



EUROPEAN
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OPEN STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

PRIORITIES FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH RESEARCH IN FP7

22 May 2006, Brussels

MEETING REPORT

The aim of the meeting was to present and discuss the future priorities of environment and health research in view of launching the first calls for proposals at the end of 2006/beginning of 2007 by Directorate I (Environment) of Research Directorate-General of the European Commission, area 'Environment and Health'.

The meeting was attended by 147 people including representatives from academia, industry, NGOs, governmental organisations/agencies including Commission services.

33 oral stakeholder statements were presented at the meeting, in addition to a number of written statements (these are published on the same website as this document).

Topics/issues identified as priorities by the stakeholders:

CONCERNING SPECIFIC HEALTH RISKS

Overall, emphasis was put on 'full-chain approach' and for the integration of risk analysis approaches of human and environmental health (including ecotoxicity).

- Health impacts of air pollution including indoor air
 - Can take advantage of existing cohorts or create new ones
 - Focus on interplay of various stressors
 - Sufficient cohort size
- Health impacts of environmental noise
 - Cumulative/long term effects need to be studied
 - Integrated approach: physical and mental health outcomes/multiple stressors
- Health impact of nanoparticles in the environment
 - Integrated approach
- Environmental risks and reproductive health
 - Combination of causal factors to be investigated (multicausality)

- Environmental causes of cancer
 - Take advantage of different exposure scenarios in some new member states
 - Specific issues identified
- Health impacts of environmental contaminants on neuroendocrine brain development
 - Epidemiological studies for cause/effect
 - Focus on maternal/infant exposure
 - Sensitive biomarkers
- Health impacts of environmental non-ionising radiation
 - Impact of complex environment
 - Several specific issues identified
- Health impacts of environmental water quality
- Health impacts of trace metal deficiency
 - viral diseases, neurodevelopment disorders, cancer, allergy/asthma
- Health impacts of extreme events including geogenic factors and emerging infectious diseases
- Health impact related to emerging contaminants such as silver or perfluorinated compounds

POLICY SUPPORT TOOLS AND METHODS FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH ISSUES

- Need for integrated risk assessments across sectors, taking into account
 - Need for full chain approach, multicausality, combined and complex exposures
 - Particularities of vulnerable groups such as children, taking into account genetic susceptibility in health RA
 - Specificity of urban exposure situations: health impact of expansion of built environment, combined exposures, problems in megacities
 - Need for exposure monitoring including biomonitoring and related methodologies; biomonitor new POPS (e.g., flame retardants)
 - Need for integrating human health and ecosystem issues (ecotoxicology) including wildlife as sentinel for human health
 - Need for validated biomarkers
- Decision-support tools needed for risk assessment including
 - New tools for human risk assessment, e.g., for long-term effects or effects of multiple exposures
 - Widely acceptable tools for cost/benefit analysis of environment interventions on human health
 - Toxicity evaluation procedures
 - Nonvertebrate methods as proxy for assessment of complex environmental impacts on human health

- Impact of spatial and temporal variation in exposures (typical of real-life exposure situations)
- Need for integration of national programmes in environment and health

General practical issues:

- Prioritisation of topics needed in development and implementation of the WP
- Further research should also be based on consolidating current knowledge
- Involve policy makers (NGOs, industry...)
- Dissemination of results should be given high priority
- Variable project size is necessary, depending on topic