

# **Scientific Committee for Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR)**

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*Stakeholder Dialogue Session,  
22/3/07*

# Nature of SCENIHR activities

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**Mandate.** Emerging or newly identified risks, broad, complex or multi-disciplinary issues requiring a comprehensive assessment of the risks to the safety of consumers and/or to public health

**Questions.** All questions come from the Commission. Many involve several DG's.

# Functioning of the SCENIHR

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- **Plenary meetings 6 per year**

SCENIHR has 12 Members with expertise in: toxicology, environmental health, epidemiology, public health, biology, physics, chemistry, engineering, veterinary and human medicine, microbiology, haematology/ immunology

- **Working groups.**

Used for each question. Each working group is comprised principally of external experts.

# Areas dealt with by SCENIHR

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- new technologies (e.g. nanotechnologies)
- medical devices, tissue engineering, blood products
- chemical and biological hazards
- physical hazards eg electromagnetic fields
- health trends eg fertility reduction
- methodologies for assessing new risks eg interactions

# Current and new issues for the SCENIHR

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## Current work

- Nanotechnologies
- EMF
- Smokeless Tobacco Products
- Plasticisers in medical devices

# Issues in interacting with stakeholders

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- ❑ To let all stakeholders know what the SCENIHR is doing
- ❑ To make the scope of the SCENIHR's work clear
- ❑ Ensuring that the independence of the SC is preserved
- ❑ How to deal with 'confidential information'
- ❑ The very limited time of members to assess additional information, receive presentations etc
- ❑ To be seen to be even handed with all stakeholders

# Stakeholder Interactions: current mechanisms used by SCENIHR

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- Calls for information (beginning)  
*eg plasticisers in medical devices*
- Invited presentations to the relevant WP (during)  
*eg CJD in blood and blood products*
- Public consultation based on initial opinion (after)  
*All SCNIHR opinions*

# Interactions with stakeholders: what has worked well

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- High level of response in public consultation exercises (eg 400 for EMF opinion)
- Generally good quality of the information provided when call for additional data
- A number of very useful presentations have been made to WP's
- Opinions generally well received



# Interactions with stakeholders - weaknesses in the current approach

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- \*The SCENIHR has difficulty in dealing with data that is:
  - i) unpublished data
  - ii) confidential data from companies
  - iii) published data with inadequate description of methodology
- \* Many of those responding to public consultation report individual experiences. They have not recognised that the SCENIHR can only deal with scientific data
- \* All important stakeholders may not be aware of SCENIHR opinions and on-going work

# Interactions with stakeholders: the way forward

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- ❑ Agree the points in the risk assessment process at which stakeholder interaction can take place
- ❑ Identify how the expertise of stakeholders may be used without compromising the independence of the WP /SC members.
- ❑ Need for an open forum to discuss specific emerging issues.
- ❑ Discussions are required on the scope and value of public consultations

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