



Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks

SCENIHR

7th Meeting of the Working Group on Synthetic Biology (Audio)

Venue: HITEC building, Rue Eugène Ruppert 11, L- 2453 Luxembourg

Meeting room: 00/091

Meeting date: 15 May 2014, between 14:00-16:00

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed the participants and announced apologies received. 13 members attended the meeting, 4 excuses. Other attendees: representatives from DG SANCO E1, DG RTD, DG ENTR, Vice Chair of SCCS who attended the second half of the meeting and 3 members of Secretariat

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as presented.

3. Declaration of interests on matters on the agenda

The Chair requested participants to declare any interest on the matters on the agenda. No declarations of any conflict of interest were made by participants.

4. Discussion on the progress made on the attributed tasks

The representative of DG RTD mentioned that the acceptable deadlines for opinions should be: 1st of June for Opinion 1 and 1st of October for Opinion 2. In principle the request for changing the mandate was accepted and an official answer from DG RTD and ENV will be sent to Secretariat soon. He mentioned that CBD published a peer review report on Synthetic Biology – WG may want to consult it (see the CBD website)

5. Discussion on outline for risk section in Opinion II

- The Chair gave the floor to one member of the WG who introduced the document “EU SynBio WG-Draft Outline of Risk Assessment Approach & Questions”;
- There were some questions raised at section 1.2 (to consider the following: habitat destruction/habitat alterations/modified habitat/damaged habitat)
- Section 1.2: There was a proposal to include a new bullet point: Ecosystems or ecosystem services

- Section 1.3: TV and MS will address the point 6; this section should be revised, might be the case to add a new subsection.
- The outline of the assessment process was introduced; members of the WG have been asked to send their additional comments before June 16;
- Questions from appendix 2 have been reviewed; members have been asked to reflect on them and all comments should be sent before the next meeting in June;
- Appendix 3 was reviewed – is mentioned that this is based on the EFSA methodology of Environmental RA and the Human Health RA should be included.

6. Discussion on new text for Opinion I

- The Chair commented the minutes of the meeting held on 08/05 in terms of disagreement with the last bullet point saying that *'The SCs Secretariat finally reminded the participants that, should the conclusion of the definition part be that SYN BIO cannot be clearly distinguished from GMO, the 1st opinion may be the "end point" of this exercise. There is no need to go on with opinion 2 and 3 if there is no difference identified (as GMO already covered by existing legal framework)'. The reason is that the present opinion I recognizes the rapidly advancing nature of GM technologies and important nuance that supports the need for ongoing updates of risk assessment methods, which will be addressed in Opinion II.*
- Version 23 of the opinion was discussed; the representative of SCCS was asked to briefly introduce his contributions to the text. This contribution did not change the definition of Synbio but provides some suggestions to other WG members to do so. ;
- Sections 3.2 and 3.3.3 have been discussed in detail and new comments are expected ASAP (see the timeline below);
- A few comments were received from SANCO E1 (see pages 8 (line 23), 16 (lines 36-38) and 17).

7. Time schedule

Opinion 1:

- All comments on sections 3.2 and 3.3.3 will be sent to the WG before next Monday (19/05) morning;
- A new draft will be prepared for section 3.3.3 and sent to the WG on May 23 at the latest;
- Comments on the last version of the document should be sent by Monday, May 26, at the latest.

Opinion 2:

- Comments and contributions to be sent before the next meeting scheduled on 16-17/06/2014.

8. Other important deadlines:

- DG RTD kindly requested the Secretariat and WG to submit Opinion 1, agreed by SCENIHR, on 2nd of June.

9. Any Other Business: None