



13th plenary meeting of the
Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER)
25 May 2011 at 10.00, Rue Breydel 4, room 02/17A - Brussels

Minutes

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Prof. Greim, Chair of the Committee, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Dr. Wim Penning, the new head of the risk assessment unit (D5) was introduced to the Committee.

Apologies received from JT, PdV, and WD.

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The draft agenda was adopted as proposed. The item on the election of a new vice-chair was postponed until the next meeting in Sept.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

No new declarations were made

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PLENARY MEETING

The minutes of the 12th SCHER plenary meeting were approved

5. ONGOING REQUESTS FOR OPINIONS BY COMMISSION SERVICES ON:

5.1. Combination Effects of Chemicals

The pre-consultation opinion was adopted for submission to SCENIHR and SCCS with the following caveats:

1. The section on "the contribution of epidemiological studies to cumulative risk assessment" will be re-worded a bit to indicate more clearly the role of epidemiology in evaluating the combined effect of chemicals at low doses.
2. The sources of uncertainty specific to mixtures will be separated from the uncertainties related to individual substances.
3. A recommendation will be added that any approaches on toxicity assessment of chemical mixtures should follow transparent and harmonized schemes aimed at providing consistent results.

The discussion also included a report by the Chair about recent developments in low-dose toxicology at a meeting in FERA (the UK). An official document is expected soon on the issue. The deliberations at that meeting support the position of SCHER on low doses. (In addition, the Chair indicated one of the main problems facing the EU risk assessment community, i.e. the notion that often legislation is based on hazard and not on risk.)

5.2. Water Framework Directive – the Environmental Quality Standards

The following opinions were adopted: diclofenac, dicofol, heptachlor, lead, naphthalene, nickel, PFOS, and terbutryne. The quinoxifen opinion is to be re-worded/shortened and adopted via written procedure by the middle of June. The opinion on polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) is to be adopted by the end of June.

5.3. TCEP in toys

The adoption of the pre-consultation opinion was postponed until the next plenary. A new version of the text (including some additional exposure calculations) is to be prepared by the rapporteur and circulated to the WG before the summer vacation period.

5.4. Improvements in Risk Assessment

The Chair of the WG reported on the current state of the opinion which still needs a lot of work and will not be ready for public consultation until some time in the fall.

6. PARTICIPATION OF THE SCHER IN ACTIVITIES/WORKING GROUPS OF OTHER SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES

6.1. New challenges for risk assessment (SCENIHR in the lead)

The SCHER representatives in this WG presented the main ideas being discussed.

7. NEW AND EMERGING ISSUES

There were none presented

8. NEXT PLENARY MEETING – 21 SEPTEMBER 2011

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The issue of possible involvement of SCHER members in the evaluation of the safety of the substance Cecure® was discussed. The Committee designated two experts (ET and/or MV) who may participate in the evaluation of the substance, if requested by EFSA.