



14th Plenary Meeting of the

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS (SCHER)

27 November 2015

Draft minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

No apologies received. Two SCHER members participated via audio.

The Chair of the SynBio WG attended the meeting via audio and presented the final Opinion on SynBio III.

DG GROW joined by audio on the agenda point on preliminary opinion on estimated amounts of toys material ingested by children.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declaration of interests on matters in the agenda

The Chair requested participants to declare any conflict of interest regarding matters on the agenda. None of the participants declared any conflict of interest.

4. Chair's / member's report

SCHER members reported on events that they attended since the last plenary meeting:

- ECHA workshop on soil assessment
- EFSA conference "Shaping the Future of Food Safety, Together"
- SCCS meeting on methodology
- SCENIHR WG on UVC lamps
- SCENIHR WG on sunbeds

5. Communication by Commission Departments

➤ *Update on the Call for applications*

The secretariat informed that the call for applications for membership in the two committees – SCCS, SCHEER finished on 2 November. The Evaluation Panel met in November and is working on the list of suitable candidates which is expected in early 2016.

According to the provisions of Decision C (2015) 5383, the members of the new Committees will be appointed by the Director General of the DG SANTE from a list of suitable candidates. Candidates not appointed as members stay on the list as a reserve.

The new Committees will enter into service in April 2016.

➤ **Ongoing evaluation of the Scientific Committees (2009-2014)**

The secretariat provided an update about the ongoing evaluation of the scientific committees which aims to assess the value of the advice provided by the Scientific Committees' scientific to the Commission decision-making process and to the community of external stakeholders overall and to assess their working methods.

The evaluation has also a formative nature as it is to inform the Commission about the possible future of the Committees, their scope and long term sustainability. This evaluation will also guide the Commission Services in a possible revision of the Rules of procedure of the Scientific Committees for the term 2016-2021.

➤ **Feedback from the EFSA concerning uncertainties and weight of evidence**

The secretariat informed that EFSA is assessing the contributions received under public consultation. No new information was sent to the secretariat.

➤ **New opinions/mandates from other Scientific Committees**

Printed copies were distributed to the SCHER members to update them about the ongoing opinions and new mandates in the other scientific committees.

➤ **Publication in scientific journals**

The secretariat informed about a publication of a commentary in Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology issue 73, November 2015 "Does the EU migration level of chromium VI in toys need to be lowered?"

The SCHER concluded that opinions to be published in scientific journals and the journals will be decided on case-by-case basis.

➤ **Request for access to documents concerning the SCHER's opinion on estimated amounts of toys ingested by children**

The secretariat informed that DG GROW asked SCHER (through the secretariat) for their agreement to release a draft version of the mandate with comments of the SCHER.

The SCHER concluded to release the document, respecting the personal data protection policy.

➤ **Workshop on synthetic biology (10 December)**

The secretariat recalled the Workshop on synthetic biology – From Science to Policy and Societal Challenges organised by the Commission and scientific committees under the Luxembourg presidency.

6. On-going work:

Update on public consultations and finalization of the opinions

➤ **Final Opinion on SynBio III "Research priorities"**

The Chair of the SynBio WG presented the final Opinion on SynBio III Research priorities. The preliminary Opinion was published for public consultation between 15 July and 16 September. The WG prepared replies to comments (61 comments were received) and made necessary changes in the Opinion.

The Opinion was adopted by the SCHER unanimously. The SCHER suggested reconsidering the title of the opinion to address also environmental issues and biodiversity.

The final Opinion will be presented for adoption to the SCENIHR on its plenary meeting on 3 December; SCCS will adopt it by written procedure (deadline 4 December).

The plan is to publish the final opinion before the SynBio workshop on 10 December.

➤ **Opinion on cadmium in arable soils**

The Rapporteur gave a presentation on the opinion. It was adopted by the SCHER in May and published for comments on 18 June (with deadline 29 July 2015): 7 comments were received. The WG met on 16 November to finalise the Opinion and prepare replies to the comments.

The opinion was adopted by the SCHER and will be published in the week 49.

➤ **Draft preliminary Opinion on Estimates of the amount of toy materials ingested by children**

The Chair and the Rapporteur of the working group reported on the progress of the preliminary Opinion. The working group met on 26 November to finalise the replies to questions from the Terms of Reference.

The SCHER discussed the Opinion and concluded that the final version will be sent for adoption by written procedure in the week 50.

➤ **Preliminary opinion on calcium cyanamide**

The preliminary opinion was published for comments on 17 November. The SCHER received a request to prolong the commenting period until 31 January.

The SCHER concluded not to prolong the commenting period until 31 January for the following reasons:

- The Opinion was published for comments on 17 November 2015; the deadline is 10 January, which provides almost 8 weeks for comments. The usual length of commenting period/public consultation is 6 weeks.
- The preliminary Opinion was already published a year before, and its finalisation delayed to consider new data provided by interested parties. Its conclusions, compared to the previous opinion, do not change.
- WG meeting has been scheduled for 22 January 2016; the WG needs time to go through the comments before the meeting.

7. New mandates

The SCHER recalled that it was discussed during the last plenaries on the SCENIHR and SCHER that the Secretariat would draft 2 new mandates on:

- **'Guidance on the structure and content of SCHEER opinions'**
- **Revision of the 'Memorandum on weight of evidence and uncertainties'**

These Opinions aim to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and expertise from the current SCs to the new one and to foster the integrated approach which should regulate the new Committee SCHEER.

The SCHER adopted the new mandates and proposed to set up a joint WG with the SCENIHR that would address first the 'Guidance on the structure and content of SCHEER opinions' and then Revision of the 'Memorandum on weight of evidence and uncertainties'.

➤ **Draft mandate on *ad hoc* rapid risk assessment**

The aim of this Opinion is to create a procedure on *ad hoc* rapid risk assessment carried out by the SCHER. The mandate was adopted by the SCHER.

➤ **For information: Future mandate on public health issues related to unconventional fossil fuels**

The SCHER secretariat was informed by DG ENV that it is considering mandating the SCHER for an opinion on public health issues related to unconventional fossil fuels.

➤ **Follow-up to the mandate on water reuse**

The mandate was adopted by written procedure and published on the website. DG JRC is planning a meeting next year, presumably in spring, exact dates are not yet set up.

8. Follow-up to the Quicksilver Plus exercise

The Chair of the WG on RRA reported on the Quicksilver plus exercise taking place on 30 September and 1 October.

Several SCHER members directly participated in the exercise. Lessons learned from the exercise are being prepared. They will help to finalise the procedure for RRA.

9. SCHER term 2013-2016: Lessons learnt (second session)

The secretariat recalled that this was the second session to share suggestions and experience concerning the functioning of the Scientific Committees during the term 2013-2016.

The second session focused on discussing the current Rules of procedure, especially:

- Stakeholders dialogue
- Functioning of the committee (establishment of WG, role and tasks of the chair/rapporteur of the WG, selection of experts)

10. Future areas of potential risks identified by the SCHER

The secretariat informed about a request to the SCs concerning topics from the STOA (the Parliament's Panel on Science and Technology Options Assessment) to provide input regarding future involvement of the SCs.

The SCHER discussed the different topics and concluded that the issues where SCHER would be able to contribute (from the point of view of its area of expertise) are the following:

- graphene
- 3D printers
- Aquaponic systems

11. Any other business

Next SCHER plenary meeting: 22 March 2016

WG meetings:

21 January 2016, starting at 9:00 the WG on guidance on the structure and the content of the opinions and on uncertainty

22 January 2016, starting at 9:00 – WG on RRA

22 January 2016, starting at 13:00 - WG on calcium cyanamide

23 March 2016, starting at 9:00 – WG on toys

Annex 1

List of Participants

Members of the SCHER

Alena Bartonova, Maria José Carroquino, Raquel Duarte-Davidson, Jadwiga Gzyl, Renate Krätke, Greet Schoeters, Colin Janssen, Claire Beausoleil, Jan Linders, Teresa Fernandes, Pim de Voogt

Absences

None

SCENIHR

Theo Vermeire, the Chair of the WG on SynBio

SCHER Secretariat (DG SANTE)

DG GROW