

Assessing emerging issues for the European Commission - Role of the SCENIHR

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Risk assessment in the European Union

RA Body	Area of Competence
EFSA	Food and Feed - Food and feed safety, Animal health and welfare, Plant health
EMA	Medicines - Safety/effectiveness medicines human use; Safety/effectiveness medicinal products for veterinary use, Pharmaco-vigilance
ECHA	Chemicals - Registration, evaluation of chemicals (REACH)
ECDC	Communicable disease - Surveillance, preparedness and response
EEA	Environment - Air, water, soil pollution, climate change, natural resources and bio-diversity
SCOEL	Workers' Safety - Occupational exposure to chemicals
SCENIHR	Emerging or newly identified health risks
SCHER	Risks related to toxicity and eco-toxicity of chemical, bio-chemical and biological compounds
SCCP	Health risks of non-food consumer products

Background on Scientific Committees (SC)

The 3 SCs managed by DG SANCO

- SC on Consumer Products (SCCP)
- SC on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER)
- SC on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR)

provide advice in the fields of consumer safety, public health and the environment (set up by Commission Decision 2004/210/EC of 3 March 2004)

Background on Scientific Committees (SC)

- Primary task: provide scientific advice upon request of the Commission as a basis for risk management decisions
- Principles: Excellence, Independence, Transparency
 - Excellence: Members are highly qualified scientists selected via Call for Expressions of Interest
 - Independence: Declaration of Interest (+ Confidentiality)
 - Transparency: Publication of opinions and minutes, Call for Information, Public Consultation
- External experts upon invitation

The Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR)

SCENIHR Mandate

Emerging or newly identified risks, broad, complex or multi-disciplinary issues requiring a comprehensive assessment of risks to consumer safety or public health

Examples

- new technologies (e.g. nanotechnologies)
- medical devices, tissue engineering, blood products
- physical hazards (e.g. noise and electromagnetic fields)
- antimicrobial resistance
- fertility reduction, cancer of endocrine organs
- interaction of risk factors, synergic or cumulative effects
- methodologies for assessing new risks

SCENIHR (/SCCP/SCHER) Responsibilities

"The Scientific Committees shall draw the Commission's attention to a specific or **emerging problem** falling within their remit, which they consider may pose an actual or potential risk to consumer safety, public health or the environment. The Commission shall determine the action to be taken including, if appropriate, a request for a scientific opinion on the matter."

Commission Decision 2004/210/EC, 3.3.2004, Article 2.4
in revised form also reflected in Commission Decision
2008/721/EC, 5.9.2008, Article 2.7

SCENIHR –mode of working

- Question framed by one or more Commission Services
- Question discussed in the SCENIHR. Chairman of a specific Working Group (WG) is appointed
- External experts are identified and invited for the WG
- WG produces a preliminary report
- Report is discussed at SCENIHR and a preliminary report / final opinion is agreed
- Public consultation (optional)
- SCENIHR considers responses and produces its final opinion

SCENIHR –Expertise

- Toxicology
- Environmental Health
- Physics
- Biology and Microbiology (Immunology, Pathology, Transfusion Medicine)
- Chemistry and Biochemistry
- Medicine
- Veterinary Medicine
- Epidemiology
- Public Health
- Tissue engineering
- Medical Devices

SCENIHR – Topics

- Nanotechnologies
- EMF (Electromagnetic Fields)
- Noise (Personal Music Players)
- Light Sensitivity (Energy-Saving Light Bulbs)
- Smokeless Tobacco Products
- Phthalates (DEHP) in Medical Devices and Alternatives
- Dental Amalgam and Alternatives
- Biocides and Antibiotic Resistance
- West-Nile Virus
- vCJD (Creutzfeld Jakob Disease)
- BSE in Cosmetics

Revision of Advisory Structure Timelines

- End of current SCs in January 2009
- Set-up of new Scientific Committees / Scientific Advisory structure (Commission Decision 2008/721/EC, 5.9.2008)
- Call for Expression of Interest closed 31 October 2008
- **Evaluation of Applications ongoing**
- Compilation, Consultation
- Publication of list of appointed members of the Scientific Advisory structure
- New Committees start after January 2009

Revision of Advisory Structure – Changes

Overall:

- Pool of Scientific Advisors
- Database of Experts
- Revision of Mandates
- SC for Consumer Safety (SCCS) to replace SCCP

SCENIHR:

- 17 members
- Mandate encompasses public health determinants and non-transmissible diseases

SCENIHR - General Information

- SCENIHR-Website:
http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihhr/04_scenihhr_en.htm
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Thank you for your attention!