

Minutes of the 114th meeting of the Scientific Committee on Food held On 9-10th December 1998 in Brussels

ATTENDANCE LIST - LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS - TEILNEHMERLISTE

Members/Membres/Mitglieder

- MM. D. BOSKOU
- MM. A. CARERE, I. ELMADFA (2nd. Vice-Chairman, Vice-President, Stellv. Vorsitzender)
- MM. A. FLYNN, R. FRIES, W. GRUNOW
- Mme. A. KNAAP (1st. Vice-Chairman, Vice-President, Stellv. Vorsitzender)
- MM. I. KNUDSEN (Chairman, President, Vorsitzender),
- S. LINDGREN,
- B. MOSELEY,
- A. PALOU,
- W. SARIS,
- P. TOBBACK,
- P. VERGER,
- J.-M. WAL

Apologies/Excusés/Entschuldigt

- Mme. S. BARLOW,
- Mme. A. FERRO-LUZZI

Commission/Kommission

- MM. A. KLEPSCH (DG III/E/1),
- MISCHENDAHL (DG III/E/2)
- Mme. M. P DARCHY (DG III/E/2)
- MM. G. SCHREIBER (DG III/E/1),
- O. ROHTE (DG III/E/1)
- Mme. C. MAJEWSKI (DG III/E/1)
- Mme. P. COLOMBO (DG VI)
- Mme. S. HEINIMAA (DG III/E/1)
- M. B. LEFEVRE (DG VI)
- M. X. GOENAGA (DG XII)

Secretariat/Secrétariat/Sekretariat

- Mr. M. A. GRANERO ROSELL (DG XXIV/B/3)
- Mme. J. THOLLEBEKE (DG XXIV/B/3)

1. Apologies for absence

The absences were noted.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

3. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

4. Matters arising from the minutes of the 113th meeting

There were not particular matters to record regarding the previous meeting.

5. New requests for opinions since the last meeting

- update of SCF report on irradiation of 1986
- beta carotene
- certain aspects of specifications of gelatine
- Implementation of Regulation 1139/98 on labelling of novel foods: List of products which do not require labelling as they do not contain detectable traces of DNA or protein
- *Stevia rebaudiana*
- genetically modified tomato
- possible update of opinion on nitrate and nitrite
- fusarium toxins

The Commission services provided general explanations concerning these new requests. Some of them had been already informally introduced at the different Working Groups.

The updating of the report of the SCF on irradiation of foods of 1986 had been expressed as a wish by the Committee at the previous plenary session. The Commission services will prepare detailed terms of reference for this question.

As regards beta-carotene the request was to evaluate the safety from all sources. The Working Groups on Additives and on Nutrition and the Task force on Upper Levels for Vitamins and Minerals will also examine this question.

As regards the request on gelatine the Committee was asked to examine the chemical and microbiological parameters to be used in Community wide specification for gelatine. The Committee should also advise the Commission services about the safety of the use of chromium tanned hides for the production of gelatine intended for human consumption. DG VI expressed the wish to receive an answer on this part of the request by June next year.

The Committee was informed by DG III of two dossiers on novel foods. One on a tomato genetically modified to downregulate the amount of polygalacturonase (PG) produced. The second concerned the *Stevia rebaudiana* leaves as novel food. The two dossiers will be considered by the Working Group on Novel Foods.

The SCF has been asked also to provide advice on the list of products which do not require labelling as they do not contain detectable traces of DNA or protein. The advice was requested following the adoption of Council Regulation 1139/98.

The Committee also was informed orally, about two new requests in the area of contaminants coming from Directorate General VI Agriculture. One concerned the evaluation of some new information regarding nitrates and nitrites. The need to update or not the opinion of the SCF on the basis of this information will be examined by the Working Group

on Contaminants. The second related to the range of fusarium toxins that may be present in some foods. The same Working Group will also examine this other question.

6. Additives

Algal beta carotene: statement clarifying the opinion of the SCF on algal beta-carotene expressed on 13/6/97

Following the SCF opinion on algal beta-carotene expressed on 13 June 1997, questions have arisen about the correct interpretation of the conclusion.

The Committee recognises that the wording in its opinion can be understood to imply that the maximum limit of 10 mg/kg food is meant as a toxicologically based maximum limit.

The background for this level was, however, that this was the maximum level envisaged by the applicant for use as a food colour. In the absence of a specific ADI, the Committee therefore quoted this figure to indicate the use levels which were part of its evaluation when considering the minor components of algal beta-carotene.

The Committee has subsequently been reassured that typical use levels of approved β -carotene, when used as a food colour is usually below 10 mg/kg food and it can be envisaged that any change to using algal β -carotene would not change the overall exposure.

The Committee, therefore, is of the opinion that there is no need to distinguish between algal β -carotene and other already permitted carotenes when used as food colours.

Riboflavin by fermentation using genetically modified *Bacillus subtilis*: draft opinion

The draft opinion was discussed and a number of questions considered. Among them there was the purpose of the use of the substance. The opinion was adopted subject to the changes agreed. The full opinion adopted is attached as [Annex I](#).

Urease preparation for use in wine: draft opinion

The draft opinion prepared within the Working Group on Additives was discussed. Some amendments were introduced and the draft finally adopted. The full opinion is given as [Annex II](#).

7. Contaminants

- Risk assessment of genotoxic carcinogens: discussion

The Working Group on Contaminants had not had the time to discuss this very complex issue in sufficient depth at its meeting which had taken place only the previous week. The subject was therefore sent to the Working Group for further consideration.

- Draft opinion on dietary exposure to certain aromatic hydrocarbons (benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene, xylenes, styrene)

The proposed draft opinion submitted by the Working Group could not be made available for this session of the Plenary due to the short time available and only an earlier previous version considered by the Working Group could be circulated. It was agreed that a revised version from the Working Group would be submitted to the next plenary session.

8. Materials and Articles in Contact with Food

Adoption of the evaluation of an additional list of substances for food contact materials

The draft was discussed. Some changes were introduced during the discussion to clarify the text. The opinion was adopted subject to the changes agreed. The full opinion appears in Annex III.

9. Novel Foods and processes (including irradiated food)

Report from the Working Group

The Chairman reported of the progress in the different dossiers being examined by the Group. The Group had also considered the new requests regarding the novel foods and had taken a number of organizational decisions regarding how to work on these new requests.

The Working Group had also briefly addressed the question of the legal situation regarding some genetically modified processing aids. It was considered desirable that the Commission services could assist the Committee on this legal aspect in the near future, in order to help the Committee when carrying out its assessments.

10. Food Microbiology and Hygiene

Draft opinion on the scientific background of the Spanish notification of Regulation on broths, consommés, soups and creams

The rapporteur introduced the paper prepared within the Working Group.

The draft opinion was discussed and a number of amendments were considered. Subject to the introduction of the changes agreed, the opinion was adopted. The full opinion appears in [Annex IV](#).

11. Intake and Exposure

Review of progress in the Working Groups having considered this aspect in detail

The Working Groups on Additives and on Contaminants had already allocated some of their time for detailed consideration of this question on the basis of documents outlining an approach that could be followed when making exposure assessments for additives and contaminants on the basis of a European model diet. In the case of the contaminants examples for three different contaminants evaluated in the past by the SCF had been chosen by the Working Group for further consideration. It was agreed that these documents will be circulated to all members for information.

12. Flavours

Review of progress

The Committee was informed by the Commission services about the progress in the Community Register of flavouring substances to be adopted very soon. An exchange of views took place on the ways the SCF would work in a practical manner in this area. A scheduled meeting of the working group on flavours was confirmed.

13. Nutrition and Dietetic Foods

Review of progress

The Chairman reported on the work on the requirements for foods for sportsmen. The group has discussed an early but comprehensive initial draft laying down possible categories for these types of foods and the scientific basis for their requirements. A text from the Working Group to the Plenary should be submitted during next year.

14. Upper levels for vitamins and minerals

Review of progress

There had been a first operational meeting in November of the Task Force set up to deal with this question. The methodology to be used for the assessment had been discussed in detail. The list of nutrients to be considered was also established. Also broad groupings of the nutrients were also established.

15. Provisional schedule of SCF meetings for 1999

Review and adoption of dates

For information: Balance of meetings in 1998

The dates for the different meetings of the SCF for 1999 were adopted. The dates for the plenary sessions are scheduled as follows:

- 20/21 January starting in the afternoon of the first day.
- 24 of March
- 16/17 June
- 22/23 September
- 1/2 December

The Committee was also informed about the planned meetings of the different Working Groups.

16. Review of the SCF 1998-2001 Working Programme

The heavy workload of the Committee was noted in all the different areas. Some organisational details were proposed in order to better plan the work on the dossiers.

17. Follow-up on information on the 5th R&D Framework Programme and Food Safety relevant for the SCF. Report from DGXII

DG XII reported briefly on the situation regarding the 5th R&D Framework Programme.

18. General information from the Commission services,

18.1 Actions following from opinions and recommendations

18.2 General information from the work of other Scientific Committees and issues of collaboration

The Committee was informed that the Commission was about to discuss a Directive on the pesticides in baby foods making use of the SCF advice on this matter issued in June.

The Committee was aware of the opinions adopted by the Scientific Committee on medicinal products and medical

devices on the toxicological data on some colouring agents for medicinal products (erythrosin, amaranth and canthaxantin). These substances had been evaluated by the SCF in the past. The Committee expressed concern about the apparent unnecessary overlap of some aspects of the opinions of the two Committees.

An initial discussion took place on the ways in which the contribution from the SCF could be done regarding the work being started by the Scientific Steering Committee on risk assessment procedures. The SCF guidelines on food additives, packaging materials, enzymes, smoked flavouring substances and others, novel foods, principles of microbiological risk assessment were among those that could be used for such a contribution.

19. SCF - Organisational matters

19.1. SCF - Information pack (updated)

Review of publications of reports and opinions of the SCF

The Committee noted the updated information pack.

The Secretariat informed about the preparation for publication for near future of three new series of reports of the SCF (series 42,43 and 44) that will incorporate all the opinions adopted by the SCF up to the period of the previous mandate (until October 1997) and not yet published on paper.

19.2. Follow-up on the use of e-mail by the SCF

The Guidelines from the secretariat on the use of e-mail were welcomed and considered too general. The members considered it desirable to have a practical session to resolve individual practical problems. The Secretariat undertook to put in practice this request.

19.3 Guidelines for the format and structure of the opinions of Scientific Committees

This item had been submitted for information. These guidelines were intended to help in preparing advises in a similar manner by all the scientific committees.

20. Scientific Cooperation. Status report

DG III agreed to provide with a written document on this issue that will be circulated by the Secretariat.

21. Any other business

There were no items to be recorded in this section

22. Adoption of these minutes

These minutes were adopted by written procedure.

ANNEXES

- **ANNEX I:** [Opinion on riboflavin as a colouring matter authorised for use in foodstuffs produced by fermentation using genetically modified *Bacillus subtilis*](#)
- **ANNEX II:** [Opinion on the use of a urease prepared from *Lactobacillus fermentum* in wine production](#)
- **ANNEX III:** [Opinion on an additional list of monomers and additives for food contact materials](#)
- **ANNEX IV:** [Opinion on the scientific background of the Spanish notification of regulation on broths.](#)

[consommés, soups and creams](#)