

Minutes of the 126th Plenary Meeting of the Scientific Committee on Food held on 27/28 February 2001, Brussels

ATTENDANCE LIST LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS TEILNEHMERLISTE

Members/Membres/Mitglieder

- Mrs. S. BARLOW First Vice chair,
- Mr. A. CARERE, K-H. ENGEL,
- A. FLYNN present on 28/2,
- W. GRUNOW,
- T. HIRVI,
- Mrs. A. KNAAP Chair,
- Mr. J.C. LARSEN,
- S. LINDGREN,
- B. Moseley,
- A. PALOU Second Vice chair,
- J. SCHLATTER,
- P. TOBBACK,
- P. VERGER,
- J.-M. WAL,
- R. WALKER

Apologies for absence:

- J. ALEXANDER,
- B. KOLETZKO,
- W. SARIS

Commission/Kommission

- Mr. L. ROSSI (DG Health and Consumer Protection),
- M. SLAYNE (DG Health and Consumer Protection)

Secretariat/Secrétariat/Sekretariat (DG Health and Consumer Protection)

- Mr. M.A. GRANERO ROSELL,
- D. PETTAUER,
- D. LIEM, M. ROMARÍS,
- Mrs. H. PEDERSEN

1. Apologies for absence

The apologies were noted.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda was adopted.

3. Declarations of interest

Prof. Engel declared a potential conflict of interest in relation to the item cassia gum (new dossier) as he had been involved three years before in research on interaction of cassia gum with flavourings.

The Secretariat requested members to declare their possible interests again when cassia gum will be discussed in detail in the future. The SCF or its Working Groups will then have the opportunity to decide whether the interest declared could compromise the independence of the members, and therefore would prevent them from participating in the discussion. At the present meeting no discussion on any aspect of the dossier took place.

One member enquired about the status of information directly sent to individual members by industry. The secretariat and the Chair reminded that the only way to submit information for the attention of the Committee was to submit the information via the Secretariat.

4. New dossiers

carbon monoxide (food additive)

-cassia gum (food additive)

benzyl alcohol

revision of scientific basis of essential requirements of infant formulae and follow-on formulae

The following new dossiers have been added to the working programme of the Committee:

Carbon monoxide has received a temporary national authorisation as a food additive. The Commission services have received a dossier through the national authority. The Committee is asked to evaluate the safety of carbon monoxide as a packaging gas for meat products in a mixture with carbon dioxide and nitrogen.

The Committee is asked to consider the safety of *cassia gum* to be used as a food additive, as a gelling agent and as a thickener.

The Commission services have received a request to evaluate *benzyl alcohol* as a carrier solvent for flavouring substances. Benzyl alcohol is included in the Community register of chemically defined flavouring substances. Detailed terms of reference will be prepared by the Commission services at a later stage.

The Community adopted harmonised rules on *infant formulae and follow-on formulae* (Commission Directive 91/321 EEC) in 1991. Such rules include essential requirements for these products. These essential requirements were based on a number of reports of the SCF. It has now become necessary to review and update the scientific basis of the above Community legislation, taking into account scientific and technical developments. The Committee is asked to revise *the essential requirements of infant formulae and follow-on formulae intended for the feeding of infants and young children*. Following a request by a petitioner, the Committee is also requested, in the context of that review, to address specifically the issue of the nucleotide content of these products. The Committee is also asked to give attention to fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS) and galacto-oligosaccharides (GOS) in infant formulae.

The appropriate Working Groups will begin their work on these dossiers in due course and will report to the plenary.

The Chair of the SCF stressed the importance to have clear requests submitted by the Commission in order for the Committee to work efficiently.

5. SCF Working Programme

The Secretariat distributed an updated list of the existing dossiers in the working programme of the Committee.

In the area of contaminants, the Committee is examining some aspects of the chemical specifications of gelatine and the group consideration of the fusarium toxins (some of them have been recently evaluated individually by the Committee). The Committee will also re-evaluate its previous opinions on lead, cadmium, mercury and arsenic, and assess Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons and organotin compounds in food. These requests to the SCF are done in the framework of a proposal for a Draft Commission Regulation setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs. This also includes the mandate for the presently ongoing re-evaluation of 3-MCPD.

In the area of Hygiene and Microbiology the Committee is about to finalise the establishment of a risk profile for the microbiological contamination of fruits and vegetables eaten raw. The Committee is also working in the development of criteria for the safety evaluation of additives produced by microbiological processes.

In the field of food additives, the Committee is considering at present two applications for additional sweeteners: neotame and erythritol. Other questions relate to the evaluation of impurities in the specifications on ethyl hydroxyethyl cellulose, of n-vinyl pyrrolidone, carnauba wax and hydrogenated poly-1-decene. The Committee is also working on the update of the guidelines on food additives. For a larger number of additional dossiers the Committee is awaiting information from petitioners or third parties. These dossiers are therefore not subject of active consideration at present.

In the area of flavourings, the Committee is planning to evaluate 200 flavourings of the Community Register of chemically defined flavourings per year according to the evaluation programme laid down in Commission Regulation 1565/2000. The Committee will also consider appropriate methods for the exposure assessment for flavours in food in the framework of this programme. The work of the SCF in this area also includes the evaluation 15 substances for possible inclusion in Annex II of Directive 88/388, and a safety evaluation of certain substances used as butter fat tracers.

The work programme of the Committee in the area of food contact materials has been ongoing for three years and comprises the evaluation of about 50 -70 compounds per year.

The working programme also includes the updating of the SCF guidelines on irradiation.

In the area of novel foods and novel processes, the Committee is considering the following dossiers: fractions of cereal brans as fat replacers, genetically modified green hearted chicory, genetically modified Radicchio rosso, and the genetically modified maize lines GA21 and BT11. In most of the cases the Committee has requested additional information and it is awaiting it to pursue the evaluation. The Committee also is working to update its guidelines on novel foods.

In the area of nutrition and dietetic foods, the Committee is engaged in establishing the Upper Levels for the remaining 20 vitamins and minerals of the 29 planned.

There are also a number of nutritional substances that may be used in the manufacture of dietetic foods that are being considered by the SCF. It is envisaged that the Committee will develop guidelines for the safety evaluation of these compounds including guidance on data requirements.

6. Co-ordination with the Scientific Steering Committee and the other scientific committees

6.1. Feed-back by the Chair on subjects discussed in the SSC which are of interest to the Committee

The Chair reported that the renewed SSC intended to emphasize its activities in this mandate in areas related to coordination of the Scientific Committees.

The Committee discussed the co-ordination of issues that involve the attention of more than one Scientific Committee. It was generally felt that for a fruitful co-operation between different SC's good communication between the chairs, the members and the respective Secretariats is needed.

6.2. Feed-back by members of the Committee having attended working group meetings of other Scientific Committees

The members attending the different Working Groups of the SSC and other sister committees were confirmed.

6.3. Discussion on the involvement of SCF members to contribute to work of the SSC and other SCs

The additional significant workload involved in the contribution to the activities of the SSC and other SCs was acknowledged but it was agreed it was important to involve the SCF in this cross-sector issues.

6.4. Contribution by the SCF to harmonisation of risk assessment procedures, Opinion of the Scientific Steering Committee on harmonisation of risk assessment procedures

The Committee acknowledged the enormous amount of effort carried out by the SSC in this exercise.

The Committee exchanged views about ways to contribute to this exercise. It was agreed that a fuller discussion of the content of the SSC report should be scheduled for the next SCF Plenary, focusing on points that need to be followed up from the recommendations.

7. Rules of procedure of the SCF

The rules of procedure adopted by the previous membership of the SCF had been discussed at the first meeting under the new mandate of the SCF on 4 December. Following these discussions a small number of changes were introduced and the revised rules were adopted.

8. General information from the Commission services on matters relevant to the SCF

FOSIE presentation by DG RESEARCH

The presentation by Dr Boenke, from the Directorate General Research and Development, on the Food Safety in Europe Concerted Action was well received by the members.

9. Food Contact Materials

9.1. Draft opinion on the 12th list of monomers and additives for contact materials

The draft opinion submitted by the Working Group was examined. The Committee considered that three substances

required further consideration by the Working Group as new recent information had become available for one of them (phthalic acid, dibutyl ester, pm.ref. 74880), and clarification of the evaluation proposed in relation to earlier evaluations was needed for the two others (N,N bis(2-hydroxy ethyl) alkyl (C8-18) amine, pm.ref. 39090, and N,N-bis (2-hydroxyethyl)alkyl C8-18 amine hydrochlorides, pm.ref. 39120. The evaluation of the remaining substances on the list was adopted subject to editorial changes and clarification of the wording of the evaluation.

The full opinion is attached to these minutes as Annex I.

The chair of the Food Contact Materials Working Group informed the Committee that the Working Group had had a joint discussion with microbiologists of the SCF and SCVPH on a number of biocidal substances for which there were petitions to the Commission to approve their addition to food contact materials. It had become apparent that guidelines need to be prepared to establish the data requirements for the safety evaluation of these substances. These guidelines will be prepared in close co-operation with the Food Microbiology and Hygiene Working Group.

10. Food additives

Discussion and possible adoption of a draft opinion on hydrogenated poly-1-decene

The chair of the Additives Working Group reported that new information had become available at a meeting the previous week, and that further additional information was going to be supplied by the petitioner in the near future. The draft opinion was therefore referred back to the Working Group for examination of the new information.

11. Nutrition/dietetic foods

The Working Group on Nutrition had discussed the alternatives for updating the Population Reference Intakes of the 31st report of the SCF (Nutrient and Energy Intakes for the European Community) of 1993. The Committee noted that such an update was a huge task, considered to be even bigger than the exercise on Upper Levels. It was felt that this task should be planned very carefully in order to efficiently use the work already carried out and to avoid duplications of efforts. The possibility of using the Scientific Cooperation system (SCOOP) had also been considered. The Working Group had decided to examine the exercises carried out recently on the same subject in several Member States in order to identify similarities and differences at a meeting scheduled for June.

On questions by members, the Secretariat indicated that for the moment there was no mandate by the Commission services on this activity and that the Commission services will report to the Committee on this at a later stage.

12. Upper Levels of Vitamins and Minerals

The Task Force had met once since the new membership of the Committee. Additional draft opinions on upper levels of the remaining vitamins and minerals will be submitted by the Group for consideration in coming SCF plenaries.

The Secretariat distributed a compilation of the opinions already adopted by the Committee for ease of reference.

13. Schedule of SCF meetings for 2001

The meetings of most Working Groups were now scheduled for the whole year 2001.

14. Any other business

follow-up of opinion on dioxins

The Committee was aware that new scientific information on the toxicity of dioxins has become available since the

adoption of its opinion on the risk assessment of dioxins in food in November 2000.

The Secretariat explained that the Commission had recently received comments on the toxicological evaluation of dioxins by the SCF from the Swedish National Food Administration and the Scientific Committee of the Norwegian Food Control Authority. While the Swedish comments related exclusively to the availability of new scientific information, the Norwegian document also based its considerations on a different interpretation of the toxicological information already considered by the SCF. In addition, some members of the SCF's sister Committee on Toxicity, Ecotoxicity and the Environment (CSTEE) had wished to express their views.

Due to the sensitivity of the issue an ad hoc group of SCF members and experts in the field of dioxin risk assessment had been convened on 26th February on short notice to consider the new scientific information and the comments received. In order to give the opportunity to explain their views, a representative of the Norwegian Committee (Prof Dr E. Dybing), and a member of the CSTEE (Prof Dr H. Greim) had been invited.

The SCF *ad hoc* working group reported to the Plenary that had discussed the new data and all views in detail. The SCF group had concluded to propose to the SCF plenary that the new scientific information published recently would need to be reflected in the toxicological evaluation of the SCF.

This course of action was generally agreed by the SCF. However, the Committee expressed its concern about the urgency, as the opinion had been adopted just recently and new scientific information will continuously become available.

The SCF agreed that, given the complexity of the issue and to assure coherence and consistency with the present opinion, sufficient time should be given to reconsider the toxicological evaluation in the SCF opinion. A small group was therefore charged to prepare a draft to be considered at the next plenary meeting.

The Secretariat explained that, given the outcome of the present discussion, the Commission might come back to the Committee soon to request an urgent response on this sensitive matter.

Corrigendum to the Report of the Scientific Committee on Food on composition and specification of food intended to meet the expenditure of intense muscular effort, especially for sportsmen opinion on foods for sportsmen

The Committee was made aware of a material mistake in the "Report of the Scientific Committee on Food on composition and specification of food intended to meet the expenditure of intense muscular effort, especially for sportsmen", adopted by the SCF on 22 June 2000. Under the section on requirements for "Carbohydrate-electrolyte solutions (CES)", the report states that "these beverages should contain not less than 80 kcal/ 100 ml and not more than 350 kcal/ 100 ml". This range is repeated in the Executive Summary. These figures should correctly be expressed per 1000 ml and not per 100 ml. The Committee agrees to correct this figure and modify the published report accordingly. The corrected version of the report is attached to these minutes as annex II. It replaces the previously published report.

15. Adoption of this minutes

These minutes were adopted by written procedure.

(The text of the opinions adopted in these annexes appear in the section outcome/opinions of the web pages of the SCF on the Internet, not in the section outcome/minutes).

1. [Opinion of the Scientific Committee on Food](#) on the 12th additional list of monomers and additives for food contact materials SCF/CS/PM/M84 final
2. [Report of the Scientific Committee on Food](#) on composition and specification of food intended to meet the expenditure of intense muscular effort, especially for sportsmen (Adopted by the SCF on 22/6/2000, corrected on 28/2/2001) SCF/CS/NUT/SPORT/5 Final corrected