

## Fluor and Iodine Commission: Annual Report 2016

### Mission

Initially founded to accompany the developments in connection with the usage of iodized salt in Switzerland, the commission nowadays engages in scientific and technical questions concerning iodine and fluoride intake, monitors intake of these nutrients and concerns itself with political issues in this field.

### Members

Prof. Michael Bruce Zimmermann, Zürich, Präsident  
Dr. Maria Andersson, Zürich  
Dr. Michael Beer, BAG representative, Bern  
Prof. Hans Gerber, Bern  
Prof. Christoph A. Meier, Zürich  
Dr. Giorgio Menghini, Zürich  
Dr. Katharina Quack Lötscher, Oberrieden  
Prof. Sabine Rohrmann, Zürich  
Stefan Trachsel, Pratteln  
Prof. Tuomas Waltimo, Basel

### Activities 2015

The annual commission meeting took place at the ETH Zurich, on March 9, 2016 March 15, 2015. Several issues were discussed in detail, including the results of the 2015-2016 Swiss iodine survey and the new ETH study on iodine contribution in Switzerland from milk and milk products. In addition, the Swiss Salt Works shared the latest sales figures for iodized, iodized and fluoridated and non-fortified salt: including sales in packages and tins, sales in bags and buckets, and total salt sales. The proportion of iodized to non-iodized salt delivered to the food industry has not changed appreciably over the past 3 years. The statistics show a clear increase in total iodine use reflecting the changes introduced in 1999 (from 15 to 20 mg/kg) and 2014 (from 20 to 25 mg/kg).

The data from 2015 National Swiss Iodine Survey were analyzed and discussed. Target groups were schoolchildren, non-pregnant women of reproductive age and pregnant women. The median UIC in school children is 137 µg/L (n=728), a significant increase compared to 2009 (mUIC 120 µg/L, n=916, P<0.001). The iodine status in Swiss school children remains sufficient. The median UIC is 86 µg/L (n=346) in women of reproductive age and 136 µg/L (n=356) in pregnant women. The iodine status in women appears borderline low, but further analysis is needed before final conclusions can be drawn. Data on thyroid function in pregnant women indicate normal thyroid function (TSH, T4). Working with the BAG, the commission will decide in 2017 on policy implications of these data. The report is being finalized and publications are being written.

The Commission aims to encourage use of iodized salt by the Swiss food industry. The 2015 BAG/BLV questionnaire sent to the Swiss food industry confirm that 75% of bakeries are using iodized salt, in agreement with sales figures from Salines de Bex. However, Swiss cheese producers are poor users of iodized salt. The rationale appears to be the French ban on iodized salt in cheese, despite the fact that this ban goes against EU regulations. The Commission agree to work with the BLV to raise awareness on use of iodized salt in the Swiss food industry.

### **Outlook**

1. The commission will meet for their annual meeting in late March 2017.
2. The major activity for 2017 will be the publication of the national iodine survey, decisions on policy based on the results of the survey, and making recommendations to the Swiss food industry on use of iodized salt in their products whenever possible.



*Michael Bruce Zimmermann, Zürich, February 28, 2017*