

# **Activity report of the Identification Committee tasked with the identification of potential future members of the Commission's group of Chief Science Advisors**

**28 February 2018**

## **Members of the Group:**

**Sir David King  
Rianne Letschert  
António Vitorino**

The Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos Moedas appointed Sir David King, Ms Rianne Letschert and Mr António Vitorino (see Annex 1 for short CV) to act as Identification Committee. The task was to identify candidates for the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors ('the Group')<sup>1</sup>. The Commissioner requested the establishment of a short list for future nominations and within that shortlist to identify three candidates to fill a current vacancy in the Group.

The work of the committee was carried out in accordance with the Statement of Methodology (Annex 2).

This report summarises the process and outcome of the work of the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Commission Decision C(2015)6946 of 16 October 2015 established the High Level Group of Scientific Advisors. The amendment of this Decision was ongoing during the activities of the Identification Committee. Further to that amendment the Group was renamed to Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. This report uses the new name of the Group.

## 1. CONTEXT

The Group was established in 2015 to provide the Commission with high quality, timely and independent scientific advice for its policymaking activities. During the past thirty months, this contributed to improving the quality of EU legislation, supporting the Better Regulation agenda.

The tasks of the Group are:

- (a) To provide the Commission with independent scientific advice on specific policy issues where such advice is critical to the development of EU policies or legislation and does not duplicate advice being provided by existing bodies. The advice provided by the group shall identify the most important and relevant evidence and empirical findings that can support decision making on the specified policy issues, including an assessment of the robustness and limitations of the evidence and empirical findings.
- (b) To support the Commission in identifying specific policy issues where independent scientific advice is needed.
- (c) To provide recommendations for improving the overall interaction between Commission policy making processes and independent scientific advice concerning any field of Union policy making.

The Group is composed of seven members who serve a 30-month term of office that is renewable once. When a member leaves the group before the end of the mandate, (s)he can be replaced by a candidate selected from the short list that was produced in the previous identification process. Commission Decision C(2015)6949 of 16 October 2015 on the setting up of the High Level Group of Scientific Advisors<sup>2</sup> limited the use of the short list for replacement of members to the first term of office that will end on 15 May 2018. To allow members to be replaced also in their second term, the Commission Decision will be amended<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. METHODOLOGY/TIMING

The Identification Committee started its work in January 2018 and met on 27 and 28 February 2018. The committee received operational support by the SAM unit of Directorate-General for Research, Science and Innovation. The Committee carried out an assessment of candidates that had been put forward by research and science organisations in Europe further to an open call for nominations.

The call was launched by the European Commission on 27 November 2017. It invited the scientific community of Europe to nominate suitable candidates for the Group of Chief

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<sup>2</sup> Commission Decision C(2015)6946 of 16 October 2015 see <http://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/>.

<sup>3</sup> Commission Decision C(2018)1919 of 5 April 2018 see <http://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/>.

Scientific Advisors. The call remained open until 22 January 2018. At the opening of the call, the Director-General of the Directorate General for Research and Innovation sent a letter to the presidents of the main representative organisations of the European research and scientific community. In that letter he informed them of the call for nominations and encouraged them to propose candidates. The Commission also asked the presidents to forward the invitation to other relevant organisations.

Moreover, the Commission published the call for nominations on the SAM website<sup>4</sup>.

The call described in detail the required profile of candidates as well as the criteria to be considered. The nominating organisations were encouraged to use the template "statement on qualifications /profile of the candidate" that was equally provided.

The work of the Identification Committee followed the same methodology that it had developed for its activities when establishing the first shortlist in 2015 for the High Level Group of Scientific Advisors (See Annex 2).

In response to the Committee's invitation, a total of 22 organisations nominated 33 candidates from across Europe. The nominations received encompassed a wide range of scientific disciplines and 27% of the candidates were women.

The members of the Committee examined all nominations received. The process started shortly after the deadline of submission (22 January 2018). At its meeting of 27 and 28 February 2018, the Committee established with unanimity a short list of fifteen candidates, three of which they recommended as suitable applicants to fill the current vacancy. For the current vacancy the Committee interviewed six candidates.

The other candidates proposed for the short list were not interviewed. The shortlist constitutes a pool of reserve candidates. If in the future vacancies in the membership of the Group will occur, the Identification Committee can be requested by the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation to then identify suitable candidates from that list to fill a vacancy. The Committee can at that moment again interview candidates before making a proposal for nomination.

Interviews took place on 27 and 28 February by videoconference. The candidates were interviewed in a structured way, i.e. a standard set of questions was asked in an identical order in all interviews. Each candidate was asked to describe his or her professional expertise as well as their experience in relation to giving science advice in a political sensitive environment. They were also asked about potential conflicts of interest.

In addition, each candidate had to confirm *expressis verbis* whether they could invest up to 40 working days per year in activities related to the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors (60 working days when elected as Chair or Vice-Chair).

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

After having conducted the interviews, the Committee reached consensus on a short list, as well as on the smaller list of candidates to fill the immediate vacancy in the Group. Both lists were submitted to the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/index.cfm?pg=home>

#### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In line with the Statement of Methodology, the Identification Committee recommended candidates with different and complementary expertise to ensure a good coverage of scientific disciplines relevant for EU policy making. It paid attention to achieving an appropriate gender balance as well as a high degree of diversity in terms of age and scientific disciplines.

**ANNEX 1 – Members of the SAM Identification Committee***Sir David King*

Sir David King was appointed as the UK Foreign Secretary's Special Representative for Climate Change in September 2013. He was previously the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor from 2000 – 2007, during which time he raised awareness of the need for governments to act on climate change and was instrumental in creating the Energy Technologies Institute. He also served as the Founding Director of the Smith School of Enterprise and Environment at Oxford; was Head of the Department of Chemistry at Cambridge University 1993-2000 and Master of Downing College at Cambridge 1995 -2000. Sir David has published over 500 papers on science and policy, for which he has received numerous awards, and holds 22 Honorary Degrees from universities around the world. Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1991, a Foreign Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2002 and knighted in 2003, Sir David was also made an 'Officier of the French Legion d'Honneur' in 2009, for work which has contributed to responding to the climate and energy challenge.

*Professor Rianne Letschert*

Professor Letschert is rector of the University of Maastricht since 1 September 2016. Previously she was professor of victimology and international law at the International Victimology Institute Tilburg (INTERVICT), where she was also director. Her work combines legal analysis with social sciences methodology. She currently works on a large scale project assessing the impact of international judicial interventions on the wellbeing of victims of international crimes and society at large. She is a member of the Board of Governance of the Dutch Victim Support Organization, and expert consultant for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon on victim issues. In 2013, she was appointed to the Royal Young Academy of Sciences of which she became the chair in April 2015. She is member of the Advisory Committee Lifelong Convicts which advises the Dutch Minister of Justice.

*Mr. António Vitorino*

President of the Jacques Delors Institute and a lawyer by profession since 1982, he has been an associate at the law firm Cuatrecasas, Gonçalves Pereira & Associados since 2005. Former Professor of Constitutional Law and European Law in the University of Lisbon.

Elected to parliament in 1980, he was Minister for Parliamentary Affairs in the government of Mario Soares (1983-85), then Deputy Secretary in the government of Macau (1986-87). He was a judge on Portugal's constitutional court (1989-94) before being elected MEP in 1994.

In 1995 he became Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of Portugal. In 1999 António Vitorino was appointed European Commissioner for Justice and Internal Affairs, a post he occupied until 2004. As a representative of the European Commission he took part in both the convention which drew up the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Convention on the Future of Europe.

## **ANNEX 2 – Identification Committee – Statement of methodology**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The members of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors of the Scientific Advice Mechanism ('SAM') are appointed by the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation based on a search process carried out by an independent Identification Committee. The Identification Committee carries out its work independently and transparently.

The current identification process concerns the establishment of a short list of candidates to replace members of the Group as well as the proposal of suitable candidates from that list to fill a current vacancy in the Group membership. The identification was preceded by a consultation of the research and science community of Europe.

The methodology set out in this statement which is to be applied for the current identification process is similar to the one that was used for the consultation and identification in 2015. It draws on the approach followed by the Identification Committee of the Scientific Council of the European Research Council ('ERC').

The Identification process takes place against the backdrop of the ongoing amendment of the Commission Decision C(2015)6946 of 16 October 2015 which established the High Level Group of Scientific Advisors. The amendment renamed that Group to the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, which is the designation used for this Statement.

### **2. CONSULTATION OF THE RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY OF EUROPE**

The mandate given to the Committee by the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation is to create a pool of suitable candidates for membership of the SAM Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. The candidates should be selected from among the nominees put forward by research and science organisations in Europe in response to an open call for nominations. The call was launched by the European Commission on 27 November 2017 and was open until 22 January 2018.

The current process is the first update of the pool since it was created in 2015. The initial pool was depleted because of the replacement of members who retired from the group.

Contrary to the 2015 process where the Committee itself actively reached out to the main organisations representing the various segments of the research and scientific policy community at European level, the current consultation was initiated and managed by the European Commission.

The Director-General of DG RTD sent a letter to the presidents of fourteen European science and research organisations on 27 November 2017. He invited them to put forward high level nominations to be assessed by the Identification Committee on the basis of the criteria set out in Article 3, paragraph 7 of the Commission Decision.

Moreover, the call for nominations was published on the SAM website<sup>5</sup> to allow other interested representative organisations of the research and scientific policy community to suggest apposite candidates.

Self-nominations were not allowed. All candidates, regardless of the source of nomination were assessed by the Committee following the process described in Section 4 (see below).

### **3. FACTORS AND CRITERIA TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT**

The factors and criteria for identification of the members are those that are set out in Article 3, paragraph 7 of Commission Decision C(2015)6946. Anticipating the amendment of that decision (see above section 1 *in fine*), special attention should be given to science communication skills.

The composition of the Group should allow demonstrating that the scientific advice that it is requested to provide at the request of the College of Commissioners is authoritative and undeniably independent. The Group should combine wisdom and experience with vision and imagination. The credibility of the Group is built on the balance of qualities amongst the men and women who make it up, and they should collectively reflect the breadth of the research community across Europe. Members of the Group must individually have an undisputed reputation as research leaders and for their independence and commitment to research. Generally, they must be current or recent research practitioners, and have exercised scientific and policy leadership at European or global level. Consideration should also be given to younger next-generation leaders.

Members must reflect the broad disciplinary scope of research, embracing the natural sciences, medicine and engineering, as well as the social sciences, economics, and the humanities. However, they should not identify themselves as representatives of a discipline or of a particular line of research and should not perceive themselves as such; they should have a broad vision which collectively reflects an understanding of important developments in research, including inter- and multi-disciplinary research, and the needs for scientific advice for policy at European level.

Beyond their proven reputation as scientists and researchers, the membership should collectively bring experience in providing scientific advice to policy makers, acquired across a broad range of EU Member States, and at European and international levels. This should include skills in the public communication of science, as well as experience in areas such as data analytics and visualisation, involvement in legislative processes, studies of scientific advisory systems, and the wider political context in which the Group is situated.

The membership should reflect the range of scientific institutions which provide policy relevant advice; it should include those with experience in advisory councils and committees, government scientific advisors, academies of science and learned societies, universities and research institutes, for example. Members who have gained experience in more than one country could be valuable to the Group, and some members may be drawn from outside Europe. A balance between men and women shall be sought.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/index.cfm?pg=home>

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

To draw up the list of candidates, the organisations consulted and other organisations that wished to nominate experts, were asked to suggest names of persons who in their opinion:

- Have the highest eminence as scientific leaders and the qualifications and experience reflecting the criteria set out above;
- Are available and willing to work as a member of the SAM HLG independently of any other interest, and
- Are deemed to have the trust and confidence of the scientific community and of policy makers.

The Committee is instructed to treat the names and personal details of candidates as confidential. It should only consider nominations that are accompanied by a statement signed by the nominating organisation regarding the qualifications and broader profile of each candidate, to allow it to make an informed judgement of the qualifications of the candidate.

The information to be provided by the statement should include:

- A synopsis of the candidate's background and curriculum vitae;
- Relevant professional experience (e.g. universities, scientific institutions, business, government, etc., indicating also any experience with regard to administrative or scientific advice to policy);
- Major publications and other significant works and prizes;
- Broader aspects of the candidate as appropriate (e.g. country of residence, experience abroad, nationalities).

The aforementioned letter that was sent to the presidents of the main European research and science organisations as well as the call for nominations that was published on the SAM website (see section 2) contained in annex a template for a Statement on Qualifications to prompt respondents to provide the aforementioned information about their nominees.

The Committee is requested to pay particular attention to the stated availability of nominees to participate in the activities of the Group. The Group usually meets six times per year for one to two days in Brussels. Sometimes meetings take place in other European cities. The working language is English. The maximum number of days that members are expected to devote to the activities of the Group is up to 40 working days which includes meetings and remote work. The chair and deputy chair are expected to dedicate up to 60 working days to their activities per year.

The call for nominations mentioned that while the nomination of candidates does not guarantee selection, the nominating organisations were expected to establish the willingness and availability of their candidates before they forwarded their name.

#### **5. MAIN REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED**

The organisations that were consulted are listed in Annex 3 (see below).



These organisations were invited to submit nominations. At the same time they were asked to invite their respective national affiliates to submit their nominations directly in order to speed up and simplify the process.

As stated above, other interested representative organisations of the scientific community were encouraged to put forward high level nominations during the period that the call for nomination was open. The consultation was announced on the SAM website.

## **6. TIMETABLE OF THE WORK OF THE IDENTIFICATION COMMITTEE**

The schedule of the identification process was as follows:

- 27 November 2017 – consultation letters sent to representative organisations and publication of the call for nominations on the SAM Website<sup>6</sup>;
- 22 January 2018– Deadline for the reception of nominations;
- End of January/mid-February 2018 – examination of the profiles of candidates by the members of the Identification Committee, and listing of candidates to be interviewed;
- 27 – 28 February 2018 – meeting of the Identification Committee, interviews of candidates by videoconference, and formulation of a confidential proposal;
- March 2018 adoption of the activity report of the Identification Committee.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/sam>

**ANNEX 3 - List of consulted organisations that provided nominations for members of the Scientific Advice Mechanism Group of Chief Scientific Advisors**

The following organisations were consulted (in alphabetical order):

- EASAC (European Academies' Science Advisory Council)
- EUROCASE (The European Council of Applied Sciences and Engineering)
- ALLEA (All European Academies)
- FEAM (Federation of the European Academies of Medicines)
- Academia Europaea (organisation representing individual scientists and scholars)
- Young academy of Europe
- Business Europe
- EARTO (European Association of Research and Technology Organisations)
- EASC (European Academy of Sciences)
- EIRMA (European Industrial Research Management Association).
- ESF (European Science Foundation)
- EUA (European University Association)
- SCIENCE EUROPE (Association of European Research Funding Organisations and Research Performing Organisations)
- LERU (League of European Research Universities)

On top of the nominations provided by the above-mentioned organisations, about a dozen other organisations sent in their nominations. These include affiliated organisations to the main organisations consulted, such as national academies and universities, but also other organisations that responded to the publication of call for nominations on the SAM website.