European Commission

Minutes of the twenty-fourth plenary meeting of the European Commission's Group of Chief Scientific Advisors

10 June 2020 (by videoconference)

Research and Innovation

Brussels, 17 July 2020

Minutes

24th ordinary plenary meeting of the European Commission's Group of Chief Scientific Advisors
10 June 2020 (by videoconference)

1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of previous meeting

The agenda of the 24th plenary meeting was adopted. The minutes of the previous meeting (11-12 May 2020, Webex) had been adopted by written procedure and published on the Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) website (https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/).

2. Nature of the meeting

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus crisis, the meeting was held via videoconference and was not open to the public.

3. List of items discussed

Ongoing and possible future scientific advice

- The Advisors adopted the opinion on *'Adaptation to health effects of climate change in Europe'* (CCH) and aim to publish it on 29 June 2020.

- Elvira Fortunato informed the meeting about progress on the topic *'A systemic approach to the energy transition in Europe'* (Energy), SAPEA's call for experts and its virtual working group kick-off meeting foreseen for the end of June. The Advisors intend to publish their scientific opinion in the first quarter of 2021 in order to inform upcoming key policies and measures needed to achieve the European Green Deal.

- Nicole Grobert informed the meeting about progress regarding the topic *'Biodegradability of plastics in the open environment'* (BDP) and SAPEA's forthcoming working group meeting on 22 June at which the first full draft of the Evidence Review Report will be presented.

Exchange on ongoing work related to COVID-19 with Peter Piot (special advisor on COVID-19 to Ursula von der Leyen), Christiane Woopen (Chair of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE)

- Participants discussed their forthcoming draft statement on scientific advice to European policy makers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The statement will be jointly authored by the Advisors (including former member Professor Janusz Bujnicki who will assist the Advisors on Corona issues as an invited expert), the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE) and Professor Peter Piot, special advisor on the response to COVID-19 to President Ursula von der Leyen. It is the first part of a planned

three phase scientific advice related to COVID-19, whereby the second and third phases will address better management of and preparedness for pandemics (to be delivered in the autumn of 2020) and resilience to crises in general (to be delivered in the longer term), respectively. The statement will be publicly announced during June 24th European Science Advisors Forum (ESAF) virtual meeting and published simultaneously on both the Advisors' and the EGE's websites.

Exchange with Reinhard Hüttl (Chair of SAPEA Board)

- Reinhard Hüttl informed the meeting about the academies' COVID-19 related work and reassured full support from SAPEA to the upcoming work of the Advisors. In addition, he informed about the progress with the topics *'Biodegradability of plastics in the open environment'* and *'A systemic approach to the energy transition in Europe'*. He offered support for outreach activities for the upcoming Scientific Opinion *'Adaptation to health effects of climate change in Europe'*.

Updates from the Secretariat

- The Secretariat briefed the Advisors on the call for nominations that will be open until 15 June following which the Identification Committee will identify nominees who best meet the selection criteria set out in the call.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

- Publication of statement on scientific advice to European policy makers during the COVID-19 pandemic on 24 June.
- Publication of the scientific opinion *'Adaptation to health effects of climate change in Europe'* on 29 June.

5. Next steps

- As above

6. Next meeting

The next plenary meeting of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors will take place by videoconference (tbc) on 24-25 September 2020.

List of Participants

Group of Chief Scientific Advisors
Rolf-Dieter Heuer, Chair;
Pearl Dykstra, Deputy Chair;
Elvira Fortunato, Member;
Nicole Grobert, Member;
Carina Keskitalo, Member;
Paul Nurse, Member;
Éva Kondorosi, Member.

Other participants
Peter Piot, Special advisor to EC President von der Leyen and member of the panel of scientific advisors on COVID-19;
Christiane Woopen, Chair of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE);
Janusz Bujnicki, member of the Group on prevention, counteracting and combating COVID-19 in the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education (for agenda point 4).

SAPEA (Science Advice to Policy by European Academies)
Reinhard Hüttl (President of Euro-CASE, Chair of SAPEA board);
Rudolf Hielscher, SAPEA Coordinator.

European Commission
Renzo Tomellini, DG RTD, Head of Unit 03 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE;
Jeremy Bray, DG RTD, Deputy Head of Unit 03 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE;
Sigrid Weiland, Assistant to Special Advisor to the EC President on COVID-19, Peter Piot;
Annabelle Ascher, DG RTD, Unit 03 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE, Secretary of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors;
Jim Dratwa, DG RTD, Unit 03 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE, Secretary of the EGE;
Additional members of the unit depending on topic discussion.