



Scientific Advice Mechanism

Minutes of the eleventh meeting of the High Level Group of Scientific Advisors

(Brussels, 27 February 2018)

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Minutes

Meeting of the European Commission's High Level Group (HLG) of Scientific Advisors
31 January and 01 February 2018, Brussels

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

The agenda was adopted. The minutes of the previous meeting (29 and 30 November 2017, Brussels) had been adopted beforehand by written procedure and are available on the Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) website (<https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/>).

The SAM HLG re-elected Rolf-Dieter Heuer and Pearl Dykstra as HLG Chair and Deputy Chair, respectively, for a further year.

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was not held in public. The meeting took place in Brussels at the offices of the European Commission.

3. List of points discussed

- Progress on scientific opinion on '*Authorisation Processes of Plant Protection Products in Europe*'. The SAM HLG reported on progress in the development of this scientific opinion to Commissioner Moedas and Commissioner Andriukaitis, following December's environment and risk perception focused workshops, and October's SAPEA organised expert workshop. The SAM HLG will organise a 'sounding board' meeting in February to fact-check elements of the draft opinion, along with a stakeholder meeting, also in February, to check the feasibility of elements of the draft opinion.
- Progress on scientific opinion on '*Novel Carbon Capture and Utilisation Technology: Research and Climate Aspects*'. Following an expert group meeting, organised by SAPEA, in January 2018, the High Level Group will organise a stakeholder meeting in February 2018 to check the feasibility of elements of the draft opinion.
- The SAM HLG took stock of the second full year of operation of the Scientific Advice Mechanism, noting in particular:
 - The publication of three scientific advice documents in 2017 (on '*Cybersecurity, Food from the Oceans; and New Techniques in Agricultural Biotechnology*')
 - The citation of two SAM HLG Scientific Opinions in European Commission legislative proposals and policy documents (November 2017's legislative proposal setting new, post 2020, CO₂ emissions standards for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles references the SAM HLG Scientific Opinion '*Closing the Gap between Light-Duty Real-World CO₂ Emissions and Laboratory Testing*', and September 2017's joint EC and High Representative Communication on '*Resilience, Deterrence and Defence: Building Strong Cybersecurity for the EU*' references the SAM HLG Scientific Opinion '*Cybersecurity*') and September 2017's EC conference '*Modern biotechnologies in agriculture – paving the way for responsible innovation*' which put the '*New*

Techniques in Agricultural Biotechnology' Explanatory Note at the centre of a broad and ongoing stakeholder debate.

- Significant progress on Scientific Opinions related to '*Authorisation Processes of Plant Protection Products in Europe* and *Novel Carbon Capture and Utilisation Technologies: Research and Climate Aspects*'.
 - Their intention to develop scientific opinions during 2018 on topics initiated by the SAM HLG itself ('own-initiative' topics).
 - The effective and productive working relationship developed with the SAPEA consortium.
 - The constructive working and communication relations with several services of the European Commission, in particular with DG JRC, DG SANTE, DG MARE and others as well as with other European and international science advice structures.
- The SAM HLG agreed on the scoping paper for the own-initiative topic '*Making Sense of Science under Conditions of Complexity and Uncertainty*' (Previously: '*Robustness of Evidence for Policy Making*'). Commissioner Moedas welcomed this document and announced to inform the Commission's College about it. Work continues on the development of the scoping paper for a candidate own-initiative topic, related to healthy ageing in close co-operation with SAPEA. Following observations related to micro-plastics in the Scientific Opinion '*Food from the Oceans*', the SAM HLG instructed the secretariat to examine the issue further in relation to its amenability to the provision of scientific advice. Other possible candidate own-initiative topics on which the secretariat is instructed to inform the SAM HLG further include air quality and sustainable food production.
 - The SAM HLG reviewed a document authored by the SAM secretariat which outlines the processes by which scientific advice is produced by the Group. The secretariat is instructed to publish the document on the Group's website once revised.
 - Members of the SAM HLG look forward to their participation in July 2018's European Science Open Forum (ESOF), including a joint session with the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies, and will hold their 13th plenary meeting in conjunction with this event.
 - The SAM HLG discussed several events for the further dissemination of its most recent Scientific Opinion '*Food from the Oceans*'.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

The meeting participants will continue to work on the '*Carbon Capture and Utilisation Technologies: research and Climate aspects*' and '*Authorisation Processes of Plant Protection Products in Europe*' Scientific Opinions; as well as on the further development of the scoping papers for an 'own initiative' topic on healthy ageing. The College of the European Commission will be informed about the scoping paper for the own-initiative topic '*Making Sense of Science under Conditions of Complexity and Uncertainty*' (Previously: '*Robustness of Evidence for Policy Making*') with a view to officially requesting the SAM HLG to work on this topic. The SAM secretariat will revise the document on the Group's working procedures prior to publication on the Group's website, and will provide further input to the group supporting their discussions on other candidate own-initiative topics.

5. Next steps

As above.

6. Next meeting

The next plenary meeting of the SAM HLG will take place 27 April, 2018

7. List of participants

Present:

Rolf-Dieter Heuer, Chair SAM HLG
Pearl Dykstra, Deputy Chair SAM HLG
Carina Keskitalo, Member SAM HLG
Janusz Bujnicki, Member SAM HLG
Elvira Fortunato, Member SAM HLG
Paul Nurse, Member SAM HLG

Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation
Keith Sequeira, Senior Adviser, Cabinet of European Commissioner Carlos Moedas

Vytenis Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety
Nathalie Chaze, Cabinet Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Marika Lautso-Mousnier, Cabinet Katainen, Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness

Bernard Charpentier, President, Federation of European Academies of Medicine (FEAM)
Rudolf Hielscher, Coordinator of the project 'Science Advice for Policy by European Academies' (SAPEA)

Wolfgang Burtscher, Deputy Director General, European Commission, Directorate General for Research and Innovation
Johannes Klumpers, Head of Unit, SAM unit, European Commission, Directorate General for Research and Innovation
Other staff from the SAM Unit