



**Minutes of the nineteenth plenary meeting of the
European Commission's Group of
Chief Scientific Advisors**

Brussels, 24-25 September 2019

Brussels, 06 November 2019

Minutes

19th ordinary plenary meeting of the European Commission's Group of
Chief Scientific Advisors
24-25 September 2019, Brussels

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

The agenda was adopted. The minutes of the previous meeting (14 and 15 May 2019, Brussels) 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

The meeting was not held in public. The meeting took place at the Commission's premises in Brussels.

3. List of items discussed

Exchange with the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos Moedas

The Advisors delivered their Scientific Opinion on the topic '[Science Advice to European Policy in a Complex World](#)' to Commissioner Moedas on 24 September. The opinion was published on the SAM website on 25 September and will be presented to the public on 26 September during the European Commission's 'Research and Innovation Days' conference.

The Advisors discussed their draft report detailing their previous 4 years' work, describing their key achievements to the Commissioner, and confirmed their intention to publish this before year-end.

In view of the upcoming replacement of Chief Scientific Advisors Elvira Fortunato and Janusz Bujnicki by 16 May 2020, and following the invitation by Commissioner Moedas, the Advisors discussed guidelines on the preferred profiles for candidates. In addition to maintaining a good gender, geographical and disciplinary balance, the Advisors also stressed the importance of good communication and outreach about the functioning and output of their group.

Ongoing topics and updates on recently completed topics

- The Advisors welcomed the Science Advice for Policy by European Academies (SAPEA) Evidence Review Report (ERR) '[Transforming the Future of Ageing](#)', to be officially handed over to Pearl Dykstra on 1 October 2019. The Advisors discussed the preparation of 'sounding board' and 'stakeholder' meetings on 12 and 28 November 2019, respectively. The Advisors confirmed their intention to adopt their Scientific Opinion by December 2019.

- Carina Keskitalo reported on the topic '*Towards an EU Sustainable Food System*' and on recent discussions with the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development as well as on other feedback from Commissioners Hogan and Andriukaitis. The scoping paper was revised for clarity and agreed by the Advisors for publication.

Candidate topics

- The Advisors welcomed a representative of the Directorate-General for Environment to the meeting with whom they discussed a request for scientific advice in relation to the question of the '*Biodegradability of Plastics in the Open Environment*'. The Advisors invited Commission services to develop a scoping paper for discussion at their next meeting.
- Elvira Fortunato reported on the outcome of the workshop on 'Adaptation to impacts of climate change on health' in the frame of the topic '*Climate Change and Health (CCH)*', which took place on the morning preceding the plenary meeting. The purpose of the workshop was to review the scientific state-of-the art concerning adaptation measures that can best alleviate the identified impact of climate change on health. A report on this meeting as well as on the 7 June workshop 'Climate change and health: A discussion on the latest international and European reports and the implications for Europe' will be published on the SAM website shortly. The scoping paper was modified for clarity and the Advisors instructed the Secretariat to publish the scoping paper on the SAM website.
- Rolf Heuer reported on the scoping workshop 'Towards a humanity-centred Data Governance approach in Europe', organised on 6 June by SAPEA as a first step towards a possible topic on '*Data Governance*'. The Advisors will welcome further discussion at a subsequent meeting.
- Regarding the topic '*Energy*', SAPEA informed the meeting that a scoping workshop 'A systemic approach to energy in Europe' is planned for November in Brussels. Elvira Fortunato and Carina Keskitalo will attend. The Advisors will welcome further discussion at a subsequent meeting.

Follow-up of published Scientific Advice:

- The Advisors will attend a 'Science in Society Salon' organised by 'Re-Imagine Europa' (RIE) and hosted by MEP Maria da Graça Carvalho on 8 October 2019. The aim of the salon will be the promotion of science advice to European policy and the continued discussion of gene editing in agriculture (see also minutes of the previous plenary meeting of 14-15 May 2019 where the previous event is reported). Rolf Heuer, Janusz Bujnicki, Pere Puigdomenech, ex-member of the EGE, and Commissioner for Research and Innovation, Carlos Moedas will participate in the event. Related to this topic, a session on gene editing will take place on 26 September as part of the R&I days with the participation of Janusz Bujnicki, Christiane Woopen, Chair of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies, and Robin Lovell-

Badge, Group Leader and Head of the Division of Stem Cell Biology and Developmental Genetics at the Francis Crick Institute.

- The Secretariat will continue to monitor international follow-up of the Scientific Opinion '*Microplastic Pollution*'. Nicole Grobert will participate in a roundtable during the G7 scientific workshop under the French Presidency, entitled '*Microplastics in the environment: biomonitoring issues and socio-ecological challenges for public decision*' to be held on 15 October in Paris. It follows the G7 Scientific Advice Cooperation on Microplastics Pollution Roundtable held in Washington (February 2019) and will allow for G7 and EU Scientific Advisors to deepen linkages among G7 members and share information to better advise public policy measures and actions to address microplastics pollution.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

- The Scientific Advisors will finalise the report on their activities over the past 4 years.
- Concerning the topic '*Transforming the Future of Ageing*', the Secretariat will organise a sounding board meeting and a stakeholder meeting on 12 and 28 November, respectively.
- Regarding the candidate topic related to '*Biodegradability of Plastics*', the Directorate-General for Environment is invited to further develop the scoping paper for subsequent review by the Advisors. If at a later stage a scoping paper will be adopted by the Advisors, the Secretariat should look into the preparation of a scoping workshop.
- The Advisors invite SAPEA to develop a scoping paper on the topic related to '*Data Governance*' to be discussed towards the end of 2019.
- The Advisors invite SAPEA to develop a scoping paper on the topic '*Energy*' and plan a scoping workshop '*A systemic approach to energy in Europe*' in November in Brussels.

5. Next steps

As above

6. Next meeting

The next plenary meeting of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors will take place in Brussels on 11 December 2019¹. It will be organised back-to-back with an extraordinary plenary meeting of the Chief Scientific Advisors on 10 December. The purpose of the extraordinary plenary meeting will be to reflect on the priorities of the new Commission and to discuss how best they can support these, in the light of their report on their achievements to date.

¹ The meeting place was changed from Warsaw to Brussels after the 19th plenary meeting

List of Participants

Group of Chief Scientific Advisors

Rolf-Dieter Heuer, Chair;
Pearl Dykstra, Deputy Chair;
Janusz Bujnicki, Member;
Elvira Fortunato, Member;
Nicole Grobert, Member;
Carina Keskitalo, Member;
Paul Nurse, Member.

Additional Participants

Henrik Wegener, Rector of University of Copenhagen, previous Chair of Group of Chief Scientific Advisors
Maria Da Graça Carvalho, Member of European Parliament;

SAPEA (Science Advice to Policy by European Academies) - (agenda items 3, 4&5 TBD)

Sierd Cloetingh (President Academia Europaea), Chair of SAPEA board;
Rudolf Hielscher, SAPEA Coordinator

European Commission

European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation Carlos Moedas;
Keith Sequeira, Cabinet Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation;
Jean-Eric Paquet, Director-General RTD;
Wolfgang Burtscher, Deputy Director-General RTD;
Silvia Forni, DG ENV, Unit D.1
Johannes Klumpers, DG RTD, Head of Unit 0.3 Chief Scientific Advisers – SAM, EGE
Jeremy Bray, DG RTD, Deputy Head of Unit 0.3 Chief Scientific Advisers – SAM, EGE
Sigrid Weiland, DG RTD, Unit 0.3 Chief Scientific Advisers – SAM, EGE, Manager of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors;
Several members of Unit 0.3 Chief Scientific Advisers – SAM, EGE, depending on the respective agenda item