



Group of Chief Scientific Advisors

Towards a sustainable food system
Policy Experts Discussion Meeting Report

Scientific Advice Mechanism

12 December 2019, Brussels

Towards a sustainable food system

Policy Experts Discussion hosted by the Group of Scientific Advisors of the European Commission's Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM)

12 December 2019, Rue de la Loi 130 b, Brussels

MEETING REPORT¹

Following earlier discussions with some of the relevant Commissioners and their services during the scoping phase of the work, the European Commission's Group of Chief Scientific Advisors wished to have a broader meeting with policy experts relevant to a sustainable food system.

At the request of the Chief Scientific Advisors, the SAM Secretariat therefore invited colleagues from European Commission Directorates-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI); Climate Action (CLIMA); International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO); Environment (ENV); European statistics (EUROSTAT); Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW); Joint Research Centre (JRC); Justice and Consumers (JUST); Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MARE); Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO); Health and Food Safety (SANTE); Trade (TRADE), as well as the Secretariat-General (SG); the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC); the European Committee of the Regions (CoR); the European Environment Agency (EEA); the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

At the start of the meeting, Chief Scientific Advisor Professor Carina Keskitalo welcomed the policy experts and briefly introduced the background and purpose of the intended scientific advice. She mentioned in particular that from earlier advice work provided to the College of Commissioner by the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors – specifically on “Food from the Oceans”, “New Techniques in Agricultural Biotechnology” and “Authorisation Processes of Plant Protection Products” – it had become apparent that it was essential to take a systems view to food production and consumption in the EU. Former Commissioner Vella (of Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) had expressed he was eager for an elaboration of that aspect following the Scientific Opinion on “Food from the Oceans”. Moreover, former Commissioners Andriukaitis (Health and Food Safety) and Hogan (Agriculture and Rural Development) had expressed a similar interest and welcomed the development of scientific advice on sustainable food systems.

Carina Keskitalo expressed she was happy to see that – while the development of the scientific advice was ongoing – the new College of Commissioners recently showed strong ambitions in sustainable food systems with the Communication on the European Green Deal. She reiterated that the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors stand ready to contribute with their advice to the development of the associated ‘Farm to Fork Strategy’, on which several participants of the meeting will be working. The preliminary scientific evidence presented at

¹ See meeting agenda and list of participants at the end this document

the meeting was expected to already inform the development of this Farm to Fork Strategy at an early phase.

Carina Keskitalo then listed the additional purposes of the meeting, specifically to:

- Exchange updates about ongoing and planned work related to the scientific advice under development as well as on relevant policy initiatives (including the forthcoming Farm to Fork strategy);
- Share thoughts about issues on which the European Commission and/or specific Directorates-General could use scientific advice;
- Hear views on the coverage, level of detail and policy relevance of the scientific evidence so far gathered and synthesised, which will underpin the scientific advice of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors;
- Exchange any other relevant information in a roundtable discussion.

Next, Dr. Johannes Klumpers, Head of Unit of the SAM Secretariat gave an overview of the Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM). He mentioned that SAM consists of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors and their supporting team, the SAM Secretariat/Unit, and the SAPEA Consortium. SAPEA (Science Advice for Policy by European Academies) provides the main input of scientific evidence for the scientific advice, bringing together knowledge and expertise from over 100 academies and learned societies in over 40 countries across Europe. SAPEA comprises Academia Europaea (AE), All European Academies (ALLEA), the European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC), the European Council of Academies of Applied Sciences, Technologies and Engineering (Euro-CASE) and the Federation of European Academies of Medicine (FEAM).

Dr. Gerjon Ikinck, project leader of this scientific advice project in the SAM Secretariat, then briefly elaborated on the already completed work, mentioning in particular the scoping review report, an exploration and summary of the existing scientific advice in the area, and the Scoping Paper setting out the request to the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. After mentioning the next steps and planning, he presenting the preliminary findings from the scientific evidence gathered and synthesised so far.

A constructive discussion followed, in which policy experts welcomed the preliminary work, mentioning it was very timely and relevant, and expressed appreciation for the comprehensive and systemic approach as well as the social sciences focus. The participants shared their scientific advice needs, highlighting several aspects that were of high interest and areas in which they would appreciate in-depth analysis of scientific evidence, if available. They also mentioned several published and forthcoming reports, academic and 'grey' literature, worth considering by the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors in the further development of the scientific advice.

Finally, Professor Rolf Heuer, chair of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, closed the meeting with a quick wrap-up of the meeting, mentioning that the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors will do their best to address the questions raised by the policy experts. He thanked all participants for their active engagement and useful contributions.

AGENDA

Final Agenda

Policy Experts Discussion

Scientific evidence and advice Towards a sustainable food system

Thursday 12 December 2019 – 13:30-17:00

Rue de la Loi 130 b

Co-chairs: **Carina Keskitalo**, Member of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors and topic leader

Rolf Heuer, Chair of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors

13:30 - 14:00 Welcome and introduction

Carina Keskitalo

Johannes Klumpers, Head of Unit – EC Secretariat of Chief Scientific Advisors - SAM, EGE

Gerjon Ikink, Project leader – EC Secretariat of Chief Scientific Advisors - SAM, EGE

14:00 – 15:30 Roundtable I (All)

- *Scientific advice needs in this area, now and in the near future*
- *Views on the coverage, level of detail and policy relevance of the work so far*

15:30 – 15:50 Questions and quick wrap-up of Roundtable I (*Carina Keskitalo*)

15:50 – 16:50 Roundtable II (All)

- *Listen to policy experts about anything the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors should be aware of about finished, ongoing or planned scientific advice reports, or policy initiatives*

16:50 – 17:00 Next steps and wrap-up (*Rolf Heuer*)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OTHER ATTENDEES

Policy experts			
Alvizou	Anastasia	EC DG SANTE	
Balogh	Attila	EC DG SANTE	
Barreira Ramos	Dora	EC DG MARE	
Boot	Iman	EC DG AGRI	
Bronzwaer	Stef	EFSA	by VC*
Brzezina	Natalia	EC DG AGRI	
Buchholzer	Florence	EC DG AGRI	
Burrill	Anne	EC DG ENV	
Chassagne	Olivier	EC DG GROW	
Christensen	Arne	EC DG EMPL	
El Khadraoui	Said	EPSC	
Fabbri	Karen	EC DG RTD	
Gozzi	Caterina	EC DG SANTE	
Ivan	Jozsef	EC DG AGRI	
Kass	Georges	EFSA	by VC*
Leip	Adrian	EC DG JRC	
Mangan	Ciaran	EC DG RTD	
Moens	Heidi	EC DG SANTE	
Olthof	Willem	EC DG DEVCO	
Pelsser	Sabine	EC DG SANTE	
Prado	Manon	EC DG GROW	
Schoumacher	Cindy	EC DG RTD	
Swierczyna	Jaroslaw	EC DG GROW	
Wollgast	Jan	EC DG JRC	by VC*
Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM)			
Heuer	Rolf-Dieter	Group of Chief Scientific Advisors	
Keskitalo	Carina	Group of Chief Scientific Advisors	
Bujnicki	Janusz	Group of Chief Scientific Advisors	by VC*
Klumpers	Johannes	SAM Unit	
Ikink	Gerjon	SAM Unit	
Ascher	Annabelle	SAM Unit	
Zegers	Ingrid	SAM Unit	
Kwiecinski	Piotr	SAM Unit	
Weiland	Sigrid	SAM Unit	

*Participated via videoconference