



Scientific Advice Mechanism

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

Manchester (UK), 25 July 2016

0. Adoption of agenda/ SAM@ESOF

The Agenda of the meeting was adopted. The participation of SAM at the ESOF conference was discussed including the keynote session on Scientific Advice to EU policies and the meeting of the EU Member States scientific advice representatives.

1. Real-world CO₂ emission testing for Light Duty Vehicles

Henrik Wegener and Julia Slingo presented the status of the work to the other members of the HLG. Activities are progressing according to schedule in view of the finalisation of the HLG opinion by end of October 2016. Next step is the organisation of a meeting with key stakeholders on 15th September.

In their discussion of their working procedures, the High Level Group (HLG) reached consensus on the fact that, taking into account the nature of HLG opinions, a peer review process is not suitable. They also agreed that the accuracy and correctness of the factual information that may be included in the text needs to be fully ensured.

2. Cybersecurity

The rapporteur for the cybersecurity topic Rolf-Dieter Heuer presented a review of the progress made and the next steps. The preparation of the workshop on *Secure Digital identities for the Digital Single Market in Europe* that will take place in Vilnius 25-26 October is well advanced. Up to 100 invited participants will take part, including top scientists from the different fields that provide insights to the topic (from computer security and cryptography to law and social sciences) and experts from the public and private sectors.

3. New topics

The SAM HLG discussed new demands received:

- Advice to support the forthcoming evaluation of pesticides legislation
- Explanatory note on new breeding techniques (NBT)

Issues considered included the political priorities of the EC, other scientific advice existing in the area, relevance for scientific advice, workload of the HLG. Discussion continued under agenda point 6 with both Commissioner Moedas and the Deputy Director General of DG SANTE.

The HLG also discussed possible own initiative topics. The HLG will continue their deliberations in view of selecting a new bottom up topic at the next HLG meeting in September 2016.

4. Update on collaboration between SAM and EU Academies

The proposal "Science Advice for Policy by European Academies" (SAPEA) has been evaluated according to the Horizon 2020 rules. The outcome of the evaluation has been communicated to the consortium alongside an invitation for grant preparation.

Working Lunch

Discussion with Sir Mark Walport and Sir Peter Gluckman including scientific advice in polarised situations.

The discussion during lunch was organised around 3 topics: i) General comments on the nature of science advice; ii) Important topics to be considered by science advice structures; iii) science advice and polarisation.

Sir Mark and Sir Peter have described the way science advice works and how the topics are chosen in UK and New Zealand respectively. Moreover they described the recent topics covered by their structures ("The future of the seas"; "the future of skills" and "waste" in the case of UK and "uncertainty" and "the effect of digitalisation in the society" in the case of New Zealand).

The importance of sound high quality evidence reviews was stressed as the basis of good science advice in any circumstances and even more in polarised situations. The brokerage role of science advisors and the need for timely supply of advice were discussed. The different nature of the topics to be dealt with by science advice (more focussed and technical or more holistic corresponding to important challenges of the society) was also discussed.

5. Update by HLG to Commissioner Moedas on first two topics

Members of the HLG informed Commissioner Moedas on the progress achieved in the two ongoing topics. There is a need to explain that the advice the HLG is working on is not about air quality where the legislative process has been already agreed by the Council and the Parliament. Instead it is about how to improve the measurement of official CO₂ emission values.

In the case of cybersecurity, the HLG explained that the workshop in Vilnius will be a big step in discussing the evidence and the complex issues that the opinion will address.

The Commissioner welcomed the progress being made on the first two topics.

6. Update by HLG and DG SANTE to Commissioner Moedas on potential new topics

Ladislav Miko, Deputy-Director General, DG SANTE, presented the two topics below:

- **Explanatory note on New Breeding techniques (NBT).** The explanatory note should explain in scientific terms new techniques used in animal and plant breeding as compared to current breeding techniques. This should also provide an outlook on further technological developments in this area. The first step needs to be the preparation of a scoping paper describing in more detail the aspects that shall be addressed.
- **Advice to support the forthcoming evaluation of pesticides legislation.** Scientific advice should examine the risk assessment procedures for active substances as well as for co-formulants underlying market authorisations of plant protection products. It might also look into the efficiency of the different processes for the approval of active substances at EU level and the authorisation of plant protection products at national level. In this case a more comprehensive scoping paper is needed identifying clearly the scientific questions to be addressed.

7. Conference on science advice to governments

The HLG took note of the current state of preparation of the Second International Conference on Government Science Advice which will take place in Brussels on 29 and 30 September 2016.

8. SAM HLG activities planning

The SAM secretariat will start the planning of the dates for the meetings in 2017. In principle there will be 4 general plenary meetings and two informal working meetings. Meetings will have a duration of 1,5 days. The SAM HLG intends to intensify its presence in Brussels to reinforce the coordination with the SAM secretariat and the EC services.

9. AOB

Dame Anne Glover, Former Chief Scientific Advisor of the European Commission, was invited by Commissioner Moedas to address the SAM HLG. She emphasized the broad expertise of the seven members of the HLG in different scientific domains and their role as ambassadors for scientific advice in Europe and beyond.

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

Present:

- Henrik-Caspar Wegener, Chair of the SAM HLG
- Cédric Villani, Member SAM HLG
- Julia Slingo, Member SAM HLG
- Rolf-Dieter Heuer, Member SAM HLG
- Pearl Dykstra, Member Sam HLG
- Janusz Bujnicki, Member SAM HLG
- Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation
- Keith Sequeira, Cabinet Commissioner Moedas
- Johannes Klumpers, Head of Unit, SAM unit
- José Jiménez Mingo, Secretary of the SAM HLG
- Other members of the SAM Unit

Excused:

- Elvira Fortunato, Deputy Chair of the SAM HLG

Invited participants:

Lunch debate on Scientific Advice including polarised situations:

- Sir Mark Walport, UK Chief Scientific advisor
- Sir Peter Gluckman, New Zealand Chief Scientific advisor

New topics proposed by Commissioner Andriukaitis

- Ladislav Miko, EC DG SANTE