



Scientific Advice Mechanism

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

(Brussels, 23 January 2018)

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Minutes

Meeting of the European Commission's High Level Group (HLG) of Scientific Advisors
29 and 30 November, 2017, Brussels

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

The agenda was adopted. The minutes of the previous meeting (5 September, 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/>).

Commissioner Moedas thanked Professor Günter Stock, as the outgoing Chair of the board of the consortium 'Science Advice for Policy by European Academies' (SAPEA), for the very good cooperation during the first year of the project and welcomed Professor Bernard Charpentier as the new Chair.

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

- Handover of Scientific Opinion '*Food from the Oceans*' (FFO opinion) to European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella:
The Scientific Opinion '*Food from the Oceans*' was handed over to European Commissioners Carlos Moedas and Karmenu Vella, responsible for Research, Science and Innovation; and for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries respectively. Carina Keskitalo, the lead HLG member for this opinion, gave an overview of its main recommendations. The SAPEA Evidence Review Report (ERR) on '*Food from the Oceans*', which informed this Scientific Opinion, was also presented. The Commissioners thanked the HLG and SAPEA, and Commissioner Vella explained how the Scientific Opinion will be used to inform maritime, fisheries and aquaculture policy development and implementation in the coming years and that it will be taken into account in launching the Blue Bioeconomy Forum and in modernising the EU partnership with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific countries in 2018.
- Ongoing and completed topics:
The HLG and the SAPEA representatives agreed that letters of acknowledgement will be sent by the chair of the HLG to the rectors of the universities of the experts who contributed to the establishment of ERRs which inform Scientific Opinions of the HLG. The first letter of acknowledgement to be sent by the chair of the HLG will concern the experts who contributed to the ERR for the FFO opinion.
HLG members and SAPEA representatives discussed progress with the topics *Carbon Capture and Utilisation Technologies*, and *Authorisation Processes of Plant Protection Products in Europe* and next steps.
Concerning the '*Authorisation Processes of Plant Protection Products in Europe*' topic: SAPEA's draft ERR was discussed at an expert workshop on 25 and 26 October and will be complemented by conclusions from two one-day workshops to be held on the 19 and 20 December. These concern environmental risk assessment as well as risk

perception and risk acceptance (the latter addressing elements of question (b) of the scoping paper).

Work on the topic '*Carbon Capture and Utilisation Technologies*' continues as planned. A preliminary draft of the ERR by SAPEA was announced for 7 December. The ERR will be reviewed at an expert workshop on 25 and 26 January 2018, to be followed by a stakeholder meeting on 20 February 2018. The intention remains to deliver the scientific opinion in April 2018.

The SAM secretariat reported on the impact of earlier scientific advice provided by SAM HLG: November 2016's Scientific Opinion '*Light-duty vehicle real-world CO₂ emissions*' informed recent legislative proposals for new, post 2020 CO₂ emission standards for cars and vans; the '*Cybersecurity in the European Digital Single Market*' Scientific Opinion fed into September's Cybersecurity communication; and the '*New Techniques in Agricultural Biotechnology*' Explanatory Note forms the centrepiece of a broad and ongoing stakeholder debate, which started with a stakeholder conference on Modern Biotechnologies in Agriculture on 28 September.

- Communication/ Public Engagement

SAPEA representatives and HLG members agreed to jointly participate in events of major importance for science advice in general and for the topics on which SAM is working in particular. The meeting participants discussed details of an official launch event for the Scientific Opinion '*Food from the Oceans*' on 2 February 2018 jointly organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries together with the Committee of the Regions in the presence of European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu Vella, as well as the further dissemination of the report.

- 'Own initiative' topics

In reply to the request of the SAM HLG Chair the SAM secretariat had prepared a draft scoping paper on the use of evidence for science advice to policy (previous working title '*Robustness of evidence for policy making*' for discussion. The SAM HLG Deputy Chair presented the paper together with her comments. SAM HLG members and SAPEA representatives discussed what should be the main focus of this topic, agreed that the SAM HLG and SAPEA should work together on this topic and asked the SAM secretariat to adjust the draft scoping paper accordingly for the next SAM HLG meeting.

The SAM HLG members and SAPEA representatives discussed a draft scoping paper '*Health in an ageing society*' which had been prepared by SAPEA. It was agreed that SAPEA will provide a new draft for the next SAM HLG meeting which will be more focussed on European health policy aspects. Commissioner Moedas noted the potential importance of both candidate topics.

- SAM – two years on

Following their discussion of the impact of their work, the SAM HLG members examined how this could be further increased in the future, noting the excellent ongoing co-operation with the JRC, as well as their intention to create closer links with the Regulatory Scrutiny Board, EGE, the Science and Technology Options Assessment bureau of the European Parliament, and the International Network for Government Science Advice (INGSA). The SAM HLG also discussed the use of foresight to identify further candidate own-initiative topics.

- **Working Procedures**
The SAM HLG reviewed the approach to gathering evidence, confirming their preference for a dual approach including literature review and 'expert elicitation'. The SAM HLG and SAPEA discussed their experience to date in working with SAPEA experts, in particular in view of experience with the FFO opinion, the first project which saw the involvement of SAPEA from the start. SAPEA will continue their efforts in selecting experts, covering all the necessary areas of expertise, in the most efficient way. The SAM HLG instructed the SAM secretariat to work with SAPEA to further develop a harmonised approach, building on existing good practice, to the briefing of experts and the explicit codification of their roles and responsibilities; and requested feedback on same during subsequent SAM HLG plenary meetings.
- **Coordination between SAM and the EGE**
Commissioner Moedas welcomed Professor Christiane Woopen, the Chair of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE) and gave a short overview of SAM and the EGE, encouraging both to develop an effective working relationship. The EGE Chair highlighted ongoing work on artificial intelligence and the future of work. The SAM HLG members and the EGE Chair agreed to occasional joint attendance at each other's meetings, to joint participation in key events of common interest and to explore possibilities for future cooperation on specific topics.
- **During the lunch time discussion the High Level Group and SAPEA representatives exchanged views on the first two years of SAM and shared these with Professor Christiane Woopen. Sir David King and Professor Rianne Letschert, both members of the Committee, which in 2015 contributed to identifying the members of the High Level Group, also participated in the discussions.**
- **Options for co-operation between Regulatory Scrutiny Board and SAM**
At the previous meeting, the SAM HLG had requested the SAM secretariat to present ideas for RSB-SAM co-operation at this meeting. This item is postponed.
- **Planning of events**
The next plenary meetings of the SAM HLG will take place on 1 February 2018 (Brussels), 27 April 2018 (Brussels), 9 July 2018 (Toulouse, in association with the EuroScience Open Forum 2018 meeting), 10 and 11 October 2018 (Brussels), and 4 and 5 December 2018 (Brussels).
- **INGSA (International Network for Government Science Advice) Manifesto for 2030 'Scientific Advice for the Global Goals'**
The SAM HLG discussed the INGSA manifesto for 2030 on scientific advice for the sustainable development goals and decided to prepare a reply.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

The meeting participants will continue to work on the '*Carbon Capture and Utilisation Technologies*' and '*Authorisation Processes of Plant Protection Products in Europe*' Scientific Opinions according to the timelines described above; as well as on the further development of a scoping paper for the 'own initiative' topics related to the *use of evidence for science advice to policy* and to *health in an ageing society* with a view to possible adoption by the SAM

HLG at the next SAM HLG plenary meeting. The secretariats of SAM and the EGE will develop proposals for joint cooperation in key scientific events.

5. Next steps

As above.

6. Next meeting

The next plenary meeting of the SAM HLG will take place 31 January and 1 February, 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

Prof Christiane Woopen, Chair European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE)

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

Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
Andras Inotai, Cabinet of European Commissioner Karmenu Vella

Eva-Mari Aro, Vice-President, (EASAC)

Bernard Charpentier, President, Federation of European Academies of Medicine (FEAM)

Prof Sierd Cloetingh, President Academia Europaea (AE)

Thierry Courvoisier, President (European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC))

Reinhard Hüttl, President, (Euro-CASE)

Günter Stock, President All European Academies (ALLEA)

Dag Lorents Aksnes (Chair of FFO Working Group 1)

Poul Holm (Chair of FFO Working Group 2)

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; from the Directorate General for MARE; and SAPEA staff members.

Apologies:

Elvira Fortunato, Member SAM HLG

Paul Nurse, Member SAM HLG