



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

Brussels, 10 and 11 December 2019

Brussels, 21 January 2020

Minutes

20th ordinary plenary meeting of the European Commission's Group of
Chief Scientific Advisors
10-11 December 2019, Brussels

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

The agenda was adopted. The minutes of the previous meeting (24 and 25 September 2019, Brussels) had been adopted by written procedure and published on the Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) website (<https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/>).

1. Nature of the meeting

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

2. List of items discussed

Exchange with the Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel

- The Chief Scientific Advisors ('the Advisors') presented the draft final 4-year report describing their key achievements to Commissioner Gabriel.
- The Advisors informed Commissioner Gabriel about ongoing and planned topics.
- The Commissioner suggested the Advisors might also work on a topic related to her portfolio.

Exchange with Member of European Parliament (MEP) Eva Kaili, Chair of the Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA) Panel

- As follow-up to their previous meeting with MEP Eva Kaili during the 9th plenary meeting on 5 September 2017, the Advisors exchanged information on ongoing and planned work.

Meeting with Vice-President for Inter-institutional Relations and Foresight, Maroš Šefčovič

- Vice-President Šefčovič acknowledged the achievements of the Advisors as presented in their draft final 4-year report and expressed his interest in continuing discussions in the future, in particular in relation to his planned foresight activities. Unit RTD 03 is invited to nominate a representative for the foresight network co-ordinated by the Secretariat General.
- The Advisors presented the candidate topic on '*A systemic approach on energy in Europe*'.

Ongoing topics and updates on recently completed topics

- Pearl Dykstra and Janusz Bujnicki informed the Group about progress on the topic '*Transforming the Future of Ageing*' and reported on the sounding board meeting on 12 November and the stakeholder meeting on 28 November.
- The Advisors will summarise the main issues in a letter to Commissioner Gabriel, to be accompanied by the corresponding Science Advice for Policy by European Academies (SAPEA) report.
- Carina Keskitalo reported on the topic '*Towards an EU Sustainable Food System*', including discussions on the draft SAPEA Evidence Review Report (ERR) at the expert workshop on 8 November. The secretariat presented plans for a meeting with policy officers of relevant Commission services, Committees and Agencies (12 December 2019), a sounding board meeting (13 February 2020), and a stakeholder meeting (18 February 2020). The scientific opinion should be adopted Q1 2020.
- In view of the relevance of this topic for the Commission Communication on the European Green Deal¹ and the up-coming Communication on the 'Farm to Fork strategy', the Advisors agreed to organise the stakeholder meeting in cooperation with Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE).
- Elvira Fortunato, Carina Keskitalo and Nicole Grobert reported on progress concerning the topic '*Climate Change and Health (CCH)*', including the expert workshop '*Adaptation to impacts of climate change on health*', on 24 September. The Advisors took note of the draft literature review, established by the secretariat, and acknowledged the focus on behavioural and social sciences. The Advisors approved the draft structure for the scientific opinion and tasked the secretariat to continue with the drafting of a chapter on the policy context.
- Carina Keskitalo will take over the lead for this topic and a first draft of the scientific opinion will be established for the 22nd plenary meeting on 17/18 March.

Candidate topics

- A SAPEA scoping workshop '*A systemic approach to energy in Europe*' is planned for 12 December in Brussels with participation of Rolf Heuer, Elvira Fortunato and Carina Keskitalo as well as experts in the field and representatives of several Commission services. The workshop will use foresight methods to identify and understand the issues at stake that will influence the future energy transition in Europe. Based on this, the development of a vision of the situation of the energy sector in Europe 2030 and 2050 will serve as a basis to analyse the needs for scientific evidence and advice and to formulate the scoping paper accordingly. Reinhard Hüttl underlined the need for a systemic approach in view of the fact that so far each Member State has a different approach to energy systems.
- Rolf Heuer and Nicole Grobert informed the meeting about progress regarding the topic '*Biodegradability of Plastics in the Open Environment*' including a scoping workshop on 27 September. A draft scoping paper had been sent to all Advisors, which was approved at the meeting with the target date for the delivery of the scientific opinion of end October 2020. The Advisors tasked the secretariat to clarify some of the sub-questions identified in the scoping workshop. Reinhard Hüttl informed the Advisors that Academia Europaea (AE) will be the leading SAPEA network for this topic.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf

- The Advisors took note of the ‘Specification to the draft Scoping Paper’ for the topic ‘*Data Governance*’ submitted by SAPEA on 9 December. They agreed to resume discussions on this candidate topic at the next plenary meeting.

3. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

- The 4-year report on activities and achievements of the Chief Scientific Advisors will be published on the website of the Scientific Advice Mechanism.
- The secretariat will participate in the foresight network coordinated by the Secretariat General.
- A scoping paper will be developed for the candidate topic ‘*A systemic approach to energy in Europe*’.
- The Advisors will send a letter to Commissioner Gabriel concerning their work on ‘*Transforming the Future of Ageing*’, to be accompanied by the SAPEA report.
- Work will continue on the topic ‘*Towards an EU Sustainable Food System*’, including a meeting with policy officers of relevant Commission services, Committees and Agencies on 12 December 2019, a sounding board meeting on 13 February 2020, and a stakeholder meeting on 18 February 2020. The stakeholder meeting will be organised in cooperation with DG SANTE. .
- Work will continue on the topic ‘*Climate Change and Health (CCH)*’. The draft report on the workshop ‘*Adaptation to impacts of climate change on health*’ on 24 September will be shared with all participants before publication. The literature review will be completed and a first draft of the scientific opinion be established for the plenary meeting on 17/18 March.
- The scoping paper for ‘*Biodegradability of Plastics*’ will be published. A call for the nomination of experts will be published by SAPEA.
- Discussions on the candidate topic ‘*Data Governance*’ will be resumed at the next plenary meeting.

4. Next steps

As above

5. Next meeting

The next plenary meeting of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors will take place in Warsaw on 3-5 February 2020. It will be organised back-to-back with an event by the Polish Academy of Sciences on science advice to policy.

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.

SAPEA (Science Advice to Policy by European Academies) - (agenda items 2, 3 and 4)

Reinhard Hüttl (President Academia Europaea), Chair of SAPEA board;
Rudolf Hielscher, SAPEA Coordinator

European Commission

Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič (agenda item 6);
Manuel Szapiro, Deputy Head of Cabinet Šefčovič (agenda item 6);
Commissioner Mariya Gabriel (agenda item 0);
Chiara Salvelli, Deputy Head of Cabinet Gabriel (agenda item 0);
Eva Kaili, MEP, Chair of STOA Panel (agenda item 3);
Wolfgang Burtscher, Deputy Director-General of Directorate General for Research &
Innovation (DG RTD);
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, Secretary of the
Group of Chief Scientific Advisors;
Several members of DG RTD, Unit 0.3 Chief Scientific Advisers – SAM, EGE, depending on
the respective agenda item.