



Scientific Advice Mechanism

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

(Brussels 30 and 31 January 2017)

0. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted. The Chair welcomed Sir Paul Nurse as a guest joining the first day of the meeting. Sir Paul will officially join the HLG as a member from March 2017, following the departure Professor Henrik Wegener. The High Level Group of Scientific Advisors (SAM HLG) named Professor Rolf-Dieter Heuer as the new Chair, and Professor Pearl Dykstra as the new deputy Chair. The new Chair thanked Professor Henrik Wegener and Professor Elvira Fortunato for their work as Chair and deputy Chair during the SAM HLG's first year. He wished Professor Henrik Wegener well in his future assignment as Rector of the University of Copenhagen and welcomed Elvira Fortunato's continued membership of the HLG.

As the new Chair and Deputy Chair would be absent on the second day of the meeting, the previous Chair, Professor Henrik Wegener, agreed to Chair the meeting on that day.

1. SAM HLG discussion on topics

The on-going SAM topics were discussed:

1a) Cybersecurity

Rolf Heuer introduced this item and provided an update. The HLG met a small team of experts, four of whom were selected from the cybersecurity workshop at Vilnius (October 25-26) and one (non-participant at Vilnius) nominated by the SAPEA consortium of the European Academies, on 11 January in Brussels. The HLG is now close to finalising its findings and recommendations in an opinion which will probably be called "Cybersecurity in the European Digital Single Market". The opinion will be relatively brief with complementary information on methodology and evidence gathering and review in annex. The next step in the process is a stakeholder meeting, 13 February 2017, to present to the main stakeholders (mainly civil society and business, but also representatives of policy-makers and academia) the draft findings and overall vision and approach of the opinion. The opinion is expected to be finalised and adopted by the end of March 2017.

1b) Food from the Oceans

Carina Keskitalo introduced this item and provided an update. Ongoing discussion with SAPEA (Horizon 2020 grant "Science Advice for Policy by European Academies") is very useful in defining the boundaries of this topic.

The first steering group meeting composed of SAM HLG members, SAPEA experts, members of the SAM secretariat and of observers from the different European Commission Directorate-Generals was due to take place on 31 January 2017 in the afternoon.

SAPEA will be very actively involved in all phases of the work leading to the adoption of the scientific opinion by the end of 2017.

1c) New techniques in agricultural biotechnology

Due to time constraints, this item was postponed for discussion under agenda item 6.

2. Progress report

2a) Stock-taking first year of SAM HLG and outlook to the second year

Commissioner Moedas welcomed Sir Paul Nurse and thanked Professor Henrik Wegener and Professor Elvira Fortunato for their work as Chair and deputy Chair during the HLG's first year.

The Commissioner noted the achievements of the SAM HLG and the Scientific Advice Mechanism during its first year. Amongst others, he mentioned the 'Explanatory note on scientific advice for the regulatory assessment of glyphosate in plant protection products' and the scientific opinion on 'Closing the gap between light-duty vehicle real-world CO₂ emissions and laboratory testing' adopted by the HLG, June and November 2016 respectively. He also highlighted SAM's participation in broader discussions on the provision of scientific advice to policy at European and international levels through September 2016's

international conference on scientific advice to policy making; and through the organisation of a meeting of the 'European Science Advisors Forum', bringing together representatives of member state science advisory structures in Manchester, UK, in July 2016.

The Commissioner looked forward to the imminent adoption of the Cybersecurity opinion, the explanatory note on New Techniques in Agricultural Biotechnology, and later to the opinion on Food from the Oceans, and other work. He stressed the importance of the visibility and impact of SAM opinions and encouraged the Group to identify own initiative topics.

2b) First SAM HLG scientific opinion – impact, dissemination

Commissioner Moedas informed the group that the first SAM HLG scientific opinion on closing the gap between light-duty vehicle real-world CO₂ emissions and laboratory testing has been well received by Commissioner Cañete.

2c) Progress report on on-going topics

The Commissioner was informed by Professors Cédric Villani, Carina Keskitalo and Janusz Bujnicki about the progress made in the on-going topics as indicated in point 1 and 6 of the present minutes.

3. European Network of Academies and SAM – Working modalities/Feedback from collaboration on topics

Representatives of the European Network of Academies were welcomed by Commissioner Moedas. Both the SAM HLG and the European Network of Academies welcomed their effective co-operation to date, reinforced by the formal creation of the SAPEA consortium, December 2016. Professor Carina Keskitalo recalled the collaboration so far in the Food from the Oceans topic and what was expected from the SAPEA consortium in the course of the next months until the publication of the scientific opinion.

On behalf of the European Network of Academies, Bernard Charpentier informed the Commissioner about preliminary discussions on potential topics for consideration by the HLG and the Academies, and will develop these further in conjunction with the HLG. It was clarified that SAPEA will provide inputs to SAM but that the Academies may provide their own opinions independently of the SAPEA consortium.

4. SAM HLG activity planning (brainstorming meeting in April 2017)

An extraordinary HLG plenary meeting is planned, 11/12 April 2017 at CERN, Switzerland/France.

5. Discussion on new topics

The discussion on new topics was postponed to the meeting described above.

6. On-going topics: next steps

Following its postponement under item 1c, an update on New Techniques in Agricultural Biotechnology was provided by Janusz Bujnicki. The HLG aims to adopt the explanatory note before the end of March 2017. SAPEA experts are actively contributing to the development of the explanatory note.

7. Scientific advice to support the forthcoming evaluation of pesticides

The SAM secretariat informed the SAM HLG that a scoping paper is under preparation in liaison with DG SANTE and that a draft will be sent to them shortly for discussion and agreement by written procedure.

8. Meeting with Sir Peter Gluckman (Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, New Zealand)

Following the joint EC-INGSA organisation of September 2016's conference 'Science and Policy Making: towards a new dialogue' and as part of his visit to the European Commission, Sir Peter Gluckman (Chief Science Advisor of the New Zealand Prime Minister and Chairman of the International Network for Government Science Advice, INGSA) was invited by Commissioner Moedas for an exchange of views with the SAM HLG.

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Professor Henrik Wegener provided an update on the work of the SAM HLG and pointed out the uniqueness of the SAM HLG at the European level.

It was confirmed that INGSA and SAM will continue collaborating in the area of scientific advice for policy.

9. Cybersecurity topic (Commission Vice-President Ansip)

Professor Cédric Villani presented the process leading to, and draft content of, the scientific opinion "Cybersecurity in the European Digital Single Market" to Vice-President Ansip and representatives of DG CNECT and DG HOME. Professor Villani explained how they approached the task, including evidence gathering and broad consultation with experts from many fields (technological, legal, economic, social sciences and humanities).

Vice-President Ansip welcomed the presentation and anticipated its usefulness in view of the midterm review on the Digital Single Market. Discussion followed on questions related to encryption, technical vulnerabilities and systems, existing challenges in the DSM, as well as human aspects and the role of users.

10. Any other business

In the light of the new topics to be dealt with by SAM, Professor Rolf-Dieter Heuer asked for the update of his Declaration of Interest stating that he is on the Board of Directors of the Genome Research Laboratory in a non-executive position.

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Present:

- Henrik-Caspar Wegener, Chair of the SAM HLG
- Cédric Villani, Member SAM HLG
- Carina Keskitalo, Member SAM HLG
- Rolf-Dieter Heuer, Member SAM HLG
- Pearl Dykstra, Member Sam HLG
- Janusz Bujnicki, Member SAM HLG
- Sir Paul Nurse
- Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation
- Keith Sequeira, Cabinet Commissioner Moedas (31 January)
- Robert Schroeder, Cabinet Commissioner Moedas (30 January)
- Johannes Klumpers, Head of Unit, SAM unit
- Jeremy Bray, Deputy Head of Unit, SAM unit
- Other members of the SAM Unit

Excused:

- Rolf-Dieter Heuer and Pearl Dykstra for 31 January 2017

Invited participants:

Agenda item 3

- Bernard Charpentier, President, Federation of European Academies of Medicine (FEAM)
- Jos van der Meer, President of the European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC)
- Ole Petersen, Vice-President and Honorary Treasurer of Academia Europaea
- Yves Caristan, Secretary-General of European Council of Academies of Applied Sciences, Technologies and Engineering (Euro-CASE)
- Rudolf Hielscher, Coordinator of the project "Science Advice for Policy by European Academies" (SAPEA)

Agenda item 8

- Sir Peter Gluckman, Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor
- Andrew Sweet, Senior Advisor, Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor
- Bruce McCallum, New Zealand Mission to the EU

Agenda item 9

- Vice-President Andrus Ansip
- Vivian Loonela, Cabinet Vice-President Ansip
- Roberto Viola, Director-General, DG CNECT
- Andrea Servida, acting Director, DG CNECT
- Graham Willmott, Head of Unit, DG HOME