



**Draft Minutes of the twenty-first plenary meeting of the
European Commission's Group of
Chief Scientific Advisors**

Warsaw, 3 and 5 February 2020

Brussels, 16 March 2020

Minutes

21st ordinary plenary meeting of the European Commission's Group of
Chief Scientific Advisors
3 and 5 February 2020, Warsaw

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

The agenda was adopted. The minutes of the previous meeting (10 and 11 December 2019, Brussels) had been adopted by written procedure and published on the Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) website (https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/support-policy-making/scientific-support-eu-policies/group-chief-scientific-advisors_en/).

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was not held in public. The meeting took place at the International Institute for Molecular and Cell Biology in Warsaw.

3. List of items discussed

Updates from the Secretariat

- The Secretariat up-dated the meeting about the nomination procedure for the replacement of four Chief Scientific Advisors whose term ends in May 2020 and November 2020, respectively.
- The Secretariat up-dated the meeting about the priorities and initiatives of the new Commission, such as the establishment of the Strategic Foresight Network, in which the Secretariat of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors is represented, the Expert Group on Economic & Societal Impact of Research and Innovation (ESIR) and the Commission's in-house think tank IDEA (Inspire, Debate, Engage, Accelerate Action).

Ongoing topics and possible future scientific advice

- Elvira Fortunato reported on the SAPEA scoping workshop 'A systemic approach to energy in Europe' which took place in Brussels on 12 December 2019 with the participation of Rolf Heuer, Carina Keskitalo as well as experts in the field and representatives of several Commission services. The Advisors agreed on a timeline, which tentatively foresees the publication of a Scientific Opinion in spring 2021. The Advisors also agreed that given the social and natural science dimension of this topic the SAPEA working group should be co-chaired by two experts representing the different disciplines and that it should be co-led by two Advisors after the departure of Elvira Fortunato in May 2020.
- The Secretariat presented progress on the ongoing preparations for a sounding board meeting (13 February 2020) and a joint stakeholder meeting on the Scientific Opinion and the European Commission's Farm to Fork Strategy (18 February 2020). The Advisors discussed a first draft of their forthcoming Scientific Opinion '*Towards a*

sustainable EU Food system' and instructed the Secretariat to provide a new draft based on their comments to be shared with the sounding board.

- The Advisors agreed to send their letter highlighting a number of key elements of the evidence review report '*Transforming the Future of Ageing*'¹, by the consortium Science Advice for Policy by European Academies (SAPEA), to Commissioner Mariya Gabriel. In the letter, which was published on the SAM website [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/letter-commissioner-gabriel_en] on 2nd of March, the Advisors invite the Commission to more in depth discussions in view of the upcoming 'Green Paper' on Ageing.
- Carina Keskitalo reported on progress regarding the topic '*Climate Change and Health (CCH)*'. The Advisors agreed on a slightly revised timeline aiming for adoption of the scientific opinion in June. They instructed the unit to proceed with the literature review and the preparation of a sounding board meeting (27 April) and a stakeholder meeting (13 May). It was agreed to start identifying possible outreach events for the topic '*Climate Change and Health (CCH)*' in consultation with relevant services (DG Climate Action and DG Health and Food Safety) and SAPEA.
- Rolf Heuer and Nicole Grobert informed the meeting about progress regarding the topic '*Biodegradability of Plastics in the Open Environment*', in particular about SAPEA's selection of experts for the working group. The Advisors agreed on a tentative timeline to deliver the Scientific Opinion in October 2020.

Discussion with Reinhard Hüttl (Chair of SAPEA Board)

- Reinhard Hüttl informed the meeting about SAPEA's efforts to intensify outreach activities, and to strengthen interactions with the young academies (European and National). Based on the acquired experience (the evidence review report on 'A scientific perspective on microplastics in nature and society' was mentioned as a particularly good example) he exchanged views with the Advisors and the Secretariat on most suitable forms of structured literature review and synthesis.

Discussion on possible topics related to the portfolio of Commissioner Mariya Gabriel and on possible subjects in support to Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič

- The Advisors discussed possible future topics and subjects in support to Commissioner Mariya Gabriel and Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič as follow-up to the plenary meeting of 10 and 11 December 2019. These potential topics are linked to previous or ongoing topics, as well as to the priorities of the Commissioner and the Vice-President.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

- Work will continue on the topic '*Towards an EU Sustainable Food System*', including 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 will be established for the plenary

¹ <https://www.sapea.info/topics/ageing/>

meeting on 17/18 March. Preparations for a sounding board and stakeholders meeting are underway for April-May.

- For the topic '*Biodegradability of Plastics in the Open Environment*', SAPEA is finalising the list of experts including a chair and co-chair.
- In view of possible discussions with Commissioner Mariya Gabriel and Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič the Advisors instructed the Secretariat to elaborate on selected topics and subjects in relation to their portfolios.

5. Next steps

As above

6. Next meeting

The next plenary meeting of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors will take place in Brussels on 17-18 March 2020. It will be organised back-to-back with an extraordinary plenary meeting of the Chief Scientific Advisors on 17 March 2020.

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 (via telco for agenda items 5,6,7)

SAPEA (Science Advice to Policy by European Academies) - (agenda items 4, 5 and 7)

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

European Commission

Johannes Klumpers, DG RTD, Head of Unit 0.3 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE
Sigrid Weiland, DG RTD, Unit 0.3 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE, Secretary of the
Group of Chief Scientific Advisors;
Annabelle Ascher, DG RTD, Unit 0.3 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE, Deputy
Secretary of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors;
Gerjon Ikinck, DG RTD, Unit 0.3 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE,
Ingrid Zegers, JRC, seconded to DG RTD, Unit 0.3 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE.