



**Minutes of the 36<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the  
European Commission's Group of  
Chief Scientific Advisors**

14-15 December 2022, via Webex

Brussels, 27 February 2023

## Minutes

36th plenary meeting of the European Commission's Group of  
Chief Scientific Advisors (GCSA)  
14-15 December 2022, via Webex

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

The minutes of the 35th plenary meeting have been adopted by written procedure and published on the [scientific advice mechanism](#) (SAM) website.

The draft agenda was adopted.

### **2. Nature of the meeting**

The meeting was held via Webex. It was closed to the public.

### **3. List of items discussed**

#### **Ongoing and possible future scientific advice**

- Eric Lambin summarised progress on the scientific opinion '*Towards sustainable food consumption*'. He reported on the third meeting of the SAPEA working group on 14 December and said the SAPEA expert workshop would take place on 3 February 2023 for gathering feedback on SAPEA's Evidence Review Report (ERR). The scientific opinion is expected to be published in June 2023.
- The Advisors discussed possible candidate topics, which are still in early stage.

Follow-up of finished opinions:

- The secretariat reported that the scientific opinion '*Cancer screening*' had had significant impact on policy development. Council had adopted its recommendations for cancer screening 'on strengthening prevention through early detection: A new approach on cancer screening' on 9 December, in which it had taken up essential recommendations from the scientific opinion.
- Nicole Grobert praised the successful event to mark the handing-over of the scientific opinion on '*Strategic crisis management in the EU*', SAPEA's Evidence Review Report and EGE's statement on values in times of crisis to Commissioners Mariya Gabriel (Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth) and Janez Lenarčič (Crisis Management in the EU), on 22 November 2022 in Strasbourg at the European Parliament's plenary session, and the presentation to the European Parliament's Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA) on 15 December 2022.

### **Exchange with Greg Drozd (Secretariat-General) on foresight activities with focus on strategic foresight reports**

Greg Drozd presented the Secretariat-General (SG)'s [strategic foresight activities](#). Decision makers increasingly need tools helping to future-proof policies. In this context, foresight gives the possibility to explore, anticipate and shape the future. It also helps to build and use collective intelligence in a structured, and systemic way to anticipate future developments. Strategic foresight, on the other hand, seeks to embed foresight into EU policy-making.

Both SG and the Joint Research Centre work hand-in-hand to provide scientific expertise underpinning various strategic foresight products. These include annual Strategic Foresight Reports, horizon scanning or Better Regulation tools. In addition, SG helps to build foresight capacities on a national level through the EU-wide Foresight Network and ensures coordination of foresight activities across the Commission via internal Strategic Foresight Network.

Following this brief outline, participants discussed strategic foresight (as an analytical and structured process which provides a view of possible futures) and the evidence-based SAM, as well as possible synergies between both.

### **Discussion with Antonio Loprieno and SAPEA representatives**

Eric Lambin and the SAM unit updated the participants on progress on: the opinions '*Strategic crisis management in the EU*' and '*Towards sustainable food consumption*', and on follow-up activities relating to the scientific opinion '*Cancer screening*', respectively. The SAM unit reported on the significant number of requests for scientific advice from various Directorates-General. These candidate topics required more discussion and time to reach maturity before any priorities could be set and work for scientific advice could begin. Participants agreed on the importance of effective follow-up to finished scientific opinions and ERRs with targeted audiences and events.

### **Exchange on outreach activities and synergies**

Toby Wardman presented the refined SAM communication strategy and invited feedback from participants. He emphasised that it was a living document with the objective of: 1) communicating the complexities of SAM in a simplified way and demonstrating the uniqueness and validity of the SAM process; 2) consolidating a common scientific SAM identity; and 3) building on respective strengths of the Commission's access to media relations and SAPEA's small and agile structure. Furthermore, the SAM communication strategy would address politically relevant topics and plans for harnessing the longer-term value of past scientific opinions.

The SAM unit presented the communication plan for the crisis topic as the first of a series of topic-specific communication plans and highlighted recent activities. The discussion focused on ways to further optimise communication and outreach activities both internally, within the Commission, and externally. For their activities, participants considered making use of written media outreach, social media, national newspapers, scientific journals, Op-Eds, etc.

**Exchange on the Staff Working Document on 'Supporting and Connecting  
Policymaking in the EU and Member States with Scientific Research'**

The SAM unit updated participants on the follow-up to the staff working document, the recent policy debate at the competitiveness Council of 2 December under the Czech Presidency and preparations for the conference on science for policy planned for 3Q 2023. The SAM unit invited input from the participants on the approach to be taken, e.g. main characteristics, the EU's role and the Advisors' role in a future ecosystem for science for policy.

**Next steps and conclusions/recommendations/opinions**

- Sustainable food consumption team to continue work on the scientific opinion.
- SAM unit and SAPEA to develop the communication plan for the topic on '*Towards sustainable food consumption*' by March 2023.

**4. Next meeting**

The next plenary meeting of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors will take place on 14-15 March 2022, in Brussels (in hybrid format for external experts and some SAPEA/YASAS participants).

## List of Participants

### Group of Chief Scientific Advisors

Nicole Grobert, Chair;  
Nebojsa Nakicenovic, Deputy Chair; (excused for 14 December)  
Éva Kondorosi, Member;  
Maarja Kruusmaa, Member;  
Alberto Melloni, Member;  
Eric Lambin, Member;  
Eva Zažímalová, Member.

### Science Advice to Policy by European Academies (SAPEA)

Antonio Loprieno, President All European Academies (ALLEA), Chairman of SAPEA Board, agenda point 6,7a;  
Rudolf Hielscher, SAPEA Coordinator, agenda point 6,7a;  
Toby Wardman, SAPEA Head of Communications, agenda point 6,7a;

### Observers

Jacek Kolanowski, Head of the Department of Molecular Probes and Pro-drugs and the Center for High-throughput Screening Research at the Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Science in Poznań, and standing delegate for the Polish Young Academy; agenda point 6,7a;  
Sarah Verhulst, Professor, Hearing Technology at the University of Gent, and standing delegate for the 'De Jonge Academie', Belgium; agenda point 6,7a;  
Helen Eenmaa, Researcher in Information Technology at the School of Law at the University of Tartu, and standing delegate for the Estonian Young Academy of Sciences; agenda point 6,7a;  
Viktorija Vaštakaitė-Kairienė, Chief researcher at the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry, associate professor at Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy, and a standing delegate from The Young Academy of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, agenda point 6,7a.

### Other participants (invited experts)

Janusz Bujnicki, Professor, Head of the Laboratory of Bioinformatics and Protein Engineering, International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology in Warsaw, agenda point 2, 8;  
Carina Keskitalo, Professor of Political Science, Department of Geography and Economic History, Umeå University, agenda point 2.

### European Commission

Gilles Laroche, DG RTD, Head of Unit 03 – Science Policy, Advice and Ethics;  
Greg Drozd, teamleader for foresight in SG;  
Tanja Zegers, Policy officer, SG;

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Jacques Verraes, DG RTD, Deputy Head of Unit 03 – Science Policy, Advice and Ethics;  
Ingrid Zegers, DG RTD, Unit 03 – Science Policy, Advice and Ethics, SAM team leader;  
Annabelle Ascher, DG RTD, Unit 03 – Science Policy, Advice and Ethics, Head of the  
Secretariat of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors;  
Vita Volante, DG RTD, Unit 03 – Science Policy, Advice and Ethics, Secretariat of the Group  
of Chief Scientific Advisors.  
Additional members of the unit depending on topic discussion.