



**Minutes of the 33rd plenary meeting of the  
European Commission's Group of  
Chief Scientific Advisors**

2 March 2022 (by videoconference)

Brussels, 02 May 2022

## Minutes

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

The minutes of the 32nd plenary meeting have been adopted by written procedure and published on the [Scientific advice mechanism](#) website.

The draft agenda was changed, postponing the agenda item 'Exchange on outreach activities and synergies' to a later date.

Nicole Grobert welcomed Gilles Laroche, the new Head of Unit. A tour de table followed.

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

The meeting was held by videoconference and was closed to the public.

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

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

- Under the lead of Éva Kondorosi, the scientific opinion [Cancer screening](#) was adopted by all advisors. Eva thanked all advisors, the SAM unit, Science Advice for Policy by European Academies (SAPEA) and Janusz Bujnicki for their excellent work. The handover of the scientific opinion to Commissioners Gabriel (Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth) and Kyriakides (Health and Food Safety), including the press conference scheduled for 2 March, was postponed due to the crisis in Ukraine.
- Nicole Grobert and Maarja Kruusmaa summarised progress on the scientific opinion [Strategic crisis management in the EU](#). Following the working group and coordination group meetings in February, SAPEA continues work on its draft evidence review report (ERR). It will also address critical infrastructures, cybersecurity and the operational aspects of emergency and crisis management as well as economic aspects of crisis management. The report will be discussed with external experts at the workshop on 25 March 2022. The scientific opinion has attracted much interest within the European Commission. The unit will continue to establish links with relevant activities and ongoing policy initiatives by other Directorates-General, most recently with DG HOME (Migration and Home Affairs) and the European External Action Service. Participants discussed (i) how scientific advice could help mitigate crises when possible alternatives exist; (ii) how decisions taken under pressure are likely to be suboptimal more often than not, including the risk of unintended consequences; (iii) the importance of scenario presentation and narratives accompanying the data to allow transparent decision-making; (iv) possible enhancement of a systemic approach with a scenario approach; (v) possible introduction of short-term and temporary

legislation that could be tailored or dropped as needed. A workshop on 'Cascading impacts on critical infrastructures' is being considered as an intermediate output towards the scientific opinion, which is planned for the second quarter of 2022.

### **Potential future topics**

- The Special European Council meeting on 24 February 2022 called for work on preparedness and readiness to be taken forward at all levels, and invited the Commission, in particular, to put forward contingency measures, including on energy. On 28 February 2022, EU energy ministers met in the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Energy) to exchange views on the energy situation in Ukraine and Europe and on its consequences, such as an increase in gas prices in the EU as well as in international oil prices, and in a more general context, the rebound in energy prices both in Europe and worldwide since 2021. On 1 March, the European Parliament adopted a resolution to significantly reduce energy dependence, in particular on Russian gas, oil and coal by, among other things, diversifying energy sources.

Against this backdrop, the advisors are exploring a possible follow-up/harvest from their recently published opinion [A systemic approach to energy transition in Europe](#). Ideas include an energy roadmap, questions on the protection of the energy poor, energy savings until renewables become available, offset loss of gas without reverting back to coal at the expense of sacrificing ambitions to achieve the European Green Deal, and the 'Fit for 55' legislative package to reduce the EU's hydrocarbon dependency.

- In addition to energy-related questions, the discussion highlighted interest in questions related to sustainable diet and human/consumer behaviour. Participants emphasised that cross-fertilisation of scientific advice, both past and present, is important and that synergies between crisis management, sustainable diet and energy could be explored. All agreed that the timely development of scientific advice, in particular in times of crisis, is crucial.

### **Discussion with SAPEA representatives**

Nicole Grobert updated the participants on the latest developments regarding the scientific opinion *Cancer Screening* and progress on the opinion *Strategic crisis management in the EU*. SAPEA informed them of the overwhelming response for the conference to be jointly organised by the advisors and SAPEA on 'Scientific advice under pressure'. The conference will take place on 27-28 April 2022 in Brussels, with the possibility of attending virtually (hybrid event). Nicole Grobert reported on the advisors' exchange on potential immediate and long-term topics (see above). SAPEA offered support for developing new solutions by reorganising working groups, carrying out evidence reviews and workshops as needed.

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

- Secretariat to explore new date for handover of the scientific opinion *Cancer screening* with Commissioners Gabriel and Kyriakides.

- SAPEA to organise ERR review workshop on the topic of crisis management on 25 March 2022 with the participation of external experts.
- Crisis management team to continue work on the scientific opinion *Strategic crisis management in the EU* and possible presentation at the European Civil Protection Forum on 28-29 June 2022.
- SAPEA to continue coordination and organisation of the 'Science advice under pressure' event on 27-28 April 2022, with input from the advisors and the Secretariat.

#### **4. Next meeting**

The next plenary meeting of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors will take place on 8-9 June 2022.

## List of participants

### Group of Chief Scientific Advisors

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

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

Antonio Loprieno (President All European Academies (ALLEA), Chairman of SAPEA Board, agenda point 3;  
Rudolf Hielscher, SAPEA Coordinator, agenda point 3;  
Toby Wardman, SAPEA Head of Communications, agenda point 3.

### Other participants (invited experts)

Pearl Dykstra, Professor of Sociology, Erasmus University Rotterdam, agenda point 2;  
Janusz Bujnicki, International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology in Warsaw, agenda point 2.

### Observers

Jacek Kolanowski, President of the Young Academies Science Advice Structure (YASAS) & Vice-Chair of the Polish Young Academy, agenda point 3;  
Moniek Tromp, YASAS Vice-Chair, agenda point 3.

### European Commission

Gilles Laroche, DG RTD, Head of Unit 03 – Science Policy, Advice and Ethics;  
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, Secretary 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.