



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

18 March 2020 (by videoconference)

Brussels, xxx 2020

Minutes

22nd ordinary plenary meeting of the European Commission's Group of
Chief Scientific Advisors
18 March 2020 (by videoconference)

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

The Advisors added an item on Coronavirus to the agenda. The minutes of the previous meeting (3-5 February 2020, Warsaw) had been adopted and published on the Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) website prior to this meeting.

2. Nature of the meeting

Due to the Coronavirus crisis, the meeting was held via videoconference and was not open to the public.

3. List of items discussed

Coronavirus

- During the meeting and in a subsequent teleconference, the Advisors recalled the co-ordinated Coronavirus response by the [European Commission](#), Member States, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The Advisors welcomed the establishment of a [scientific advisory panel](#) to the Commission and noted that though the Advisors' role is not to provide scientific advice during epi-/pandemics, they are ready to contribute to subsequent analysis and considerations of proactive future measures. The Advisors expressed strong support for global initiatives to make coronavirus and COVID-19 related publications and supporting data immediately accessible to support the ongoing public health emergency response efforts, and in the spirit of EU open access policy.

Updates from the Secretariat

- The Secretariat updated the meeting about the nomination procedure for the replacement of four Chief Scientific Advisors whose terms end in May 2020 and November 2020, respectively. An open call for nomination of candidates for membership of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors to the European Commission will be published shortly. Janusz Bujnicki and Elvira Fortunato, whose contracts will end in 15 May 2020, will be replaced by Eva Kondorosi and Eugene Kennedy as of 16 May 2020 for a three year period.

Ongoing topics and possible future scientific advice

- The Advisors discussed a close-to-final draft of their forthcoming scientific opinion '*Towards a Sustainable Food System*'. The opinion informs the forthcoming '*Farm to Fork Strategy*' to be adopted by the Commission in April 2020.

- The Secretariat reported on progress regarding the topic '*Climate Change and Health (CCH)*'. The Advisors intend to publish the opinion in June 2020, following in particular, sounding board and stakeholder meetings in April and May respectively.
- The Advisors adopted the scoping paper on the topic of '*A systemic approach to the energy transition in Europe*' to answer the question: *How can the European Commission contribute to the preparation for, acceleration, and facilitation of the energy transition in Europe given the present state of knowledge on the possible transition pathways?* The Advisors were asked to provide a scientific opinion by the first quarter of 2021.
- Nicole Grobert informed the meeting about progress regarding the topic '*Biodegradability of Plastics in the Open Environment*'. A SAPEA working group for the development of an Evidence Review Report has been established and met in February and March. The Advisors took note of the EASAC's report¹ '*Packaging plastics in the circular economy*', 10 March 2020. The scientific opinion is expected to be published by end October 2020.

Discussion with Reinhard Hüttl (Chair of SAPEA Board)

- Reinhard Hüttl informed the meeting about SAPEA's efforts to organise or and co-organise outreach events about the topics of the SAM (113 in 18 European countries since June 2017). In the current situation, SAPEA will continue to organise outreach activities using online formats and different formats of social media. Working Group meetings will be organised remotely, SAPEA is operational. He informed about the recent good interaction with the young academies (the national young academies represented by the German Young Academy, the Young Academy of Europe and the Global Young Academy) as well as their joint approach and joint interest in contributing to the Scientific Advice Mechanism. He announced that SAPEA will publish on the project website an overview of sound scientific sources about the COVID-19 situation which includes links to the efforts made by the science academies in Europe.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

- Finalisation of work on the topic '*Towards a Sustainable Food System*'
- Preparations for sounding board (April) and stakeholder (May) meetings for the topic '*Climate Change and Health*'.
- Establishment of a working group by SAPEA for the topic '*A systemic approach to the energy transition in Europe*'.

5. Next steps

- As above

¹ https://easac.eu/fileadmin/PDF_s/reports_statements/Plastics/EASAC_Plastics_complete_Web_PDF.pdf

6. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors will be held 11/12 May. The timing and nature of the meeting are subject to change.

List of Participants

Group of Chief Scientific Advisors

Rolf-Dieter Heuer, Chair;
Pearl Dykstra, Deputy Chair;
Paul Nurse, Member;
Janusz Bujnicki, Member;
Elvira Fortunato, Member;
Nicole Grobert, Member;
Carina Keskitalo, Member.

SAPEA (Science Advice to Policy by European Academies)

Reinhard Hüttl (President of Euro-CASE, Chair of SAPEA board);
Rudolf Hielscher, SAPEA Coordinator;
Toby Wardman, SAPEA Head of Communications.

European Commission

Wolfgang Bartscher, Deputy Director General of DG RTD Science and Policy Transitions;
Johannes Klumpers, DG RTD, Head of Unit 03 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE;
Jeremy Bray, DG RTD, Deputy Head of Unit 03 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE;
Sigrid Weiland, DG RTD, Unit 03 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE, Secretary of the
Group of Chief Scientific Advisors;
Annabelle Ascher, DG RTD, Unit 03 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE, Deputy
Secretary of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors;
Several members of Unit 03 Chief Scientific Advisors – SAM, EGE, Secretary of the Group
of Chief Scientific Advisors, DG RTD.