

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018

To: All Academies of ALLEA, EASAC, Euro-CASE, FEAM and Young Academies

**European Scientific Advice Mechanism**  
**Evidence review on the topic *Making Sense of Science under conditions of complexity and uncertainty***

**Call for nominations for an international working group to conduct the evidence review**

The European Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) provides independent and transparent scientific advice to the European Commission, working with a Group of Chief Scientific Advisors and the European Academies (SAPEA).

SAPEA (Science Advice for Policy by European Academies) comprises the five European Academy Networks: [Academia Europaea](#), [ALLEA](#), [EASAC](#), [Euro-CASE](#) and [FEAM](#). SAPEA represents over 100 Academies in more than 40 European countries, and spans all the major disciplines (including engineering, humanities, medicine, science and social sciences).

The Group of Chief Scientific Advisors intends to produce a Scientific Opinion on the topic of *Making sense of science under conditions of complexity and uncertainty*. The overarching question is:

*How can good scientific advice be provided to European Commission policymakers, based on available evidence, under conditions of scientific complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity?*

SAPEA will undertake the evidence review that informs the Scientific Opinion. To address the topic, SAPEA will set up an international and interdisciplinary working group of around 10-12 expert members. The experts will provide their input via physical meetings and are required to produce a first draft of an Evidence Review Report by December 2018.

The organisational lead for the topic will be Academia Europaea (AE), working closely with the other European Academy Networks in SAPEA.

SAPEA offers the opportunity to raise the profile of your Academy's work and expertise on a European level, and we ask as a first step for the contribution and support of your Academy by nominating Academy Fellows or external experts for the Working Group, in accordance with the expertise indicated in Annex 3.

Please address your response to [celine.tschirhart@sapea.info](mailto:celine.tschirhart@sapea.info), by the **deadline of Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July**.

Nominations of experts should be accompanied by a short curriculum vitae (please not more than 2 pages), together with a short explanation on how the nominee's experience meets the areas of expertise needed listed in Annex 3.

Reasonable travel costs will be reimbursed by SAPEA for attendance at physical working group meetings.

Further details are provided in the annexes to this letter, including terms and conditions on the selection of candidates. A SAPEA Selection Committee will be responsible for the composition of the Working Group (criteria detailed in Annex 4).

Please contact [celine.tschirhart@sapea.info](mailto:celine.tschirhart@sapea.info) if you have questions or would like further information.

We look forward to hearing from you.



**Professor Bernard Charpentier**  
Chair of the SAPEA Board



**Professor Ortwin Renn**  
Chair of the Working Group

## Annex 1

### Background to the topic Making Sense of Science

The SAPEA Evidence Review Report will inform the Scientific Opinion produced by the Group of Chief Scientific Advisers. The Scientific Opinion will be addressed primarily to **policymakers, who make use of scientific advice across the European Commission** and will also be of relevance to the **governance of scientific advice in the Commission**. The Opinion is due to be delivered by June 2019, together with the final version of the Evidence Review Report.

Comprehensive information about the Scientific Advice Mechanism:

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/index.cfm>

## Annex 2

### Overall project objectives

Members of the Working Group are expected to:

- Meet around three times before December 2018
- Consider the results of the systematic search of the published literature on the topic
- Draft the Evidence Review Report and review/advise on the editorial work undertaken by SAPEA staff, with the first draft of the Evidence Review Report delivered by mid-December 2018
- Respond to the comments made by the peer reviewers of the Evidence Review Report
- Be involved in stakeholder and public engagement work (such as meetings, conferences, events), as appropriate

In support, SAPEA professional staff will:

- Establish the working group and organise around three physical meetings
- Oversee a systematic search of the published literature on the topic
- Undertake editorial work on drafts of the Evidence Review Report, in liaison with the working group
- Organise a workshop comprised of a wider group of experts, to consider the draft Evidence Review Report
- Coordinate formal peer review of the final draft of the Evidence Review Report
- Undertake appropriate stakeholder and public engagement work associated with the topic
- Prepare and publish the final Evidence Review Report, by June 2019

An indicative timeline is as follows:

Steps	Indicative timeline
Working Group Chair in place	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2018
Nominations call sent out for Working Group	w/c 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2018
Deadline for nominations	9 <sup>th</sup> July 2018
Composition of Working Group made SAPEA Selection Committee and approved by SAPEA Board	w/c 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2018
First meeting of Working Group	Late July/early August (if feasible) 2018
Subsequent meetings of Working Group	September-December 2018
First draft of Evidence Review Report	Mid-December 2018
Wider expert workshop held	January/February 2019
Peer review of Evidence Review Report	April 2019
Final version and handover of Evidence Review Report	June 2019
Post-launch promotion, stakeholder and public engagement	June-December 2019

### Annex 3

#### List of issues to be covered and expertise sought

The scoping paper for Making Sense of Science has been published:

[https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/pdf/meetings/hlg\\_sam\\_scoping\\_paper\\_science.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none](https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/pdf/meetings/hlg_sam_scoping_paper_science.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none)

The scoping paper question is:

*How can good scientific advice be provided to European Commission policymakers, based on available evidence, under conditions of scientific complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity?*

The following sub-themes have been identified:

1. Complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity in science for policy, including the clarification of policy goals; how policy questions/issues are framed; dealing with multiple styles of reasoning and conflicting evidence, considering the various disciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives of what science can offer to policy makers
2. Appropriate evidence for policy under conditions of complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity, including frameworks, methods and approaches; identifying and applying varying types of quality criteria; distinguishing types of evidence, uncertainty and ambiguity; understanding validity, reliability and relevance of evidence
3. Appraisal and use of evidence, including practical examples of good practice; general recommendations and principles

Nominees for the working group must be able to demonstrate applied/practical knowledge/experience in providing science advice for policy.

## Annex 4

### Criteria for selection of members to the international Working Group

A SAPEA-appointed Selection Committee will select the experts according to demonstrated excellence in one or more of the fields listed in Annex 3 and other criteria such as:

- Interdisciplinarity; all relevant disciplines should be included
- Broad geographical coverage of Europe
- Inclusion of experts from non-European countries, as appropriate
- 20% female members as a minimum

Please note that nomination does not guarantee selection to the Working Group.

## Annex 5

### SAPEA: Science Advice for Policy by European Academies

- Spanning the disciplines of engineering, humanities, medicine, science and social sciences, **SAPEA** brings together the outstanding knowledge and expertise of Fellows from over 100 Academies, Young Academies and Learned Societies in more than 40 countries across Europe
- SAPEA is part of the [European Scientific Advice Mechanism](#) (SAM) which provides independent, interdisciplinary and evidence-based scientific advice on policy issues to the European Commission, working closely with the [SAM High Level Group of Scientific Advisors](#)
- The project is funded through a grant from the EU's Horizon 2020 programme
- Academies' independence, academic expertise and convening power make them a critical source of evidence for policymakers and the wider public, providing an unbiased, balanced and transparent perspective. Academies within SAPEA are members of one or more of the European Academy Networks: [Academia Europaea](#), [ALLEA](#), [EASAC](#), [Euro-CASE](#) and [FEAM](#).
- SAPEA will provide a means for closer collaboration between Academies, combining Fellows' expertise in engineering, human, medical, natural, social and technical sciences in a unique way.

All Member Academies across Europe are part of SAPEA and are encouraged to participate actively. Opportunities for involvement include nominating Fellows to SAPEA working groups, hosting working group meetings, hosting outreach events and helping SAPEA to communicate the achievements of the project.