Scientific Advice Mechanism

Secure digital identities for
the Digital Single Market in Europe

A workshop of the High Level Group of Scientific Advisors of
the European Commission’s Scientific Advice Mechanism

Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Vilnius, Lithuania
(25-26 October 2016)
On request of Vice-President Andrus Ansip (Digital Single Market) and Commissioner Guenther Oettinger (Digital Economy and Society), the High Level Group of Scientific Advisors of the European Commission’s Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM HLG) agreed at its first meeting on 29 January 2016 to provide a scientific opinion on the topic of cybersecurity.

The concrete scope of the Scientific Advice requested is described in the scoping paper, in particular the issues at stake, the EU policy landscape relevant to cybersecurity (such as the Cybersecurity strategy, the Digital Single Market Strategy and the European Agenda on Security) and the potential areas and questions for evidenced based policy-making.

Through further consideration of the main priorities described by Vice President Ansip when he presented the request to the SAM HLG on 29 January 2016, the SAM High Level Group agreed at its second meeting on 17 March 2016 to focus its work on the question of digital identities for a Digital Single Market in Europe.

The SAM HLG organized a workshop in Vilnius (Lithuania) on 25-26 October 2016 addressing cybersecurity and secure digital identities. The workshop is a key milestone that provides an interactive platform to gather evidence and initiate discussions that will contribute to the preparation of the opinion of the SAM HLG.

The aims of the workshop were specifically:

- To define, justify and explain the key issues - current as well as emerging challenges and opportunities
- To gather and discuss the scientific evidence

Top scientific experts from the domains of information technology and computer security, as well as from social sciences, humanities and law, took part (see the list of participants). In addition, representatives from different groups of stakeholders participated, notably businesses, civil society and public administrations.

The European Academies, notably EASAC (European Academies Science Advisory Council), ALLEA (All European Academies), Academia Europae and Euro-CASE (European Council of Applied Sciences, Technologies and Engineering), supported the workshop by suggesting experts. In addition, representatives of the H2020 project
managed by the European Academies to support SAM (the “SAPEA” project, starting in November 2016 for 4 years) also took part.

The SAM HLG was represented by its four members who were mandated to cover the cybersecurity topic (Pearl Dykstra, Rolf-Dieter Heuer, Cédric Villani and Janusz Bujnicki).

The workshop addressed the following topics, based on the issues mentioned in the scoping paper and the SAM HLG deliberations (see the programme for more details):

1. Understanding digital identities through a multidisciplinary approach
2. The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis) of digital identities
3. Privacy and security
4. Security and trust in the digital world

The workshop was structured in four sessions (one for each topic above) addressing a more detailed set of questions that were developed by the SAM HLG with the support of the SAM Secretariat (see the programme for more details). Each session was chaired by two SAM HLG Members and moderated by two invited experts. Moreover, one or two opening presentations were given in each session by experts, followed by an open debate.

The workshop discussion was held under Chatham House rule (not attributing the statements to a person without his/her consent) and all participants were asked to speak in their personal capacity. Taking into account the number of topics addressed within a very strict timetable, participants were invited to send further inputs (e.g. short notes and reference documents) on the issues covered during the workshop within 10 days to the SAM Secretariat. These inputs may also be taken into account as part of the evidence gathered through the workshop. As a core rule, only publicly available information will be used in the HLG’s Scientific Opinion.

The following European Commission Directorates-General participated also in the workshop:

- Communications Networks, Content & Technology (DG CONNECT)
- Joint Research Centre (DG JRC)
• Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW)
• Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME)
• Research and Innovation (DG RTD) – SAM secretariat
• Informatics - Computer Emergency Response Team of the EU institutions (CERT-EU)

EUROPOL, European Union’s law enforcement agency, also took part in the discussions.

All workshop documents (including the programme, the list of participants and the presentations) are published on the SAM website.

The outcome of the workshop will be discussed by the SAM HLG at its fifth meeting on 24 November 2016. The evidence-gathering process will continue, as necessary. In addition, a stakeholder workshop is planned in February 2017 to present an advanced draft version of the SAM HLG’s opinion. The aim is to finalise and publish it in March 2017.