



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
 ENTERPRISE AND INDUSTRY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

**MANDATE OF THE SECURE SOCIETIES ADVISORY GROUP ADVISORY GROUP FOR
 HORIZON 2020 – THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

TASK

Under the Specific Programme implementing Horizon 2020 (2014/2020), the Commission is responsible for drawing up the work programmes. In doing so, the Commission wishes to draw on the best possible external advice.

Members of the Secure Societies Advisory Group should provide consistent and consolidated advice to the Commission services during the preparation of the Horizon 2020 work programme, regarding the Secure Societies Challenge of the Specific Programme.

Advice should be provided on relevant objectives and scientific, technological and innovation priorities by way of opinions, recommendations or reports.

Advice should pertain to all activities under this Secure Societies Challenge, including, where relevant, international cooperation; multidisciplinary, including social and economic sciences and humanities, and cross-cutting research and innovation; responsible research and innovation including gender; research career development, doctoral training, and skills; bridging from discovery to market application; responding to emerging needs and unforeseen policy needs; sustainable development and climate change; dissemination, knowledge transfer and broader public engagement; SME participation; and societal and economic impact.

The Advisory Group must provide a written input to be made public for each work programme. The advice received from the Group will complement other sources of external advice received by the Commission services. While providing the Group with feedback on the use of the advice and input given, the Commission and its services retain the right of initiative. The Advisory Group does not take binding decisions.

The Group may also be consulted in the preparation of the strategic programme, the planning document setting out key orientations on a three year basis to guide the preparations of the work programmes.

The Group may be asked to provide recommendations on potential experts evaluators in relation to calls for proposals under their mandate. The final selection of experts will remain the responsibility of the Commission services and funding bodies.

CAPACITY

Experts participate in the Group in their individual capacity or as individuals representing an interest or an organisation.

Experts commit themselves to discuss questions put forward and provide advice in their relevant field of expertise to the best of their ability and in the best interest of EU research and innovation. They also commit themselves to respect the rules related to confidentiality and conflicts of interest.

Advice to the Commission is the result of discussions within the Group. This advice is expected to represent the consensus view of the Group. However, in the event that a consensus cannot be found, for whatever reason, individual experts may request to have divergent views recorded.

As well as bringing forward their own collective expertise, the Group may also be a focal point for processing inputs from across society related to this challenge. The Group will thereby support outreach and strengthening of the Commission services' dialogue with a wider group of stakeholders.

COORDINATION OF ADVISORY GROUPS

To avoid fragmentation and to ensure that cross-cutting issues and opportunities for joint action are identified, the Group Chairs are to meet on a regular basis. In addition, the experts with expertise in the mainstreamed cross-cutting issues like, for instance, gender may also meet on a regular basis to provide a critical mass of specialised expertise to assist with additional horizontal advice on such important issues, while at the same time ensuring clear links between the horizontal and more specialised level.

DURATION OF SERVICE

Each expert will serve for a period of two years with the possibility of renewal once for a final period of maximum two more years.

RENEWAL

To ensure a regular rotation of experts and fresh input, up to half of the members of the Group will be replaced every second year (i.e. at the beginning of 2016 and again at the beginning of 2018).

CHAIRS, VICE-CHAIRS, RAPPORTEURS

During the first meeting, the Group shall elect the Chair and, if needed, the Vice-chair by a simple majority for the two-year period.

The Chair – and Vice-chair – will thereafter change every two years when the membership is renewed.

As it is a requirement that each Group provides a written input for each work programme, considerations should be given to nominating a rapporteur.

MEETINGS

The Commission services may choose the frequency of meetings which seems most appropriate, provided that the Group is properly involved in the preparation of each work programme. However, as a general principle, the Group should meet at least 2 times a

year to discuss the general orientations and documents as well as questions put forward by the services.

Working groups composed of a sub-set of experts may be created for specific purposes in agreement with the Commission services. They shall operate in accordance with the rules laid down by the Advisory Group and with the horizontal Commission rules for expert groups, and shall be dissolved as soon as their mandate is fulfilled.

Additional experts may be invited to the meetings of the Group to take part in discussions on a particular subject.

The meetings of the Advisory Group and subgroups shall, in principle, be held on Commission premises.

DATA PROTECTION AND TRANSPARENCY

As the management of an Advisory Group implies collecting and processing private data, the procedures provided for by Regulation (EC) 45/2001¹ apply.

To this end, each Advisory Group designated expert receives, together with the invitation letter, the 'Service Specific Privacy Statement' by which the expert will be informed of the nature of the process.

By signing the declaration of acceptance, each Advisory Group expert agrees to have his or her name made public as a member of the Group, including on the internet, and to the publication of written inputs that are produced by the Advisory Group

Following this procedure, the Commission will make publicly available:

- The names of the Advisory Group experts.
- The written advice provided by the Advisory Group.

The information will be published on the Horizon 2020 website on EUROPA. In addition, the names of the Advisory Group experts are published in the Commission's public register of expert groups.

The work programme to be adopted by the Commission may provide an overview of how the advice provided by the Group and other sources of external advice have been used.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Each Advisory Group expert must sign a declaration of acceptance covering the confidentiality and conflict of interest issues.

The rules on confidentiality and conflict of interest are the following:

¹ Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data (OJ L 8 of 12.1.2001, p. 1).

- The Advisory Group experts as well as experts' representatives and invited experts shall comply with the obligations of professional secrecy laid down by the Treaties and their implementation rules, as well as with the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of EU classified information². Experts are therefore required to not divulge information given in the context of the work of the Advisory Group unless the Commission agrees to release them from the confidentiality obligations. At the same time, experts must ensure the protection of such confidential information and documents with the same level of protection it uses to protect its own confidential information, but in no case any less than reasonable care. Should they fail to comply with these obligations the Commission may take appropriate measures, including, if necessary, the partial or total exclusion of the expert from the Advisory Group meetings.
- The Advisory Group experts must not use confidential information and documents for any purpose other than fulfilling their obligations and must not seek nor act in any way to take advantage of or exercise undue influence on the implementation of Horizon 2020.

Participation in the Group will not be compatible with the following conflicts of interest:

- Assisting the Commission services in evaluating proposals and monitoring projects under the specific areas of research, innovation and technological development covered by this Advisory Group.
- Acting as Member State delegates/representatives or experts/advisers accompanying Member States delegates/representatives, or Associated State observers, in the Programme Committee assisting the Commission; or called as experts before these committees (except the Chair-person of the Group who can be invited by the Chair-person of a Committee to present the work of the Advisory Group).

The Advisory Group experts may participate in consortia under Horizon 2020. However, should any item of the agenda or any subject discussed in a given meeting of the Group be of relevance for projects or proposals under Horizon 2020 that an expert, or the organisation to which he/she belongs, has submitted or is likely to submit, the expert in question should inform the Commission services and the Group of the situation as soon as they are aware. The same applies in other situations that could give rise to a conflict of interest (e.g. involvement of a close family member). The Commission will then take a decision on the participation of the expert on a case by case basis. The person in question may therefore be requested to abstain from the deliberations and/or leave the room during the discussion of the concerned item/subject. If necessary, the expert may be excluded partially or totally from the Advisory Group meetings.

As a general rule, if an expert has a conflict of interest, he/she must declare it to the responsible Commission official as soon as he/she becomes aware of it, and specify the nature of the conflict. The Advisory Group experts must inform the Commission services of all interests, not explicitly stated above, which could be considered prejudicial to their independence or impartiality.

² Commission Decision 2001/844/EC, ESC, Euratom of 29 November 2001 amending its internal Rules of Procedure - <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:317:0001:0001:EN:PDF>

When an Advisory Group expert knowingly conceals a conflict of interest and this is discovered once a member, the Commission will exclude the expert in question from the group, without prejudice to penalties that may derive from other applicable Regulations.

REIMBURSEMENT

Travel and subsistence expenses shall be reimbursed according to Commission decision of 5 December 2007³.

³ Rules on the reimbursement of expenses incurred by experts from outside the Commission invited to attend meetings in an expert capacity, C(2007)5858