



Mr. José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission
European Commission
200 Rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels

6 May 2014

Dear President,

**Science, Governance, and a Stronger European Union –
a strengthened role for the Chief Scientific Advisor**

As the EU seeks, in the aftermath of the major economic crisis, to restore prosperity and re-build public trust, we believe that the time has come to place scientific evidence at the heart of governance.

Science, its insights and methods, is the bedrock on which our living standards are based. It fuels investment and innovation, delivering new ways of meeting our diverse needs, solving pressing social problems, and enhancing freedoms. As such, it is a precondition for achieving an ever stronger European Union.

For policy-makers, scientific evidence provides ways of identifying potential harms and of developing effective ways to mitigate risks, such that the benefits of government intervention justify costs and unintended consequences are avoided. Evidence-based decisions, derived from the best available science, build trust, enhance legitimacy, and reduce the risk of regulatory failure. They also provide a predictable policy context within which trade and investment flow freely and innovation flourishes.

Within the European Commission and notably under your leadership, there is recognition of this and positive steps have been taken to encourage the use of high quality science whenever officials develop policy, laws and rules. We welcome these initiatives.

Particularly important was your initiative to create the position of the Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA), successfully put into practice by Prof. Anne Glover in the last two years.

We see the CSA as a key proponent in science-based decision-making to make the important role of science more visible in the EU-Institutions as well as establish an independent reference partner for science stakeholders close to the Commission President and independent of single Directorate Generals.

In order to further improve the process of science governance we would encourage you and your successor as Commission President to further institutionalize the role of scientific evidence in the political process.



We would recommend to look into the following changes to develop the position of the CSA:

1. The position of the CSA should remain close to the President of the Commission with the mandate to act independently, its own resources and administratively separate from BEPA, so it can adequately fulfil its task as strong voice for science in the European Commission.
2. To ensure transparency and credibility, the Commission should establish a new, coherent policy for the collection and use of scientific advice. Based on a formal process of evidence gathering, including strict scientific standards, it should be the task of the Joint Research Center to consolidate a scientific opinion, and provide the CSA with it.
3. The CSA should be supported by Scientific Advisors in all relevant DGs. These SAs should be placed with the respective Director General and manage the liaison to the CSA. They should manage the calls for procurement and feed the evidence back to the DGs as long as proposals are in a draft stage.
4. The CSA should have a formal role in the Impact Assessment Board as well as during the Interservice Consultation. The CSA should also have the mandate to voice scientific evidence in the Commissions decision-making process. The College of Commissioners should then lay out its argumentation, in case it chooses to overrun the official scientific opinion.
5. The CSA should play a guiding role in the Science and Technology Advisory Council (STAC), the evolving network of national science advisors, and the better coordination of chief scientists in the European institutions and agencies to ensure improved cooperation between experts as well as high standards for science advice in the EU. Also the relationship to science expertise in other regions, in particularly to the USA, should be strengthened.
6. The CSA should also take an active part in improving science communication and a structured exchange with science stakeholders to advance understanding of science in Europe. It is important to raise awareness on best practice in science communication in certain member states that could be adapted in other countries or on the European level.

This clearer mandate for the Chief Scientific Advisor should make it possible to give scientific evidence its adequate role in the European policy-making process.

We would look forward to the opportunity to discuss these ideas in more detail.

Yours sincerely,


Emma Marcegaglia