

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS THE ACADEMIA EUROPAEA **Eugen Seibold, Freiburg/Breisgau**

When Anne Buttimer asked me to contribute a report about the early history of the Academia Europaea (AE), it was the first time after more than twenty years that I looked for the notes which I had kept about its planning and preparations in the years 1984 -1988.

In these years I was not only president of the European Science Foundation (ESF) in Strasbourg (from January 1985 to 1990) but was charged with many other demanding international and national commitments (1980 -1985 president of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) in Bonn and from July 1987 to the end of 1988 acting president of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) in Ottawa because William Hutchison had unexpectedly passed away, the Balzan Price committee in Milano, commissions in the German Geological Survey and the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung). By these reasons my notes concerning the AE are often short and may have some omissions.

For this report, I follow these notes which evoke of course many remembrances, especially about the frequent conversations with Sir Arnold Burgen. The essence were the aims, possible activities, especially the relations to ESF and a balanced choice of founding members. It was obvious that this planning would need time.

I got some first informations about AE in the DFG office in September 1984. On occasion of a meeting of European research ministers, Peter Brooke (UK) had proposed a European Academy of sciences "to strengthen the influence of science against Brussels bureaucracy". In October 1984 the Royal society most notably in the person of Sir Arnold became active. The need of „a common unity of distinction in research to rediscover European identity“ was emphasized.

Until autumn 1986 this activity was not discussed in ESF Board and Executive meetings. Robert van Lieshout and David Spearman had visited me 1985 in Bonn to discuss the eventual participation of ESF in the US Deep Sea Drilling Project. Perhaps the plan for AE was also mentioned. My first talks with Sir Arnold about AE are noted September 1986 and October 3 on occasion of a ESF Committee meeting in Strasbourg and during the General Assembly of ESF November 18 to 20. First general topics were the structure and names of possible founding members for a "European Association of Scientists". At a meeting in the Royal Society in London October 21st and 22nd 1986, Sir Arnold presented a memorandum about a "European Academy acting notably in concert with ESF". Participants were Lord Flowers, van Lieshout, Magnusson, Canovas, Cappelletti, Curien and Seibold.

As far as I can remember, I had earlier proposed a Think Tank Meeting for the ESF Executive Council with some guests to define the further development of ESF in general. It took place in Marlenheim near Strasbourg 29th to 30th October. Discussions about AE. were also included.

As a result, Michael Posner, the secretary general of ESF since summer 1986, wrote on November 11th a letter to Sir Arnold defining some possible problems:

1. It seemed doubtful whether eminent active scientists in their forties or so would attend more general oriented assemblies instead of participating in smaller meetings of their specialities.

2. Furthermore it seemed difficult to define the number of members who should represent the elite of European Scholars.

Up to the present I feel that these arguments illustrate ongoing problems.

The memorandum was officially addressed on 17th to 18th December 1986 in Strasbourg where all in attendance of the mentioned London meeting participated. Unfortunately I had to stay in a Freiburg hospital for surgery.

In the January 1st 1987 issue of "Nature" an article of Robert Walgate dealt with the situation in Brussels regarding "Eureka" etc. He said that the activities will only be successful if a European framework for upstream research was improved by a "Researchers Europe", but is hampered by lack of funds and national egoisms.

This was clearly in favour of AE.

Sir Arnold informed me in a letter of January 5th about the results of the December meeting. Ten days later he came for a visit to Freiburg. Inside the ESF the general opinion remained one of: „no obstacles, but no hurry“. The most important point was to avoid overlapping activities. Nevertheless the discussions with Sir Arnold went already into many details. Important points were the nomination and number of founding members. Sir Arnold had wide knowledge about personalities by his position in the Royal Society and his activities in ESF, but more proposals from humanities and social sciences were still needed.

The next meeting took place in London January 27th, 1987. In order to prepare it I drafted a scheme for private use (see fig. x). Therein I stressed on AE tasks: 1. To improve the links of individual top scientists in Europe and 2. The organisation of annual multidisciplinary meetings. The result of the meeting was a comprehensive questionnaire which Sir Arnold drafted afterwards. In my mind it was a masterpiece concerning all topics from generalities down to every details. It was sent to the members of the founding group. The comments became the base for a „clear document“ drafted again by Sir Arnold defining aims, structure, activities, number of members, relations to other organisations and funding of the "European Society of Scientists:" We thought that such a document was needed especially to approach sponsors. It was distributed March 31th, 1987. In a letter of the same day Sir Arnold asked me for comments. Due to a number of long trips I was only able to answer briefly on April 20th with some short personal remarks:

- 1) Multi- and Interdisciplinary: Information, communication, establishing and improving contacts and eventually initiating projects. Special fields are very well covered by the European Learned Societies as I could observe during

the EUG IV Congress in Strasbourg some days ago (about 1800 participants and mostly young scientists!). Additionally EEC and ESF are active in these special branches. COLMAR -Type activities were not too encouraging however. 2) Cooperation in scientific activities seem to be well covered by ESF, ERC, ESA, CERN, ILT, etc.

1) and 2) are improving mobility and the „Euro-sense.“.

3) The „voice of European science“ to media, politicians , governments etc. is very weak. Therefore I think that improvements in 1) and 3) could well be a base for „the European society of Scientists“. However I would prefer a Latin translation of this title.

More details were adressed in London on May 29th. In this meeting additional proposals were discussed by the founding group.

1. It was agreed that the name of the society should be in Latin.

2. Europe was defined geographically. The ordinary members from these countries could be completed by foreign or associated members. For the first few years some 5000 ordinary membes should be elected. At the beginning the founding group should be enlarged to about 20, later to 100 members responsible for the election of the first 1000 members. The next group meeting should include a presentation of a theme of general scientific interest. To finance the planned activities a total budget of 90 0000 £ was proposed for 1988, 280 000 for 1989 and 430 000 for 1990. In the discussion of additional names for founding members I strongly recommended Jacques Tits (Mathematics/France) and Renate Mayntz (Sociology/Germany).

On July 2nd, 1987 I presented the results of the meeting to the ESF based on a detailed report from Sir Arnold.

On December 11th, 1987 Twelve founding members including Tits and Mayntz met in London. The age of officers and council members should be restricted to 70 years. Van Lieshout and Magnusson were proposed to become AE Vicepresidents. This was a gesture of goodwill for excellent relations with ESF. The functions of AE were finally defined and the group including myself was optimistic and ambitious. AE should act as a “voice for European scientists providing independent nonpolitical advice in scientific matters.“.

After this meeting, I had fewer opprtunities to contribute to tAE's further development. In my position as acting president of IUGS I had to attend to business in Ottawa and prepare the next International Geological Congress in Washingtonj D.C, together with the preparations for the election of its new president. That means that I was often abroad in China, the two Americas and Europe. Additionally, in 1988 I reached the age of 70 and due to the new rules (which I had supported) I retired - with some real regrets - from the official founding group.

However, I continued to observe events, though with only scanty personal notes, and assisted where I could in answering criticisms of AE. : In July 1988 Sir Arnold had to answer a letter from the president of the Académie des Sciences in Paris, Alain Horeau who had expressed some

concern about AE. Being a member in Paris, I was approached, too. Sir Arnold responded summarizing that the birth of AE was certainly not hasty, with discussions going back to 1984. These are continuing to guarantee a balance of specialists and nationalities of the founding members and also in general. Many existing academies -like European organisations did not seem to be very influential and others like the efforts of Prigogine in Brussels are only in statu nascendi. The mostly very ancient national academies are of very different importance.

A possible cooperation should be discussed during the foundig meeting of AE in Cambridge in September 1988 where all the presidents would be invited. Finally, all the founding members would do their best to ensure that no single nation would dominate either in the number of members, in the location of meetings or in funding.

Looking back, I am pleased that I had the chance to support in many ways and under sometimes difficult conditions the start of a new initiative to bring Europe together.

EUROPEAN NEEDS	ESF CONTRIBUTION	OTHERS	ESSS THINGS
EUROPEAN ACTIVITIES IN SCIENCE	ADD. ACTIVITIES ODP etc	CEE/ESA etc	2 MONY? ? BRINGING NEW IDE
VOICE FOR EUROPEAN SCIENCE	PRTLY, RECOM MENDATIONS AS ENTR	PRTLY CEE TO GOVERNMENTS LEARNED SOC.	+ IF ESTABLISHES AND KNOWN
ADVICE TO GOVERNMENTS	NOT EFFECTIVE UP TO NOW	?	+ " " "
LINK INDIVIDUAL SCIENTISTS; UNIV-RESINST. - GOVNT-INDUSTRY	JUST BEGIN- ING (NETWORKS)	LEARNED SOCISTIS	+ "
ANNUAL MEETINGS: SPECIALITIES MULTI-DISCIPLINARY	- (COLL TRF)	LEARNED SOC -	- "
REPORTS SIMILAR TO NAS - USA	-	?	+ BUT WHAT STYLE MONEY?
IMPROVE MOBILITY	+	CEE, CEE etc	INTERLECTUREL OTHERWISE: MOND
AWARDS, PRICES etc	-	KOSBER PRICE etc	ONLY SEVERAL OTHER SEVERAL GEN
BETTER COOPERATION, CENTRAL ORGANIS. FOR HEADQUARTERS, LEARNED SOC	HEADQUARTERS MEMBERS	?	?? INDIVIDUAL PRIORITY?
			PERSONAL VIEWS
			SERBOLD 27