

Letter from the President - September 2016

The long, hot summer is coming to an end and we are looking forward to an increasingly exciting time for the Academia Europaea. I am drafting this letter whilst travelling back to Utrecht from Oxford following my participation in the [Young Academy of Europe](#)'s annual meeting. The new YAE President is [Professor Hagit Amirav](#) (Humanities and Social Sciences Domain), who happens to be based in Amsterdam and so, we can interact on a regular basis. [Nicole Grobert](#) now assumes the role of a Vice Chair for the coming year. It was pleasing to see that unlike the senior academy Board of Trustees, the YAE Board has a balance in gender representation. Can I please remind all AE members, that the YAE would welcome your nomination of any younger scholars that you are familiar with, as candidates for election to the YAE. The procedure is on the [YAE website](#) (via our home page link).



I am pleased to report, that since our Cardiff Annual conference in June, we are able to welcome 185 new members into our community this year. The next call for nominations of possible new members will **open on December 1st**, so look out for the announcement in a future newsletter – all members can nominate candidates for membership, for any section. Elections will take place in September 2017.

Also at Cardiff, Professor [Xavier Costa-Guix](#) (Architecture - Barcelona) was elected by the members attending the AGM as an independent member of the Council.

Over the summer, our new award – **The Adam Kondorosi- AE award for Early Career Investigators**, was presented at the [12th European Nitrogen Fixation Conference](#), held in Budapest on August 25. The winner was a young researcher - **Simona Radutoiu**, in recognition of her outstanding scientific achievements in plant science. The event was well attended and highly appreciated by the scientific community. I introduced the award and the winner.

In 2017 the **senior Adam Kondorosi –AE award** will be made during our Budapest annual conference. The call for nominations and terms for the award in the plant sciences, will be published on our website and in a newsletter announcement. Perhaps our Classes and other Sections might consider setting up their own awards and finding sponsorship.

I recently had the honour to visit Bergen to meet with the Rector of Bergen University – **Professor Dag Rune Olsen MAE**, and to sign a new Hub agreement modelled on that for Cardiff. I was honoured that the University will now host the Hub and I am sure Jan Vaagen, Laszlo Csernai and colleagues at Bergen will provide us with a dynamic programme covering our Northern Seas region, in the near future.

Our [Wroclaw Hub](#) (the team of Ola Nowak, Kasia Majkowska and Prof. Tadeusz Luty, the Academic Director) have put together two excellent young scholars events for later this month. The Hub is also strengthening its role as a focus for Central and Eastern European Scholars through workshops to improve accessibility to ERC and H2020 programmes. I would like to specifically thank the Hub staff for their support in mailing out welcome packs to all our new members.

I would also like to announce that our Board member Prof. [Eva Kondorosi](#), has been elected as a Vice President of the ERC with responsibility to co-ordinate the life sciences domain of the ERC.

Our [Barcelona Hub](#) (Prof. Ricard Guerrero, Academic Director) recently sent out a newsletter announcing their future events, in particular the [November 21st Disputatio debate](#). This is a wonderful event and follows a tradition that goes back to medieval Catalonia. Details are on the Hub website. Please try to attend this prestigious event in wonderful Barcelona.

The **Cardiff Hub** (Prof. Ole Petersen, Academic Director and AE Treasurer) organised an excellent June annual conference and their report and photos can be found on their [Hub website](#). The hub is currently focussed on finalising the AE participation in the new and very important H2020 project to provide the European Commission with independent scientific advice. We are in partnership with ALLEA, EASAC, FEAM and EuroCASE in the project. Final negotiations are ongoing and I am hopeful that the four-year contract will be ready to sign by the end of October.

One early action has been an invitation to the consortium by the Commission's High-level Group for Science Advice to participate in an event in Vilnius, on **Cybersecurity**. Already several months ago, we submitted names of recommended AE members for Commission consideration on this topic. I am especially pleased now to see that our members Professors Cedric Villani, Josep Domingo-Ferrer, Erol Gelenbe, Bart Preneel and Adi Shamir are listed as co-organisers and invited experts. We can expect substantially more AE member opportunities for involvement in science advice topics as the SAPEA project unfolds.

This brings me to an important message to all members.

This H2020 project [acronym SAPEA - Science Advice for Policy by European Academies] is highly prestigious and very visible and it puts the AE directly into a high profile and important position within the European landscape and in particular with the European Commission.

The project approach is a radical (and risky) departure for the Commission and there is a lot at stake.

So, it is vital that we play a full and active part in the project. Our Cardiff and London teams have been working on the details and Louise Edwards, in Cardiff, will manage our 'advice' and topic involvement on a day-to-day basis, including the identification and selection of AE members as experts. So, to ensure our full participation, we need to improve the member expertise data that we hold, and enhance the searchability of such data. Whilst such an improvement is necessary for the SAPEA project itself, the development will benefit the AE as an organisation, over the longer-term.

To undertake this and other related developments requires that all members, where possible, make a financial contribution on an annual basis. If I said to you that as of now, nearly one third of members have still not made a donation for 2016, you will not perhaps be surprised at my next statement, which is;

We intend to focus our database development, data capture and any subsequent selection of international experts only on those of our members who demonstrate that they see the AE as a beneficial organisation. The indicator for this is an annual donation.

Those members who have made a donation for 2016 and earlier will be included.

So, if you have not yet made a donation this year and see high quality, independent scientific and academic advice to European policy makers, as important issues for the AE and other Academies to

be involved in and you want to be engaged in this project - **please make your contribution for 2016 before the end of the year.**

Finally for this letter: please remember that you all have (unlimited) personal webspace on our website and can update your own data, access the European Review online, all as part of your membership. You need to log in to your account on the ae-info.org website. If you need any help please contact the Graz information center team who are providing us with an excellent service.

A word about the Annual Conference 2017

Can I encourage all of you to put 4th-7th September 2017 into your diaries for the 29th Annual Conference (jointly with ALLEA) at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The topic will be *Resilience and Sustainability* and there will be an exciting excursion to the Lake Balaton area.

Plans are well advanced with our partners, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, ALLEA and the Young Academy of Europe. Our esteemed member Prof. Balazs Gulyas is spearheading the organising group. The **key dates are September 4 – 6, 2017** with an optional geological-social excursion on 7 September – a traditional and enjoyable end to our annual meetings that is open to all delegates.



Our 2016 cohort of new members will have a special place in the programme, with a dedicated reception and welcome event.

I am also honoured, to announce that **we will award Professor Helga Nowotny MAE with the Gold Medal of the Academia Europaea**, in recognition of her major contributions over many years, to the development of European Science, in particular through her inspirational leadership on behalf of and for the European Research Council.

Sierd Cloetingh
September 2016