

Letter from the President - Summer 2016

Before we all start a well-deserved summer break, I have several important items to raise with you all.

Firstly, my personal welcome to the **205 new members** elected on 26th June. 174 of these new members have already accepted their invitation to join. I'm looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible at our 2017 Annual Conference in Budapest. We will arrange a dedicated 'meet and greet' buffet reception for the 2016 cohort. Keep an eye on the [main AE website](#) for the launch of the next nominations cycle - from 1st December.



Annual Conference 2016

My thanks go to Ole Petersen and his team of Judith Lockett and Louise Edwards, who organised an exceptional Conference in Cardiff at the end of June. We had some wonderful speakers and a stimulating debate session on the new [Scientific Advice Mechanism](#) (SAM). The Conference was also the formal Cardiff Hub launch event and we can expect a dynamic programme to develop in the future as a complement to our other three hubs. A highlight of Cardiff was the **2016 Erasmus Lecture** given by Professor Martin Rees on *From Mars to the Multiverse*. My thanks to Professor Gerry Gilmore for his wonderful laudation. The lecture will be published in a future volume of the *European Review*. You can find a full report and photographs on the [Cardiff Hub website](#).



My personal thanks to Professor Dianne Edwards, who organised a wonderful coastal excursion that included some excellent geology, natural history and a fabulous lunch at a 13th-century thatched roof pub - a perfect end to the meeting. Poor Dianne was unable to take part due to a broken arm suffered a few days prior to the Conference. Get well soon, Dianne.

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.



European developments

Brexit is on everyone's lips. It was a strong topic of discussion at the Cardiff Conference, as it coincided with the UK referendum result. We have all seen the various reactions in the press and media. As you all know, the AE is in a project consortium (called SAPEA) with ALLEA, FEAM, EuroCASE and EASAC to provide scientific advice to the EU. This will be funded out of Horizon 2020 for four years and we are expecting to start later this year. The AE is a not-for-profit charitable company registered in the UK, so naturally people are wondering whether we will be able to partner in the project. The answer is at this time, yes. Until the UK Government activates Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty and has completed the period of withdrawal, nothing changes. As President, I can categorically state that the Board of Trustees will ensure that the AE retains its position with regard to EU funding and the SAPEA project. However, I also want to make clear that the Academia Europaea was established in 1988 as a pan-European academy. Our individual membership of almost 4,000 is drawn from all disciplines and all countries of the whole continent of Europe, both EU and non-EU states. Our purpose is to support and promote the widest cooperation between scholars of all disciplines and countries and to encourage the free movement of ideas, knowledge and people. That mission remains clear and is as strong now as it was when defined by the founding fathers.

So, as we all take advantage of the summer, I will end this letter with a personal view as an earth scientist. European science and scholarship depends on the maintenance of freedoms of dialogue, exchange of ideas and practical cooperation. Science and scholarship, like geology, recognise no geopolitical or economic borders. I am strongly of the opinion that, more than ever in the coming months and years, European scholarship will need the collaborative support of the Academia Europaea and other similar pan-European academy organisations to maintain the cohesive strengths of our European scientific community. I am personally confident that the current turbulence will be temporary and that we will find a pragmatic way through this period.

Have a good summer.

Sierd Cloetingh
July 2016