



ACADEMIA EUROPAEA  
CARDIFF KNOWLEDGE HUB

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PROMOTING  
**RESEARCH  
EXCELLENCE**  
FOR **POLICY**  
AND **PROGRESS**

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2020

## INTRODUCTION

### Welcome to our Annual Report 2020.

In the report, we summarise our progress towards meeting the goals we set ourselves for the year. This is the first year of our new Strategic Plan, which runs from 2020 to 2023. When we introduced it, we obviously had no awareness that a pandemic was to arrive in the Spring. Since March, the Cardiff Hub team has been working from home and, with no physical meetings possible, we have had to adapt quickly, developing our online capacity and capability.

On the first of our primary objectives, we have completed work on our third evidence review for the European Commission. The report, *Biodegradability of Plastics in the Open Environment*, was published by the SAPEA consortium in December. This was the first review to be conducted from beginning to end solely by virtual means rather than physical meetings. The success we have had in fostering a sense of collegiality between members of the expert group has demonstrated that it is possible to collaborate in completely new ways.

Indeed, our willingness to embrace the digital world has become integral to delivering our programme of work. This year, we made the transition from physical to online events, with three major webinars taking place on important topics. One obvious advantage of bringing down barriers of distance and time is that we have been able to attract large international audiences, helping to raise our profile across the world.

Despite the uncertainties that 2021 may bring, we have shown ourselves capable of rising to challenges, and we are developing our sustainability planning with that aim in mind.

I would like to thank members of the Hub Steering Group and, in particular, our first Chair, Sir John Skehel MAE FRS. I am delighted that Sir Mark Walport MAE FRS has become our next Chair, with Sir John continuing to serve as a member of the Group.



### Professor Ole Petersen

CBE FMedSci FLSW MAE ML FRS

Academic Director, Academia Europaea Cardiff Knowledge Hub





# HIGHLIGHTS IN 2020

■ Publication and handover of the SAPEA Evidence Review Report on *Biodegradability of Plastics in the Open Environment*, meeting the time schedule agreed with the European Commission



■ Completion and submission of SAPEA's *Sustainability Plan*, the work on which was led by the Cardiff Hub. The Plan is being used by SAPEA to shape its future development



■ A successful transition from physical to online events, with three major webinars that attracted a large international audience



■ Further development of the Hub website, with more in-depth content and greater engagement via social media



Our achievements are set out in the context of the four priorities in the Strategic Plan 2020-2023:

1. Continue to play a major role in providing science advice for policymaking
2. Promote excellence through showcasing outstanding research and engaging with our members
3. Build connections with a wider group of stakeholders
4. Aim to achieve ongoing sustainability of the Cardiff Knowledge Hub



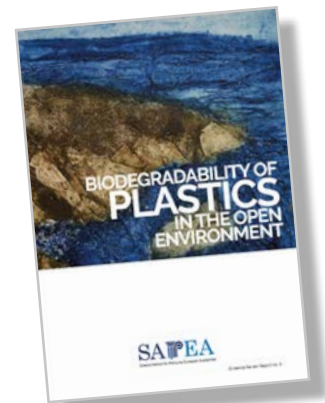
## PRIORITY 1:

### Continue to play a major role in providing science advice for policymaking

Continuing to play a full role in delivering high-quality evidence reviews for policymaking in the SAPEA project and explore other opportunities for providing science advice

The Hub led the latest evidence review undertaken by SAPEA, on the topic of *Biodegradability of Plastics in the Open Environment*. The review has informed the policy-based Scientific Opinion of the European Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. With the first Working Group meeting taking place at the end of February and regular meetings held throughout the period of the pandemic, this was the first review to be conducted entirely via virtual means. The report was presented to Chair of the Advisors, Professor Nicole Grobert, at the official handover event on 14th December. European Commissioners Gabriel and Sinkevičius were in attendance. There will be an extensive campaign of promotion and outreach throughout 2021.

The Hub oversaw a comprehensive systematic review on the European food policy landscape, on behalf of SAPEA. The systematic review was specifically requested by the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors and published in March, alongside SAPEA's Evidence Review Report, *Towards a Sustainable Food System*. The systematic review involved a novel partnership between methodologists (members of Cardiff's Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE) and Cardiff University Library Service) and subject experts. An advisory panel was assembled to support the review, chaired by Professor Terry Marsden, Director of Cardiff's Sustainable Places Research Institute (PLACE) and including Professor Roberta Sonnino, Director of Cardiff's Research Centre for Urban and Regional Food Systems (SURF).



# 2020



**PRIORITY 2:**

**Promote excellence through showcasing outstanding research and engaging with our members**

Showcasing outstanding research, particularly by Academia Europaea members, as well as work led by us in projects, for example, SAPEA. We will engage in public debate on topical issues in research, for example, open access, interdisciplinary approaches, research impact, international collaboration, translational research etc.

Producing really engaging online content has been a priority, due to the constraints on physical events brought about by the pandemic. Throughout the year, we have continued to develop our website and social media communications, as well as maintaining traditional formats like the quarterly newsletter, which is sent to the entire AE membership and other key stakeholders.

The website has been a major focus, with the creation of a regular stream of news stories keeping our online homepage fresh and interesting. In particular, we have been collating articles related to COVID-19, written by members of Academia Europaea. Our dedicated COVID-19 page is in the top 5 most popular pages on our website and the series is also featured on AE's main website.

Our interview series with members of Academia Europaea continues to grow, each interview showcasing their research and exploring views on key issues in their field. In 2020, we published 8 further interviews:



**Professor Peter Barnes MAE FRS**

Professor of Medicine  
National Lung and Heart  
Institute



**Professor Yike Guo MAE**

Professor of Computing Science  
Imperial College London



**Professor Peter Jackson MAE, FBA**

Professor of Human Geography  
University of Sheffield



**Professor Martin McKee MAE**

Professor of European Public Health  
London School of Hygiene and  
Tropical Medicine



**Professor Barbara Prainsack MAE**

Professor of Comparative Policy  
Analysis  
University of Vienna



**Professor Nils-Eric Sahlin MAE**

Professor of Medical Ethics  
University of Lund



**Baroness Onora O'Neill MAE FBA FRS**

Member of the House of Lords



We also published our first video  
interview with:

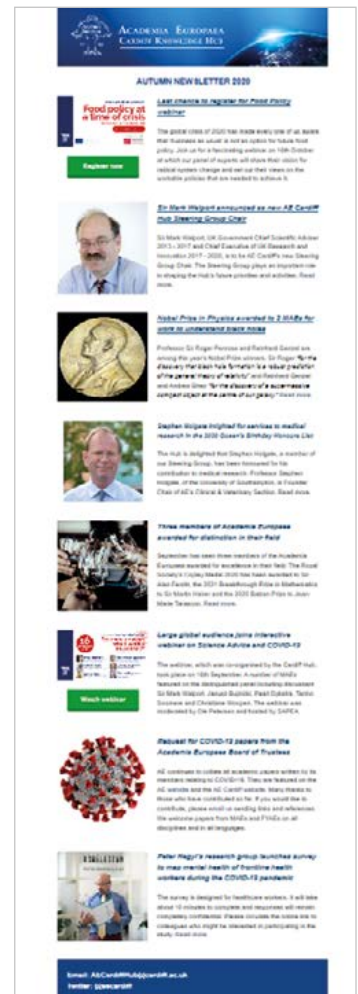
**Gemma Modinos FYAE**

Chair of the Young Academy of  
Europe

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

In February, we published a comprehensive event report, *The Future of Research: Assessing the Impact of Plan S*. The report provides a summary of the talks and discussions that took place at our international symposium, held in collaboration with and hosted by KU Leuven in November 2019.

Everything we feature on our website is the basis for our social media activity. Whilst we undertake some activity on Facebook, Twitter remains our key focus. Our followers have increased significantly this year from 363 to 490. With more followers, we are benefitting from an increasing number of impressions. Our communications via social media successfully raise awareness of the Hub and this in turn drives traffic to the news stories featured on our website and encourages registrations for our events.



**Top Tweet** earned 1,613 impressions

👉 @INGSciAdvice's Global Week of Dialogue starts on Monday!

Looking forward to lots of exciting events around the theme of #ScienceAdvice & #COVID19, including SAPEA's webinar 'Science Advice: what works in a crisis?'

It's not too late to register: [bit.ly/3fvNCCs](https://bit.ly/3fvNCCs)  
[pic.twitter.com/CmA8vVxW1P](https://pic.twitter.com/CmA8vVxW1P)

Part of the INGSA Global Week of Dialogue

**Science advice: what works in a crisis?**

10 September 11.30-12.00 CEST

Register now! [www.sapea.eu/scienceadvice](https://www.sapea.eu/scienceadvice)

**Top Tweet** earned 7,795 impressions

Gemma Modinos @g\_modinos, new Chair of the Young Academy of Europe @yacadeuro, talks about her vision and priorities for the YAE in our first video interview.

Watch the full interview here:  
[bit.ly/3m9U7z5](https://bit.ly/3m9U7z5) [pic.twitter.com/inHbHuEuiJ](https://pic.twitter.com/inHbHuEuiJ)

**Top media Tweet** earned 1,884 impressions

Read a summary of the talks & discussions that took place at our international symposium on #ImpactPlanS @KU\_Leuven.

Distinguished speakers included Open Access Champion for @cOAlitionS\_OA, @JohanRooryck & @ScienceEurope President, @marcschiltz1.

[bit.ly/37cs8GZ](https://bit.ly/37cs8GZ)  
[pic.twitter.com/bVh62DYhWf](https://pic.twitter.com/bVh62DYhWf)

**Top Tweet** earned 4,105 impressions

Listen to Professors Péter Hegyi @TMFoundationHQ, Stephen Holgate @unisouthampton & Ole Petersen @cardiffuni share new perspectives on how to translate scientific evidence into clinical practice.

Webinar: 'The #FutureOfTranslationalMedicine' 29 June

[bit.ly/2YB0wc6](https://bit.ly/2YB0wc6)  
[pic.twitter.com/uQRKcXaK9b](https://pic.twitter.com/uQRKcXaK9b)



Our concerted efforts to showcase our members' achievements and promote our work at such a challenging time has resulted in a significantly improved performance in terms of marketing impact, as the table below illustrates.

Summary of online marketing impact, comparison between 2019 and 2020. Data from 1st January – 31st December 2020				
	Indicator	2019	2020	Performance improvement compared to same period 2019
WEBSITE	Number of visits to the Hub website	7,546	12,986	↑ 72.0%
	Number of pages viewed on the Hub website	20,290	28,328	↑ 39.6%
	Number of new users	5,199	9,893	↑ 90.2%
TWITTER	Number of impressions	110,833	126,991	↑ 14.5%
	Number of active user engagements (e.g. re-tweets, likes) with the Hub Twitter account	2,254	2,815	↑ 24.8%
	Number of Twitter followers	363	490	↑ 34.9%

### PRIORITY 3:

## Build connections with the wider group of stakeholders

Reaching out to and engage with a wider group of Hub stakeholders, including higher education and research institutions, political bodies, academies and the general public.

We started the year with two physical events, both linked to the *Making Sense of Science for Policy* Evidence Review Report, the work on which was led by the Cardiff Hub.

On 11th February, a well-attended workshop took place at the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, to discuss the Evidence Review Report and its implications for policymaking at European and national level. The speakers at the workshop included Professor Rolf-Dieter Heuer (then Chair of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors); Professor Ole Petersen (in his capacity as Vice-President, Academia Europaea and Director of the AE Cardiff Hub); Professor Maria Baghramian (SAPEA Working Group) and Professor Peter Halligan (Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales).



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

On 30th January, a panel discussion was hosted by the Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange (CUSPE) at Magdalene College, Cambridge University. Speakers at the workshop included Professor Ole Petersen (representing SAPEA and the AE Cardiff Hub), Professor Susan Owens and Professor Andy Stirling, both members of the Working Group that produced the Evidence Review Report.



Following the outbreak of the pandemic, we began making plans for webinars to replace physical events.

In June, the AE Cardiff Hub organised its first ever webinar to support Academia Europaea's Translational Medicine project. *The Future of Translational Medicine* attracted an international audience, with almost 300 people from 28 countries participating in the live session. The webinar was sponsored by MDPI and the Journal of Clinical Medicine. Professor Ole Petersen chaired the panel, which also included Professor Péter Hegyi MAE and Sir Stephen Holgate MAE.



A major international webinar on *Science Advice: What works in a Crisis?* took place on 16th September as a satellite event of INGSAs Global Week of Dialogue. Chaired by Professor Ole Petersen and with Sir Mark Walport as discussant, it featured a distinguished panel of speakers. The event was a collaboration between the Hub, SAPEA, the JRC, the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors and the European Group on Ethics (EGE). Over 240 participants attended the live session from 36 countries and the recording continues to be viewed on YouTube.

[sapea.info/events/science-advice-crisis](https://sapea.info/events/science-advice-crisis)  
**Science advice: what works in a crisis?**  
Moderated by Ole Petersen, Academia Europaea

<b>Pearl Dykstra</b> Deputy Chair, European Commissioners Group of Chief Scientific Advisors	<b>Christiane Woopen</b> Chair, European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies
<b>Ortwin Renn</b> Chair, SAPEA working group on Making Sense of Science for Policy	<b>Janusz Bujnicki</b> Recent member, Group of Chief Scientific Advisors
<b>David Mair</b> Head of Unit, Joint Research Centre	<b>Tarmo Soomere</b> President, European Science Advisors Forum

A webinar on *Food policy at a time of crisis: What should the future look like?* took place on World Food Day, 16th October. Chaired by Professor Ole Petersen, the webinar was a collaboration between the Hub, SAPEA, Cardiff's Sustainable Places Research Institute (PLACE) and the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. An audience of 160 from 36 countries attended and the webinar is still being viewed on YouTube.

**Food policy at a time of crisis: what should the future look like?**  
16 October, 14:00 CEST  
Register now! [sapea.info/food-webinars](https://sapea.info/food-webinars)

SAPEA has received funding from the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number [number]



**PRIORITY 4:****Ensure future sustainability**

Aiming to achieve ongoing sustainability of the Cardiff Knowledge Hub.

In June, SAPEA published its *Sustainability Plan*, which lays out a roadmap for the consortium's future development in providing evidence for the European Commission's Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. Overseen by Academia Europaea, the work on the plan was undertaken by the Hub, with an interim report in 2019 and the final Plan in 2020.

We reported last year that the SAPEA project had been extended to end-2021, without additional budget. Over the summer, SAPEA has awarded an extra 600,000 EUR, to be used for science advice activities related to COVID-19. The Cardiff Hub will be able to bid for a share of this budget, in return for undertaking relevant work.



# 2020

## RESOURCES

### Staffing



Academic Director  
**Professor Ole Petersen**  
CBE FLSW FMedSci FRS MAE



Knowledge Hub Manager  
**Louise Edwards**



Executive Officer  
**Juliet Davies**



Executive Officer (Projects)  
**Dr Mildred Foster**

### Finance

Under the Cooperation Agreement between Academia Europaea and Cardiff University, the University meets defined salary and non-staff costs. The SAPEA project covers the salary costs of personnel engaged on the project, both in the Hub and Cardiff University Library Services, in addition to associated travel costs.



## GOVERNANCE

The Hub Steering Group plays an important role in shaping the Hub's future priorities and activities. In 2020, AE Cardiff was delighted to welcome two new members to its Steering Group, Sir Mark Walport and Professor Rudolf Allemann. Sir Mark Walport FRS MAE was the UK's Government Chief Scientific Adviser between 2013 and 2017 and the Chief Executive of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) from 2017 to 2020. Professor Rudolf Allemann FLSW is Pro Vice-Chancellor of International and Student Recruitment at Cardiff University. In September, Sir Mark Walport was announced as the new AE Cardiff Hub Steering Group Chair, succeeding Sir John Skehel FRS MAE.

The following distinguished scientists and scholars serve on the Group and we thank them for their support:

**Rudolf Allemann** FLSW

**Yves Barde** MAE FRS

**Nora de Leeuw** FLSW

**Dianne Edwards** CBE FLSW FRS MAE

**Theo D'haen** MAE

**Donald Dingwell** MAE

**Sir Stephen Holgate** CBE MAE

**Genoveva Martí** MAE

**Colin Riordan** FLSW

**Sir John Skehel** FRS MAE

(Chair until 16th September 2020)

**John Tucker** FLSW MAE

**Sir Mark Walport** FRS MAE

(Chair from 16th September 2020)



AE Cardiff Hub Steering Group Meeting, 1st December 2020, chaired by Sir Mark Walport, attended by AE President-elect Marja Makarow



## Acknowledgements

The Cardiff Hub would like to thank colleagues of all organisations that have given us their support in 2020, in particular:

Academia Europaea  
ALLEA, All European Academies  
Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange (CUSPE)  
Cardiff University, in particular the Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE), CU's Library Services and the Sustainable Places Research Institute (PLACE)  
European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC)  
European Group on Ethics (EGE)  
INGSA  
MDPI and the Journal of Clinical Medicine  
Newington Design  
Royal Irish Academy  
Science Advice for Policy by European Academies (SAPEA)  
Translational Medicine Foundation  
Welsh Government  
Welsh Higher Education Brussels (WHEB)  
Young Academy of Europe (YAE)

## About Academia Europaea

**Founded in 1988. Now has more than 4500 leading scientists and scholars as members, including over 70 Nobel laureates. Operates through a network of knowledge hubs in Barcelona, Bergen, Budapest, Cardiff, Tbilisi and Wrocław.**

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