



ACADEMIA
EUROPAEA

CARDIFF

ANNUAL
REPORT
2024

CARDIFF
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL
CAERDYDD

PROMOTING
RESEARCH
EXCELLENCE
FOR POLICY
AND PROGRESS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2024.

This has been a significant year for our work in the European Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM). We have played a full part in all of the evidence reviews and policy recommendations published by the SAM in 2024. Our most important contribution has been our coordination of the evidence review on *Solar Radiation Modification*. We were also pleased to be involved in work by the European Group on Ethics, including its important Statement on *Defending democracy in Europe*, for which Cardiff conducted literature reviews.

Our participation in the second SAPEA project, running from 2022 to 2024, was made possible by our successful application for a grant under the UK funding guarantee for Horizon Europe. Now, with the UK's association to Horizon Europe, we are able to enter the third SAPEA project as full beneficiaries. I am delighted that the consortium's proposal passed evaluation over the summer, with the result that SAPEA3 runs from the start of 2025.

As always, we have run an interesting programme of events this year, with a mix of online, hybrid and in-person events attracting large international audiences. Some are related to our work on science for policy, others address issues around policy for science. It has been very satisfying to collaborate with bodies such as the Learned Society of Wales, Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN) and the Young Academy of Europe.

The quality of our communications work is recognised across Academia Europaea, and we have continued to manage communications with the AE membership, as well as promotion of the AE Annual Conference 2024. In our popular Interview Series, we have showcased the work of MAEs across a range of academic disciplines and fields. As part of our *We stand with Ukraine* campaign, we caught up with the life and experiences of Oleg Krishtal, a leading scientist living and working in Ukraine.

At the end of another busy but satisfying year for the Cardiff Hub, I extend my thanks to our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Wendy Larner FRSNZ FLSW, and to our Steering Group and its Chair, Sir Mark Walport FRS FMedSci FRSE MAE, for their support.



Professor Ole H. Petersen CBE FRS FMedSci ML MAE FLSW
Director of the AE Cardiff Hub



CONTEXT

Our achievements in 2024 are set out in the context of the four priorities in the Strategic Plan 2020-2024.

1. Continue to play a major role in providing science advice for policymaking
2. Promote excellence through showcasing outstanding research and engaging with our membership base
3. Build connections with the wider group of stakeholders
4. Ensure future sustainability

The areas of focus we defined in our Hub Plan for 2024 were to:

- Deliver on commitments in the current SAPEA project (2022-24) and try to secure participation in the renewal of SAPEA (2025-2029). We aimed to support innovation in SAPEA, by investigating the potential, as well as the risks of AI in conducting systematic reviews for policy.
- Offer an engaging programme of events and conferences, as a mix of online-only and physical/hybrid. We set out to foster relationships with partners, such as CONNECTS-UK, the Learned Society of Wales and the Young Academy of Europe. A further objective was to strengthen and coordinate communications of Academia Europaea and its network of hubs.
- Develop our AE Cardiff Hub strategy for 2025-onwards

We delivered on all these, as we describe below.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

■ In the Strategic Advice Mechanism, we led the coordination of an evidence review on *Solar Radiation Modification*, as well as providing significant input to reviews on *AI in Science* and *One Health*. Cardiff also conducted literature reviews to inform the European Group on Ethics' Statement on *Strengthening democracy*. We are part of a consortium that has made a successful grant application for SAPEA3, running from 2025 to 2029.

Scientific Advice Mechanism

to the European Commission

■ Our 2024 programme of events attracted well over 1,000 people, either in-person or online. Our management of communications on behalf of Academia Europaea has resulted in much stronger engagement with the AE membership. We have strengthened our outreach to staff and students at Cardiff University, through featured articles and open events.



■ Attendee feedback:

“Thank you, this was very informative and helpful.”

“Please organise more of these events on this vital subject.”

“This is easily THE most interesting seminar I have ever listened to. Thank you so much Cardiff Uni for facilitating.”

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

1:

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

We will continue 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.

A major piece of work from the Scientific Advice Mechanism has been an evidence review and policy recommendations on opportunities and risks of Solar Radiation Modification (SRM). AE Cardiff led the coordination of the evidence review and partnered with Cardiff University Library Services on two literature reviews, one for the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors and another for the European Group on Ethics. Published in December, the outputs attracted major media attention, including articles in *The Guardian* and *Politico Europe*.

In April, the Scientific Advice Mechanism published its evidence review and policy recommendations on *Successful and timely uptake of AI in science in the EU*. AE Cardiff and Cardiff University Library Services delivered rapid reviews in all four key areas of work (Vision, Process, People and Policy). As part of outreach, AE Cardiff hosted an international webinar in May, *AI and academic publishing: What does the future hold for authors, readers and publishers?* Chaired by Ole Petersen, speakers included members of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, the SAPEA expert working group and major academic publishers. The webinar was attended by 170 people from more than 30 countries.

AE Cardiff and Cardiff University Library Services have been developing their understanding of how AI might be used as a tool to support their systematic review work in SAPEA. This has been done via a literature review, identifying tools and testing them. This work will take off under SAPEA3 (2025-2029), with a dedicated work package for AI.



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

In November, the Scientific Advice Mechanism published its evidence review and policy recommendations on *One Health*, with a focus on cross-sectoral governance. The work was informed by several literature reviews performed by AE Cardiff and Cardiff University Library Services.

In June, the European Group on Ethics (EGE) published its latest Statement, *Defending democracy in Europe*, in response to a request by EC Vice-President Dubravka Šuica. The Statement was informed by a literature review conducted by AE Cardiff and Cardiff University's Library Services. In September, AE Cardiff hosted and chaired a webinar addressing key issues around the state of democracy, especially in the face of rising populism. The event attracted over 50 people from 20 countries.

In November, AE Cardiff hosted two events to raise awareness of the Scientific Advice Mechanism within the UK. The first was a partnership with the Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN), to boost UK engagement with the SAM. The other was run with the Environment Platform Wales, a collaboration between the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and research institutions across Wales. The events attracted over 100 people.

In April, SAPEA published a new *Strategic Development Plan*, with the work coordinated by AE Cardiff. We oversaw a review of existing strategy and operations, including an internal review and consultation with a wide range of external stakeholders. The Working Group responsible for the work was chaired by AE President, Marja Makarow. In June, the Cardiff Hub Manager Louise Edwards presented the Plan to the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors and staff at the European Commission, where it was well received.

In July, AE Cardiff hosted an interactive workshop for academies, as part of a SAPEA series. *Reaching out to society: how academies can maximise the impact of their public engagement* was attended by around 100 representatives from academies. The workshop outlined the purpose of public engagement, highlighted some of the latest trends and methods, and facilitated knowledge-sharing. The main outcomes were written up as part of a deliverable to the European Commission.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

2:

Promote excellence through showcasing outstanding research and engaging with our members

We will showcase 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.

Visits to the AE Cardiff website have increased by 40% this year. Our newly revamped website was launched at the end of the year. Our number of followers on X (formerly Twitter) held steady. In November, we opened a Bluesky account, as an alternative to X and have attracted over 100 followers so far.

This year, we have boosted our Interview Series on the website, with more MAEs than ever before. Interviewees have come from a range of academic disciplines and fields:

Humanities: Cláudia Álvares MAE, Associate Professor of Communication; Rosi Braidotti MAE, Distinguished Professor of Humanities; Kjersti Fløttum MAE, Professor Emerita of French Linguistics; Samuel Lieu MAE, distinguished scholar in the field of ancient history; Li Wei MAE, Professor of Applied Linguistics

Social sciences: Pearl Dykstra MAE, Professor Emerita of Empirical Sociology and past Member of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors; Jiří Přibáň MAE, Professor of Law at Cardiff University; Kate Tchanturia MAE, Professor of Psychology

Exact sciences: Saiful Islam MAE, Professor of Materials Modelling; Nuria Oliver MAE, 2024 winner of the Hypatia European Science Prize

Life sciences: Oleg Krishtal MAE, Neurophysiologist; Nicolas Mathevon MAE, Distinguished Professor of Neurosciences and Animal Behaviour; Kai Simons MAE, Professor of Biochemistry and Cell Biology.



AE Cardiff has again led on communications to the AE membership, on a funded basis. As part of the work, we coordinated a branding refresh for Academia Europaea. We also led on communications work for the AE Annual Conference, held in Wroclaw in November.

We published interviews with incoming AE Hub Directors, David Lordkipanidze MAE (AE Tbilisi) and Péter Hegyi MAE (AE Budapest). We also ran an interview with Scott Bremmer FYAE, incoming President of the Young Academy of Europe.

In promoting the AE Annual Conference 2024, we published interviews with the following keynote speakers:

Yvonne Buckley MAE, ecologist and Professor of Zoology; Katarzyna Chojnacka MAE, Professor of Technical Sciences; Helen Kennedy MAE, Professor of Digital Society; Heino Falcko MAE, astroparticle physicist and radio astronomer; Verena Winiwarter MAE, environmental historian

STRATEGIC
PRIORITY

3:

Build connections with the wider group of stakeholders

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



In May, we hosted a webinar, *Boosting research impact: Policy engagement for early-career researchers*, in partnership with the Learned Society of Wales Early Career Researchers Network. The webinar attracted around 170 participants.

In August, Professor Ole Petersen delivered a keynote address at the 22nd European Bioenergetics Conference. The event took place at the University of Innsbruck, attracting more than 500 participants.

In November we supported an open forum at Cardiff University, organised with CONNECTS-UK, a partnership to foster scientific collaboration between Europe and the UK. The hybrid meeting, *AI: what does it mean for research, for society and for you?* drew an audience of 50 and speakers included the Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales, Professor Jas Pal Badyal FRS.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY

4:

Ensure future sustainability

We aim to achieve ongoing sustainability of the AE Cardiff Hub.



The second SAPEA project has run from May 2022 to December 2024. The Cardiff Hub has been able to participate via a UK Government funding guarantee, administered through Innovate UK. Under a closed call issued this year, AE Cardiff has secured an increased budget as part of a consortium that will take SAPEA forward from 2025 to 2029. The other source of external funding for the Hub has come from its communications work for Academia Europaea, which provides a contribution towards salary costs.

In the final quarter of the year, we have drafted a new Strategic Plan for the Hub, laying out our proposed path from 2025 to 2029, in tandem with the grant award for SAPEA.

STAFFING



Academic Director
Professor Ole Petersen
CBE FLSW FMedSci FRS MAE



Hub Manager
Louise Edwards



Executive Officer
Juliet Davies



Communications Officer
Alice Sadler



Project Assistant
Shenaé Jonas
(October-December 2024)

Acknowledgements

AE Cardiff would like to thank colleagues of all organisations that have given us their support in 2024, in particular:

- Academia Europaea, in particular Members who have supported and engaged with the Hub, and our colleagues across Europe
- Cardiff University, in particular the University Library Service, including the European Information Hub and Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE)
- CONNECTS-UK
- European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE)
- German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina
- Insights Wales
- Learned Society of Wales and its Early Career Researchers Network
- Newington Design
- Science Advice Mechanism (SAM), including the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors and the Science Advice for Policy by European Academies (SAPEA) and Young Academies Science Advice Structure (YASAS)
- UKRI
- Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN)
- Universities Wales
- Wales Centre for Public Policy
- Welsh Government
- Young Academy of Europe



About Academia Europaea

Founded in 1988. Now has more than 5,500 leading scientists and scholars as Members, including over 80 Nobel laureates. Operates through a network of knowledge hubs in Barcelona, Bergen, Budapest, Cardiff, Tbilisi and Wroclaw. Our headquarters are in Munich, with a support office in London.

Academia Europaea Cardiff Hub
Cardiff University, SPARC, Maindy Road
Cathays, Cardiff CF24 4HQ
www.aecardiffknowledgehub.wales
AECardiffHub@cardiff.ac.uk

Find us on social media



Twitter/X: @aecardiff

Bluesky: @aecardiff.bsky.social

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063976268263>

Hosted by

