



Painting of Podilskyi district in Kiev, Ukraine
Yuriy Khymych (1928 – 2003) Honoured Artist of the Ukraine
(Private Collection [Burdakova/Petersen])



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

December 2020

In spite of the obvious challenges presented by the coronavirus crisis, the AE Cardiff Hub has completed more substantial tasks this year than ever before. We organised and oversaw the generation of the SAPEA Evidence Review Report on 'Biodegradability of Plastics in the Open Environment', which was handed over, on time, to the European Commission by the AE President, Sierd Cloetingh, on 14th December. For the first time, all Working Group and Coordination meetings were held by Zoom. It was the third Evidence Review Report produced by the Cardiff Hub (out of the total of 8 generated by all the 5 SAPEA partners so far). In addition to this very major task, the Hub finalised SAPEA's 'Sustainability Plan' and produced a Systematic Review on 'The European Food Policy Ecosystem' in collaboration with Cardiff University's Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE).

With regard to outreach, the year started normally. I had the pleasure to speak about our 2019 Evidence Review Report on 'Making Sense of Science for Policy' (MASOS) at meetings at the University of Cambridge in January and at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin in February. Thereafter, it was all webinars! In September, I introduced and chaired a high-level webinar during INGSAs 'Global week of Dialogue' on 'Science Advice: What Works in a Crisis' with a distinguished panel including Pearl Dykstra, Ortwin Renn and Sir Mark Walport. At the very end of this year, I shall be speaking, again about MASOS, at a large hybrid physical/webinar meeting in The Hague on 'Policies and Strategies for Evidence-Informed Policymaking'. The Cardiff Hub has been responsible for other successful and well attended webinars on various themes, including 'The Future of Translational Medicine' in June and 'Food Policy at a Time of Crisis' in October.

Our website has been more active than ever before. Our popular series of interviews with prominent members of the Academy has been greatly expanded and our section on 'COVID-19: Recent publications by Members of Academia Europaea' has signposted the large number of important articles in this vital area authored by MAEs.

None of this could have been accomplished without the dedicated Hub staff, Louise Edwards, Juliet Davies and Mildred Foster. Special thanks to Louise (Hub Manager), who has become increasingly indispensable, not only for AE but for the whole of SAPEA, acquiring a superior reputation in Brussels for supreme efficiency and competence. I am also grateful to Cardiff University's Vice-Chancellor, Colin Riordan, and the AE President, Sierd Cloetingh, for their continued support. Finally, I want to thank our outgoing Chair of the Hub's Steering Group (SG), Sir John Skehel, for his immensely valuable services these past 5 years and welcome Sir Mark Walport as our new SG Chair. Happy New Year!

Ole (Ole H Petersen CBE MAE ML FRS)
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