



ACADEMIA EUROPAEA
CARDIFF KNOWLEDGE HUB

ANNUAL
REPORT
2021

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



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Annual Report 2021

It was a milestone year for the Cardiff Hub, as we celebrated our fifth anniversary and reflected on what we've achieved since the Hub was officially launched at the Academia Europaea Annual Conference in 2016.

With the continued impact of COVID-19, we have successfully managed the disruption of the pandemic on our work, as we did also in 2020. Whilst still working from home, we organised online events and further developed our website and social media presence.

Indeed, we have found a wide international audience for our webinars, engaging with more people around the world than ever possible before. I was particularly proud to chair the online event we co-organised at the European Parliament, on the topic of biodegradable plastics. It was part of a programme of outreach activities we undertook to promote the SAPEA Evidence Review Report, *Biodegradability of plastics in the open environment*, published at the end of 2020.

It has also been an important year in terms of the future sustainability of the Cardiff Hub. The current SAPEA project has been extended to April 2022, and the Cooperation Agreement between Academia Europaea and Cardiff University was renewed to the end of 2024.

I was delighted that members of the Hub team have been recognised for their service and contribution; I was honoured to be the recipient of Academia Europaea's Gold Medal in 2021 and our Hub Manager, Louise Edwards, received the President's Merit Award.

Finally, I congratulate our President and Vice-Chancellor and member of our Steering Group, Professor Colin Riordan on having been elected a member of Academia Europaea. I would like to thank Sir Mark Walport FRS FMedSci MAE, Chair of the Cardiff Hub Steering Group, and Professor Sierd Cloetingh MAE, President of Academia Europaea 2014-2021, for their valued support. The Hub looks forward to welcoming Professor Marja Makarow MAE, President of Academia Europaea from 2022.



Professor Ole Petersen

CBE FMedSci FLSW MAE ML FRS

Academic Director, Academia Europaea Cardiff Knowledge Hub



HIGHLIGHTS IN 2020

■ Our ambitious online webinar series has grown this year, reaching over 1200 people in 65 countries around the world. Our webinar *'Plastics pollution: Are biodegradable plastics a solution?'*, hosted by MEP Mohammed Chahim and chaired by Professor Ole Petersen, connected us directly with policymakers in Europe.



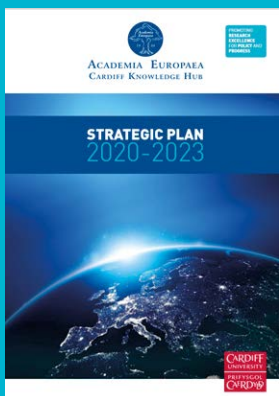
■ We've strengthened relationships with key strategic partners of Cardiff University and Academia Europaea, through joint events and projects. These partners included the Young Academy of Europe, the European Group on Ethics and Welsh Government, amongst others. Our event *Digital media in crisis situations* supported the strategic partnership between the University of Bremen and Cardiff University.



■ Promoting the achievements of Academia Europaea Members (MAEs) continues to be a priority. We've published a number of interviews with high-profile members, including Professor Sir Roger Penrose, recipient of Academia Europaea's Erasmus Medal in 2021.



Our achievements in 2021 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 the wider group of stakeholders
4. Ensure future sustainability

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.

Biodegradability of plastics

Our focus this year has been on outreach activities for the SAPEA Evidence Review Report, *Biodegradability of plastics in the open environment*. The Evidence Review Report was co-ordinated by the Cardiff Hub for Academia Europaea, and published at the end of 2020.

The Cardiff Hub co-organised the launch webinar for the Evidence Review Report, which attracted an international audience of almost 170. Held on 4th February, the webinar brought together a panel of speakers from the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, SAPEA and the European Commission, to respond to the question, *'Taking action on plastics pollution: Are biodegradable plastics the answer?'*

'Biodegradable plastics: How do we engage with consumers and society?' was the focus of our second webinar, on 21st May. Attendees from 38 countries joined our panel of experts. The webinar was organised with SAPEA, in partnership with the Royal Irish Academy.

Our third webinar *'Plastics pollution: Are biodegradable plastics a solution?'*, held on 16th June, was hosted by MEP Mohammed Chahim and chaired by Professor Ole Petersen. Panellists included Members of the European Parliament, the Chair of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors (Professor Nicole Grobert MAE), Members of the SAPEA Working Group and representatives from industry and NGOs. Over 300 people attended the webinar.

The Cardiff Hub also oversaw a mapping review of recent research evidence on the topic, which was published by SAPEA in February. Specialists in systematic review at Cardiff University undertook the review, with the Cardiff Hub co-ordinating the work. It forms a complementary report to the SAPEA Evidence Review on *Biodegradability of plastics in the open environment*.



Making sense of science

We have continued to promote the SAPEA Evidence Review Report, *Making sense of science under conditions of complexity and uncertainty*, published in 2019 and co-ordinated by the Cardiff Hub. Professor Ortwin Renn, Chair of the SAPEA Working Group that produced the report, spoke at our 'Digital media in crisis situations' webinar in March 2021, examining opportunities and risks at the interface between science advice, the media and the public.

Energy systems

Cardiff University was asked to map the policy landscape relating to energy transition in Europe, as an important part of SAPEA's Evidence Review Report, *A systemic approach to the energy transition in Europe*. This mapping was led by Frederico Rocha, Manager of the European Documentation Centre at Cardiff University, and the Cardiff Hub acted on behalf of Academia Europaea to deliver this policy mapping work.

We also co-organised a webinar 'Transitioning to new energy systems: What impact will it have on society and on our lives?' with SAPEA and the AE Bergen Knowledge Hub. This timely event, ahead of the COP26 Conference in November, was attended by an international audience of over 130.



Current SAPEA projects

The Cardiff Hub has had an active role in both of the SAPEA evidence reviews started in 2021 and ongoing into 2022.

For the *Strategic crisis management in the EU* project, co-ordinated by ALLEA, we achieved a good success rate in nominating experts to the SAPEA Working Group. As input to the project, we worked with information specialists in Cardiff University to produce a set of papers for the Working Group. These included definitions of key terms for the topic, together with factsheets on EU crisis response mechanisms.

For the *SAPEA Cancer screening in the EU* project, led by FEAM, we have worked with Cardiff University's Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE) to produce rapid reviews (a type of systematic review that is adapted to the time constraints of the project). The rapid reviews will form part of the evidence base presented to the European Commission's Group of Chief Scientific Advisors in 2022.

Making new connections

Louise Edwards, Cardiff Knowledge Hub Manager, joined the Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN) Joint International Sub-Committee. UPEN is a community of UK universities and policy professionals committed to increasing the impact of research on public policy.

The Cardiff Hub has also partnered with the Welsh Centre for Public Policy and an international consortium to submit a funding proposal in response to the Transatlantic Platform's call, 'Recovery, renewal and resilience in a post-pandemic world'.

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.

We have continued to develop our website and grow our social media engagement, as well as maintaining traditional communications like our quarterly newsletter, which is sent to the entire Academia Europaea membership and to our key stakeholders.

Website

The website has continued to be a major focus, with a regular stream of news stories keeping our homepage fresh and interesting. This has resulted in a 5% increase of visits to the website.

Our 'Interview Spotlight' series remains one of the most popular features on our website, with four new interviews this year showcasing the research and achievements of Academia Europaea Members. We were privileged to interview Professor Sierd Cloetingh, Academia Europaea's President; Professor David Allison, Indiana University; Professor Ole Petersen, Vice-President of Academia Europaea; and Professor Sir Roger Penrose, Oxford University.

We continue to collate COVID-19 articles published by Members of Academia Europaea. Our dedicated COVID-19 page has grown to over 70 articles and is frequently one of our top ten most visited pages on the Hub's website. Links to the page are also promoted on the websites of Academia Europaea, the International Public Policy Observatory and SAPEA.

In April, we launched a new feature for the website – our Briefing Series. The Series complements webinars held by the Cardiff Hub, summarising key points of discussion from our panels of experts to provide a useful resource on each relevant topic. We have produced papers on research integrity, digital media in crisis situations, and engaging with the public on biodegradable plastics.



Professor Sir Roger Penrose took part in our Interview Series following his special award ceremony at Wadham College, University of Oxford, September 2021

Social media

Our Twitter presence has continued to grow, with a 27% increase in followers from last year. As well as raising awareness of the Cardiff Hub, this helps to increase traffic to our website and encourage webinar registrations. In 2021, we had 236,863 impressions on Twitter, this is an 86% increase on the same period last year.

The most noticeable improvement has been the number of visits to our Twitter profile, now averaging almost 3800 visits per month, up from around 250 per month last year.

Top Tweet earned 12.9K impressions

Join us for an international webinar on **#Digitalmedia** in crisis situations: rethinking their role & function' on 1st March.

A partnership event between Academia Europaea, University of Bremen, Cardiff University & SAPEA.

Supporting **#WalesinGermany2021**

bit.ly/2MRmWDL
pic.twitter.com/j0kiA0V0OC

Summary of online marketing impact, comparison between 2020 and 2021. Data from 1st January – 31st December 2021				
	Indicator	2020	2021	Performance improvement compared to same period 2019
WEBSITE	Number of visits to the Hub website	12,986	13,710	↑ 5%
	Number of pages viewed on the Hub website	28,328	28,678	↑ 1%
TWITTER	Number of impressions	126,991	236,863	↑ 86%
	Number of Twitter followers	490	626	↑ 27%
	Number of visits to the Hub profile	Average 250 per month	Average 3800 per month	↑ 1420%

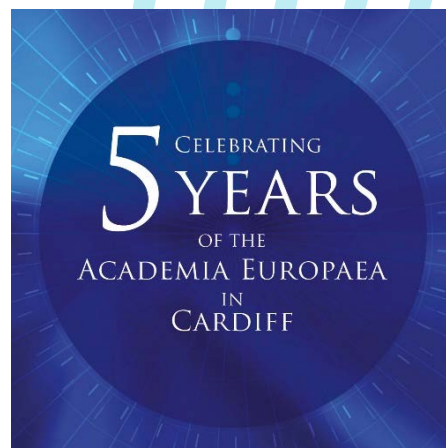
Newsletter

Our quarterly newsletter remains an important part of our communications and successfully generates visits to related news stories on our website. In early 2021, we developed a new design for the newsletter. The open rates and click rates (the number of people who click on a link) for our newsletter continue to be above the average for organisations that use email marketing.

Marking our fifth anniversary

The Cardiff Hub marked its fifth anniversary in June. We launched a promotional campaign through Twitter, Facebook, our website and newsletter, to highlight this special occasion.

We interviewed the President of Academia Europaea, Professor Sierd Cloetingh, and published a special timeline of Cardiff's achievements over the past five years. We also promoted videos of congratulatory messages from Professor Cloetingh; Professor Colin Riordan, Cardiff's President and Vice-Chancellor; Sir Mark Walport, former UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser and Chair of our Steering Group; and Dr Gemma Modinos, Chair of the Young Academy of Europe.



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.

Engagement through webinars

Through our public events we engage with a wide group of stakeholders. In 2021, we continued to run successful webinars online. A major benefit from this change to online events has been the ability to reach an international audience, with over 1200 people in 65 countries around the world this year in total.

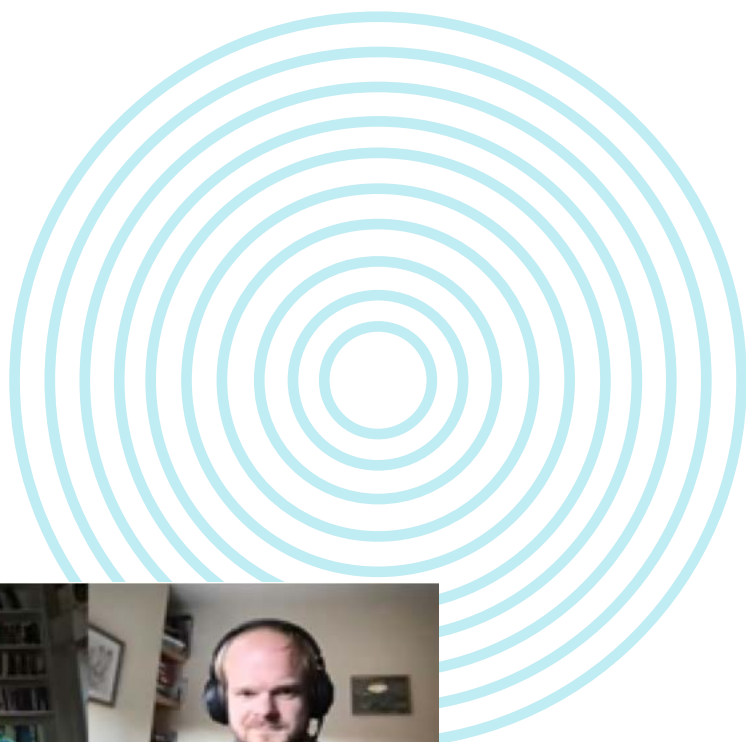
Our *'New perspectives on COVID-19'* webinar, hosted on 26th January 2021, saw presentations by six Members of Academia Europaea who have all published papers on biomedical aspects of COVID-19. Over 120 people attended the live session from 27 countries.

Our *'Digital media in crisis situations: Rethinking their role and function'* webinar was held on St David's Day, 1st March. At this special online event, our panellists discussed the role of digital media on public debate, attitudes and behaviours during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Over 110 people joined the webinar from 23 countries. This event was a partnership between Academia Europaea, University of Bremen, Cardiff University, SAPEA and in support of the Welsh Government's *Wales in Germany 2021*.

On 22nd March, the Cardiff Hub hosted an international webinar on *'Research integrity: Supporting early-career researchers in cases of alleged scientific misconduct'*. This was a joint event between the Cardiff Hub, the Young Academy of Europe, SAPEA and the European Group on Ethics, and it attracted an audience of almost 200 from 33 countries.

Developing partnerships

The Cardiff Hub continues to build partnerships with other organisations, this year exploring potential projects with the Wales Centre for Public Policy, the Young Academy of Europe and NORCE, amongst others.



Panellists at our *'Digital media in crisis situations'* webinar

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:

Ensure future sustainability

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

An ongoing role in SAPEA

As part of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement reached between the EU and UK at the end of 2020, the UK stated its intention to associate to the EU's seven-year Horizon Europe research and innovation programme. As a result, both Academia Europaea (which has its headquarters in London) and its affiliated entity, Cardiff University, aim to participate in the successor to the current SAPEA project. At the end of November, the UK government announced a financial safety net for successful project bids, whilst being ready to associate to Horizon Europe. We have played a major role in the preparations for the successor SAPEA project, which will run from May 2022 to December 2024.



The Cooperation Agreement between Academia Europaea and Cardiff University has been renewed to the end of 2024, ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the Cardiff Hub.

CALIPER

In late 2021, the Cardiff Hub was invited to join a consortium working on the Horizon 2020-funded project, CALIPER. This project supports nine research organisations, predominantly in Southern and Eastern Europe, to establish Gender Equality Plans.

Working with the Young Academy of Europe, the Cardiff Hub is leading on communications across Europe and encouraging wider engagement with the project.

New projects

The Cardiff Hub continues to explore future opportunities, based on our core competencies in science advice, systematic evidence review, international project management, events and communications.

Through our external partnerships, we have applied for funding for two new projects this year.



Staffing



Academic Director

Professor Ole Petersen

CBE FLSW FMedSci FRS MAE

Academia Europaea Gold Medal 2021



Knowledge Hub Manager

Louise Edwards

Academia Europaea President's Merit Award 2021



Executive Officer

Juliet Davies



Executive Officer – Science for Policy

Anna Coote

Finance

Under the Cooperation Agreement between Academia Europaea and Cardiff University, the University meets defined salary and non-staff costs. Additional income is derived from the Cardiff Hub's two projects funded through the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme – SAPEA and CALIPER.

Governance

The Academia Europaea Cardiff Knowledge Hub Steering Group plays an important role in shaping our future priorities and activities. The following distinguished scientists and scholars serve on the Group, and we thank them for their support:

Rudolf Allemann FLSW

Yves-Alain Barde FRS MAE

Nora de Leeuw FLSW MAE

Dianne Edwards CBE FLSW FRS MAE

Theo D'haen MAE

Donald Dingwell FRS ML MAE

Sir Stephen Holgate CBE MAE

Genoveva Martí MAE

Colin Riordan FLSW MAE

Sir John Skehel FRS MAE

John Tucker FLSW MAE

Sir Mark Walport FRS MAE (Chair)

Acknowledgements

The Cardiff Hub would like to thank colleagues of all organisations that have given us their support in 2021, in particular:

Academia Europaea

Bergen Aquarium

CALIPER consortium

Cardiff University, in particular the European Documentation Centre and Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE)

Centre for Translational Medicine,
University of Pécs

European Group on Ethics (EGE)

European Parliament Intergroup on
Climate Change, Biodiversity and
Sustainable Development

Group of Chief Scientific Advisors

Indiana University

Newington Design

NORCE

Royal Irish Academy

Science Advice for Policy by European
Academies (SAPEA)

University of Bremen

Wadham College, University of Oxford

Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP)

Welsh Government

Welsh Higher Education Brussels

Welsh Norwegian Society

Young Academy of Europe



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, Munich, Tbilisi and Wroclaw.

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