



# Academia Europaea Bergen Knowledge Hub

# Annual Report 2020

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**THE ACADEMY OF EUROPE**  
**BERGEN KNOWLEDGE HUB**

# Introduction

**By Eystein Jansen, Professor at Department of Earth Science at University of Bergen, Academic Director at Academia Europaea Bergen Knowledge Hub.**

2020 turned out to be a different year than envisaged, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic which severely constrained our activities from March and onwards. Most work has been done online and from home offices, and several of our planned events have been cancelled or postponed to 2021. Despite this, AE-Bergen has found ways to resume close to normal activities using digital tools.



Academic Director of the Academia Europaea Bergen Knowledge Hub, Eystein Hansen.

We foresee that the pandemic will influence a large part of 2021 and likely influence academic life in years to come. As digital forms of exchange and communication have replaced physical meetings and shown that it is possible to do without many travels, we will probably converge to a less physical and more digital way of conducting our activities, or hybrids between the two.

The pandemic raises many questions and gives rich and novel data sets for many investigations of our societies, including health care systems, governance, scientific prioritizations and science communication – to name some. It is already clear that many countries considered to be very resilient to disruptions, and with seemingly strong health care systems, have not lived up to such expectations. Others have handled the pandemic surprisingly well, despite having health care systems considered to be vulnerable prior to the pandemic. The evidence now at hand underscores the necessity of a renewed discussion on the role of science advice for policy, and the role of politics vs expert opinions in decision-making in crises.

One of the principles underlying the foundation of the Academia Europaea is the need for impartial expert advice to public and private bodies. With over 4000 eminent scientists and scholars from a variety of disciplines and cultures as members, the academy can comment on scientific or academic matters independent of any national or organizational bindings and is well suited to offer advice to appropriate bodies in Europe, both in normal times and in times of crisis.

(Bergen, March 2021)

## Our Mission

Our Hub aims to be a catalyst for collaboration, knowledge exchange and ideas to:

- Engage research and scholarship with policymaking in Europe and in the Nordic and Baltic Regions, on behalf of Academia Europaea and in close collaboration with national academies of the region.
- Promote excellent research from and about the Nordic and Baltic Region, its surrounding seas, and the Arctic with emphasis on marine and maritime research, sustainability, and the Nordic social model, through scholarly workshops and public events.
- Demonstrate the importance of scientific scholarship and maximise engagement with our members, policymakers, private and public entities and the wider public.
- Stimulate scientists to accomplish stringent and unequivocal communication and interaction with decision makers, media, and the public.

## Our main strategic priorities

Our major framing perspectives are marine and Arctic issues, our cooperation with SAPEA (Scientific Advice for Policy by European Academies), and advocacy for establishing independent national science advice mechanisms throughout our region. Our hub will promote sustainability issues including the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing sustainable use of the ocean and marine resources, climate change, energy transformation and policies for the development of governance and welfare, as well as promoting the arctic as a military low-tension area.

We emphasize the importance of collaborative efforts from scholars from the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities, to solve major human challenges.

2021 will be the first year of our new Strategic Plan, which runs from 2021 to 2024. A more thorough outline of the strategic areas of the AE-Bergen Hub, can be found in the Strategic Plan on <https://aebergen.w.uib.no/>. A concentrated version is found below:

## Strategic areas for the AE-Bergen Hub

### Area 1 - Science-policy interface

We aim to contribute to evidence reports for science-policy interactions, including to propose future SAPEA topics, and to promote science advice and science diplomacy in general. The Hub will advocate independent national science advice mechanisms, comparable to the EUs' Science Advice Mechanism (SAM). Our advocacy for establishing national independent scientific advice mechanism, will primarily focus on the need for processes providing independent and transdisciplinary scientific/knowledge-based reviews, and to clearly separate such reviews from political recommendations.

As outlined in our Strategy Plan, we will organize debates and dialogues on scientific topics relevant to policymaking. We will engage with SAPEA and EU's Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM), including nomination of candidates to SAPEA activities. In addition, we will engage with national mechanisms for science advice to policymakers in our region. We will continue as an active partner of the multi-stakeholder forum Arctic Frontiers.



## Area 2 – Promote and showcase excellent research and scholarship

We will promote and showcase research and scientific excellence within our region and beyond, through various events and communication channels, engaging with our membership base and members of the Young Academy of Europe in our region. We will pose critical research-based questions, contribute to scientific debates, and illuminate scientific breakthroughs and outcomes from meetings and conferences.

From 2021 we will co-organise science lectures with UiB's Horizon lecture series on a regular basis, highlighting excellent research on cross-disciplinary issues for a broad science-interested public. We will also co-organise events with the Bergen programme-committee of the Norwegian Academy of Technological Sciences (NTVA).

## Area 3 – Visibility and regional engagement

We will increase our visibility in the region and strengthen our engagement with relevant actors and communities (private, public and NGOs). To fulfill our mission, we aim to further develop the Hub's portfolio of activities and sponsorships at the intersection of science and the wider society.

By sharing publications and reports, news items and interviews, we aim to make our website an engaging showcase of our activities and engagements. We will establish and update a calendar of activities and events, aiming to attract a broad audience from the academic, public, and private sectors. In addition to in-person events, we will communicate broadly through webinars, our website, newsletters, and social media channels. We will participate in relevant local forums and arenas that match our priorities, both to increase our visibility and to actively seek collaboration with others.



Academic Director Eystein Hansen in our video, first presented during the Arctic Frontiers conference 2021.

## Area 4 - Cooperation with national academies in our region and the other AE Hubs in Europe

We aim to establish good connections to the national academies of our region. In this endeavour we will emphasize AE's strengths in science advice for policy, its pan-European perspectives, and strong connections to leading European research institutions e.g., the European Research Council, in addition to the thematic areas of our Hub. We aim to strengthen the interaction between academic communities across Europe, starting with collaboration with other AE Hubs. We will engage in inter-Hub meetings to discuss possibilities for e.g., joint events, activities, mutual learning and sharing of resources.

## ACTIVITIES IN 2020 - HIGHLIGHTS

### January

- Nomination of candidates to SAPEA working group on Biodegradability of plastics in the open environment.
- Participation at the Arctic Frontiers conference – ‘Power of Knowledge’ in Tromsø.
- Side event at the Arctic Frontiers conference: ‘Science advice for policy: Who asks, who gives, and who listens?’ Jointly organised by UiB, AE Bergen, Bjerknes Center for Climate Research, The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, UiT The Arctic University of Norway. Eystein Jansen was moderator (web recorded).
- Academic Director Eystein Jansen participated by invitation at Arctic Ocean Decade Workshop: Policy-Business-Science-Dialogue, side event at the Arctic Frontiers Conference. Organised by The Research Council of Norway, Arctic Frontiers, and IOC of UNESCO.

### February

- Participation at the national SDG conference in Bergen.
- Academic Director Eystein Jansen participated in a workshop on ‘Science advice and Science diplomacy’, side event at the SDG conference. SAPEA/SAM and the MASOS report was presented by Eystein Jansen and SAPEA working group member professor Jeroen Pieter Van der Sluijs.
- Outreach event: A metal science opera ‘Fish to Mars’. Cultural event for students and participants at the SDG Conference. Initiated and financially supported by AE Bergen.
- Meeting in Bergen with the General Secretary of the Norwegian Technological Academy (NTVA). The aim is to establish a formal collaboration agreement.



SAPEA working group member Professor Jeroen Pieter Van der Sluijs at the workshop on ‘Science advice and Science diplomacy’, at the SDG conference. Photo: Eivind Senneset for the University of Bergen.



Signing of a Conference Riga Declaration on cooperation, science and innovation in the Baltic Sea Region.

- Participation in Conference in Latvia: Innovation – Power of the 21st century. Organised by the Latvian Academy of Sciences, University of Latvia and Smart Up BSR (Baltic Sea Region).
- Signing of a Conference Riga Declaration emphasizing the need and will for cooperation and strengthening science and innovation in the Baltic Sea Region.
- Second meeting of the Advisory Board (Zoom meeting)

### March

- Participation at a preparation meeting for the UN negotiations on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). Organized by The Foreign Ministry and UiB.
- Meeting with the State Secretary of The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to investigate national interest/possibility to support cooperation with existing and planned AE hubs in Europe.

- The Hub delivered a written statement in the official hearing of a new strategy for The Norwegian Research Council arguing for a) the need for an independent national science advice mechanism in Norway and b) better funding and more independent mechanisms for evaluation of applications in free research programs.



Dag Rune Olsen from our Advisory Board at a panel discussion during the Rosendal Week (Rosendalsveko). Moderator Frøy Gulbrandsen to the right.

## May

- Nomination of candidates to a SAPEA working group on Energy Transition in Europe.
- Postponed: The Rosendal-seminar for the Steering Group and Advisory Board on strategy and topics on societal/global challenges in need of evidence-based reviews, originally scheduled for May 2020, will at the earliest take place in the autumn of 2021 but more likely in 2022, due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- The Hub established a Norwegian registered not-for-profit company to be able to organise and coordinate activities e.g. for project management within Horizon Europe, and as a tool to serve the whole membership.

## August

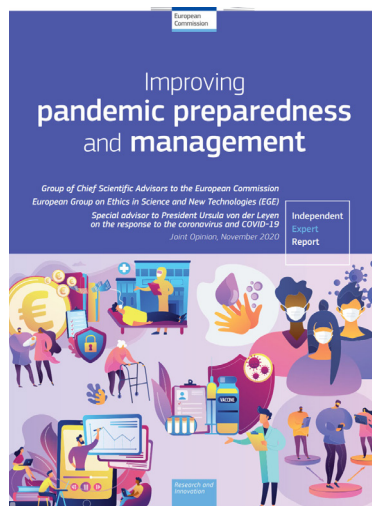
- Nomination of candidates to SAM (Scientific Advice Mechanism) expert group on 'How can Europe ensure adequate management of and better preparedness for future epidemics and pandemics in the global context?'. One of the candidates (Rebecca Cox) was a successful nominee.
- Participation at the Rosendal Week (Rosendalsveko), gathering knowledge institutions, business, society, and politicians in Western Norway to brainstorm ideas about climate, energy, and sustainable resource management.

## October

- Recruitment process of new communications adviser. Nils Olav Sæverås started as communications adviser November 1th.
- Academic Director Eystein Jansen gave a presentation on various aspects of Open Access policies, and the position of the ERC at an Open Access seminar organised by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters.

## November

- Interview on the AE-Bergen website with Professor Rebecca Cox, head of the Influenza Centre in Bergen, following the publication of the Independent Expert Report "Improving pandemic preparedness and management".



Professor Rebecca Cox, head of the Influenza Centre in Bergen, was nominated by AE-Bergen for the Independent Expert Report "Improving pandemic preparedness and management".

## December

- Steering Group extended with a new member: Ole Øvretveit, CEO of Initiativ Vest, a regional Think Tank for the West-Coastal area of Norway.
- AE-Bergen Steering Group meeting: One of the main topics was discussion of the hub's strategy plan, which was approved with some suggested adjustments. Professor Matthias Kaiser held a presentation on 'Science-policy interface in the COVID-19 era – contours of the academic, political and practical challenges'.
- Participation at the launch event for the new Academia Europaea Budapest Hub.

## January 2021

- Production of a short video describing the mission of AE, AE-Bergen Hub and SAPEA for the Arctic Frontiers conference 2021 'Building Bridges' (see below).
- Inaugural meeting of the joint AE-Bergen – Horizon lectures committee.
- Meeting with the Estonian Academy of Science (EAS). Background: The Norwegian Embassy in Tallinn has suggested to hold a conference on Arctic research for the Estonian Polar Research Committee in fall 2020 on the matter to mark both 100 years of diplomatic cooperation between Norway and Estonia and the application of Estonia for an observer seat in the Arctic Council. We discussed both the framing of such a conference and other possibilities for cooperation between EAS and AE-Bergen. Planning of the conference is in progress (thus with uncertainties due to COVID-19) involving the Norwegian embassy, EAS and AE-Bergen.



## February 2021

- Participation at the online conference Arctic Frontiers – 'Building Bridges' in Tromsø. AE-Bergen was represented by a virtual stand showing our new video (also presented in the main programme) and AE-strategy documents. Due to limited numbers of side-events compared to non-online conferences, our planned side event on Arctic Shipping will take place as an Arctic Frontiers webinar instead, scheduled for April 7th.
- Participation at the online national SDG conference in Bergen.



Bergen – our beautiful home city.



## History and organisation

Academia Europaea (AE), or The Academy of Europe, is a Pan-European non-for-profit company association of individual scientists and scholars established in 1988. The members are experts and leaders in their own subject areas as recognized by their peers. The Young Academy of Europe (YAE) is independent but affiliated to Academia Europaea.

Academia Europaea operates through its sections and disciplinary classes, but also through a network of regional knowledge hubs, so far in Barcelona, Cardiff, Wroclaw, Bergen, Tbilisi, Munich, and Budapest. The Budapest Hub is hosted by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, established in December 2020 to support academics, scholars, and independent research in Hungary, facing a challenging political environment.

The AE-Bergen Hub was established in 2014 and hosted by The University of Bergen (UiB) from 2016. UiB sponsors the running of the Hub, including qualified personnel, appropriate spaces and services for its correct operation and full functioning. AE-Bergen is headed by an Academic Director appointed by UiB, currently AE member (MAE) professor Eystein Jansen (from 2018). The cooperation agreement between AE and UiB states that the Academic Director, an Advisory Board, and a Steering Group shall ensure strategic direction and activities in line with AE's purpose and the intentions of the agreement.

### Academic Director and Hub Administration of AE-Bergen

Academic Director

**Professor Eystein Jansen**

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Communication Adviser

**Nils Olav Sæverås**

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Website: <https://aebergen.w.uib.no>

## **Advisory Board members in 2020**

- Dag Rune Olsen; MAE, Chair, Rector, Professor, Univ. of Bergen, Norway (Medical physics)
- Erland Källén; MAE, Professor, University of Stockholm, Sweden (Meteorology/Climate)
- Marja Makarow; MAE, Professor, Biocenter Finland (Molecular cell biology), President elect of AE
- Björn Wittrock; MAE, Professor Emeritus, Uppsala University and Vice President AE
- Jüri Allik; MAE; Univ. of Tartu, Estonia (Psychology)
- Ole Arve Misund; MAE, Director/Professor Tromsø (Marine and fisheries biology)
- Martin Fernø; MYAE, Professor, University of Bergen (Physics)

## **Steering Group members in 2020**

- Kjersti Fløttum; MAE, Univ. Bergen (Linguistics)
- Petter Bjørstad; MAE, Univ. Bergen (Informatics)
- Dieter Roerich; MAE, Univ. Bergen (Physics)
- Marit Warncke, CEO Bergen Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Svein Sundby, MAE, Professor, Institute for Marine Research, Bergen (Oceanography)
- Anne Gro Salvanes, MAE, Professor, Univ. of Bergen (Marine biology)
- Dag L. Aksnes; MAE, Professor, Univ. of Bergen (Marine biology)
- Sigrid Eskeland Schütz; Professor Univ. of Bergen (Law)
- Matthias Kaiser; Professor, Univ. of Bergen (Philosophy of science)
- Stein Kuhnle; MAE, Professor, Univ. of Bergen (Political science)
- Jessica Jewell; Research scholar/Assoc. prof., Chalmers Univ/UiB (Energy and Political science)

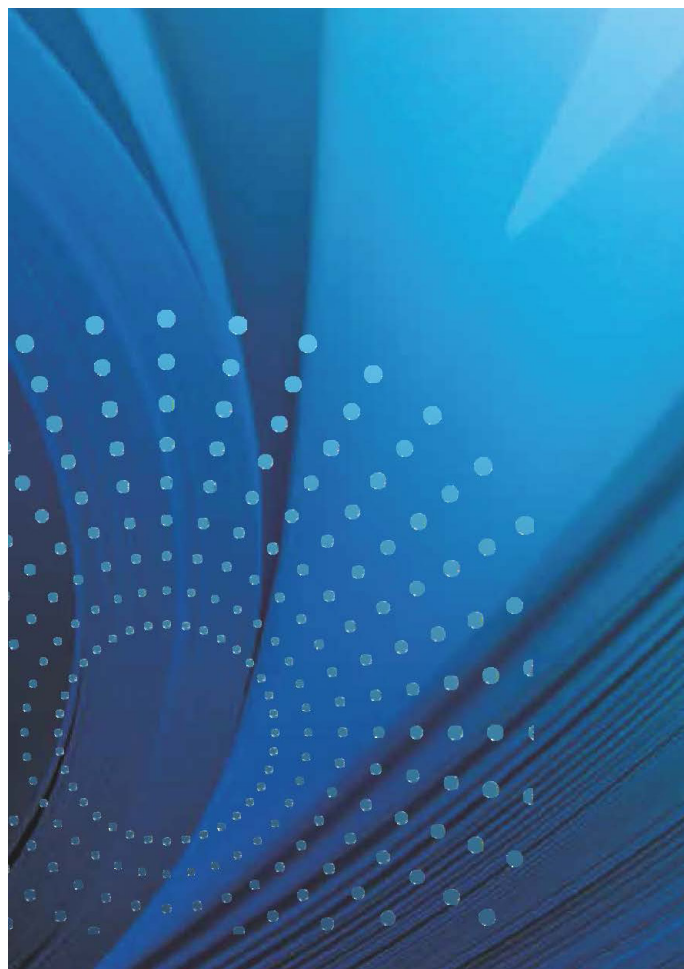
## **Terms of reference (TOR) for the Advisory Board**

- Formulate an overall strategy for the Hub
- Provide input to the strategic and annual plans of the Hub in terms of meetings, discussions, and events.
- Ensure the development of science advice for policy within the Nordic/Baltic political context.
- Ensure that the Hub is visible and has activities on a Nordic/Baltic scale, including engagement in activities outside of the Bergen region.

- Provide links with international and national academic networks.
- Provide links to AE members and academic environments in the Nordic/Baltic Region and activate these in Hub activities.

### **Terms of reference (TOR) for the Steering Group**

- Develop strategic and annual plans together with the Academic Director and the Hub management team.
- Develop collaborations and broad linkages with the society of Bergen and Western Norway, such as: The regional academic institutions and research environments, regional and municipal authorities and their organisations, regional industry, business environments and industry clusters and the public.
- Link high level academic scholarship with key societal issues, e.g. through the SDGs.
- Stimulate knowledge-based policy development, and actively pursue science for policy options on the national and European levels through existing science for policy mechanisms and other activities, as well as taking part in nominating suitable candidates for such tasks.
- Establish scoping processes to identify policy challenges at the regional, national and/or the European levels that can be enlightened by scientific evidence and advice.
- Propose engagements and opportunities for the Hub in terms of conferences and public events.
- Provide links with international and national academic networks.





THE ACADEMY OF EUROPE  
BERGEN KNOWLEDGE HUB

**Hosted by**



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