



# Academia Europaea Bergen Knowledge Hub

# Annual Report 2023

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## Introduction

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

Dear all,

The Academia Europaea Bergen Hub (AE Bergen) is pleased to present our annual report for 2023. As you will see from the report, 2023 was a year of selected major projects for the hub, but also a year for diverse forms of outreach and discussion through lectures and workshops on a variety of topics.

Our work and daily life both as citizens and scientists have been severely impacted by the geopolitical situation characterised by increased conflicts and turmoil. This has also had an impact on the activities of our Hub. Research cannot be performed in isolation. Scientists must provide and share their knowledge but should if possible, also engage in opportunities to use research and scientific collaboration to reduce tensions through cross-border contacts; often called 'science diplomacy'.

One of our Hub's main strategic priorities has always been 'the Arctic', and scientific cooperation in this region is now highly affected by the Russian ongoing attack on Ukraine and the following sanctions. During 2022-2023 we carried out a project analysing some of these effects. We interviewed many stakeholders of Arctic research and science diplomacy, and organised a successful event on the topic with many key stakeholders at the 2023 Arctic Frontiers conference. Main findings from this project can be read in the report [The Future of Arctic Science and Science Diplomacy](#). See also textbox on page 10. We have also been interviewed on this issue in the [SAPEA podcast](#).

A critical effect of the Russian invasion is loss of key scientific data from the Arctic. We are following up our engagement by a new 'Rethinking Arctic Collaboration' project funded by UArctic and with

in-kind support from our host, the University of Bergen (UiB). The project includes academic and non-academic partners from Canada, USA and Europe, seeking knowledge from experts and stakeholders to further map the situation and hopefully advise as to how Arctic scientific collaboration and science diplomacy can be recovered again.

Continuing outreach activity from previous years, our Hub also in 2023 organised a series of lectures in cooperation with academies like The Norwegian Academy of Technological Sciences, and UiB, on topics like cancer in the light of evolution, seabed mining and biodiversity conservation in the deep sea, nuclear energy, Arctic Ocean exploration, and on 'green' vs 'blue' focus on nature and sustainability'.

I will use this opportunity to wish new members from the Nordic and Baltic region heartily welcome. I hope you will engage with AE and our Hub. We welcome all suggestions of topics, events and initiatives. I also will urge our members to nominate new members, as our current membership is increasing in age. We need influx of active younger scholars from all fields. Our Hub provides some communication and administrative support for the Young Academy of Europe. We see this as a fruitful means of supporting the activity and integration of young scholars into AE activities.

One activity I am very hopeful for, is the work of the Academia Europaea Task Force on Environment, Sustainability and Climate, which I am part of. The Task Force came about after polling the wide interest in our membership to engage in these areas. We held a fruitful workshop in Cambridge in September, the outcome of which was presented at the AE Annual Meeting in Munich in October. We first aim to spearhead activities in the area of a sustainable food system, and more initiatives will follow.

As vice-president of the ERC for the Physical Sciences and Engineering Domain I see a potential for synergies between Academia Europaea and ERC. One way I hope to utilise this potential could be to involve both the Academia Europaea and the ERC in the International Decade for Science for Sustainability, an initiative just decided by the UN General Assembly.

Eystein

(Bergen, February 4th, 2024)



Academic Director of Academia Europaea Bergen, Eystein Jansen.  
Photo: ERC

## 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.
- Our Strategic Plan 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](#). 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 re-



levant 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 have co-organised 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 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.

### **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.

# Highlights from 2023 activities

## January

A meeting between the staff of AE-Bergen and Young Academy of Europe (YAE) Board members was held on January 16th. This was the first meeting between AE-Bergen and YAE after the new YAE Board members were elected in October 2022. The meeting included discussion of specifics of the AE-Bergen support to the YAE.

## February

On February 3rd, AE-Bergen co-organised a well-attended side event at the Arctic Frontiers Conference 2023 Moving North, in Tromsø. The event [The Future of Arctic Science and Science Diplomacy](#), included a panel of major stakeholders of research, research policy and politics concerning the Arctic. The event was part of AE-Bergen's investigation on the status and prospects of Arctic science and science diplomacy in light of the Russian war against Ukraine, later in the year to result in the report [The Future of Arctic Science and Science Diplomacy](#), initiated by Academia Europaea Bergen. The event illuminated grave examples of how longstanding Arctic cooperation, academic friendships and scientific observational data have been terminated or are rapidly withering due to both the war, the sanctions against Russian institutions and the freeze of science diplomacy efforts. Following the event, an opinion piece by Eystein Jansen, Ole Øvretveit and Lise Øvreås was published Nordlys (Northern Norway's biggest newspaper) and in Khrono (the website of Norwegian higher education).



Ole Ramus Øvretveit, 3rd from left, moderated our side event at the Arctic Frontiers Conference 2023 Moving North, in Tromsø.



Darwin Day & Horizon lecture, February 13th: Professor in medicine Jarle Breivik explored the evolutionary logic of cancer.

AE-Bergen co-organised a Darwin Day & Horizon lecture, February 13th: Professor in medicine Jarle Breivik explored the evolutionary logic of cancer under the title [Making Sense of Cancer](#). In this lecture, Breivik drew lines from the evolution of the species, through embryologic development, to aging and malignant transformation. What will it take to get rid of cancer? Should society rather learn to live with it?

AE-Bergen continued our involvement as co-organiser of a well-established meeting series (mainly held in Norwegian) together with the Bergen offices of the Norwegian Academy of Technological Sciences (NTVA Bergen) and The Norwegian Society of Graduate Technical and Scientific Professionals (Tekna Bergen). The first series meeting of 2023, [on nuclear power and sustainability](#), was held on February 14th. Lectures were given by Professor Jan Petter Hansen (UiB/NHH) and Niels Berger (CFO) from ThorCon ([thorconpower.com](http://thorconpower.com)).

## April

AE-Bergen was co-organizer of the Horizons Lecture, April 20th: [Seabed Mining and Biodiversity Conservation in the Deep Sea: Where Science meets Policy](#). In her lecture, Lisa A. Levin, from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, explored how the deep-sea ecosystems are being targeted for seabed mining, their biodiversity and why it matters, potential threats and management challenges.

## May

AE-Bergen's communication advisor Nils Olav Sæverås participated in the '[Publishing in Academia: Digital Challenges](#)' symposium at the Wenner-Gren Centre in Stockholm, May 10th to 12th. The symposium was co-organised by the HERCulES group of the Academia Europaea and the Wenner-Gren Foundation.



A meeting of administrative and communication staff from the AE hubs during the anniversary celebration of the Academia Europaea Wrocław Knowledge Hub.

Nils Olav Sæverås also represented AE-Bergen at the [celebration of the anniversary the Academia Europaea Wrocław Knowledge Hub](#) on May 19th. The regional branch of Academia Europaea in Wrocław, Poland, was established in 2011.

## June

The annual meeting of the Academia Europaea Bergen steering group took place on June 12th. Topics were activities and plans, with emphasis on the Hubs engagement on how the Russian attack on Ukraine influences the prospects of Arctic research and science diplomacy.



The annual meeting of the Academia Europaea Bergen steering group took place on June 12th.

## July

Project manager Ole Øvretveit and AE-Bergen Academic Director Eystein Jansen were guests of the SAPEA podcast, hosted by Toby Wardman, in a podcast episode released in July. The topic was our



Project manager Ole Øvretveit and AE-Bergen Academic Director Eystein Jansen were guests of the SAPEA podcast, hosted by Toby Wardman.

“Science Diplomacy in the Arctic”-project. [The podcast is available from the SAPEA website, but can also be found on Spotify and YouTube.](#) “Genuinely one of the most important topics I’ve ever discussed on this podcast”, host and interviewer Toby Wardman says in his introduction to the episode. The podcast starts with some general information about the Arctic and how it is governed by the 8 Arctic countries, as well as the function of the Arctic Council. This as a background for the discussion on the current state of Scientific Diplomacy in the Arctic and the current lack of exchange of scientific data from the Arctic as a consequence of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

## August



University of Bergen rector Margareth Hagen presenting at the 2023 Rosendal Week .

Since the first Rosendal Week in 2020, Academia Europaea Bergen has been represented at this regional conference on climate change and energy transitions in Western Norway. Our representative at the 2023 Rosendal Week (August 7th – 8th) was Hub Manager Kristin Bakken.

## September

September 20th-22nd, Academic Director Eystein Jansen participated as a selected member of the Academia Europaea, at the Academia Europaea’s Task Force on Environment, Sustainability and Climate (TFESC) workshop in Cambridge. AE-Bergens Steering Group member Matthias Kaiser

also participated. The primary objective of this gathering was to explore innovative strategies and approaches to advance Healthy Food and Sustainable Agriculture in Europe, while maintaining a global perspective.

## October

Academic Director Eystein Jansen and Hub Manager Kristin Bakken participated at the 34th Annual Conference of Academia Europaea in Munich, October 9th - 11th. A presentation of the Hub's activities and plans at AE-Bergen was given by Eystein Jansen.



The inaugural Sydney Brenner Medal was presented to Gene Yeo, PhD, MBA, professor of cellular and molecular medicine, at the 34th Annual Conference of Academia Europaea in Munich.

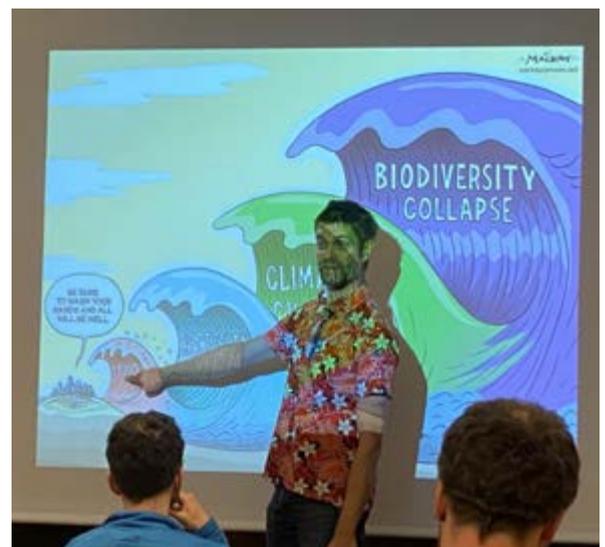
The high North is Norway's most important strategic foreign policy area. The national GoNorth project has completed two expeditions into the Arctic Ocean. On October 17th, AE-Bergen facilitated a seminar in Bergen for NTVA, titled [GoNorth – Exploring the Arctic Ocean](#). The seminar presented discoveries from the 2023 summer expedition along the mid sea ridge northwest of Svalbard, including hydrothermal vent fields that have never previously been explored.

## November

On November 14th, a lecture in the AE-Bergen, NTVA Bergen and Tekna Bergen lecture series was held, titled [The “green” vs the “blue” lens on nature and sustainability](#). Professor of marine ecology at UiB, Christian Jørgensen, explored some of the comparisons between what happens at land and in the oceans, in the myriad of data on global resource use and potential impacts.

The final report on our “The Future of Arctic Science and Science Diplomacy” project was published on our website. For more on the findings in the report, see page 10. The report was referenced at the website EUobserver.

AE-Bergen's engagement in science and science diplomacy in the Arctic was strengthened by a grant of 400 000 NOK from UArctic for 2023-2025 for the international [‘Rethinking Arctic collaboration’](#) project, to be led by AE-Bergen and Eystein Jansen. Partners are the Alfred Wegner Institute, Germany, Nord University, Norway, Dartmouth College, USA, The Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Canada as well



Professor of marine ecology at UiB, Christian Jørgensen, at the November 14th lecture.

as the international NGO International Center of Reindeer Husbandry. There is also a Steering Group for the project. The project had its startup-meeting for partners and Steering Group members on November 29th. It was decided that a first task should be to prepare a session-proposal on the topic at the [Arctic Circle Berlin](#) forum in May 2024.

## December

AE-Bergen with co-organisers got acceptance for a proposed side-event for the [Arctic Frontiers 2024 conference](#). The side-event (held on February 1st 2024), [exploring the new Arctic energy mix in light of major electrification projects](#), was a success and [is available on youtube](#).



Initial meeting of the “Rethinking Arctic Collaboration”-project.

## Arctic climate data unavailable to science following Russia sanctions

**Currently, Arctic climate research does not have access to climate data from 45% of the Arctic area. This is because climate data from the Russian Arctic areas is largely no longer available to the global research community, as a by-product of the Russia sanctions.**

This is one of the findings in the report [‘The Future of Arctic Science and Science Diplomacy’](#), initiated by AE-Bergen. The report describes the situation for scientific cooperation and science diplomacy in the Arctic in the wake of the Russia sanctions since February 2022, with a particular focus on effects on sharing of climate data and access to the collection of data.

Both scientific and evidence-based state-to-state cooperation has historically been intertwined and of high importance in the Arctic. This tight connection between science and (science) diplomacy has helped to reduce geopolitical tensions and facilitated international management programs. In line with the current sanction regime, western countries and the EU have paused bilateral and institutional collaboration and contact with Russia after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This applies to scientific organisations as well. The current war involves a high risk of severe drawbacks in the international Arctic cooperation needed for security, climate change mitigation, biodiversity, combatting pollution, ecosystem conservation, and food security.

The temperature increase is three times faster in the Arctic than the global average, leading to continued loss of sea ice and melting glaciers. Another critical aspect is the thawing of the permafrost with resulting methane emissions. Monitoring climate changes accurately requires data from all Arctic areas, including the Russian ones that are lacking today.

## 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. The contract between AE and UiB was renewed on May 25th 2021, ensuring that UiB will host and provide facilities and personnel for the running of the AE-Bergen Hub until 2025.

## Academic Director and Hub Administration of AE-Bergen



Academic Director

**Professor Eystein Jansen**

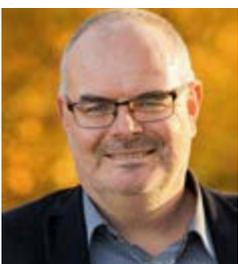
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Hub Manager

**Kristin Bakken**

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Communication Adviser

**Nils Olav Sæverås**

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## Advisory Board members in 2023

- Margareth Hagen; Chair, Rector and Professor, University of Bergen, Norway (Italian Literature)
- Erland Källén; MAE, Professor, University of Stockholm, Sweden (Meteorology/Climate)
- Kirsten Drotner; MAE, Professor, University of Southern Denmark, (Media)
- Carl G. Gahmberg; MAE, Professor Emeritus, University of Helsinki, Finland (Molecular and Integrative Biosciences)
- 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 2023

- Kjersti Fløttum; MAE, Univ. Bergen (Linguistics)
- Petter Bjørstad; MAE, Univ. Bergen (Informatics)
- Dieter Roerich; MAE, Univ. Bergen (Physics)
- 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; MAE, Professor, Univ. of Bergen (Philosophy of science)
- Stein Kuhnle; MAE, Professor, Univ. of Bergen (Political science)
- Hans Z. Munthe-Kaas; MAE, Professor, Univ. of Bergen (Mathematics)
- Ole Øvretveit, Project manager, (Pilot Digital Coast)
- Lise Øvreås; MAE, Professor, Univ. Bergen (Geomicrobiology)
- Marc Bezem; MAE, Professor, Univ. Bergen (Informatics)

## AE-Bergen office and contact

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E-mail: [AEbergen@uib.no](mailto:AEbergen@uib.no)

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

## 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.



To promote excellent research from and about the Nordic and Baltic Region, its surrounding seas, and the Arctic, is part of the mission statement of AE-Bergen.



THE ACADEMY OF EUROPE  
BERGEN KNOWLEDGE HUB

**Hosted by**



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

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