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AE Section Earth and Cosmic Sciences

BRIEF manifesto Motivation and vision

The vision behind the founding of the Academia Europaea 25 years ago is still very much alive: bringing together scientists from the highest possible caliber, irrespective of their scientific discipline and country of residence in Europe, to address, in a bottom-up manner, cross-border scientific challenges and issues of common interest. In doing precisely this, Academia Europaea has created a unique platform bringing all too frequently separated scholars from the natural sciences and the humanities together. In doing so it has necessarily mixed cultures from different geographic areas of Europe. This has not only been a rich cultural and scientific experience for those that have been part of the process of building up Academia Europaea in the past 25 years, but it is also of vital importance in order to set the stage for truly interdisciplinary research and research training – one of the greatest challenges of the coming decades. In my own field of science - Earth Sciences - Academia Europaea has served as the catalyst in setting the stage for many cross-border research initiatives in Europe. Subsequent section chairs such as the late Stefan Mueller, Enric Banda, Andre Berger and Don Dingwell all have played prominent roles in the European research landscape in their field and beyond. In this spirit, I have myself as Section chair under the auspices of AE promoted with the Section the creation of the pan-European

collaborative research programme TOPO-EUROPE, now in existence for 10 years, which has generated research opportunities for close to 100 young researchers from all over Europe, attracting over 30 Million Euro of funding for collaborative multidisciplinary research , with great societal relevance in areas such as natural hazards and energy resources. Promoting scientific excellence and seeing it spread over the whole of Europe, thereby making Europe a more attractive place to be for future researchers in a world of strong competition is another key priority. I have been very happy to contribute actively to this through my membership of the Scientific Council of the ERC, a body perceived widely as the flagship for identifying and selecting scientific research in a fully bottom-up spirit. Linking scientific excellence to innovation for the mutual benefit of both of them is another prime challenge, especially for Europe. Based on my experience as member and chair of ERC's working group for industrial relationships and innovation, which developed the ERC Proof of Concept scheme, I envisage a pro-active role also here for Academia Europaea. As promoter of close to 70 PhD students from 20 different nationalities including many from Central and Eastern Europe, I have always been very much impressed by the drive and the self-organising capacity of young researchers. It is also in this context that I am very pleased with the initiative of a group of ERC starting grantees to create the Young Academy of Europe under its first president Andre Mischke. I am very happy I have been able in my capacity as ERC Council member and Vice-President of Academia Europaea to facilitate the creation of this Young Academy and its affiliation to Academia Europaea.

The creation of the regional knowledge hubs is another novel development, spreading the organization of activities of Academia Europaea further all over Europe. The Wroclaw knowledge hub has been operational now for almost two years, leading to new activities in the humanities and the organization of the 2013 Academia Europaea Annual conference, while the Barcelona knowledge hub started more recently its activity, preparing very actively for the Annual Assembly in 2014 and for a range of multidisciplinary activities, including the 10th TOPO-EUROPE meeting taking place in May 2014 in Barcelona. Our Norwegian colleagues have taken the initiative for an additional knowledge hub in Bergen, with a possible focus on energy, resources and sustainability in the Arctic. All these initiatives show the commitment of a broad segment of Europe's scientific community to the Academia Europaea mission and the credit Academia Europaea has built up. At the same time, it is evident that there is an increased need for coordination of the different activities of the regional knowledge hubs to ensure maximum synergy and benefit to the membership of Academia Europaea. It is here, where I see the need to strengthen the organizational base for the headquarters of our Academy in London, so capably led and staffed by our Executive Secretary David Coates and Teresa McGovern.

I also see the need to reinforce the dialogue between the different sections. I strongly support the creation of a platform where the section chairs can meet to discuss issues of common interest, including cross section activities such as promoted in the recent past by Theo de Haen and Hermann Maurer.

I propose to better benefit from our multi-disciplinarity to bring together scholars and scientists from different fields for brain storming and a fruitful dialogue during our annual or ad hoc meetings.

We have to increase the involvement of the membership by establishing electronic ballots for membership elections inside sections.

It will be crucial to increase the prestige of the annual meeting and try to get a larger fraction of the newly elected membership to the meeting.

This brings me to the final issue: the financial base of Academia Europaea. Obtaining funding for an Academy as such is not a trivial matter as experienced by numerous previous presidents. Securing funding for attractive activities, with an outward looking perspective is obviously key. At the same time we need to fully mobilize the membership at large, benefitting of the synergy of Academia Europaea and the Young Academy of Europe. Common efforts by the London office and the regional knowledge hubs are essential here.

Summarizing, I see the following priorities for the new President and the Board:

- Widening and intensifying participation of the membership, promoting synergy between Academia Europaea and the Young Academy of Europe
- Strengthening the role of the sections, enhancing their effectiveness and interaction
- Strengthening the internal organization and financial sustainability of Academia Europaea

With your support, with my experience of fruitful interaction with many of you in my different capacities within Academia Europaea since I was elected in 1993 and with my strong belief in the potential of Academia Europaea, I hope to be able to realize these goals and to continue to position Academia Europaea as an influential body of European scholars in the European research landscape.

Nominators

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