



PRESS RELEASE

Europe's Leading Scientists Build New Bridges in Budapest

Budapest, 8 September 2026 – Eminent figures from the scientific communities of Europe and the wider world are gathering in Budapest from 12 to 16 October for Building Bridges 2026, the 37th Annual Conference of Academia Europaea. Organised by the HUN-REN Hungarian Research Network and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), the five-day event brings together leading European researchers from the natural and life sciences, the humanities and the social sciences. The 15th Conference of the Young Academy of Europe is being held in Budapest alongside it.

The stature of Building Bridges 2026 is clear from the make-up of the scientific community behind it. Founded in 1988, Academia Europaea is the pan-European academy of humanities, letters and sciences. It now has more than 5,500 members from Europe and other parts of the world, all elected on the strength of their scientific achievements. Nearly 90 of them are Nobel laureates, and many others have received the world's most prestigious international awards, including the Abel Prize, the Fields Medal, the Turing Award, the Balzan Prize and the Wolf Prize. Academia Europaea is also an important player in European scientific cooperation and in science-based policy advice.

The Budapest conference is this community's flagship annual gathering. HUN-REN is hosting the event as a Patron of Academia Europaea, with the MTA joining as co-host. The conference takes its central idea from its title: building bridges, that is, forging links between disciplines, generations of researchers, institutions and countries, and connecting basic research, innovation, policy and societal benefit.

Holding the event in Hungary also gives the national research community a chance to become even more closely involved in European science, and to launch new international collaborations from Budapest.

“We meet at a time of great significance for research and scholarship, global – European – national. Make your voice heard in exchanges amongst colleagues at Europe's annual academy meeting,” said Donald B. Dingwell, President of Academia Europaea.

BUILDING BRIDGES BUDAPEST '26

37th Annual Conference of Academia Europaea 15th Conference of the Young Academy of Europe

12-16 October 2026



"The bridges spanning the Danube connect Buda and Pest, and they are also a fitting symbol of what science must do: connect disciplines, generations, institutions and countries, and link the results of discovery research with social and economic impact. With Building Bridges 2026, we want to create a lasting platform for European scientific dialogue, from which new collaborations and joint initiatives can emerge," said Balázs Gulyás, President of the HUN-REN Hungarian Research Network and Chair of the conference's Local Organising Committee.

"Academia Europaea and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences are closely connected, not least because the Hungarian members of Academia Europaea also tend to be linked to our institution," noted Mihály Pósfai, President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He added that since 2020 the MTA has also hosted the Academia Europaea Budapest Knowledge Hub, which brings together scientific communities across institutions, generations and disciplines. He also touched on the divisions that have marked Hungarian society and the Hungarian scientific community over the past fifteen years or so, and said he was glad that the rifts that had opened up were now fading. *"Science needs bridges on a global scale too, because we face huge challenges, such as the controlled and responsible use of artificial intelligence,"* Pósfai stressed. *"We have to rethink the framework within which scientific work takes place, as well as how we bring up and educate young people, and we must find answers to the questions raised by climate change. We can only develop solutions to these enormous challenges by pulling together and working jointly."*

The plenary programme addresses many of the defining questions of contemporary science. Keynote speakers include Stefan W. Hell, winner of the 2014 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. The 2026 Academia Europaea Sydney Brenner Medal Lecture will be delivered by Meritxell Huch, an internationally recognised expert in organoid research, while the Erasmus Medal Lecturer will be Quentin Skinner, a leading historian of modern political thought. Hungary's leading researchers will be represented by, among others, Széchenyi Prize-winning microbiologist Éva Kondorosi and evolutionary biologist Eörs Szathmáry, both members of Academia Europaea.

The scientific programme ranges from sustainability and Earth system processes, through new directions in biomedical and biological research, to current questions in the social sciences and humanities. Discussions will cover, among other topics, global ecological challenges, sustainable energy and food production, the future of the welfare state, the concept of freedom and the challenges facing democracy today. A dedicated session will also examine how scientific advice can support policymaking in turbulent times.

Building Bridges will, however, be much more than a series of plenary lectures. The Academia Europaea Budapest Knowledge Hub is organising a separate programme: alongside a meeting of the continent's various Knowledge Hubs, projects from the *From Knowledge to Action*

BUILDING BRIDGES BUDAPEST '26

37th Annual Conference of Academia Europaea 15th Conference of the Young Academy of Europe

12-16 October 2026



initiative will be presented, with the aim of turning scientific research into tangible societal and policy outcomes. The accompanying programme also includes a symposium, titled *Science-Driven Transformation of Educational Quality: From Systemic Inequality to Evidence-Based Practice*.

The Young Academy of Europe will hold its own annual general meeting, with presentations by new members and professional sessions, while the Academia Europaea's Classes will also meet in Budapest. The event will include the Academia Europaea's Annual General Meeting, a formal welcome for its new members and the traditional President's Dinner.

A joint press release of Academia Europaea, HUN-REN Hungarian Research Network and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

