

Cardiff University press release

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Lord Martin Rees awarded Erasmus Medal by European academy

Astronomer Royal given prestigious award at the annual conference of Academia Europaea held at Cardiff University

The Academia Europaea have awarded the 2016 Erasmus Medal to Astronomer Royal Lord Martin Rees at their annual meeting and conference in Cardiff.

The award has been given to Lord Rees for his substantial contribution and achievements related to European science over a sustained period of time.

Lord Rees, who currently holds the post of Astronomer Royal and is a former President of the Royal Society, has conducted influential theoretical work on subjects as diverse as black hole formation and extragalactic radio sources, and provided key evidence to contradict the Steady State theory of the evolution of the Universe.

Lord Rees was also one of the first to predict the uneven distribution of matter in the Universe, and proposed observational tests to determine the clustering of stars and galaxies.

In addition to the award, Lord Rees will deliver the prestigious Erasmus Lecture, entitled '*From Mars to the Multiverse*', at the conference held at Cardiff University's Hadyn Ellis Building on Monday 27 June.

Ahead of the event, Lord Rees said: "I'm delighted to have been selected to give the Erasmus Lecture this year. Astronomy and space science are subjects where pan-European collaboration has been strong and effective, so it's especially appropriate to speak about them at the Academia Europaea conference."

The 28th Annual Conference of the Academia Europaea is being hosted in Cardiff for the very first time, and will bring together some of the brightest minds in Europe in the fields of humanities and sciences.

Academia Europaea, founded in 1988, acts as a pan-European academy with over 3000 members, including more than 50 Nobel Laureates, who are leading scientists and scholars and collectively promote research, learning and education.

The Academy operates through a network of regional knowledge hubs in Barcelona, Wroclaw and Bergen, and a fourth hub will be formally launched during the conference and will be hosted by Cardiff University.

A highlight of this year's conference will be a debate on scientific advice mechanisms, which will feature Sir Mark Walport, the UK's Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Julie Williams, the Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales, and Patrick Child, Deputy Director-General at the Directorate of Research and Innovation, European Commission. In 2015, the European Commission set up the Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) to support the Commission with high quality, timely and independent scientific advice for its policy-making activities.

Professor Ole Petersen FRS, the Academic Director of the Cardiff Knowledge Hub said: "The foundation of Academia Europaea in 1988 was due to an initiative by the UK's Royal Society and

although the outcome of the EU referendum is disappointing for European Science and Scholarship, the Cardiff Hub will work hard to sustain the strong research collaborations that have been built up with our partners in Continental Europe.”

The *Academia Europaea* conference forms part of Cardiff’s Summer of Innovation – a seasonal showcase of the best of the University’s work to turn research excellence into ‘real world’ answers.’

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2. Cardiff University is recognised in independent government assessments as one of Britain’s leading teaching and research universities and is a member of the Russell Group of the UK’s most research intensive universities. The 2014 Research Excellence Framework ranked the University 5th in the UK for research excellence. Among its academic staff are two Nobel Laureates, including the winner of the 2007 Nobel Prize for Medicine, University Chancellor Professor Sir Martin Evans. Founded by Royal Charter in 1883, today the University combines impressive modern facilities and a dynamic approach to teaching and research. The University’s breadth of expertise encompasses: the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences; and the College of Physical Sciences and Engineering, along with a longstanding commitment to lifelong learning. Cardiff’s flagship Research Institutes are offering radical new approaches to pressing global problems. www.cardiff.ac.uk