

Academia Europaea Annual report for 2020, Synopsis

The full 2020 trustees report has been compiled during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. As far as has been possible, the activities of the AE (including those managed out of our Regional Knowledge Hubs) have continued via online media and platforms.

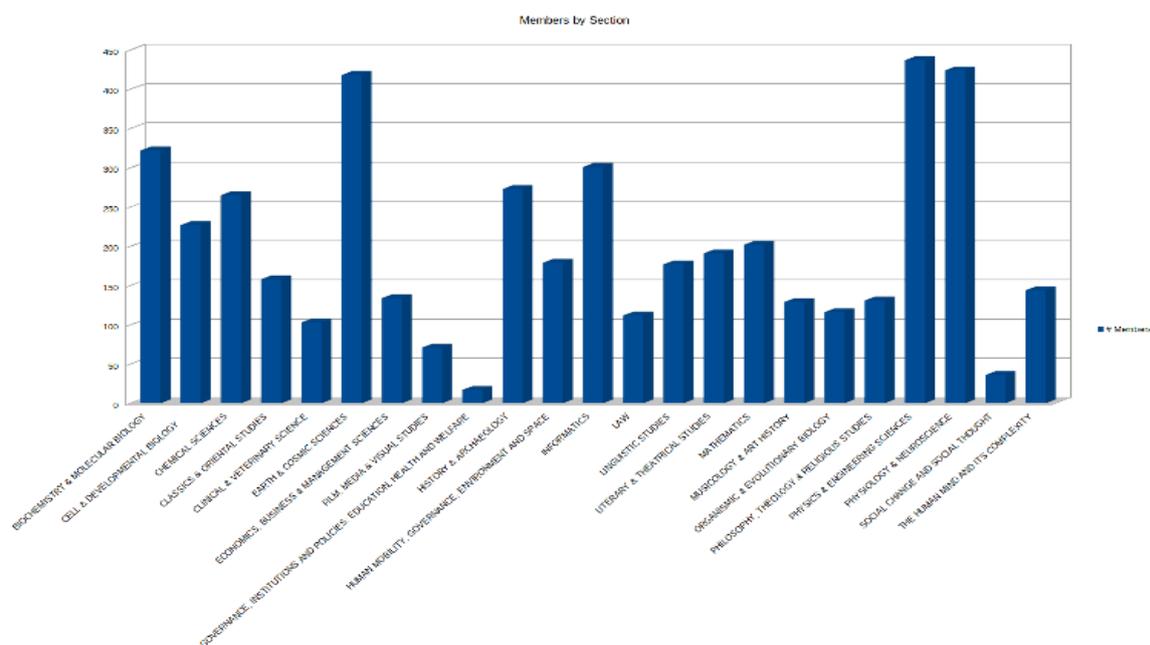
In 2019, the Board of Trustees adopted a five-year strategic plan¹ with following priorities

- To recognise and support the development of individual scholarship and scholars
- To promote excellence and deliver collective expertise and advice
- To create beneficial collaborations and partnerships
- To improve visibility, impact and trust, and
- To broaden the support base.

Priority one [*To recognise and support the development of individual scholarship and scholars*]

In 2020, the AE elected 352 new members across all disciplinary sections, so continuing the trend to meet the target and reflect the diversity (in terms of age-gender and subject) of the European community of scholars. At the end of 2020, total membership stood at 4500. Academic Section committees were renewed throughout the year to reflect the changing nature of the membership.

Members distribution by Academic Section (at the end of 2020)



¹ https://www.ae-info.org/ae/Acad_Main/About_us/Mission_Statement

The AE prime scholarly publication – The European Review, continued to grow and develop a significant impact factor for its classification. Worldwide demand for publication space was reflected in an increase to six issues per volume. An open access sponsored supplement (with the Wenner Gren Foundations, Stockholm and the AE HERCuLES group²) was published³.



An agreement has been signed to provide members with a new linked journal for the life sciences – ‘Biology Direct’.⁴

Recognising Excellence



The **2020 Erasmus Medal**⁵ was awarded to **Professor Roger Penrose**, the internationally noted mathematician and Physicist. The presentation of the medal and the delivery of the 2020 Erasmus Lecture will take place at the annual conference in Barcelona, October 2021.

Priority 2 and 3 [*To promote excellence and deliver collective expertise and advice*] and [*To create beneficial collaborations and partnerships*]

The AE continued to play a major role in the European Commission funded Horizon 2020 project SAPEA⁶ [Science Advice for Policy by European Academies]. The Cardiff Regional Knowledge Hub⁷ at Cardiff University provided the AE lead on a range of scientific advice topics that fed into the Science Advice Mechanism of the EU. Topics included a review of evidence for European food policy and an evidence review of biodegradability of plastics. Work started on a successor project - SAPEA+. This will be funded out of the Horizon Europe programme of the EU (scheduled to start in 2022).



² Higher Education Research and **CULTure** in European Society - https://www.ae-info.org/ae/Acad_Main/Activities/HERCuLES

³ Open access issues – supplement S1 Mind the Gap Bridging Secondary and Higher Education Volume 28 - Symposium S1 - August 2020 - from the HERCuLES symposium of 2018. Edited by Professor Svend Erik Larsen (Aarhus) <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798720001210>

⁴ Published by Springer Nature - <https://biologydirect.biomedcentral.com/>

⁵ The Erasmus Medal is the highest award made by the AE. Recipients are selected following a call for nominations and a rigorous peer review process. https://www.ae-info.org/ae/Acad_Main/Activities/Awards_and_Prizes/Erasmus_Medal

⁶ <https://www.sapea.info/>

⁷ <https://aecardiffknowledgehub.wales/>

The AE Bergen Knowledge Hub will be included as a linked partner alongside the Cardiff Hub, which will continue to take the AE lead, thus increasing the engagement of the AE and our diverse membership. The Young Academy of Europe will be a partner in the SAPEA+ consortium, coordinating a group of Young Academies from a number of European countries.

The AE also continued to play a role in the European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC)⁸.

During 2020, the AE Hubert Curien New Initiatives Fund provided support for member, section and Hub focussed activities:

- Contextualising Human Diversity in Context. Published by University of Trieste Press 2020. editor - Professor Cinzia Ferrini (University of Trieste) Electronic version at: www.openstarts.units.it/handle/10077/30260
- Workshop on Observatory Synergies for Astroparticle Physics and Geoscience (in collaboration with the European Alliance for Earth Sciences – GEO.8)
- Evidence for Policymakers: An international conference on generating and sharing evidence and data for improved policymaking (Supported staff to participate) at The Hague.
- Translational Medicine project: publication of the final report, as a substantial full paper (25 pages), in the Journal of Clinical Medicine. <http://aiscardiffknowledgehub.wales/2020/05/22/academia-europaea-position-paper-on-translational-medicine-published-in-leadingopen-access-journal/> and <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-0383/9/5/1532> (Prof. Peter Hegyi)

The Fund supported the following member initiated proposals that were postponed because of the COVID pandemic to future dates.

- History & Archaeology Section – Hosted at the Wroclaw Hub: ICONOCLASM : PAST & PRESENT ISSUES postponed to October 2021
- Class of Social and Related Sciences (Hosted at Wroclaw) event Collective Identities, Nations and Social Spheres postponed to 2021

During 2020, two new AE Regional Knowledge Hubs agreements were signed with sponsoring organisations: the Budapest Regional Knowledge Hub⁹, based at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and under the Academic Directorship of Professor László Lovász (Mathematics), and the Munich Regional Knowledge Hub, based at LMU, Munich and under the Academic Directorship of Professor Don Dingwell (Earth Sciences). A continuation agreement was signed between Cardiff University and the AE, extending the Cardiff Hub mandate. All seven of the AE Regional Knowledge Hubs have their own independent programmes of activity and operate with complimentary missions.¹⁰

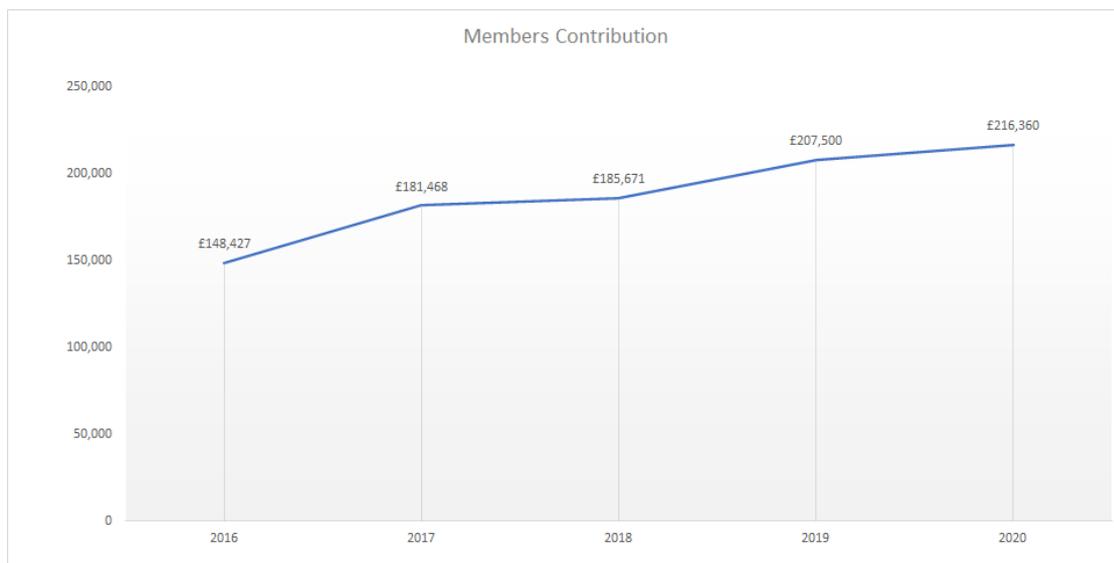
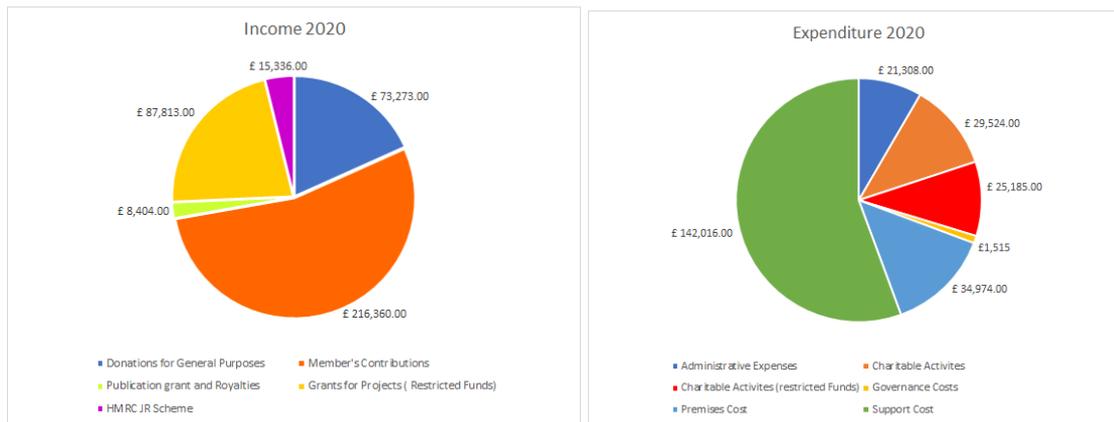
Priority 5 [*Broaden the support base*]

Despite the impact of a COVID lockdown period and the temporary “furlough” of a staff member, the AE was able to maintain a healthy financial position during 2020. The Hon. Treasurer established a sponsorship sub-committee. Current sponsorship policies and plans were reviewed as a prelude to developing a new strategy for income generation.

⁸ <https://easac.eu/>

⁹ https://www.ae-info.org/ae/Acad_Main/Budapest_Knowledge_Hub

¹⁰ https://www.ae-info.org/ae/Acad_Main/About_us/Knowledge_Hubs_and_Offices



Other priorities

Due to the COVID restrictions, a number of our 2020 planned developments were put on hold. The Trustees have been considering a major proposal to launch an Academia Europaea College of Excellence scheme (AE Professors scheme) and a regional AE champions (Ambassadors) scheme, now delayed to 2022. Similarly, dedicated Class meetings focussed on new members will now be held virtually during late 2021, as an integral part of an online annual conference, which reflects the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

Readers can find the full 2020 trustees (activity) report and the individual Hub annual reports at www.ae-info.org. The individual Regional Knowledge Hub reports are on their own websites. The full 2020 independently examined accounts and financial statements are at www.ae-info.org. These reports have been filed with the relevant authorities in the UK (Companies House and the Charity Commission for England and Wales).