



News

EASAC has new president and elects two vice-presidents

EASAC is pleased to announce that Professor Thierry J.-L. Courvoisier is the president of EASAC for the period January 2017-December 2019. A Geneva-born astrophysicist, he has served as vice-president of EASAC, president of the European Astronomical Society (EAS) and president of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences. He is the author or co-author of more than 400 scientific papers.

EASAC also welcomes two new vice-presidents for the 2017-2019 period: Professor Christina Moberg and Professor Eva-Mari Aro. In addition to her new position within EASAC, Professor Moberg, an expert in organic chemistry, is president of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. She was awarded the King's Medal in 2016. Professor Aro, a molecular plant biologist from Finland, has been president of the International Society of Photosynthesis Research. She served the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters 2010-2015, first as a board member, then as a vice-president and most recently as president.



Above: Professor Thierry J.-L. Courvoisier, EASAC's president (Left), Professor Christina Moberg (Centre) and Professor Eva-Mari Aro (Right), EASAC's new vice-presidents

SAPEA project participation

EASAC is contributing to the SAPEA project (“Science Advice for Policy by European Academies”), which works within the European Commission’s [Scientific Advice Mechanism \(SAM\)](#) and is carried out by five European academy networks: [Academia Europaea](#), [ALLEA](#), [EASAC](#), [Euro-CASE](#), and [FEAM](#). [SAPEA was launched in Brussels in December 2016](#) and is currently putting in place its working structures, administrative coordination, and communications. SAPEA will run for four years.

Latest Publications

EASAC publishes two new reports on the circular economy

The development of a circular economy remains a critical issue in the European Union. The EU will need to choose the right approach to indicators of progress and so-called critical materials to achieve its circular economy objectives of reducing environmental impact and increasing European competitiveness. To respond to these issues, EASAC [launched two reports](#), “Indicators for a Circular Economy” and “Priorities for Critical Materials in the Circular Economy”. These reports take a rigorous approach to the factors that must be considered if Europe is to achieve the circular economy.

Indicators for a Circular Economy: You can’t manage what you don’t measure

Measuring progress towards the circular economy is crucial, and EASAC’s [report](#) reviews the indicators recently proposed in different fields and assesses their relevance for the circular economy. In this report, EASAC offers advice to the European Commission which is in the process of deriving a set of indicators for the circular economy, as promised in its 2015 “Closing the loop” policy statement.

Priorities for Critical Materials in the Circular Economy

In its [report](#) on critical materials’ role in the circular economy, EASAC notes that the European Commission considers substitution and recycling rates as factors in its criticality assessments. But EASAC cautions against relying too much on substitution as a solution to anticipated supply constraints. Insufficient attention is given to the basic geological distribution of critical elements, and to the many barriers which exist to efficient recycling from end-of-life products. This report offers some advice to the Commission on how to decide which materials are most critical and the implications for recycling strategy.

Report Launches in Spring 2017

The first half of 2017 will be busy for EASAC: at least three new reports and one statement will be launched on several compelling issues, including analyses of the potential impacts of dedicated electricity storage on Europe’s electricity grids, genome editing, and the multifunctionality of forests as well as a critical assessment of EU regulations when applied to homeopathic products.

- EASAC’s Energy Programme is currently finalising the report on electricity storage, which is expected to be launched in April.
- EASAC’s Environment Programme is focusing its attention this spring on the report on forests, which is expected to be launched in May.

- EASAC's Biosciences Programme meanwhile is working on a report on genome editing and a statement on homeopathy and EU regulations, both to be launched before June.

Stay tuned for save-the-dates for the launches of these reports!

Programme Updates

Biosciences: Food and Nutrition Security and Agriculture

EASAC is one of four regional networks that constitute IAP, the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), the global network of all National Academies of Science and Medicine, with over 130 members worldwide. IAP launched a project in 2015, aiming to provide science-based advice to policy makers and the public at a global level. EASAC will be providing one of four reports—the other three will be written by the IAP members in Asia, Africa, and the Americas—that will be compiled into a single global report.

The EASAC working group has met twice (April and October 2016) and is aiming for a final report to be ready in the first half of 2017. The working group defined the desired outcome for food and nutrition security as “access for all to a healthy and affordable diet that is environmentally sustainable”.

The issues for Europe, and impacts of activity and decisions in Europe on the rest of the world, are covered in a series of chapters adapting and addressing the main themes and questions. This is work in progress, but the report is taking a systems approach to food and nutrition security and emphasising issues for local-global connections. The focus is on capitalising on the scientific opportunities in two respects: (i) how the current scientific evidence base can shape opinion, serve as a resource for innovation and inform policy options; and (ii) what should be the research agenda to fill current knowledge gaps.

Energy: Decarbonisation of Transport

Scoping is on-going in the EASAC Energy Programme for a new project on the Decarbonisation of Transport. The academies are nominating experts who will meet for a workshop in Brussels, which will facilitate an exchange views with policy officers from the European Commission and with other key stakeholders. This is part of the process of finalising the scope and focusing the new project on those inter-related issues which are most important for climate, energy and transport policy making in the EU.

Environment: Negative Carbon

The EASAC Environment Programme has started with initial work on a proposed statement on possible means of removing carbon from the atmosphere (so-called negative carbon). Currently, material is being prepared on the range of technological options which will be reviewed by the EASAC experts.

Environment: Soil Sustainability

The project on soil sustainability has been started with support by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, which held an expert meeting in November to discuss its scope and content. Work is progressing on defining the key policy issues and drafting the scientific analysis of the current state and trends in the EU's soil resources.



ABOUT EASAC

EASAC - the European Academies' Science Advisory Council - is formed by the national science academies of the EU Member States to enable them to collaborate with each other in providing advice to European policy-makers. [FIND OUT MORE](#)

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