

The Academies of Europe

Preamble: This overview highlights both the common features of, and differences between, the three supranational associations of academicians and academies in Europe.

Academia Europaea, The Academy of Europe, is a European, non-governmental association of members who are scientists and scholars who collectively aim to promote learning, education and research. Founded in 1988, its membership of about 2500 includes leading experts from all branches of science and technology, the letters and humanities, social and cognitive sciences, economics and the law. The objectives are kept deliberately broad so as to ensure interdisciplinary discourse and activities. Modalities include annual meetings of members, multidisciplinary meetings, and an interdisciplinary journal. Since 1989, the Academia Europaea has evolved from its origins as an organisation of predominantly western European scholars, into a truly pan-European Academy of Sciences, Humanities and Letters. The Academy endeavours to encourage the highest possible standards in scholarship, research and education, the promotion of a better understanding among the public at large of the benefits of knowledge and learning, and of scientific and scholarly issues which affect society, its quality of life and its standards of living. The Academy gives science policy advice to EU political bodies through statements and reports. Recent reports include *“Europe 2020, a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”* (May 2010), *“Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation Funding”* (AE Response to the Commission Green paper: *From Challenges to Opportunities*, May 2011), *Position paper on the situation of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Europe* (February 2012).

ALLEA, the All European Academies, was founded in 1994 and is the Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities from more than 40 countries in the Council of Europe region. Member Academies are self-governing communities of scientists and scholars across all fields of the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities. They operate as learned societies, think-tanks, grant givers, and research performing organisations. ALLEA’s objectives are to promote the exchange of information and experiences between Academies, offer European science and society advice from its Member Academies, strive for excellence in science and scholarship, for high ethical standards in the conduct of research, and for independence from political, commercial and ideological interests. ALLEA’s work includes the societal, technological and environmental challenges that Europe faces and proposes the steps necessary to maintain and expand a vigorous and rigorous science base in Europe. It communicates with political and other stakeholders through Memoranda, science policy advice, statements and reports. Its ‘policy for science’ work seeks to contribute to improving the framework conditions under which science and scholarship can excel. Themes include *the European Research Area and Horizon 2020, Digitisation and Open Access, Intellectual Property Rights, Science and Ethics, Science Education, Scientific Integrity, Social Sciences & Humanities*.

EASAC, the European Academies’ Science Advisory Council, was formed in 2001 by the National Science Academies of the EU Member States to provide scientific advice to EU policy-makers (so-called ‘science for policy’). It provides a collective voice of European science at the EU level, and its mission reflects the view that science is central to wise policy-making and many aspects of modern life. Through EASAC, the academies of EU member states work together to provide independent, expert, evidence-based scientific advice for those who make or influence policy within the European institutions. With the growing importance of the European Union as an arena for policy, academies recognise that the scope of their advisory functions needs to extend beyond the national to cover also the European level. EASAC is open and transparent in its processes, and its views are vigorously independent of commercial or political bias. It has carried out substantive studies of the scientific aspects of policy issues, most recently on such topics as *Climate Change and Infectious Diseases in Europe, a Europe-wide Electricity Grid, the Groundwater Situation in Southern Europe, Synthetic Biology, the Impact of Nanomaterials on Health, Concentrating Solar Power, Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and Direct-to-Consumer Genetic Testing*. Current work is on *Sustainable Biofuels, Carbon Capture and Storage, and Adaptation to Extreme Weather Events*. EASAC’s Council has highly experienced scientists nominated one each by the 24 National Science Academies of EU Member States, the National Science Academies of Norway and Switzerland, the Academia Europaea and ALLEA.