

# The European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC)

## *Strategy 2017 – 2021*

### *“Science advice for the benefit of Europe”*

#### **EASAC and its networks**

EASAC is the voice of independent science advice in the European Union, mobilising Europe's leading scientists to guide EU policy for the benefit of society.

EASAC is the network of the 27 national science academies of the EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland. The pan-European academy, Academia Europaea, and ALLEA, the association of all academies in geographic Europe, are also represented in EASAC Council. With a potential reach of over 10,000 experts covering a wealth of scientific disciplines, EASAC is an instrument for mobilising Europe's best scientific minds on important public policy issues. EASAC has a 15 year track record of producing high quality advisory reports for policy-makers in the European Commission and European Parliament, and the science advisory mechanisms within them.

EASAC is the regional affiliated network for Europe of the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), the global network of science, engineering and medical academies, who work together on global science policy issues.

From November 2016 to October 2020, EASAC is working closely with Academia Europaea, ALLEA, and the networks of engineering (EuroCASE) and medical (FEAM) academies in Europe through a project consortium, SAPEA, which is an integral but independent part of the European Commission's Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM).

EASAC organises its work through three core programmes - biosciences, energy and environment - each supported by a steering panel of experts nominated by member academies. Collectively, these are the engine of EASAC.

#### **EASAC's core objectives**

EASAC's strategy 2017 to 2021 is framed around five core objectives:

1. To influence EU policy development and implementation, and also national policy within EU Member States (MS);
2. To inform EU contributions to global policy-making;
3. To provide an independent platform for debate and for convening scientists, policy-makers and publics;
4. To build the science policy capacity of EU academies and scientists, and mobilise the European science community to engage on regional policy agendas;
5. To build a progressive and more resilient national science academies' network.

## Objective 1:

### Influencing EU policy development and implementation, and MS national policy

EASAC has developed a solid reputation for producing outstanding reports on wide-ranging issues of policy relevance. EASAC will continue to produce high quality output (e.g. reports, statements, workshops, briefings) and bring expertise and insight into different parts of the policy cycle: from *scoping* the question/new project, to *shaping new policy* and *shaping legislation* by Member States and EU Parliament, to *implementation* and *review* (monitoring/evaluation).

Over the next five years, EASAC will place increased emphasis on:

- building **stronger links with its core constituencies**:
  - **the European Commission**, especially those institutions most closely related to EASAC's core programmes (such as DG Environment, DG Sante, DG Agriculture and DG Energy)
  - **the EU Parliament** exploiting different avenues for reaching its members (MEPs) e.g. national parliamentary groups, EU-wide political parties and working groups;
  - **the European Council**, through EASAC's member academies;
  - **the High Level Group**, which is the core part of the SAM
- encouraging **member academies** to engage proactively with their national governments and representatives (e.g. in EU Parliament, on the European Council, in Permanent Representations in Brussels, and city and regional representatives who implement EU policies);
- **timing its reports** to coincide with "hot" topics, EU policy agendas and milestones;
- **more rigorous dissemination and outreach** – including launch events, briefings in Brussels and Strasbourg, publishing two-page summaries of reports, targeted marketing, and using conventional and social media channels more creatively;
- **horizon scanning** for future, as yet unanticipated, policy challenges;
- its **partnership within the SAPEA project**, as a formal but independent arm of the European Commission's SAM;
- **customer focus** - balancing bottom up (supply driven) and top down (demand driven) work, independently and through its partnership in SAPEA, including exploring commissioning models;
- **cross-/multi-/interdisciplinary perspectives** – whether independently or through SAPEA - so that interventions are more comprehensive; this could include the co-design of projects through EASAC steering panels (energy, environment, biosciences) and a more flexible approach to the current three core programmes;
- having a voice on **critical policy-for-science issues**, whether independently, in partnership with other networks, or through SAPEA.

## **Objective 2:**

### **Informing EU contribution to global policy-making**

The global influence and leadership of the EU should not be overlooked. The EU has enhanced observer status at the United Nations (UN), allowing EU representatives to present EU agreed common positions, to make interventions, present proposals and circulate EU communications as official documents at the UN General Assembly. The EU is also party to around 50 international UN agreements as the only non-state participant. It is a full participant on the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Forum on Forests and the Food and Agriculture Organisation, and many UN summits, including Rio and Kyoto summits on climate change.

Further, as a regional network of IAP, EASAC has access to other interacademy networks around the world, as a conduit for shaping and promulgating important policy messages.

Over the next five years, EASAC will:

- provide **regional leadership for IAP's** interregional project on sustainable agriculture, its new project on global policy-making and the Sustainable Development Goals, and other IAP projects relevant to global policy-making;
- pilot and then assist fundraising for a **new IAP interregional project**;
- **influence EU policy for UN policy frameworks**, where practicable;
- encourage its member academies to **engage with their respective national delegations** to UN policy frameworks;
- cooperate with **African partners** - including NASAC and the African Union - on issues of mutual interest.

## **Objective 3:**

### **Providing an independent platform for dialogue and debate**

The 21st century is the Information Age, where intelligence is sourced from many different places (including the internet and social media) and information is increasingly large and complex. EASAC has a role to play in providing independent, intelligent and objective syntheses of complex information/data. Open policy-making is also gaining increasing traction, engaging a broader range of stakeholders (for example through social media, crowd sourcing and collaborative policy processes), and opening up policy-making to new voices, ideas and techniques. EASAC will need to respond and adapt to this demand.

Over the next five years, EASAC will:

- further develop its **Brussels office** to maintain and develop links with the Commission and Parliament, and as a venue for hosting discussion fora for EU officials, policy-makers, scientists, NGOs and the wider public;
- seek **innovative partnerships** with European media agencies, journalists and/or intermediaries i.e. organisations who engage the public;
- include an **online open consultation** element (open calls for evidence) to all major projects to help scope and inform them, so that issues of public concern can be addressed;

- explore policy options by looking at their **intended and unintended consequences**;
- increase use of **social media, webinars and online communication tools** as a routine part of outreach and dissemination.

#### **Objective 4:**

##### **Building science policy capacity and mobilising the European science community**

An implicit part of EASAC's role is to build the capacity ("empower") its member academies to work confidently and competently at national and regional levels. It can also encourage other members of the European research community, institutional and individual, to engage on science policy issues through partnership and outreach.

Over the next five years, EASAC will:

- advise its **member academies to convene different constituencies** to discuss EU and national policy, sharing and promoting best practice across members;
- continue to submit **articles and report summaries in peer-reviewed scientific journals**, and in national, international, scientific and mainstream press;
- where mutually beneficial, **work with other relevant institutions / agencies**, such as European national research institutes with offices in Brussels, to promulgate important science policy messages and engage a wider science community;
- strive to create events, such as **science policy "learning collaboratives"** where member academies – and others where there is interest - can share good practice and work through real case studies together.

#### **Objective 5:**

##### **Building a progressive and more resilient academies' network**

With ever complex, highly politicised and fast evolving policy challenges, increasingly crowded and competitive science policy landscapes, and more voices positioning themselves to be heard, EASAC must mitigate reputational, strategic, operational and financial risks. It must respond to different opportunities, risks and expectations from the user community and from its (current and prospective) partners

Over the next five years, EASAC will:

- develop an **implementation plan** to support this strategy;
- deploy a "live" **risk register** where potential risks are listed and ranked;
- develop a range of (online) **planning tools for EASAC leadership** to assist induction processes, succession planning and project management;
- **draw on the work of individual member academies** and encourage them to take on more responsibility for EASAC's work;
- demonstrate **transparency, consistency and quality assurance** in its processes and procedures
- design and implement a **mechanism for evaluating impact** and clearer monitoring and evaluation processes;
- develop a **fundraising strategy** to diversify its funding sources;
- commission an **independent external review in 2020**.