Dear Academia Europaea Members, friends and colleagues,

We hope that you and your family and friends remain safe and healthy during these challenging times. First, we wish to inform you that the Barcelona Knowledge Hub (AE-BKH) is working remotely until at least May 9th, in compliance with recommendations by the Spanish health authorities regarding COVID-19. During this time, no phone calls to our office (located at the Institute for Catalan Studies, which is closed) will be answered. Questions and/or comments may be sent to barcelona@acadeuro.org and will be answered between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, CET, Monday through Friday.

Next, we are pleased to share this 2020 Spring-1 Newsletter with you, with information about the postponement of the 32nd AE Annual Conference, originally scheduled for 20-23 October of this year. By decision of the Board of Trustees of the AE, this meeting has been postponed until 19-22 October 2021.

We also wish to highlight news regarding the second edition (Life and Health Sciences) of the Barcelona Hypatia European Science Prize, awarded by the Barcelona City Council in collaboration with the AE-BKH. Due to the extraordinary situation worldwide in response to COVID-19, the originally established deadline for the Call for Nominations has been extended until further notice, as explained in section 2 of this Newsletter.

Additionally, we invite you to peruse the 2019 Annual Report of the Barcelona Hub, sent previously to the AE headquarters in London.

Finally, we introduce a new section in our Newsletter: Random Walks in the Barcelona Hub. There we propose a visit to several points of interest on our website, indicating the corresponding links. In particular, we invite you to view our two interviews with Prof. László Lovász, winner of the first edition of the Hypatia Prize, during his visit to Barcelona on the occasion of the award ceremony, held on 5 February 2019 in the historical “Saló de Cent” of the Barcelona City Council building and presided by the Mayor, Ada Colau.

Thank you for your attention. I wish all of you a complete recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and hope that, as our leaders act to help us overcome this world crisis, they rethink the contributions that all of us can make to strengthen community links and create a more sustainable and socially conscious society.

Cordially yours,

Ricard Guerrero
Academic Director, AE-BKH
1. NEXT AE ANNUAL CONFERENCE: BUILDING BRIDGES 2021

We wish to inform you that the Board of Trustees of the AE has decided that this year’s conference, which our Hub in Barcelona was planning to host in October 2020, has unfortunately been cancelled due to COVID-19. The Board have also proposed the dates of next year’s conference, which we kindly ask you to mark on your calendars now: 19-22 October 2021 (Tuesday to Friday).

We will follow the weekly schedule of the two previous Annual Conferences held in Barcelona in 2018 and 2019: Tuesday, at the Institute for Catalan Studies (IEC), for various administrative meetings, including the 32nd Annual Business Meeting of Members; Wednesday at the Barcelona Biomedical Research Park (PRBB), for Class sessions and the welcome to new AE Members and induction ceremony (those elected in 2020 and 2021); Thursday at the PRBB, for the AE Erasmus Medal lecture by Roger Penrose, the André Mischke YAE Prize for Science and Policy, and the 2021 International Adam Kondorosi AE Award for Advanced Research in Plant Sciences, plus a varied programme of leading European scholars’ lectures; and on Friday, the traditional post-conference culture and geology field trip. In addition, on Wednesday evening, the President’s Dinner for new and current members will take place.

Details of the event, which will follow a similar format and schedule to former meetings in Barcelona, will be made available in due time.

We look forward to seeing you in Barcelona in 2021.

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2. BARCELONA HYPATIA EUROPEAN SCIENCE PRIZE (2nd edition, Life and Health Sciences)

Due to the extraordinary situation worldwide in response to COVID-19, the originally established deadline of March 31, 2020, has been extended until further notice. According to the suspension of administrative deadlines outlined in the Third Additional Provision of Spanish Royal Decree 463/2020, 13 March 2020, which established a state of alarm in Spain due to COVID-19, and the subsequent extension of the measures adopted therein, currently it is not possible to confirm the new deadline for the nomination of candidates for the Prize. As soon as the state of alarm has ended, enabling the authorities to determine this deadline, the AE-BKH in agreement with the Barcelona City Council will announce it accordingly.

Call for Nominations. The AE-BKH is pleased to announce the Call for Nominations for the second edition of the Barcelona Hypatia European Science Prize, awarded by the Barcelona City Council in collaboration with the AE-BKH. This Prize, in the amount of 30,000 euros, recognises an outstanding researcher who has achieved a career of excellence at the highest international level in Europe and has made a significant contribution toward different fields of knowledge, as well as a positive impact on society.

The second edition of the Prize will recognise a research career focused on the Life and Health Sciences (LHS), including other related sciences and technologies giving support to LHS, such as biochemistry, bioengineering, etc.
Candidates and Nominators. Candidates for the Prize must be nominated by a Member of the Academia Europaea (MAE) (Nominator 1), from any Section, and must have the support of an additional MAE (Nominator 2), also from any Section. Nominator 1 can propose only one candidate. The two nominating MAEs must be from different countries. Although nominators must be MAEs, the candidate does NOT have to be a MAE, nor a native of a European country, but she/he must have developed her/his career mostly in Europe.

All information regarding prize criteria and procedures, including the Nomination Form, can be found on the Barcelona Knowledge Hub’s website at http://barcelona.acadeuro.org/hypatia-prize-second-edition-2019-2020/ Questions or comments may be addressed to: Kimberly Katte, Hub Manager, at barcelona@acadeuro.org.

We encourage all MAEs of any speciality to present and nominate your best choice in the field of Life and Health Sciences (LHS) as a candidate to the already prestigious Hypatia Prize.

3. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AE-BKH WEBSITE AND VIDEO CHANNEL DURING 2019

The AE-BKH Website is a dynamic resource of information and photo galleries from the many activities organised by the Barcelona Knowledge Hub, such as the annual Women’s Week, the Disputatio of Barcelona and Building Bridges conferences, etc.

If you have not done so already, we encourage you to view our 2019 Annual Report of Activities on our website, in which we summarise the Hub’s activities during 2019.

Also, we invite you to check out our ‘Barcelona-in-Action’ channel on Vimeo, containing a total of 29 videos viewed a total of 2,237 times. During 2019, 6 new videos were added to the channel, the most viewed ones being “On Academies in Europe and Hungary” (09:33) and “On Math in Society” (15:25). If you have not yet done so, we encourage you to view these videos featuring Prof. László Lovász, winner of the first edition of the Barcelona Hypatia Science Prize, as interviewed by Kimberly Katte, Hub Manager of the AE-BKH.

We plan to continue with both virtual and face-to-face activities such as these during 2020 and will send more information when available.

4. RANDOM WALKS IN THE BARCELONA HUB

“Random Walks”, what’s in a name? In 1983, American physicist Howard C. Berg published his influential book, Random Walks in Biology (Princeton Univ. Press), a book on the random motion of molecules, subcellular particles, or cells, which depend on such motion or are markedly affected by it. Berg used for his book a mathematical concept representing a stochastic or random process describing a succession of random steps on a mathematical plane. This allowed him to study the movement of the bacterium Escherichia coli, and many
scientists are still using the same concept to study the genetic and molecular basis of the movement of many different organisms, including us.

Of course, we humans are much more complex than simple molecules, subcellular particles, or bacteria, although while under lockdown due to COVID-19, it is possible that in some ways our behaviour is very similar to theirs. A “random walk” enables us to discover or find something without actively seeking it.

This is precisely what we propose with this section, to walk through our website and randomly discover what is hiding inside, thereby becoming more acquainted with the different activities organised by our Hub each year.

Taking the first step of this random walk through our website, we propose to enter the AE-BKH Women's Week section, which focuses on the annual activity of our Hub devoted to highlighting the role of women in all areas of knowledge. This year, due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the three scheduled sessions were reduced to two. See http://barcelona.acadeuro.org/womens-week-2/womens-week-2020/

Once you've entered this section, you can follow your own random walk to other related places by following the links you will find. Have a pleasant walk (at random, of course).