

# BARCELONEWS

Newsletter of the Academia Europaea-Barcelona Knowledge Hub

<http://barcelona.acadeuro.org/>  
Corporate site: <http://ae-info.org>

## 2021 WINTER NEWSLETTER (December 15, 2021)

Dear Members of Academia Europaea, friends and colleagues,



A festive image of the AE-BKH office at the Institute for Catalan Studies (IEC)

As the year quickly comes to a close, the Barcelona Knowledge Hub of Academia Europaea (AE-BKH) is pleased to share the present **2021 Winter Newsletter** (BarceloNEWS) with you.

First, we offer highlights from the recent 32nd Academia Europaea (AE) Annual Conference, **Building Bridges 2021**, hosted by our Hub this past October in a hybrid format featuring activities held in Barcelona and on-line (see Section 1, below).

Next, we review recent activities, including the **Disputatio of Barcelona 2021**, "**Mental health and pandemics: burden and resilience**," (Section 2) and the commemorative series, "**Cooperation, evolutionary force. Lynn Margulis, 10 years later**," (Section 3).

Finally, we announce the inclusion of the aforementioned *Disputatio of Barcelona 2021* in our Barcelona-In-Action digital archive, for your viewing enjoyment in "**Random Walks**" (Section 4). Thanks for your time and attention. Please feel free to e-mail us ([barcelona@acadeuro.org](mailto:barcelona@acadeuro.org)) with any questions or comments that you may have.

Best wishes for health and safety this holiday season,

**Ricard Guerrero, Academic Director, AE-Barcelona Knowledge Hub**



AE President Sierd Cloetingh during the closing of the BB2021 at the PRBB.

### 1. HIGHLIGHTS FROM BUILDING BRIDGES 2021

AE-BKH is pleased to have hosted the AE 32nd Annual Conference and the 10th of the Young Academy of Europe (YAE), **Building Bridges 2021**, bringing together a total of 325 experts (55 on-site delegates and 274 virtual delegates) representing 41 different countries and a wide variety of academic disciplines. This year's conference took place in a new hybrid format featuring activities conducted on-site at the Barcelona Biomedical Research Park (PRBB) and online. Furthermore, the event marked the last annual conference for AE President **Sierd Cloetingh**, who steps down at the end of 2021 after leading the academy for seven years.

The AE sessions comprising the Building Bridges 2021 plenary programme in Barcelona on 20-21 October highlighted leading international academic figures, including: physicist Sir **Roger Penrose**, recipient of the 2020 AE Erasmus Medal (laudation

given by Astronomer Royal Lord **Martin Rees**); **Ole Petersen**, AE Vice-President and recipient of the AE Gold Award; **Susan Trumbore**, expert on carbon cycle processes and 2020 Balzan Prize winner; **Quentin Skinner**, historian of modern political thought and 2006 Balzan Prize winner; **Mara Dierssen**, cellular and systems neurobiologist; and **Donald Dingwell**, volcanologist.

The YAE, for its part, contributed toward the plenary programme with the André Mischke YAE Prize 2021 for Science and Policy, awarded to **Marian Verhelst**, and a panel of European experts convened by YAE Chair **Gemma Modinos** to discuss redefining academic recognitions.

Prior to the plenary programme, the four Classes comprising AE held their respective preconference meetings in an entirely virtual environment, highlighting keynote presentations by renowned scholars, such as historian Quentin Skinner, earth scientist Domenico Giardini and mRNA scientist Katalin Karikó, as well as presentations by Members of the AE Class of 2020.

More information, including a link to the corresponding gallery of photos, is available at <http://barcelona.acadeuro.org/home/building-bridges/building-bridges-2021/> (Videos will be added soon.)



Disputatio of Barcelona 2021.

From left to right: Arcadi Navarro, Ricard Guerrero and Eider Arenaza-Urquijo.

## 2. SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH AND PANDEMICS DURING RECENT *DISPUTATIO OF BARCELONA 2021*

While the COVID-19 pandemic is considered an important burden for mental health systems worldwide, it also serves as an unprecedented global experiment that provides unique opportunities for understanding genetic pathways shared between infectious disease and neurodegeneration, as well as for studying the predictors and mechanisms of increased resilience to

dementia on both individual and societal levels.

In this context, AE-BKH held its *Disputatio of Barcelona 2021* entitled, “**Mental health and pandemics: burden and resilience**,” on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, at the Institute for Catalan Studies (IEC). With the goal of providing an invaluable dialogue among expert scientists on the relationship between mental health and pandemics, the session sought to find consensus on priorities and possible paths forward. Serving as the two *disputantes* for the debate were: **Arcadi Navarro**, MAE, ICREA Research Professor at Pompeu Fabra University and Director of the Pasquall Maragall Foundation, Barcelona; and **Eider Arenaza-Urquijo**, Research Team Leader at the Barcelonaβeta Brain Research Center, Barcelona. **Ricard Guerrero**, MAE, AE-BKH Academic Director, introduced the *disputantes* and directed questions from the audience to them.

Dr. Navarro began by offering an overview on current research on how COVID-19 may trigger degenerative effects leading to cognitive impairment and even AD symptoms, outlining the main questions that researchers are attempting to answer. Dr. Arenaza-Urquijo, for her part, offered interesting results from ongoing research on how the brain builds resilience against ageing, stress and other risk factors for Alzheimer’s disease. Both *disputantes* highlighted the urgency to promote mental health and stress resilience as a means of promoting healthy ageing, notably in the context of pandemics. The role of vaccines was also featured as an important player in improving mental health outcomes.

More information, including photos, available at: <http://barcelona.acadeuro.org/home/annual-programming/disputatio-of-barcelona/disputatio-of-barcelona-2021/>



Lynn Margulis (1938-2011) (Photo by I. Fernández)

### 3. "COOPERATION, EVOLUTIONARY FORCE. LYNN MARGULIS, 10 YEARS LATER," OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2021

In commemoration of the tenth anniversary of her passing, this fall AE-BKH co-organised a series of activities celebrating renowned biologist Lynn Margulis and her theory of endosymbiosis, which helped advance evolutionary biology in the late twentieth century.

"Cooperation, evolutionary force. Lynn Margulis, 10 years later" consisted of round tables, lectures, film screenings and an exhibit of texts and photographs, held between 13 October and 3 December 2021, at a number of different venues, including the Contemporary Culture Centre of Barcelona (CCCB), CosmoCaixa and the Marine Sciences Institute - Spanish National Research Council (ICM-CSIC).

More information, including photos, available at: <http://barcelona.acadeuro.org/home/special-projects/cooperation-evolutionary-force/>



### 4. RANDOM WALKS IN THE BARCELONA HUB

This section, whose name is inspired by the influential book published by American physicist Howard C. Berg (*Random Walks in Biology*), offers different itineraries through our website to lead users to "randomly" discover what is hiding inside and thereby become more acquainted with the activities of our Hub.

This time, in case you missed the event streamed live on YouTube, we invite you to watch our recent *Disputatio of Barcelona 2021*, "Mental health and pandemics: burden and resilience" (Section 2), featuring as disputantes **Arcadi Navarro**, MAE (ICREA Research Professor at Pompeu Fabra University and Director of the Pasquall Maragall Foundation, Barcelona), and **Eider Arenaza-Urquijo** (Research Team Leader at the Barcelonaβeta Brain Research Center, Barcelona). The event is available on the *Disputatio of Barcelona* video gallery at: [http://barcelona.acadeuro.org/home/barcelona-in-action-digital-archive/video\\_gallery/disputatio-of-barcelona-video-gallery/](http://barcelona.acadeuro.org/home/barcelona-in-action-digital-archive/video_gallery/disputatio-of-barcelona-video-gallery/)

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

<http://barcelona.acadeuro.org/>

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