

# The Estonian Academy of Sciences

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## Briefly about the Academy

The Estonian Academy of Sciences was founded in 1938 as an association of high-level scientists and scholars with commitment and responsibility to advance scientific research and represent Estonian science nationally and internationally. The primary mission of the Academy is to contribute to the building of knowledge-based Estonia, the fostering of new knowledge adaptation for economic growth and improvement of the quality of life in Estonia, the enhancement of public understanding and appreciation of science and scientific methods of thought.

To achieve its objectives the Academy organises various activities relying on the intellectual power of its Members. It provides independent, highly professional scientific expertise and science-policy advice, promotes excellence in research, communicates and disseminates knowledge, enhances public awareness of science and scientists, encourages research co-operation at national and international levels.

**The motto of the Academy** – *Facta non solum verba* – is the guiding principle of the Academy in all its activities.

## Legal status of the Academy

The Estonian Academy of Sciences is a legal person in public law operating pursuant to the Estonian Academy of Sciences Act<sup>1</sup>, the Organisation of Research and Development Act<sup>2</sup>, its statutes and other legislation. As an autonomous institution the Academy has the right to:

- establish its statutes;
- elect its members;
- determine its organisational structure;
- choose the directions and forms of its activities and the partners;
- decide on the use and disposal of property and funds;
- decide on the use of the results of its activities.

The Statutes of the Academy and the amendments thereto are approved by the General Assembly and registered by the Ministry of Education and Research.

## Structure

*Membership of the Academy* is composed of full members, whose number is limited to 60 (excl. members over 75 years of age) and foreign members, whose number is determined by the General Assembly. Membership in the Academy is for life. The Academy is currently composed of 79 full members and 18 foreign members (as of September 2014).

The *General Assembly* (usually held twice a year) is the highest decision-making body of the Academy. The *Board* is the collegial directing body of the Academy acting between the sessions of the General Assembly. The Board includes the President, Vice-Presidents, the Secretary-General, heads of divisions and non-executive members elected by the General Assembly from among the full members.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/522042014001/consolidate>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/524032014005/consolidate>

A *Division* unites the full members and foreign members of a corresponding scientific field and the institutions of the Academy in partnership activities with other R&D institutions and learned societies of the same scientific field. The Academy has four divisions:

- Division of Astronomy and Physics;
- Division of Informatics and Engineering;
- Division of Biology, Geology and Chemistry;
- Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The *Office* handles the administrative, financial and other day-to-day activities of the Academy in compliance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Board and reports to the Secretary-General.

## **The role of Members**

Members of the Academy are chiefly acting as leading experts and scientists, conducting research and teaching at universities. Additionally to their main occupation, many members of the Academy are engaged as experts and advisers, sitting on national expert panels and advisory councils for the Parliament, the Government and other state authorities (e.g. President's Academic Advisory Board, Research and Development Council, Evaluation Council of the Estonian Research Council, National Science Prize Committee, Research Policy Advisory Committee, Steering Committees of National R&D Programmes, etc.) and participating in drafting legal acts relating to R&D activities in Estonia.

Members of the Academy represent the Estonian Academy of Sciences, the Estonian research community, as well as the whole society in various EU structures (expert committees and advisory boards). A great majority of them are occupied on editorial and advisory boards of international scientific organisations and scholarly journals.

## **Councils and committees**

Currently, the Academy has 10 active expert panels:

- Committee on Marine Sciences;
- Committee on Meteoritics;
- Committee on Nature Conservation;
- Committee on Phylogeny and Taxonomy;
- Council for Estonian Centres of Excellence in Research;
- Council for International Exchanges;
- Energy Council;
- Publishing Council;
- Standing Committee on Cyber Security;
- Standing Committee on Medical Science and Health Strategy.

The objective and activities of the panels are focused on joint discussions for elaborating and shaping opinions, analysing diverse problems and preparing plans and recommendations on topical issues of their special fields of study.

## **Institutions**

Two institutions have belonged into the structure of the Academy since the 1990ies:

- *Under and Tuglas Literature Centre*<sup>3</sup>, whose main tasks are the study of texts from Estonian written culture in both historical and theoretical perspective, the analysis of Estonian literature in the contexts of historical Baltic literary space and world literature, and the development of literary and cultural theory in close connection with the newest trends in the world.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.utkk.ee/eng/contacts.html>

- *Estonian Academy Publishers*<sup>4</sup> are the leading publisher of scholarly periodicals in Estonia, whose production is practically extending over all essential fields of contemporary science. The Publishers issue 8 titles of peer-reviewed journals: 'Acta Historica Tallinnensis'; 'Estonian Journal of Archaeology'; 'Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences'; 'Estonian Journal of Ecology'; 'Linguistica Uralica'; 'Oil Shale'; 'Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Sciences' and 'Trames'. They also publish non-periodical scientific literature (monographs, article collections, yearbooks, etc.).

All journals are available in electronic format. Online access to the full text of separate titles is provided either by EBSCO host databases or CEEOL online archive.

A brand new institution – the *Institute for Advanced Study* – was established according to the General Assembly resolution of April 24, 2013.

### **Associated institutions, societies and unions**

Research and development institutes, cultural establishments and learned societies, whose activities and objectives comply with the interests and aims of the Academy, may associate with the Academy. Relations between a particular associated institution or society and the Academy, the mutual rights and obligations are provided for in the Statutes of the Academy and an agreement of association. Since 1989 agreements of association have been signed with 25 partners (8 institutions<sup>5</sup>, 17 learned societies and unions<sup>6</sup>).

### **Activities**

In order to perform its functions, the Academy:

- initiates, develops and coordinates advanced studies;
- supports international scientific cooperation;
- publishes scholarly publications;
- attends to the education of new generations of researchers;
- organises academic meetings and conferences;
- holds science competitions;
- confers awards and allocates scholarships;
- provides expert advice and recommendations for the Riigikogu, the government and state authorities;
- participates in preparing legislation concerning R&D activities;
- participates in the work of other R&D institutions and foundations through its appointed representatives;
- submits opinions on the organisation of Estonian research and financing of R&D activities;
- contributes to realisation of the creative potential of researchers and protects their interests.

### **Research Professors**

Research Professorships were established at the Estonian Academy of Sciences in 2001. The first three Research Professors were elected for a three-year period in 2002. Competitions for successive terms were held in 2005, 2008 and 2012, filling three vacancies up to 2015. So far, research performance has been assessed as excellent in all respects for every completed Research Professorship term.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.kirj.ee/>

## **International relations**

Promotion of scientific co-operation at national and international levels is one of the main responsibilities of the Academy. The Academy's international activities fall into the following major areas:

- Representation of Estonian science in various international organisations; support to Estonian National Committees for international scientific unions, dissemination of information about such activities.

The Academy is represented in the following all-European and worldwide scientific organisations: ALLEA, EASAC (European Academies' Science Advisory Council), European Marine Board, CETAf, ICSU, UAI (*Union Académique Internationale*), IAP. Professor Jüri Engelbrecht, Vice President of the EAS served as the president of ALLEA in 2006-2012.

- Participation in various EU structures (expert committees and advisory boards, EU FP programmes and projects, etc.).

The Estonian Academy of Sciences is a Bridgehead Organisation of the EURAXESS network, providing researchers and their families with customised assistance in all mobility-related issues. The network gets financial support from the European Commission, aiming at facilitating the researchers' mobility in Europe. Since 2006, the EAS has participated as a partner in the EC FP projects "Researchers' Night", targeted at popularisation of science and research as a career.

- Bilateral co-operation with academies and other partner institutions on the basis of co-operation agreements.

The EAS fosters transnational research and mobility of researchers and aims at facilitating scientific networking. The agreements on scientific co-operation signed with partner institutions in other countries (in total 32) allow the Academy to draw on goodwill and experience of partners in shaping its own strategies and co-operation tools. On the basis of bilateral agreements, it runs a scientific exchange programme, hosting around 70 visiting researchers per year and nominating the same number of Estonian scientists and scholars per year for study and conference visits abroad.

The Estonian Academy of Sciences organises and participates in various joint scientific events (incl. traditional Baltic Conferences on Intellectual Co-operation).

## **Awards and scholarships**

The *Medal of the Estonian Academy of Sciences* is the highest award of the Academy.

*Memorial medals of the Academy* (6 in total) are awarded to recognize outstanding achievements in particular areas of Estonian research.

*Memorial prizes of the Academy* are awarded to highlight excellence in Estonian research.

*Student Research Paper Prizes* are awarded to stimulate further independent research of talented and highly capable students.

*Estonian Science Communication Awards* are granted jointly by the Academy, the Estonian Research Council and the Ministry of Education and Research. The purpose of the award is to highlight popularisation of science, promote activities towards communicating research to the public and give recognition to individuals as well as research groups for their accomplishments in this area.

*Scholarships of the Academy* have been initiated to support completion of monographic research works and popular science books, their layout and editing.

## **Publications**

The first Year Book was published two years after the Academy was founded, bearing 1940 as its publication date. The publication was discontinued until 1996 due to historical events. Electronic versions of yearbooks since 2001 (in Estonian and English) are available on the Academy's website.<sup>5</sup> The Year Book traditionally encloses a list of publications by all members of the Academy for the corresponding year.

Currently, the list of works published by the Academy has been replenished by several new titles (mainly in Estonian):

- The first issue of the series 'National Science Prizes of the Republic of Estonia' was launched by the Academy in 1997. The 18th book of compiled articles providing an overview of the current year prize-winning researchers, research teams and their work was presented in June 2014.
- The series of theme based article collections, known by the public as the 'blue books' (originating from their blue covers), offers an overview of studies in particular fields of knowledge relevant to Estonian research. 16 titles have been published so far, their focus turned on engineering, medical science, exact sciences, humanities, life and earth sciences, etc.

Other publications of the Academy include conference materials, seminar papers (e.g. thematic series 'From Science to Society', 'New Trends in Science'), brochures, booklets, etc. Also, several titles in English have appeared as the outcome of a joint effort by the Academy and the Estonian Centres of Excellence in Research:

- Centres of Excellence in Estonian Science (2004);
- Research in Estonia: Present and Future (2011);
- Estonian Centres of Excellence in Research: Focus, Aims, Perspectives (2012).

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.akadeemia.ee/en/>