

SECOND WORKING YEAR OF THE ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AS THE CHAIR OF THE EUROPEAN ISC MEMBERS

Erle Rikmann, Secretary of the European isc network

At the end of 2021, the Estonian Academy of Sciences was elected chair of the European members of the global science organisation International Science Council (isc). Estonia will direct the work of the European isc Members until the end of 2024.

2023 was a busy year for the isc on several fronts. Reorganisations continued to include a broader circle of scientists in the activities of the Council, which paid particular attention to empowering scientists from developing countries and crisis regions. At the intersection of science and politics, the isc aims to act as a catalyst for change, concentrating expert scientific knowledge, formulating policy recommendations and speaking in matters that are important for both science and society.

In May 2023, a science symposium was held as a mid-term meeting of the isc in Paris, France, and this focused on possible synergies between scientists of different regions, their organisations and various scientific disciplines. As the Chair of the European isc Members, Tarmo Soomere presented the interests and common challenges of European scientists.

During Estonia's presidency, the main activities of the European isc Members have been focused around three

umbrella topics. First, the representation of the interests of European research institutions and scientists in the global isc organisation. In recent years, the activities of the isc have significantly expanded and the management of the organisation has changed. Although the European isc Members comprise nearly a quarter of the member organisations of the global isc, they are not proportionally represented in the new management of the Council. Therefore, one of the tasks of the European isc Members and its Secretariat in Estonia is to draw attention to the viewpoints and needs of European scientists in the global isc organisation.

The second important umbrella topic is the promotion of scientific advice and knowledge-based policy-making in Europe, primarily by way of developing and shaping the structures necessary to achieve this. The network of science organisations concentrates the best knowledge and helps find the best new practices for solving scientific advice challenges by sharing experience, holding public discussions and engaging in research cooperation. The need for more permanent scientific advice structures with rapid response capabilities and interdisciplinary competences is also growing at EU level.



Photo: Baisa Radunović

Science Day with the Montenegrin hosts. From left: Vladimir Crnojević, Director of the BioSense Institute; Biljana Šćepanović, Minister of Science and Technological Development of Montenegro; Mila Popovich, Director General in the Government of Montenegro; Ljubiša Stanković, Vice-President of the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts.



Photo: Baška Radunović

A moment from the meeting of the Presidents of the academies of sciences at the Annual Meeting.

The third area of activity in the work of the European ISC Members is the development of science diplomacy and international research cooperation. This includes the improvement of overall knowledge as well as practical activities where the aim of research cooperation is to support relations between countries or regions or, conversely, to facilitate the growth of science and innovation via diplomacy.

The event of the year for the European ISC Members is the Annual Meeting and a science day aimed at the broader public, which are both held in autumn. In 2023, both events were held in Podgorica, Montenegro, in the middle of September (14–15 September) in cooperation with the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts. The participants were given an overview of developments in the region's research and science policy, and the major



Photo: Baška Radunović

Participants in the Annual Meeting.

challenges to science in Europe were addressed. Discussions also focused on matters related to the position and influence of science in society, relations between science and politics, developments in science diplomacy and the changing role of European science in the globalising world.

In 2024, the European ISC Members are facing new organisational (elections of a new steering group, possible change of location of the Secretariat) and substantive tasks, such as the more efficient inclusion of European scientists in solving global scientific issues.



Photo: Balaša Radunović

Tarmo Soomere's opening words at the Annual Meeting.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND THE HEIDELBERG ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Academy member Jaan Undusk

Germany, the largest country in Europe by population, has a total of nine academies of sciences, one of which is federal (German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina), while the other eight are regional. The academy of sciences of the state of Baden-Württemberg is located in Germany's oldest university town, Heidelberg.

The key person in the establishment of relations between the Estonian Academy of Sciences and the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities is Ulrich Kronauer (born 1944) who was a member of the German law dictionary (*Deutsches Rechtswörterbuch*) workgroup at the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities from 1974 to 2009. It was Kronauer who, while working on the reference book founded in 1897 and by now comprising 14 volumes, highlighted its importance in studying the history of the public use of language in the Baltic countries. Kronauer discovered Estonia thanks to linguistics philosopher Carl Gustav Jochmann from Pärnu (1789–1830), who studied law at Heidelberg University and in the 1820s anonymously published his later renowned works at the university publishing house. In 2009, Kronauer established the Jochmann Society (Jochmann-Gesellschaft e.V.) which has essentially evolved into an academic German-Estonian friendship society.

As the first and in the current perspective also the only Baltic Commissioner (*Baltikumsbeauftragter*) of the Heidelberg Academy, Kronauer brought distinguished members of the Heidelberg Academy, the world-famous historian Reinhart Koselleck⁸³ (2003) and the former rector of Heidelberg University, Volker Sellin⁸⁴ (2009), to speak in the hall of the Estonian Academy of Sciences in Toompea. Thereafter, relations between the academies mainly developed in the framework of conferences dedicated to the history of the Baltic countries held both in Estonia and Heidelberg, where the Estonian Academy of Sciences was represented by the Under and Tuglas Literature Centre.

Communication reached a new level in autumn 2022, when the presidents of the academies, Bernd Schneidmüller and Tarmo Soomere, met in Heidelberg. The meeting was also attended by the Vice-President of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Matthias Kind, the Director of the Under and Tuglas Literature Centre, Jaan Undusk, and Ulrich Kronauer, and goals were established for broader cooperation.

⁸³ Reinhart Koselleck's presentation 'About the History of Concepts and the Concepts of History' in the Academy hall in September 2003.

⁸⁴ Volker Sellin's public lecture 'Monarchy and Nationalism' held in the Academy hall on 16 September 2009.