



Academia Europaea The Academy of Europe



**An award of the Academia Europaea Gold Medal,
Monday 24 September 2018, at the Royal Society, London, to**

Robert Jan Smits MAE (h.c)

Citation: This award is only rarely given, and is made “... to those members and non-members of the Academia and to organisations, in recognition of the contribution made to European science through inspiration, public support, management expertise or by financial means. “

The Board of trustees of the Academia Europaea are pleased to recognise the substantial and sustained contribution that Robert-Jan Smits has made to European Research and Innovation policy, notably through the development of the European Research Area and through the design and implementation of HORIZON 2020, the EU multi-billion science and innovation programme, aimed at supporting collaborative research between researchers from Europe and at global level.

Robert-Jan Smits will deliver his Gold Medal address during on the occasion of the Academia Europaea 30th anniversary event, to be held courtesy of the Royal Society, London in September, 2018.

The laudation will be given by Professor Eva Kondorosi MAE, a trustee of the Academia Europaea and a Vice-president of the European Research Council.

Science, Europe's most precious asset

Robert-Jan Smits



Abstract

The heart of the European project is a set of values on which 28 Member States have agreed: respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law. These values are enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty and were inspired by the atrocities of the Second World War.

In recent years, these values are increasingly put to the test.

There is a special responsibility of the science system and the science community in Europe to speak out and to lead by example. To show that we believe in our European values and that we represent these values. As a matter of fact, to make it clear that science cannot flourish without these values.

Biography

Robert-Jan Smits is currently the Open Access envoy of the European Commission. He was until recently, the Director-General for Research and Innovation (RTD) at the European Commission. Prior to this role, he had held positions of responsibility at the European Commission for aspects of research and innovation policy and had been a key promoter of the development of the European Research Area and for the strengthening of European co-operation in research, including for the widening and capacity development policies and funding schemes for RTD across Europe.

He has been a strong advocate on behalf of the excellence initiatives including for the development of the European Research Council and most recently for enabling the establishing of the new Science Advice Mechanism (SAM) that now operates within the Commission. Robert-Jan has also throughout his career been a strong advocate of the value of the independent advice and expertise that the national and international Academies of Science (including also for the Humanities) can bring to evidence based policy and the promotion of scientific excellence.

He has in recent years received a number of international recognitions: from: South Africa, the Academy Medal from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, an Honorary degree from Edinburgh University and a life-time achievement award from EuroScience

Robert-Jan Smits has also in 2018, been invited as a member (honoris causa) of the Academia Europaea

Further information: https://ec.europa.eu/epsc/team/robert-jan-smits_en

Laudatrix

Professor Eva Kondorosi MAE

Research Professor at Biological Research Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HU) and Research Director at the Plant Science Institute of CNRS (FR)



Biography

Eva Kondorosi was born in Budapest, graduated (Biology) and received her PhD (Genetics) at the L. Eötvös University in Budapest. She was postdoc at the Max Planck Institut für Züchtungsforschung (Köln) and visiting scholar at the Sussex, Harvard and Cornell Universities. Eva Kondorosi was the founding director of the BAYGEN Institute (2007-2012) which is now part of the Biological Research Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Szeged where she directs the Symbiosis and Functional Genomics Unit. She has also been a founding member of the Institut des Science Végétales CNRS in Gif sur Yvette, France as one of the first research directors and group leaders. Her primary research field is Rhizobium-legume symbiosis with recent focus on the plant controlled differentiation of bacteria. For her original discoveries she received several awards including the Széchenyi and the IS-MPMI awards in 2012. She is Full Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, a foreign associate of the National Academy of Sciences (USA), and member of the following institutions or bodies: Academia Europaea (also member of its Board of Trustees), the European Molecular Biology Organization, the Board of Directors of the International Society for Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions (until 2016), the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, the French Academy of Agriculture and the Scientific Advisory Board of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (2013-).

Further information: http://www.brc.hu/biochem_symbiosis_and_functional_genomics_unit.php