



Academia Europaea

TBILISI

Knowledge Hub

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

HOSTED BY



**TBILISI
STATE
UNIVERSITY**

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Introduction

By **Professor David Prangishvili**

Academic Director of Academia Europaea Tbilisi
Knowledge Hub



David Prangishvili MAE

Welcome to our Annual Report 2019, highlighting achievements in the Hub's first year of operation.

Academia Europaea Tbilisi Knowledge Hub was established on the 24th of April 2019 as a joint initiative of Academia Europaea and Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia.

The Tbilisi Knowledge Hub acts as the Academia Europaea's branch in the Eastern Partnership Countries with the aim to promote in the region European standards of scholarship and science management, to develop coordinated interactions with international agencies, and to encourage top-notch interdisciplinary and international scientific research, knowledge, and education.

The opening of the Hub was met with great enthusiasm by the general public and by the academic community of Georgia. It was considered as an event of significant academic and political importance, recognizing the European identity of Georgian Science and Culture. Moreover, it was regarded and as an essential step toward Georgia's return to the European family and the reclamation of Tbilisi's status as the centre of intellectual life in the South Caucasus, at the border of Eastern Europe and Western Asia.



The Tbilisi Knowledge Hub will promote education and research in all branches of sciences. However the priority will be the development of multidisciplinary scientific activities related to biological, cultural, linguistic, ecological diversity in the South Caucasus. Such objective is determined by the growing interest in the links between biological and cultural diversity and the expansion of the concept of biocultural diversity into an object of academic inquiry. The Caucasus offers a perfect opportunity for such studies: it is the area of the highest linguistic diversity in Europe and one of the richest and most diverse wilderness areas on Earth. Finally, there is a high-level expertise in the region in human and natural sciences suitable for understanding links between nature and culture and the inter-relationships between humans and environment.



Tbilisi

Clusters of excellence are essential elements of the strategic plan of the Hub, which will be developed through focused conferences and seminars and enable multidisciplinary, international scientific networking. At present three such clusters of excellence have been established:

(a) Human Cultures, Health and Microbes;

(b) Ponto-Caspian Connections: Climate, Ecology and Human Evolution

(c) Eastern Christianity: History, Theology, Cultural Influences, and Religious Practices.

The activities of the Hub in these directions, mainly focused on the organization of workshops, conferences and seminars, are summarized in the annual report.



Academia Europaea Tbilisi Knowledge Hub Opening Ceremony



Prime Minister of Georgia, Mamuka Bakhtadze



Tbilisi State University

The Tbilisi Regional Hub of Academia Europaea was inaugurated at the Aula of Tbilisi State University on the 24th of April, 2019. The President of Georgia Salome Zurbashvili has welcomed the opening of the Hub and the inauguration ceremony was attended by the Prime Minister of Georgia Mamuka Bakhtadze, Parliamentarians, the Diplomatic Corps, members of the Board of Trustees of Academia Europaea, professors and students of Tbilisi State University.



Rector of Tbilisi State University, George Sharvashidze
and President of Academia Europaea, Sierd Cloetingh

The collaboration agreement was signed by the President of Academia Europaea Sierd Cloetingh and by the Rector of Tbilisi State University George Sharvashidze.



Organization

The AE Tbilisi Knowledge Hub office is headed by an Academia Director, appointed by the Rector of the TSU, currently AE member David Prangishvili. The Academic Director and the Advisory Board ensure the strategic direction and activities of the Hub.

Advisory Board



Alexander Tsiskaridze



David Lortkipanidze



David Prangishvili



Eva Kondorosi



George Sharvashidze



Merab Kokaia



Mikheil Chkhenkeli



Tamaz Gamkrelidze



Zaal Kokaia



International Conferences and Workshop

International Workshop **RESEARCH POLICY & NETWORKING**

April 25-26, 2019



The Academic Directors of the Tbilisi (David Prangishvili)
and Cardiff (Ole Petersen) Knowledge Hubs

This was the first event organized by the Tbilisi Knowledge Hub, following its inauguration. The presenters included the president, vice-presidents, class chairs, and academic directors of three Hubs of Academia Europaea, as well as the Rector of Tbilisi State University and members of the Scientific Board of the Tbilisi Knowledge Hub. The workshop has defined lines of interactions of the new Hub with Academia Europaea and discussed future plans of the Hub and its collaboration with other Hubs of Academia Europaea.



Sierd Cloething - President of the Academia
Europaea



Ole Petersen - Academic Director of the
Cardiff Knowledge Hub





MICROBES AND THEIR VIRUSES: ECOLOGY, DIVERSITY, APPLICATIONS

September 22-28, 2019



The conference was organized by Academia Europaea Tbilisi Knowledge Hub and Tbilisi State University, in collaboration with the Universities of Bergen and Yerevan, Giorgi Eliava Institute of Bacteriophage, Microbiology and Virology and the Georgian Association of General and Applied Microbiology. The conference celebrated the centenary of microbiology research in Georgia and covered the following topics: Clinical Microbiology and Epidemiology; Bacteriophages and their Medical Applications, Microbial Technologies; and Microbial Exosystems and Microbiomes. The special workshop "New Trends in Extremophile Research and Biotechnology" covered key areas of ecology, diversity and biotechnological potential of extremophilic microorganisms and their viruses. On the opening day of the conference, two public lectures were held: "Microbial culture as part of human culture" (Harald Bruessow, Switzerland) and "Graphics of behavioral history of bacteriophage detection for schoolchildren" (Jeremy Barry, Australia).

The event was attended by scientists from 19 countries (USA, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Turkey, Iran, Israel, Italy, Norway, Georgia, France, Armenia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Switzerland, China). Participants, including young researchers and students.

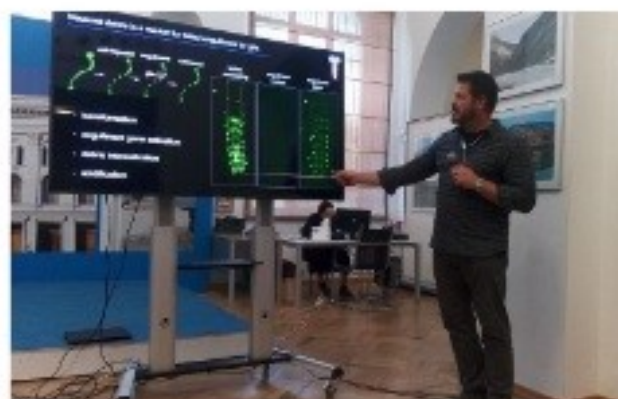
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Functions of Neuroglia

September 26-28, 2019



Alexander Roitbak

The conference was organized by Tbilisi State University, Academia Europaea and the Tbilisi Knowledge Hub with support of Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation. The conference featured presentations by leading scientists from around the world and provided an excellent opportunity for experts and young scientists to share and discuss the latest advances in the field of neuroscience and to establish international collaborations. The conference commemorated the centenary of the prominent neuroscientist, Alexander Roitbak, one of the pioneers of electrophysiological investigation of the central nervous system. The conference revived the series of regular conferences on Neuroglia which were initiated by Alexander Roitbak and have served as a platform to share the most recent knowledge in – what was at the time – a newly emerging field. Since the last meeting in 1989, neuroglia physiology has become one of the leading fields in modern neuroscience.

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Distinguished Seminar Series (DSS) - <<The Crossroads>>

The Tbilisi Knowledge Hub has launched the Distinguished Seminar Series - THE CROSSROADS, featuring presentations by outstanding thinkers and scientists. The purpose of the seminars is to popularize science, to encourage the exchange of ideas at crossroads - across the barriers of disciplines, time, and space, and to promote interdisciplinary, international scientific cooperation. Distinguished speakers are selected based on the impact of their research on the scientific community. In 2019 three seminars of the series have been organized.



"Microbial Culture as Part of Human Culture"



"The Multiplicity of Literary Forms"



"European Dimensions of the Medieval Georgian School of Philosophy"

On 22 September, 2019 the seminar - "The Multiplicity of Literary Forms" was held by the Academia Europaea Tbilisi Knowledge Hub and the Center for Eastern Christian Studies under the DSS at Tbilisi State University.

The seminar was delivered by Prof. Harald Brusov (Leuven University, Belgium).

24 June, 2019 the seminar - "The Multiplicity of Literary Forms" was held by the Academia Europaea Tbilisi Knowledge Hub and the Center for Eastern Christian Studies under the DSS at Tbilisi State University.

The seminar was delivered by Prof. Ana Kharanuli (Tbilisi State University) and Prof. Michel Stone (Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

On 20 June, 2019 the seminar - "European Dimensions of the Medieval Georgian School of Philosophy" was held by the Academia Europaea Tbilisi Knowledge Hub under the DSS at Tbilisi State University.

The seminar was delivered by Prof. Levan Gigineishvili (Tbilisi State University) and Prof. Benedek Szigmund (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest); Moderator - Prof. David Prangishvili (Academic Director, AETH).



The Summary Report on Activities

The activity of the Hub in 2019 was summarized by the Academic Director David Prangishvili, MAE, at the joint session of the Representation Council of Tbilisi State University and members of the Scientific Board of the Tbilisi Knowledge Hub on December 28, in Kachreti Ambassadors Resort. At the joint session the plans for 2020 have been discussed and approved.



David Prangishvili
MAE





Management and Resources

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