

# **EASAC Foundation Policy Plan**

*Established by the board of EASAC Foundation*  
*October 2024*

## **1. Introduction**

In June of 2024, EASAC foundation was formally established in Amsterdam as a foundation ('stichting') under Dutch law, with KvK number 94050945 and RSIN 866618077. In this policy document of the foundation, we describe how EASAC Foundation aims to stimulate and support the science for policy activities of academies and their networks through fundraising and donations from individuals or organisations that wish to support the work of EASAC Foundation. Subsequently, we sketch the first steps that the board of EASAC Foundation tends to take in the fall of 2024 to implement this strategy; we give an overview of potential donors and of steps we could take to engage with potential donors.

## **2. A foundation without staff and which cannot take loans**

The actual work which EASAC Foundation aims to support is often done by working groups composed of members nominated by Academies in Europe, or is focused on activities to strengthen such activities. This can be done through support of members of academies from newer member states, by supporting activities to increase diversity in terms of gender, geographic spread, disciplinary background etc.

EASAC Foundation will not need to have a large organisation for managing such projects: all the administrative work is done by experienced retired scientists who serve as board members and who have been involved in science for policy advice at the national or international level. Therefore, EASAC Foundation will not act as an employer, and will not (be able to) take loans. Its aim is to raise funds for the activities executed and managed by board members of EASAC Foundation. The most important and time-consuming work of board members of EASAC Foundation will amount to establishing contacts and to fundraising.

Initially the website [easacfoundation.eu](https://easacfoundation.eu) will be maintained by the board member who also built the site. Once the foundation is successful in raising funds, a professional company can be hired to maintain the website.

Contracts with donors and the yearly report and financial overview are taken care of by the EASAC Foundation board members. The website [easacfoundation.eu](https://easacfoundation.eu) will of course include clear information about the projects supported by external donors, with full disclosure of the contract between EASAC Foundation and the donor, and of the activities supported by the gift.

As a result of the 'light' structure of the foundation, with limited administrative tasks and no personnel, this policy plan does not go into management details further, except to stress that only a very limited amount (maximum 5%) will be withheld from gifts for overhead (mainly used for the bank account and in exceptional cases for international travel by the board members). Hence at least 95% of gifts will be used for supporting projects of EASAC Foundation.

It is noted that the board members all have extensive experience as board members of academies, network organisations of academies, universities and funding organisations.

### **3. The mission of EASAC Foundation**

Initially, EASAC Foundation will focus on four thematic areas: Climate, Energy, Environment and Biosciences & Public Health. This in particular because the board members do have their background, experience and contacts in the exact and medical sciences. Moreover, from the point of view of the exact and medical sciences, these are the major challenges facing modern society; moreover, these are global issues, so that international cooperation is crucial for addressing them.

The experience of the board members with the European network organisation of academies, EASAC, is that in order to address such themes convincingly and impactful, it is important to give *independent* science for policy advice on particular topics within these thematic areas. This is done by forming working groups of expert scientists, nominated by academies in Europe, that meet several times to address the topic and write an advisory report. The scientists typically perform their work free of charge. Nevertheless, while as a result costs are low, budgets are needed for travel and for hiring a science policy officer to support the work of the working group and to write the draft report. The few network organisations that exist have limited funds, so they can address only a limited number of topics. EASAC Foundation therefore aims to raise funds to support and broaden this type of work in Europe, to increase the participation and diversity of scientists involved and to be able to address topics which existing organisations are able not to address because of their limited funds.

An additional aim of EASAC Foundation is the following. Many present-day challenges require input from social sciences and humanities as well (think of legal, ethical, economic and security aspects, as well as of the influence and impact of human behavior), but traditionally scientists from these fields have been less involved in science for policy advice. EASAC Foundation therefore hopes to raise funds which allows to stimulate the participation of experts from the social sciences and humanities in topical working groups. Collaboration with the international network organisation ALLEA, which traditionally has a stronger focus on social sciences and humanities, will be required to achieve this. If EASAC Foundation is successful in raising funds, the long-term aim is to broaden the scope of the work to other societal challenges; think of making resilient societies, Artificial Intelligence and its impact on society, transformative change, immigration, etc.

Board members are eager to explore with possible donors what type of projects might appeal to them, and have EASAC Foundation serve as the ideal partner that can bring together the right experts from academies and organizations to give *independent* science for policy advice to Europe or even at the global level. In this sense, EASAC Foundation also aims to act as a broker between donors and academies and their network organisations.

Avoiding conflict of interest, and guarding the independence of science for policy advice, is crucial. Therefore, before signing an agreement with a possible donor, the board will ask advice from prospective partners (individual scientists as well as academies and network

organisations) as to whether support by the proposed donor is suitable and will not breach the independence of the science advice that EASAC Foundation intends to undertake with any funds donated.

In short, the aim of EASAC Foundation is to raise funds to broaden activities in Europe on science for policy advice. There are many individuals and organisations that are convinced more than ever that unbiased and independent input from scientists is crucial for tackling many of the challenges and questions our modern societies face – think of climate, environment, energy or health, but also of biodiversity, clean water, impact of AI, plastics, raw materials – and which are willing to the work within the remit of EASAC Foundation.

#### **4. Policy plan for EASAC Foundation's fund raising**

Several aspects for successful fundraising are important. First of all, potential donors should not be treated as ATM's, which give money on request. Rather they should be lured and canvassed over a longer period, and one should be able to offer a portfolio of options, as different possible donors find different options attractive; organisations will typically only be interested in projects or other activities that match their mission. So, the first step of our fundraising policy plan is to identify a variety of possible propositions. This is done in section 6.a below.

Secondly, it is important to identify possible donors, and to identify possible entries to them – the highest chances for success are when someone who knows the donor or who has access to the person or organisation, is willing to introduce EASAC Foundation. Of course, this identification process will be ongoing in the future, as contacts and chances will be continuously refined through feedback and interactions with colleagues sympathetic to the foundation's work. Based on interviews with former presidents of the academy networks on advice and suggestions from many colleagues, the board has drawn up a preliminary list of possible organisations and individuals to approach. The board will follow up on these suggestions in the fall of 2024, and is, in fact, already in contact with one organisation which has indicated interest in donating to EASAC Foundation funds of k€30 yearly for the coming three years.

The board of EASAC Foundation is also aware that modern fundraising requires transparency and openness. We therefore present in appendix A our draft for a 'gift agreement' with donors.

##### **4.a. List of possible propositions**

The board has identified the following possible propositions for canvassing prospective donors:

- a specific thematic project within one of our three programmes.
- support for the general work of one of the three programmes, Environment, Energy or Biosciences and Public Health.
- a new theme outside our regular programmes (e.g. impact of AI, sustainability,...).
- appointing a younger researcher to support a programme director or programme line (this could have a training aspect too); could be in scaled up to a fellowship programme or a programme for interns.

- strengthening communication
  - communication about our reports (social media, visuals,...);
  - Communication specifically optimized for MEPs;
  - Initiatives to improve connections with the scientific community;
  - making lay-people versions of our reports;
  - preparing support material for our member academies to organise their own national launch;
  - aimed at specific regions, eg. by supporting capacity building of science advice in the newer member states, southern Europe, etc.;
  - increasing coverage of the work of EASAC Foundation in major European media (e.g. with the help of a professional writer);
  - increasing attention for our work through the Interacademy Partnership (IA), a global organisation academies.
- adapting EASAC Foundation's work or that of network organisations of academies for use by member academies (e.g., translations of reports).
- a mechanism to use suitable reports/initiatives from member academies and adapt them to the European or global level.
- involving academies in candidate EU countries in science for policy advice.
- Building a Young EASAC Foundation network.
- travel to international meetings for participants from countries or academies with limited means; special initiatives to facilitate participation in international working groups.
- taking the lead for a global project with Interacademy Partnership (IAP).
- Global IAP initiatives.
- Joint initiatives with networks of academies, like EASAC, ALLEA or FEAM.

#### **4.b. List of prospective donors**

Through our own personal networks and through interviews with two former presidents of the network organisations of academies who were successful in attracting outside funding for activities, the board has identified a first list of prospective donors, which it has classified, based on its present assessment, as *active*, *high potential* and *other options*. Of course, these classifications can change depending on future feedback, personal contacts with colleagues with experience with particular organisations, etc., so this list is a living document which will be updated regularly.

#### **4.c charity/ANBI status**

For possible donors, it will be important that EASAC Foundation will be an official charity, i.e. will have ANBI status in the Netherlands. An application for ANBI status has been submitted to the Dutch tax service ("belastingdienst") in August 2024.

In accord with the requirements of an ANBI in the Netherlands, board members will perform their work for EASAC Foundation free of charge (although they can be reimbursed for travel expenses made for fundraising activities).

#### **4.d Advisory board**

We intend to establish an advisory board in 2025. As advisory board members, we aim to invite a few individuals who know the funding landscape, who have held a position as

director of a fund, or who have first-hand experience (e.g. because they served on an advisory board of a fund). We expect that we will be able to identify suitable candidates after having explored the various prospective donors mentioned above.

#### **4.e Website**

EASAC Foundation has already launched the website <https://easacfoundation.eu/>. This contains all necessary public information; it will be maintained by the board member who built it (van Saarloos)

#### **4.f Buildup-phase of 3 years**

EASAC Foundation was established in 2024 with three board members, who all have experience with science for policy advice via the network organisation EASAC. The present board sees the period 2024-2027 as a buildup phase aimed at establishing the necessary contacts and experience. The statutes of EASAC Foundation require that at least one board member is a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, which is a registered ANBI, and that one other board member is a member of an international academy with the status comparable to ANBI (a 'charity').

In mid-2027 the functioning of the foundation will be evaluated and the composition of the board will be re-evaluated; a rotation schedule for the board members will then also be established.

#### **4.g Next steps**

The contacts with one possible donor are classified as active, and the present perspective is that EASAC Foundation will be asked to submit a proposal in the fall of 2024, once EASAC Foundation will have obtained charity/ANBI status.

In the fall of 2024, board members have started to explore the various foundations expected to be interested in the work of EASAC Foundation. The first contacts have been made with several Danish foundations that have expressed interest in the work.

## Appendix A: Gift Agreement



### EASAC Foundation Gift Agreement

*This legally-binding agreement is between*

\_\_\_\_\_.

*hereby referred to as the Donor*

*and the EASAC Foundation, Amsterdam, the Netherlands*

*on \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_*

EASAC Foundation is a charity registered under Dutch law as “Stichting EASAC” in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, with ANBI status and Rechtspersonen en Samenwerkingsverbanden Informatienummer (RSIN number) 866618077.

#### 1. Donor Commitment

The Donor has pledged to give \_\_\_\_\_

with payments *on \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, on \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, on \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, and on \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_*

#### 2. Donation Purpose

The purpose of the agreed gift is

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At least 95% of the donation will be used for the purpose stated. A maximum of 5% of the donation will be retained by the EASAC Foundation to meet administrative, bank account, regulatory and similar costs incurred by the EASAC Foundation.

### **3. Non-interference**

The credibility, effectiveness and impact of science for policy advice provided by EASAC rests on its independence. EASAC brings together the best experts from the science community of Europe to provide advice independently based on current insights from science without any real or perceived conflicts of interest with or support from lobby groups or other vested interests.

The purpose of the gift as stated in Clause 2 of this agreement is to stimulate the particular indicated activities of EASAC. The donor formally agrees not to in any way exert influence on, nor interfere with, the formulation, progress, outcomes or recommendations of any aspect of EASAC's advisory work.

### **4. Recognition**

The donor will be named in relevant announcements and reports in a variety of media by the EASAC Foundation.

### **5. Reporting and Stewardship**

For the duration of the donation, the EASAC Foundation will provide an annual report to the donor on how the funds donated have been used.

### **6. Reputation**

If at any time the donor or their name may in the opinion of the EASAC Foundation compromises public trust in, or the reputation of the EASAC Foundation, including acts of moral turpitude, the EASAC Foundation retains the right to return the gift and, as necessary, make that return public knowledge.

## **7. Amendment**

This agreement can only be changed with the formal written consent of both the donor and the EASAC Foundation.

## **8. Interpretation**

In the event of any differing operational perspectives, the EASAC Foundation's understanding of the intent and purpose of all clauses of this agreement is final.

## **9. Applicable Law**

This agreement is subject to clauses of the documents legally establishing the EASAC Foundation and to the policies and procedures of the EASAC Foundation.

This agreement is subject to relevant applicable laws and public reporting requirements in the Netherlands.

### **Signed by**

For the Donor \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

For the EASAC Foundation \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_