

Third announcement – including programme and abstracts

The integrity of science

*A conference about the conflict between public policy and independent science,
in honour of Dr. Árpád Pusztai (1930 – 2021)*

Edinburgh (UK), 26 – 27 May 2023

open to both on site and online participation

Followed by the Annual General Meeting of ENSSER, 28 May 2023

This announcement can be found online at https://ensser.org/events/events_2023/the-integrity-of-science-programme/

Organised by

European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSER)

Mariolopoulos Kanaginis Foundation for the Environmental Sciences

Critical Scientists Switzerland (CSS)

Association des Amis de la Génération Thunberg

Funded by

Triodos Foundation

Mariolopoulos Kanaginis Foundation for the Environmental Sciences

Critical Scientists Switzerland (CSS)

European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSER)



Triodos  **Foundation**



Independent scientific research for the benefit of people and the planet is suppressed on a larger scale and in more ways than most people are aware of. Commercial interests as well as governments and regulatory agencies generally determine what we read and hear about in the media as scientific findings. Behind the scenes, however, much excellent research is being kept away from public attention by a multitude of means, including (but not limited to) intimidation and harassment of scientists. As a result, there is a growing gulf between public policy and independent science. The integrity of science is at stake. The conference addresses this alarming subject by highlighting one case and analysing many others.

The conference will be in two parts:

Day one (26 May 2023) will honour Dr Árpád Pusztai (who passed away in 2021) and will recall his work and discuss the controversies of his later findings.

Day two (27 May 2023) will probe the continuing conflicts between public policy and critical science, with the purpose of improving public understanding and use of science.

PROGRAMME

Day 1: A memorial to Dr. Árpád Pusztai

Friday, 26 May 2023, 15:00 – 22:00 GMT

In 1998, Dr. Árpád Pusztai, a world expert on plant lectins, sparked a public debate on the safety of genetically modified (GM) food by speaking on the British TV programme *World in Action* about the health damage he found in rats fed GM potatoes containing lectins in preliminary tests. As a result of this brief TV interview, he was suspended from his job at the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen, Scotland.

His research had been commissioned by the Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department of the Scottish Office (the precursor of the present Scottish government). The sharp and prolonged criticism from scientific circles which followed the events, has never been substantiated by tenable scientific arguments. Indeed, his findings have been supported by other independent research that also casts doubt on the safety of some GM food.

Pusztai's standing as a biochemist and specialist on animal feed was recognised and beyond doubt before these events.

This memorial will describe this episode. We hope we can lay the controversies to rest.

PROGRAMME

(Note: Abstracts of the lectures can be found at https://ensser.org/events/events_2023/abstracts-the-integrity-of-science/)

14:30 Registration + tea / coffee

15:30 Opening

Prof. P. Nicolopoulou-Stamati, Medical School of National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, Chair of ENSSER and Secretary of the Board of Mariolopoulos Kanaginis Foundation for the Environmental Sciences

Chair of the day

Dr. Ulrich Loening, Centre for Human Ecology, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

15:45 Difficult days in the Pathology Department: Exciting collaboration with A. Pusztai
Dr. Stanley Ewen, Histopathology Dept., University of Aberdeen, Scotland

16:30 My association with Dr. Árpád Pusztai - an honest scientist

Emeritus Prof. Vyvyan Howard, Professor of Bioimaging, Biomedical Sciences Institute, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland

- 17:15 **Árpád Pusztai - Laureate of the German Whistleblower Prize**
Dr. Angelika Hilbeck, Institute of Integrative Biology, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, Switzerland
- 18:00 **Dinner break**
- 20:00 Reflections on the Pusztai affair
Andrew Rowell, author
- 20:45 Dr. **Árpád Pusztai, the private person**
Dr. Susan Bardócz, Professor of Human Nutrition, University of Debrecen, Hungary
- 21:30 Outlook on day 2 of the conference
Dr. Ulrich Loening, Centre for Human Ecology, University of Edinburgh, Scotland
- 21:45 Closing
Prof. P. Nicolopoulou-Stamati, Medical School of National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, Chair of ENSSER and Secretary of the Board of Mariolopoulos Kanaginis Foundation for the Environmental Sciences
- 22:00 End

Day 2: Conference "The Integrity of Science"

Saturday, 27 May 2023, 10:00 – 17:00 GMT

Pusztai's story is not unique. Fundamental scientific research is often suppressed in areas where human or environmental health or biodiversity are shown or suspected to be at risk, and even when a new finding is merely unconventional.

In day two, the corruptive influence of entrenched or commercial interests on science in the last decades will be described and analysed, with references to many similar cases (tobacco, asbestos, pesticides, electromagnetic radiation, PFAS, climate change, COVID19, etc.). The list of lessons not learned from early scientific warnings¹ still grows. The grave consequences of this corruption of science for the future of humanity and our planet will be the focus of the conference.

We hope that this conference will inspire fuller appreciation of the values of science, beyond the community of scientists, especially including young scientists.

PROGRAMME

(Note: Abstracts of the lectures can be found at https://ensser.org/events/events_2023/abstracts-the-integrity-of-science/)

- 9:30 **Door open + coffee / tea**
- 10:15 **Opening by chair of the day**
Diederick Sprangers MSc, Scientific Coordinator of ENSSER
- 10:20 **Basic processes and values in science**
What is good science? When and how does it fail?
- Panel chair: *Dr. Brian Wynne, Professor of Science Studies, Lancaster University, England*

¹ European Environment Agency, "Late Lessons from Early Warnings", Vols. I and II, Copenhagen, 2001 and 2013, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/environmental_issue_report_2001_22 and <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/late-lessons-2>

- Science as a public good: open science and scientific integrity
Prof. Geoffrey Boulton, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

- On Technology, Ignorance and Responsibility
Christine von Weizsäcker, Advisory Board of the Federation of German Scientists and Scientific Committee of the German Society on Human Ecology

- The decline of theorization: a threat to the integrity of science
Dr. Marie Chollat-Namy, République des Savoirs, École Normale Supérieure, Paris, France, and Vice President of the Association des Amis de la Génération Thunberg

- A damaging hidden divide in our scientific endeavour - The solution requires a shift towards a "con vivo" science
Dr. Ulrich Loening, Centre for Human Ecology, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

- Panel discussion

12:05 **Lunch break**

13:05 **Scientific questions, findings and public policies**
Documenting denial, corruption, harassment and intimidation and links to public and corporate policies

Panel chair: *Christine von Weizsäcker, Advisory Board of the Federation of German Scientists and Scientific Committee of the German Society on Human Ecology*

- Science Suspended at the Turn of Century: Collision of a Political Imperative against Evidence and Critical Enquiry
Dr. Ignacio Chapela, Professor, Dept. of Environmental Science, University of California Berkeley, USA

- Geography of Asymmetries and Chemical Colonialism – A Brazilian Woman Geographer in Exile
Prof. Larissa Bombardi, Department of Geography, University of São Paulo, Brazil (on leave) and Visiting Researcher at CESSMA (Centre d'études en sciences sociales sur les mondes africains, américains et asiatiques), Programme PAUSE, Université de Paris, France

- Towards a Taxonomy of Ways in Which Current Science Lacks Integrity
Dr. Irina Passos Natário de Castro, University of Coimbra, Portugal and Dr. Brian Wynne, Professor of Science Studies, Lancaster University, England

- Panel discussion

14:25 **Tea / coffee**

14:50 **Promises, risks and regulation**
Possible ways forward

Panel chair: *Dr. Angelika Hilbeck, Institute of Integrative Biology, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, Switzerland*

- Inappropriate use of regulatory risk assessment to demonstrate 'safety' – unstated, unrealistic assumptions
Emeritus Prof. Vyvyan Howard, Professor of Bioimaging, Biomedical Sciences Institute, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland

- Deceptive science - Manipulated methods and trimmed information in biosafety of GM

crops. Reflections on two cases from Latin America
Dr. Georgina Catacora - Vargas, Bolivian Catholic University San Pablo, La Paz, Bolivia

- Panel discussion

15:55 **Final discussion**

Diederick Sprangers MSc, Scientific Coordinator of ENSSER

16:25 **Closing**

Prof. P. Nicolopoulou-Stamati, Medical School of National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, Chair of ENSSER and Secretary of the Board of Mariolopoulos Kanaginis Foundation for the Environmental Sciences

17:00 **End**

Venue

Royal Society of Edinburgh
22 – 26 George Street
Edinburgh EH2 2PQ
Scotland

Please note: we offer tea and coffee, but not meals. For the dinner break on Friday and the lunch break on Saturday, many restaurants can be found in the immediate vicinity of the Royal Society.

Recording

The entire conference (lectures and discussion sessions, both on site and online) will be recorded and published.

Registration fees

Both on site and online participation is possible.
Voluntary fees, both for online and on site participation:

Please consider making a donation towards covering the considerable costs of this conference, e.g.:

€ 5 (reduced), € 30 (regular), € 60 (solidary), or any amount with which you wish to support us; payable to our bank account with reference "conference fee" or to our paypal account (scroll down and click on the button "spenden").

Registration

For online registration, please register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_LeAEaWcoT3aMACAicAxF_g

For on site registration, please register here:

https://ensser.org/events/events_2023/registration-integrity-of-science/

Your registration will be confirmed.

Accommodation

The conference takes place in Whitsunday weekend, so it is advisable to book accommodation as soon as possible.