The Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in Rome

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The Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei is the oldest and most prestigious science academy in Italy. It was founded in 1603 by Federico Cesi – a Roman patrician – with a passion for the natural sciences. The name derives from *lince*, Italian for lynx, for the acute vision attributed to the lynx, which, in that period, was still a common species in Italy. The focus of the Academy under Cesi's vision was to study all the natural sciences from a liberal and experimental viewpoint, free from any traditional encumbrance or authority. One of the first members of the Academy was Galileo Galilei – the great Italian astronomer, physicist and engineer – who joined in 1611.

Today, the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei has two academy classes, one for the physical, mathematical and natural sciences and the other for the humanities and social sciences. Its current statutes foresee a maximum of about 90 Italian members for each class and an equal number of foreign members and corresponding members who are co-opted annually. Among the past members, one can find several illustrious scholars, from Righi and Pacinotti to Fermi, Pasteur to Röntgen and Einstein, Mommsen to Croce and Gentile, all Olympians of scientific research of their time.

The Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei is an independent institution committed to imparting credible information to its citizens and policymakers about current issues and their plausible solutions. The Academy's members are among the leading scientists and researchers within Italy and abroad.

As per the scopes defined by article 33 of the Italian Constitution, the Academy holds assemblies and meetings of its members; organises national and international congresses, conferences, meetings and seminars; promotes and carries out research activities and missions; confers several prestigious awards and grants; publishes the reports and the proceedings of the congresses, meetings and seminars. It provides – upon request and on its own – opinions to public entities in the fields within its competence.

The Academy also maintains and fosters international cooperation with several foreign national academies and represents Italy in the prime academic international organisations. Among these are the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), the All European Academies (ALLEA), the European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC), the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRN) and others. Over the years, the Academy has served in various executive committees of international organisations. Particularly relevant is the participation in the IAP, a network of over 140 national, regional and global member academies. Founded in 1993, its goal is to provide a collective mechanism for academies to strengthen their crucial roles as providers of evidence-based policy and advice. IAP also helps build the capacity of its new and less-experienced member academies, thus strengthening their ability to take on an advisory role in their nations and to contribute to global discussions.

The Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei is also part of the network of national academies of the G7 and G20 countries; they provide scientific advice for the annual summits of Heads of State and Government. They prepare science-based recommendations related to topics on the summit agendas.

With respect to Science Diplomacy, the Academy is actively involved with various activities. For instance, the *Colloquia on Science Diplomacy* series of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, published by the Institute of the Italian Encyclopedia, was born as a cultural manifesto in support of the objectives of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the Colloquia, the eminent personalities of world institutions and the presidents of the most prestigious academies discuss current topics of global importance, plausible solutions and future developments of interest for the international community. The themes represent visions of an evolving humanity according to the models of solidarity and sustainable development, international cooperation and multilateralism. An open-access volume of the *Colloquia on Science Diplomacy* is available for consultation at https://colloquia.treccani.it.

The Academy combines modernity with tradition and actively participates in discussions on the changing role of science and scientists in society. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Academy established a committee to express its views and provide input on the many questions regarding SARS-CoV-2. They initiated a webpage containing documents, statements and reports on COVID-19 by the Lincei Committees, Lincei Fellows, and other Academies, Academy networks and institutions.



The Academy also pioneered a significant initiative to increase visibility and to foster interest in topics such as sustainable development, the role of research and education, etc., amongst stakeholders. "I Lincei per una nuova didattica nella scuola: una rete nazionale" ("The Lincei for a new kind of teaching in schools: a national network"), was a project promoted in 2010 by the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei and by Italy's Ministry of Education, University and Research to organise training activities and refresher courses for teachers, aimed at improving the teaching system. Later, in 2015, this project led to the "I Lincei per la Scuola" ("Lincei for school") Foundation to promote a new kind of teaching in schools.

The project aims to support and encourage the improvement of national education and training systems, giving life to a network of centres, the "**Poli**" which establishes, in the plurality of initiatives, a renewed methodology for teaching scientific subjects capable of stimulating the learning of the scientific method and the development of creativity. The project also aims to facilitate a constructive dialogue at the local level between higher cultural institutions and the School. "I Lincei per la Scuola" is an interdisciplinary project that leads to the formation of a cultured, thinking, curious and informed citizen and to an inclusive school and engine of justice and social promotion. In the last seven years, the project has involved 23500 teachers and more than one million students.

To summarise, the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei is an old but lively institution, highly respected within the Italian and the international community, with a reputation that has further magnified after its President for the years 2018-2021, Giorgio Parisi, a theoretical physicist, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics (2021). The original motto of the Academy, "the aim of the Academy is not only to acquire knowledge of phenomena and knowledge through a just and at the same time pious life but also to transmit them to men orally and in writing, peacefully, without harm to anyone", formulated four centuries ago has remained essentially unchanged and stronger than ever!