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Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

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Klara Anna Capova · Erik Persson  
Tony Milligan · David Dunér  
Editors

# Astrobiology and Society in Europe Today



*Editors*

Klara Anna Capova  
Department of Anthropology  
Durham University  
Durham, UK

Erik Persson  
Department of Philosophy  
Lund University  
Lund, Sweden

Tony Milligan  
Department of Theology & Religious  
Studies  
Kings College London  
London, UK

David Dunér  
Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences  
and Division of History of Ideas and  
Sciences  
Lund University  
Lund, Sweden

ISSN 2191-9100

SpringerBriefs in Astronomy

ISBN 978-3-319-96264-1

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96265-8>

ISSN 2191-9119 (electronic)

ISBN 978-3-319-96265-8 (eBook)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018948604

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This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

# Acknowledgements

This publication is based upon the work from COST Action Origins and evolution of life on Earth and in the Universe (ORIGINS) supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).

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Funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme of the European Union

The editors would like to acknowledge the support of COST Action TD1308 ORIGINS through the Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) fundings: STSM-TD1308-010216-070847, STSM-TD1308-121216-081651, STSM-TD1308-1604180-40883 and STSM-TD1308-150418-040842 and the support of the Pufendorf Institute for Advanced Studies at Lund University, Sweden, through the “A Plurality of Lives” research theme.

The editors would also like to thank all members of the international advisory board: Octavio Chon-Torres, Kathryn Denning, Steven Dick, Abhik Gupta, Sun Kwok, Lucas Mix Addy Pross, and Kai-Uwe Schrogl.

The editors would also like to thank all of the authors and researchers who contributed to the Astrobiology and Society White Paper. For their comments on the text, we extend our thanks to Julie Nováková (Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic), Caroline Dorn (University of Zurich, Switzerland), Vladimír Bozhilov (Sofia University, Bulgaria), and John Robert Brucato (Astrophysical Observatory of Arcetri, Italy).



# About this Book

This book describes the state of astrobiology in Europe today and its relation to the European society at large. With contributions from authors in more than 20 countries and over 30 scientific institutions worldwide, the document illustrates the societal implications of astrobiology and the positive contribution that astrobiology can make to European society.

The book has two main objectives: 1. It recommends the establishment of a European Astrobiology Institute (EAI) as an answer to a series of challenges relating to astrobiology but also European research, education, and society at large. 2. It also acknowledges the societal implications of astrobiology, and thus the role of the social sciences and humanities in optimizing the positive contribution that astrobiology can make to the lives of the people of Europe and the challenges they face.

Astrobiology enjoys a great deal of interest among the public, probably more than most of the other fields of research. It also has implications for human life outside the laboratories and lecture halls. It has the potential of being a flagship of European cooperation in science. It provides an ideal ground for collaborative European projects which support the ethos of cooperating countries. Astrobiology is inherently multidisciplinary and based on collaboration between disciplines, universities, and countries. For Europe to take a leading role in this research, it is very important to have a stable structure that can coordinate research, research infrastructure, funding and relations to the surrounding society in an efficient way. The establishment of a EAI, as a consortium of institutions, will provide the perfect forum for such collaborative efforts and should be a key priority for European research institutions as well as the European astrobiology community and the EU. To have an active astrobiology research programme, coordinated and fostered by such an institute, will enhance the international standards of European space research and of European science in general.

The EAI would be able to promote astrobiology research, assist in the decision-making process of relevant European institutions, be involved in mission planning, engage in science dissemination, education and communication, as well as engaging in outreach and media work in a much more efficient way than

individual research institutions. The EAI will act as a strong voice for the astrobiology community in dialogue with decision makers, funding agencies, the media, other stakeholders, and the general public. It will be proactive in the debate on important legal and ethical issues in astrobiology and space research.

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# Editors and Contributors

- A. Anglés** University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong
- J. Arnould** Centre national d'études spatiales (National Centre for Space Studies), Paris, France
- L. Billings** Consultant to NASA's Astrobiology Program, California, USA
- K. A. Capova** Department of Anthropology, Durham University, Durham, UK
- E. Chatzitheodoridis** School of Mining and Metallurgical Engineering, National Technical University of Athens, Athens, Greece
- L. Dartnell** University of Westminster, London, UK
- D. Dunér** Lund University, Lund, Sweden
- M. Gargaud** Laboratoire d'Astrophysique de Bordeaux, Pessac, France
- W. Geppert** Physics Department (Fysikum), Stockholm University (Stockholms universitet), Stockholm, Sweden
- E. Hemminger** Evangelische Hochschule Rheinland-Westfalen-Lippe, Bochum, Germany
- Z. Kaňuchová** Astronomický ústav SAV (Astronomical Institute SAS), Tatranská Lomnica, Slovakia
- A. Kereszturi** Csillagászati és Földtudományi Kutatóközpont (Research Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences), Budapest, Hungary
- G. Kminek** European Space Agency, Noordwijk, The Netherlands
- P. Laine** Jyväskylän Yliopisto, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland
- A. Losiak** Polska Akademia Nauk (Polish Academy of Sciences), Warsaw, Poland

- Z. Martins** Instituto Superior Técnico, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal
- J. Martínez-Frías** Instituto de Geociencias, IGEO (CSIC-UCM), Madrid, Spain
- N. Mason** School of Physical Science, The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK
- A. Melin** Malmö Universitet, Malmö, Sweden
- T. Milligan** Department of Theology and Religious Studies, King's College London, London, UK
- P. T. Mitrikeski** Institut za istraživanje i razvoj održivih ekosustava (Institute for Research and Development of Sustainable Ecosystems), Zagreb, Croatia
- E. Nabulya** Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda
- L. Noack** Freie Universität Berlin (Free University Berlin), Berlin, Germany
- E. Persson** Department of Philosophy, Lund University, Malmö, Sweden
- S. Ramos** Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico, USA
- K. Smith** Clemson University, Clemson, USA
- S. Tirard** Université de Nantes, Nantes, France
- M. Waltemathe** Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany

# Abbreviations

AbGradE	Astrobiology Graduates in Europe
ASB	Astrobiology Society of Britain
ASSA	Astronomical Society of Southern Africa
COSPAR	Committee on Space Research
COST	Cooperation in Science and Technology
DAbG	German Astrobiology Society
EAC	European Astrobiology Campus
EAI	European Astrobiology Institute
EANA	European Astrobiology Network Association
EC	European Commission
ELSI	Earth-Life Science Institute
ESA	European Space Agency
ESO	European Southern Observatory
EU	European Union
FAST	Five Hundred Meter Aperture Spherical Telescope
IAGETH	International Association for Geoethics
IAU	International Astronomical Union
ICSU	International Council for Science
ISSI	International Space Science Institute
ISU	International Space University
JAXA	Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
NAI	NASA Astrobiology Institute
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NNA	Nordic Network of Astrobiology
OST	Outer Space Treaty
SFE	The French Astrobiology Society
SIA	Italian Society of Astrobiology
SOMA	Mexican Society of Astrobiology
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
STS	Science and Technology Studies

STSM	Short-Term Scientific Mission
TD	Trans Domain
UN	United Nations
UNAM	National Autonomous University of Mexico
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNOOSA	United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs
WG5	Working Group 5

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