

Nobel laureate, Turing Award winner enlisted by top academy



Nobel laureate C.N. Yang (left) and Turing Award winner Yao Qizhi. [Photo: China Daily]

Nobel laureate Chen Ning Yang and Turing Award winner Yao Qizhi have become Chinese citizens and officially joined the Chinese Academy of Sciences as academicians—the highest academic title in China, the academy's faculty office said on Tuesday.

They are the first overseas scientists to relinquish their US citizenship to join the official faculty of China's highest scientific research organization. Yang, 94, will join the mathematical physics department, while Yao, 70, will enter the information technology and science department.

"They are both world renowned scholars," the office said in a statement. "Their entry into the academy's faculty will increase the influence of China's scientific circles worldwide."

Yang and Tsung-dao Lee received the 1957 Nobel Prize in physics for their work on parity nonconservation of weak interaction, becoming the first people of Chinese origin to win a Nobel Prize.

Yao became in 2000 the first person of Chinese origin to receive the Turing Award, the most prestigious award in computer science. He won for his fundamental contributions to the theory of computation such as cryptography and communication complexity.

In late 2016, both scientists had relinquished their foreign nationality and

submitted their request to join the academy. The faculty office said it had to adopt new procedures to accept the two scientists, who were both foreign academicians at the time.

In order to become a foreign academician, one has to be an accomplished scientist who contributed greatly to China's science and technology. After being recommended by more than five Chinese members, the foreign scientist enters a biennial election and must win a two-thirds majority of academicians' votes to join their ranks, according to the academy's charter.

A foreign academician, though lacking voting rights, can advise on Chinese scientific developments and the workings of the faculty office, as well as receive academic publications and invitations to seminars held by the office. Foreign academicians can join the ranks of Chinese members once they receive Chinese citizenship.

A Chinese member can make suggestions on major Chinese scientific projects and vote on prospective new members of the academy.

There are now 754 Chinese and 78 foreign scientists in the academy. In recent years, the faculty office has worked to build a "big academician family", connecting renowned scholars from around the world to give advice and contribute to China's scientific development.

"As China's science, economy and society develop, the influence of the faculties will increase domestically and abroad," the office said.

Speech: "This Council has a responsibility to sustain the peace won in Europe seven decades ago."

Thank you Mr President, Mr Minister, and thank you to our three Secretary-Generals for their briefings today.

The three organisations – the United Nations, the OSCE, and the European Union – are all playing a crucial role to preserve peace and security in Europe, and we are grateful for all of the work that you do.

Everything that we do in this Council has come about as a direct result of conflict in Europe. Over seven decades on from the Second World War, we should be proud that Europeans now enjoy a level of stability and prosperity that would have been unthinkable to our grandparents' generation.

And as we heard so clearly in the session on Ukraine earlier this month, instability and insecurity persists in Europe. The borders of Europe are

threatened today in a way not seen since the Cold War. The territorial integrity of your country, Mr President, has been flagrantly violated leaving up to 10,000 dead, with millions displaced.

At the heart of this disregard for sovereignty lies the Russian Federation and its world view that thinks Moscow's interests can and should prevail over the sovereign and democratic choices of independent countries. It's a world view illustrated by Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and continued support for separatists in Eastern Ukraine.

Only a few days ago Russia recognised passports from the so-called "People's Republics" in Donbas under the guise of humanitarian assistance for a conflict which Russia itself instigated. A more appropriate response would be for Russia to honour its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including by withdrawing its troops and equipment from Ukraine; and using its influence over the separatists to implement the ceasefire and heavy weapons withdrawal agreement. Until all such commitments are met in full, Russia will remain under sanctions from the EU and G7 states.

Put simply, we can't stand idly by in the face of such aggression. This Council has a responsibility to sustain the peace won in Europe seven decades ago, to ensure that the rules based international order, most notably the UN Charter, is respected and upheld by all countries. We have a responsibility to ensure that wars waged across battlefields are ended through dialogue pursued across tables.

The three organisations we've heard from today are playing a vital role in those efforts.

In the face of great odds and escalating violence, the OSCE is bravely monitoring the line of contact in Ukraine. The UN is bringing vital aid and much needed relief to those suffering. And through sanctions, the EU is bringing pressure to bear on Russia to meet its commitments under the Minsk agreement.

But these organisations can't do it alone. All sides must step up and make a ceasefire a reality, implementing their Minsk agreements in full.

Sadly, the need for a peaceful, political settlement extends far beyond the borders of Ukraine. In the interests of time I won't mention every single conflict in Europe – the flashing light, after all, is meant to be a sign to stop, not an encouragement to keep going. So let me just mention a few of the other conflicts. In Georgia, the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia remain unresolved, with Russian pressure showing no signs of dissipating. In Moldova, it is long past time for a comprehensive, peaceful settlement of the Transnistria conflict; based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova with a special status for the Transnistria Region.

In Nagorno-Karabakh, a peaceful settlement also remains elusive owing to a high level of mistrust and a lack of any political will to compromise. And we support the efforts of the Co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Across the continent, the United Kingdom will continue to be a force for peace in Europe, through our membership of NATO, the OSCE and, of course, this Council. Our own security has long depended on the strong partnerships of the Euro-Atlantic area, and so we are committed to strengthening those partnerships further, including by maintaining the NATO target of spending 2% of our economy on defence, and I strongly encourage all NATO allies to meet that target.

NATO has responded in a coherent, comprehensive and measured fashion to Russia's destabilisation and provocation. It has modernised its deterrence and defence posture, as a balanced response to the instability and insecurity Russia has attempted to sow, while also being open to dialogue with Russia.

Mr President,

Three years on from the Maidan protests, we speak clearly in this Chamber today to reaffirm our total support for the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty as outlined in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. We speak clearly to say that we do not, we will not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea. I am proud to do so again today on behalf of the United Kingdom.

Thank you.

[News story: Celebrating Women in Whitehall: Her Majesty The Queen meets Female Permanent Secretaries](#)

The event held at The Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace acknowledged that women are being appointed to the top of the Civil Service at the fastest rate in history.

One in three permanent secretary positions in the past two and a half years went to women.

Three years after Her Majesty became Queen, the Civil Service appointed its first ever female Permanent Secretary, Baroness Evelyn Sharp.

Baroness Sharp entered the Fast Stream in 1926 just one year after women were allowed to apply. Now there are ten female permanent secretaries, making up just over a quarter of all permanent secretaries.

The event marked this great achievement but also brought together role models for future generations and future permanent secretaries.

Sue Owen, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and diversity champion for the Civil Service said:

I was delighted to welcome so many women who have broken the glass ceiling past and present to get to the very top of the Civil Service.

Women make up more than half the Civil Service and we benefit from their skills. It is absolutely right that women should be properly represented at the highest levels. Whilst the first female Permanent Secretary was appointed in 1955, it is only in the last decade or so that real progress has been made.

We want this trend to intensify. We will support women at every level to achieve their full potential and to know they can reach the very top.

Sir Jeremy Heywood, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service said:

The Civil Service is committed to being a place where everyone can thrive regardless of background, with the aim of becoming the most inclusive employer in the UK.

Currently, over 40% of the Senior Civil Service are women. But there is still more to do, which is why we are determined to build on our progress to date by removing any remaining barriers for women and other underrepresented groups in the Civil Service.

Further information

In total, there have been 35 female permanent secretaries, including those currently in post.

The figure of ten female permanent secretaries includes Antonia Romeo, Permanent Secretary at the Department of International Trade who takes up her role in March 2017.

Speech: The UK post-Brexit: a stronger and even closer ally to Latvia

There is a well known saying in Latvia, 'Veca mīlestība nerūs' – old love

does not rust.

And it is with a very similar sentiment that the UK is approaching the upcoming negotiations with the European Union. We are seeking a new, strong partnership with our closest neighbours in Europe.

For the UK and Latvia, we hope that that our new partnership will be deeper than just our individual relationships with the European Union. Our histories do, of course, pre-date the establishment of the EU.

Our shared history can be seen in your capital city – transformed by its former mayor and British emigrant, George Armistead.

It can also be seen at Oxford University where the legacy of the great Riga-born philosopher and historian, Sir Isaiah Berlin, lives on.

I'm proud too of the fact that the United Kingdom was the first country to de facto recognise Latvia's independence almost a century ago – a week before Latvian independence was declared. And deeply honoured that you annually commemorate our Royal Navy's important contribution to defending your independence in 1919, when the British cruiser HMS Dragon helped the Latvian Army to protect Riga from West Russian Volunteer Army.

We are natural allies for a number of reasons.

We are both strong supporters of global free trade and have a trusted relationship when it comes to questions of security and defence.

So the message I bring with me to Latvia today is a simple one – the UK and Latvia will continue to be reliable partners, willing allies and close friends.

I know there are many here who were disappointed with the outcome of the UK's referendum vote, which I understand.

But today I'm meeting with your Prime Minister and your Foreign Minister to make clear that we can use the UK's departure from the EU to deepen and reinvigorate our partnership.

For while we may be leaving the institutions of the EU, we are not leaving Europe.

What we are seeking is a smooth and orderly exit from the EU and a strong new partnership.

And I'm confident that if we approach negotiations in a spirit of goodwill, we can deliver a positive outcome that works for the mutual benefit of all.

Because it is absolutely in the UK's interests that the EU succeeds and prospers politically, economically and socially.

For our bilateral relationship, there are three areas where our mutual interests converge.

Firstly, Latvians living in the UK contribute a great deal to the fabric of our society and we'll continue to welcome the brightest and the best to the UK.

I want to emphasise that Latvians' existing rights to reside in the UK are not affected by the EU referendum vote, so there is no reason for any Latvian national who is legally living in the UK and obeying the laws of the country to feel insecure.

And the British government has been clear – we want to get a deal done quickly that protects the rights of all EU citizens living in the UK, and British citizens living in the EU.

Indeed, we would have liked to have come to such an agreement already, and have been clear it will be a priority once formal negotiations begin.

Secondly, maintaining security and defence in Europe will continue to be uppermost in our minds. So we'll stand by our NATO commitments to spend 2% of GDP on defence and help protect the interests of our allies and friends.

Finally, trade between our countries is significant, totalling well over a billion pounds last year and covering a range of sectors, including timber, machinery and financial services.

And we are trading more, not less, with trade between the UK and Latvia growing by around a fifth last year.

So we will continue to buy Latvian goods and services, sell you ours and trade with you as freely as possible. That is exactly why we are pursuing a new free trade agreement that will be to our mutual benefit.

Britain's decision to leave the European Union wasn't about us closing ourselves off from the world. Instead it was about us opening ourselves up to the rest of the world.

We'll remain an outward-looking country that aims to be an even closer ally to Latvia.

Because just as our histories have been closely intertwined, so will we both positively shape the direction our countries take in future.

Latvia and the UK will remain close partners. My message to you is that our important relationship will not diminish after our exit. Indeed, it will grow stronger still.

The Forest School

I was sad to receive a copy of the resignation letter of the Head teacher of

the Forest this week. I wish her well in retirement and understand her wish to pass the leadership of the school on to someone else.

In the letter she draws attention to the current level of the Forest budget. I agree with those in Wokingham who would like our schools to have bigger budgets, as they are at the bottom of the league tables for receiving public money. I campaigned on the Conservative party Manifesto in 2015 that proposed a move to fairer funding in this Parliament. I worked with MPs from other parts of the country in the previous Parliament who shared the problem of relatively low levels of financial support for their schools. This Parliament I have urged successive Secretaries of State to press on with putting in a suitable scheme that rebalances the cash going to each school so that those getting least are better treated.

The present Secretary of State has promised to introduce such a scheme and is consulting on the details. I have urged her to give more to the poorly financed schools. I have also asked for further transitional relief. Some was awarded in recent years as the Coalition government agreed with me and the MP Group making the case for fairer funding.

I did have a meeting at the Forest to discuss budgets and to suggest ways to attract more money. The immediate pressures have been created by a shortfall of pupils applying to the school, which the Forest attributed to the opening of Bohunt. The main sums of money are given to schools on a per capita basis to cover the costs of each pupil. This will remain true under the new funding scheme, so it will be important for a school that wants a decent budget to recruit pupils up to its capacity. With more pupils and more income it is possible to offer a wider range of subjects and to have more equipment and staff. If fewer pupils attend then it does mean fewer staff and may also entail a narrower range of subjects.