

## Robert Fox

Emeritus Professor of History of Science, University of Oxford

### Science without Frontiers?

Cosmopolitanism and national interests in the sciences in times of peace and in times of war

Thursday, October 20 2022,  
13:00h  
Josebe Olarra Lecture Hall, DIPC

Shortly before the Great War, the pioneering historian of science George Sarton articulated his view of science as a pursuit that knew no political frontiers. Events were soon to show how fragile his universalist vision was. The new scientific unions that were established after the war (including the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics, in 1922) were an Allied creation that had no place for Germany and the other Central Powers. Since then, the century has been one of recurring tension between Sarton's cosmopolitanism ideals and the realities of a pursuit increasingly dependent on governmental support and vulnerable to international events. In tracing this tension, I shall point to its persistence in our own day, as scientists struggle to fashion their response to a resurgence of challenges, extending in IUPAP's centenary year to warfare at the heart of Europe.



Professor Fox's main research interests are in the history of the physical sciences since 1700, with special reference to France, and more generally in the relations between technology, science, and industry in modern Europe. Since his book *The Savant and the State. Science and Cultural Politics in Nineteenth-Century France* (Johns Hopkins University Press) appeared in 2012, he has been working on internationalism in the practices and culture of science in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 2016 he received the George Sarton medal of the History of Science Society and the Alexandre Koyré medal of the International Academy of the History of Science.