

FOREWORD

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VARIED SENTIMENTS AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

The relationship between science and society is traversed by contrasting sentiments, comprising both trust and distrust, which are expressed differently depending on the actors and contexts.

From the standpoint of public policy, Law No. 2020-1674 of 24 December 2020 on the programming of research for the years 2021 to 2030 may already be considered a response to distrust of science. One of its three main ambitions is to 'reposition science in an open relationship with the whole of society'¹. This orientation had direct consequences for universities as early as 2021, with the introduction of the Science With and For Society (SAPS) label, whose central aim is to 'renew the pact between researchers and citizens, by instilling greater familiarity, trust and reciprocity in their relationships'².

1. <https://www.vie-publique.fr/loi/275347-loi-de-programmation-de-la-recherche-2021-2030-lppr>

2. <https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/fr/science-avec-et-pour-la-societe-les-mesures-issues-de-la-lpr-49218>

From the standpoint of researchers specialising in the analysis of the relationships between science and other forms of knowledge produced by society (experiential, professional, and scholarly knowledge), the challenge is to work towards greater epistemic justice between academic scientists and other knowledge actors. The title of the work by Anne Salmon and Jean-Louis Laville, *De l'agir sur à l'agir avec : défis socio-écologiques, association des savoirs et recherches participatives* (érès, 2025), is in this respect programmatic, insofar as it underscores that contemporary challenges are accompanied by a requirement for the democratisation of knowledge and a redefinition of modes of knowledge production.

SAPS AT UPEC

It is at the intersection of these two perspectives that the university has sought to situate its action. Paris-Est Créteil University thus submitted an application for SAPS accreditation in 2021, oriented towards audiences distant from science, particularly young people. Thanks to solid partnerships with the public, economic and associative sectors, ambitious activities have been carried out since 2022, bearing witness to a renewal of dialogue with these audiences and a determination to embed science within renewed forms of exchange.

The 3D animated series 'Les aventuriers du savoir' (The Knowledge Adventurers) addresses all of these objectives. It was produced by the Supamonks studio, which specialises in animated films for young audiences. Consisting of six two-minute episodes, the series presents methods used by scientists and is accompanied by an educational booklet produced by the Exploradôme science museum, a major science mediation actor in the Val-de-Marne area. This educational initiative rests on a firm conviction: that methods are a central element in the development of science, and that public understanding of them is an essential lever for building trust. While this initiative is emblematic of the university's positioning, it is also the fruit of close collaboration between academic actors and partners. The scripts were co-constructed by researchers from different disciplines, who became the models for the series' characters, working in conjunction with the production team.

Collaborations with civil society actors are numerous and take diverse forms. We sought to reflect this diversity at UPEC by drawing on the national Fête de la Science, held during the first week of

October, and extending it across the entire month over the university's 16 campuses. The first edition of this event, entitled 'Éclats de sciences' (Sparks of Science), was held from 3 to 24 October 2025. It offered various dialogue formats: screenings, debates, workshops, experiments, participatory activities and lectures. It is within this framework that the present collective volume was conceived, bringing together contributions devoted to the relationship of trust and distrust in/with science.

A CROSS-CUTTING COMMITMENT

At the conclusion of the three years of the SAPS label, it became clear that it was necessary not only to sustain these new dialogues with society, but also to embed them more deeply within the university's ecosystem. UPEC committed to an approach aimed at connecting SAPS projects with open science initiatives, centred on the opening up of publications and research data; with those relating to the observation of research impact, which seek to analyse the reciprocal effects of these science–society interactions; and finally with citizen participation mechanisms, of which the student citizens' assembly has been a concrete and visible illustration for several years.

This deployment is not limited to a transformation of the relationships between science and society. It also entails new collaborations between academics and non-academics, as well as more cross-cutting ways of working within the university. Traditionally, in French universities, open science is overseen by Common Documentation Services, whilst research valorisation falls under dedicated directorates. The SAPS label has thus contributed to breaking down these silos and fostering stronger interactions between departments. In this sense, it has not only enabled the renewal of dialogue between academic research and society, but also driven the evolution of practices and cooperation within the university itself. It is within this perspective that the present volume is situated.