Leopoldina

A tour of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina
Dear Readers,

Since being declared German National Academy of Sciences in 2008, the Leopoldina has become well established as an advisory body for policy makers and society as well as in international cooperation. In this advisory capacity, the academy organises important debates on topics such as the energy transition, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, demographics or research on antibiotics.

Our office in the government quarter in Berlin gives us easy and direct contact to policy-makers, the media and international partners. The Leopoldina also enjoys successful cooperation with academies in other countries. In the past few years, for instance, it has established cooperation agreements with national academies in South Africa, South Korea and Israel, and held many joint symposia.

In this brochure, we would like to provide you with an overview of the Leopoldina and its activities. The brochure describes our work and gives you the names of the relevant contact persons. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.

Halle upon Saale, December 2014

Jörg Hacker
XXVI President of the Leopoldina
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The Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina was appointed the German National Academy of Sciences on 14 July 2008. The legal basis for this act was the resolution by the Joint Science Conference of the federation and states of 18 February 2008. Since then, the Federal President of Germany has been the patron of the Leopoldina. The academy is independent and dedicated to the common good.

In founding a national academy, the idea was to create a legitimised institution that would work scientifically on important social topics of relevance to the future, independently of economic or political interests; communicate its results in the political sphere and to the public; and represent these topics both nationally and internationally.

The Leopoldina was founded in 1652 in Schweinfurt and is thus the oldest continuously existing academy of natural sciences and medicine in the world. As an academy, it selects outstanding scientists to become members. Since its foundation, it has appointed over 7,000 individuals, including Marie Curie, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Alexander von Humboldt, Justus von Liebig and Max Planck, among others.

Leopoldina – Nationale Akademie der Wissenschaften

The Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina was appointed the German National Academy of Sciences on 14 July 2008. The legal basis for this act was the resolution by the Joint Science Conference of the federation and states of 18 February 2008. Since then, the Federal President of Germany has been the patron of the Leopoldina. The academy is independent and dedicated to the common good.

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With currently around 1,500 members in more than 30 countries, the Leopoldina has the largest number of members among German academies. The members are organised in specialised sections, which in turn are grouped into four classes. These classes, which were newly introduced in 2009, integrate the members more strongly than before in the drafting of statements and recommendations and also strengthen interdisciplinary exchange. The classes focus on natural sciences, life sciences, medicine, as well as humanities, social and behavioural sciences. They also form the platform for international exchange and the selection of new members.

The Annual Assemblies provide a forum for the members.

### Leopoldina’s Classes and Sections:

#### Class I: Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Engineering
- Mathematics
- Informatics
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Earth Sciences
- Engineering Sciences

#### Class II: Life Sciences
- Agricultural and Nutritional Sciences
- Physiological and Evolutionary Biology
- Genetics/Molecular Biology and Cell Biology
- Biochemistry and Biophysics
- Microbiology and Immunology
- Human Genetics and Molecular Medicine
- Physiology and Pharmacology/Toxicology

#### Class III: Medical Sciences
- Anatomy and Anthropology
- Pathology and Forensic Medicine
- Internal Medicine and Dermatology
- Surgery, Orthopaedics, Anaesthesiology
- Gynaecology and Paediatrics
- Neurosciences
- Ophthalmology, Oto-Rhino-Laryngology and Stomatology
- Radiology
- Veterinary Medicine

#### Class IV: Humanities, Social and Behavioural Sciences
- History of Science and Medicine
- Epistemology
- Economics and Empirical Social Sciences
- Psychology and Cognitive Sciences
- Cultural Sciences
Organisation

The Leopoldina is a supranational association of scientists. More than a quarter of its members come from outside Germany. New members are proposed by the academy members and elected to the academy by the presidium in a multi-stage selection process. Each member belongs to a section in accordance with his or her scientific discipline. Each section elects a representative to the senate from its members. The senate, to which individuals from scientific organisations and the public also belong, elects the members of the presidium, checks the accountability reports and decides on the academy’s scientific strategy.

The academy is organised as a non-profit registered association and is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (80%) and the state where it is located, Saxony-Anhalt (20%). The president and four vice presidents form the executive board in the legal sense. The presidium is made up of the Executive Board and additional members and is responsible for the Leopoldina’s activities. A full-time secretary general is in charge of the office and is supported by the administration department in this role.

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Leopoldina members and the city of Schweinfurt donated this president’s chain of office to the academy in 1955.
Providing guidance on current scientific and science policy issues to policy makers, society and industry is the central task of the German National Academy of Sciences. These can include topics such as climate change, nutrition, disease control and health, demographic change, global economic systems, conflict research or natural resources. The aim is to deliver statements and recommendations for meeting urgent social challenges and to identify important future issues, where the scientific basis is important in finding a solution. In this work, it is also a matter of recognising at an early stage the important developments that are indicated by science and may become of significance to society in the future, and of analysing and commenting appropriately on them.

The Leopoldina conducts its policy advice activities jointly with the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities, including the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, as well as acatech – National Academy of Science and Engineering. The work is steered by a coordinating committee, which is led by the Leopoldina. Working groups or ad hoc commissions can also be formed alone or in cooperation with other academies, scientific institutions or international partners, in order to produce recommendations and statements. As a result, statements, recommendations or reports are produced on interdisciplinary or field-specific topics and long-term developments, but also on current, day-to-day political issues.

The Leopoldina conducts a peer review of the results and then submits them as a basis for discussion and political measures to decision makers and interested parties in the political sphere and society.

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International Relations

In the age of globalisation, topics such as energy, climate change or health require supranational political measures. By cooperating with the academies of other countries, the Leopoldina promotes the international exchange of views on these topics. This takes place in various forms, such as joint symposia or the issuing of joint statements. For example, the national science academies of the G7/G8 member countries – known as the G-Science Academies – make recommendations for solving urgent global challenges to the participating heads of state and government in the run-up to each Summit.

In order to address such topics of global relevance, the Leopoldina is an active member of international umbrella organisations incorporating other national academies such as the Royal Society in London, the Académie des sciences in Paris, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the National Academies of the United States. For example these include the:

- InterAcademy Council (IAC)
- InterAcademy Medical Panel (IAMP)
- Global Network of Science Academies (IAP)
- Federation of the European Academies of Medicine (FEAM)

Since April 2010, the Secretariat of the European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC), to which the national academies of the EU member states belong, is located at the Leopoldina. International statements and recommendations of European significance are produced by EASAC and sent to the EU Commission or the EU Parliament.

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Policy advice also always includes advising society. The public should have the opportunity to inform itself more easily and better about current scientific and science policy topics, in order to be able to participate in the political discussions. Issues of importance to society, such as demographic change, tackling contagious diseases, and securing energy supply, are therefore presented comprehensibly in interactive dialogue-based events. Visitors to these events – which include fishbowl discussions, night-time science cafés and science slams – have the opportunity to talk in depth with one another and with experts about urgent issues of the day.

In order to promote the interdisciplinary discussion between scientists and to disseminate their scientific findings, the Leopoldina co-organises symposia and meetings with universities, research institutes and other academies. The symposia are interdisciplinary and convey current knowledge beyond the borders of the discipline, while the meetings discuss field-specific problems more extensively.

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Publications

The Leopoldina makes its scientific discussions available to the public. Its journal “Nova Acta Leopoldina” reflects the academy’s spectrum of lectures, meetings and symposia. This journal represents the continuation of the first medical and natural scientific journal in the world and dates back to the year 1670.

The journal “Acta Historica Leopoldina” is dedicated to the history of science, particularly that of the academy. The academy’s almanac has been published since 1990 and documents the activities of the Leopoldina during the respective calendar year.

The German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina informs the public about its work in a digital newsletter published every two months. Alongside reports on events and new policy advice statements, the newsletter features interviews with prominent scientists and politicians. The newsletter is published in German and English and currently has around 5,000 subscribers.

The Leopoldina’s richly illustrated book gives more detailed information about the work, projects and history of the venerable academy.

You can subscribe to the Leopoldina newsletter at www.leopoldina.org/en/abo.

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Since 1997, the Leopoldina has supported outstanding young post-doctoral students by providing post-doctoral scholarships in its Fellowship Programme. These scholarships are available to German scientists who would like to work abroad (and to scientists from Austria and Switzerland who wish to conduct research in Germany). The programme makes it possible for them to carry out independent research for up to two years at a renowned scientific institution abroad (or in Germany).

The awarding of the fellowships and their financial endowment are based on the guidelines of the German Research Foundation. An awarding committee decides on the basis of peer-reviewed project proposals. To date, over 430 people have been supported in the programme, which is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Since 2009, the state of Saxony-Anhalt has contributed to the funding.

After they have returned from abroad, the academy offers its fellows further support, with the aim of facilitating their integration into the German science environment. This follow-up funding is limited to five years and helps its beneficiaries to present scientific results, maintain and develop contacts, and establish new cooperation projects. All of the fellows are offered a mentoring programme in which the members of the National Academy of Sciences provide expert guidance.

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Honours, Medals, and Prizes

The Leopoldina honours outstanding scientific achievements by awarding medals and prizes. Apart from honorary membership, which is limited to a few individuals, the Cothenius Medal in gold, endowed by Christian Andreas Cothenius (1708-1789), personal physician to the royal Prussian court, is the Leopoldina’s most important award. This medal is awarded for the outstanding lifetime achievements of a member of the Leopoldina.

The Carus Medal is based on an endowment in honour of the XIII President of the Leopoldina, Carl Gustav Carus (1789-1869). It is complemented by the Carus Award, which is endowed by the founding city of the Leopoldina, Schweinfurt. The prize and the medal are awarded for important scientific discoveries or achievements within a field represented by the Leopoldina.

The Leopoldina awards the Mendel Medal – named after the founder of genetics, Gregor Mendel (1822-1884) – for special achievements in research in the field of molecular biology and genetics. The Schleiden Medal is awarded for significant achievements in the area of cell research. Leopoldina members are honoured for major contributions to the benefit of the academy by the presidium’s Medal of Merit. The Emperor Leopold I Medal is awarded to public figures who have made a significant contribution to the Leopoldina and to science as a whole.

The Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker Prize, endowed with €50,000, is jointly awarded with the Stifterverband every two years. This prize honours scientists or research teams for outstanding scientific contributions and social commitment. The Leopoldina Early Career Award, sponsored by the Commerzbank Foundation, is endowed with €30,000 and awarded every two years. The Leopoldina Thieme Prize for Medicine, endowed with €15,000 and sponsored by the Thieme Publishing Group, is awarded to young scientists who have produced significant new findings in the aetiology, pathogenesis, therapy and prevention of human diseases. There are two further awards, the Georg Uschmann Prize for the History of Science, endowed with €2,000, and the Leopoldina Prize for Young Scientists, which is presently endowed with €5,000.

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In 2013, the Leopoldina awarded its member Stefan W. Hell with the Carus Medal for his achievements in the field of microscopy. A year later, Hell has received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry.
The Leopoldina library was founded in Nuremberg in 1731. With over 260,000 books, monographs and journals on natural sciences and medicine, it is a rich resource of traditional and modern knowledge. The focus of the collection is on publications about the history of science, particularly of natural sciences and medicine, as well as on publications by scientific societies and associations.

The comprehensive collection of works on natural sciences and medicine on six floors of stacks has accumulated mainly through the exchange of academy publications with partners all over the world and gifts from academy members.

The literature can be viewed or borrowed in the reading room of the Leopoldina in August-Bebel-Strasse 50a in Halle. External users may request materials by interlibrary loan. The electronic catalogue is available at https://opac.bibliothek.unihalle.de/LNG=DU/DB=4/.

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The Archive

As one of the oldest academy archives in the world, the Leopoldina’s archive stores around 1,700 metres of documents dating from over 350 years.

The core collection of the Leopoldina archive includes matriculation records and minute books, curricula vitae, publication lists and portraits of the members, as well as series of correspondence and comprehensive administrative records of the academy. In addition, the archive stores some 50 bequests from important scientists, over 10,000 photographs featuring the history of the academy and science, and various works of art, such as paintings, drawings and medals.

With its collection on the history of the Leopoldina and its biographical materials, the archive offers science historians excellent research opportunities.

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The Centre for Science Studies

The Leopoldina Centre for Science Studies coordinates the Academy’s activities relating to the history of science and focuses on fundamental science theory issues of relevance to the subjects represented by the Leopoldina.

The centre offers a good working environment for visiting researchers who wish to make use of the Leopoldina’s library and archive. It is also developing its own programmes to process the Leopoldina’s library and archive materials and make them available to the public. It also coordinates the Leopoldina’s long-term projects, which are funded by the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities. These include a historical-critical edition of Goethe’s writings on the natural sciences, completed in 2011, and the project “Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919): Edition of Letters”.

The letters of Ernst Haeckel

The extensive collection of letters by renowned natural scientist Ernst Haeckel is an important primary source of information on the history of biosciences in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and a testimony to the popularisation of the natural sciences around 1900.

The aim of the project is to compile Haeckel’s letters, still scattered across the globe, with the inventory in the Ernst Haeckel archives in an online presentation and a 25-volume edition of his selected correspondence. Coordinated by the Ernst-Haeckel-Haus at the University of Jena, the compilation of this comprehensive edition is expected to take 25 years to complete.

For more information, please visit: www.leopoldina.org/en/haeckel
The Leopoldina, which was called *Academia Naturae Curiosorum* at the time, was founded by four physicians in 1652 in the Free Imperial City of Schweinfurt. Their aim was to deepen knowledge of the natural sciences and to improve communication between the natural scientists of that era.

In 1677, the independent academy was officially recognised by Kaiser Leopold I and was awarded special privileges in 1687. Since then, it has had the title of *Sacri Romani Imperii Academia Caesareo-Leopoldina Naturae Curosorum*, from which its current abbreviated name, Leopoldina, derives. Since 1878, the academy has been based in Halle upon Saale.

The period of the Third Reich left its marks on the academy, too. Both members and directors of the academy succumbed to the Nazi regime. Academy members who were murdered in the concentration camps are commemorated by a stele on the academy premises at the Jägerberg in Halle. During the years of the GDR, the Leopoldina largely preserved its independence as a result of the courage and prudence of the members of its presidium. It selected its members, particularly from what was then the Federal Republic of Germany and from other countries in the West, without the exertion of state influence. Following German reunification, it received the status of a registered association.
The Presidium of the Leopoldina in September 2014 (from left to right): Gunnar Berg, Jutta Schnitzer-Ungefug, Martin Quack, Benno Parthier, Frank Rösler, Bärbel Friedrich, Helmut Schwarz, Jörg Hacker, Sigmar Wittig, Ursula M. Staudinger, Peter Propping, Martin Lohse, Hans-Peter Zenner, Volker ter Meulen. Other members not pictured here are Gunter S. Fischer, Harald zur Hausen, Heinz Schott and Georg Stingl.
The Presidium

The academy is run by a presidium. Members of the presidium are elected by the senate. Their term of office is five years and they can be re-elected once for a further term. The Presidium usually meets once a month and prepares all of the academy’s important decisions.

Presidium

President
Jörg Hacker, Halle

Vice Presidents
Gunnar Berg, Halle
Bärbel Friedrich, Berlin
Martin J. Lohse, Würzburg
Ursula M. Staudinger, New York

Class Secretaries
Peter Propping, Bonn
Frank Rösler, Hamburg
Sigmar Wittig, Karlsruhe
Hans-Peter Zenner, Tübingen

Members
Martin Quack, Zurich
Helmut Schwarz, Berlin
Georg Stingl, Vienna

Secretary General
Jutta Schnitzer-Ungefug, Halle
(with a consultative vote)

Former Council Members
Gunter S. Fischer, Halle
Harald zur Hausen, Heidelberg
Volker ter Meulen, Würzburg
(XXV President)
Benno Parthier, Halle
(XXIV President)

Special Representative for Archives, Library and Long-term Projects
Heinz Schott, Bonn
(with a consultative vote)
One of the Leopoldina’s key concerns is informing the public about current developments in science. Journalists are therefore important partners, as they provide background knowledge to a large audience and can explain research findings and their significance. The Leopoldina presents current research topics to important multipliers in the “Diving into Science” seminar programme for journalists, that was launched together with the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

Journalists who do not have a specific scientific focus can attend the programme’s lectures, discussions and workshops to learn how scientists work and under what conditions, visit renowned research establishments, and receive first-hand knowledge on topics of high societal relevance such as climate change, personalised medicine, and the future of farming.

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The Young Academy

The Young Academy was co-founded by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the Leopoldina in June 2000. Its membership is restricted to 50 people. Outstanding junior scientists who have completed a doctorate are elected as members for five years.

The Young Academy’s primary tasks are to further interdisciplinary scientific discourse among outstanding young scientists and to promote initiatives at the points of intersection between science and society.

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Friends of the Leopoldina

On the initiative of the Leopoldina Presidium, Friends of the Leopoldina was founded in August 2007 with the objective of promoting the academy’s science and research intellectually and materially. Its patron is Dr. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, former Foreign Secretary of the Federal Republic of Germany and an honorary Senator of the Leopoldina. All interested parties are welcome to join the Friends of the Leopoldina.

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Leopoldina Locations

All of the Leopoldina’s locations in Halle are in close walking distance from the Moritzburgring tram stop. It is served by line 7 from Halle main station.

The Berlin office is located a few minutes’ walk from Friedrichstrasse railway station and Oranienburger Tor underground station.

You can find detailed journey descriptions at www.leopoldina.org/en/service/contact
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