

# Hamburg Science Summit 2025

**Europe's Innovation  
Challenge**

# About the Hamburg Science Summit

The Hamburg Science Summit brings together leading experts and decision-makers from science, politics, business and think-tanks to discuss the future of science and innovation in Europe. Organised by Körber-Stiftung and the Ministry of Science, Research and Equality in Hamburg, the annual event focuses on a different aspect of Europe's science and innovation landscape each year.



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# Welcoming note

By Eva Nemela

The Hamburg Science Summit was launched in 2024 with a shared conviction: that science and innovation are vital to a strong and sovereign Europe. One year on, that conviction has only gained in significance. In a shifting geopolitical landscape, Europe must define its own priorities — to safeguard strategic autonomy, but also to uphold fundamental scientific principles such as academic freedom. This is where Europe's strength lies: in its freedom, its openness, and its ability to forge consensus across differences.

In his keynote at last year's Summit, Enrico Letta called for a "Fifth Freedom" — the free movement of research and innovation. That vision points the way forward to a Europe that mobilises knowledge and creativity as confidently as it mobilises people, goods, services and capital. Yet science itself is neither European, nor American, nor Chinese. By its very nature, science is global — and as such, it builds bridges, not borders.

The Hamburg Science Summit brings this spirit to life. It gathers the people who drive breakthrough science and transformative innovation — across countries, sectors, and disciplines. With this, the Körber-Stiftung continues its long-standing commitment to European excellence, embodied by the Körber European Science Prize.

We warmly welcome all distinguished guests from academia, politics, industry, and think tanks to Hamburg. We also extend our sincere thanks to the Ministry of Science in Hamburg for their invaluable partnership. Europe's future depends on science, and science thrives in a united Europe. Let us shape that path together.



**Eva Nemela**  
Member of the  
Executive Board,  
Körber-Stiftung

# Welcoming note

By Maryam Blumenthal

Science is much like climbing a mountain: it is about setting challenging goals, it is about being curious to find new pathways and perspectives, and above all: it is about teamwork and hanging together. Only who cooperates will reach the top. The Hamburg Science Summit captures this spirit by bringing together experts from all different disciplines with one common goal: to shape Europe's future by strengthening innovation and competitiveness.

We live in challenging times: politically, the central pillars of our old global order are being attacked. The rule of law, multilateralism, free trade and freedom of science as well as the primacy of democracy and human rights. Economically, Europe needs to strengthen its sovereignty and reconsider its place in the world. And in ecological terms, we need sustainable technologies, climate-friendly mobility and research that allows us to make the right decisions for future generations.

What Europe needs to face these challenges is transformative research. Science that makes a difference. This is our ambition in Hamburg, and we have a lot to offer: strong partnerships between universities, research institutions and innovative companies. A fast-growing infrastructure and excellent networks. And a diverse culture that makes us attractive to people from all over the world.

I am very happy that we continue our fruitful partnership with Körber-Stiftung in organizing this summit and I wish to thank everyone who was involved in creating this inspiring programme. Hamburg is proud to host so many experts from all over the world, and we look forward to climbing new mountains with you. Welcome to Hamburg!



**Maryam Blumenthal**  
Senator for  
Science, Research  
and Equality,  
Free and Hanseatic  
City of Hamburg

# Science, innovation, and the return of geopolitics

By Markus Dressel

For a long time, science and innovation have ranged as one policy field among many — and not the most important. While science has always been regarded as contributing to prosperity and, to some extent, informing policymaking, it has typically been viewed as a sectoral issue rather than a strategic priority.

On a budgetary level, this is reflected in the persistent difficulty of raising public research expenditure. While public R&I investments have increased in recent years, their relative share of GDP across EU Member States stood at 0.71% in 2024 — only a modest rise from 0.68% a decade earlier. Similarly, Eurostat reports that R&I accounted to 1.45% of total government spending across EU countries in 2024, again representing only a modest increase from 1.37% ten years ago. Even the countries with the highest R&I ratios, such as Iceland, Germany, and the Netherlands, invest barely more than 2% of their annual government budgets in science and innovation.

Similar observations can be made at the level of policy rhetoric. In EU documents, science and innovation have appeared in sections on growth, sustainability,

and competitiveness, but rarely as priorities in their own right. Nationally, too, science policy has generally been treated as a sectoral issue without overarching relevance — as seen in recent election debates in France and Germany that largely focused on other matters, or in the inaugural policy statement of Germany's new chancellor, Friedrich Merz, where science received less attention than forestry and agriculture.

In short, science and innovation have rarely featured among headline priorities, despite their acknowledged relevance for growth, security, or sustainability.

## The EU's new emphasis on science and innovation

This perspective is now shifting in light of a changed geopolitical and economic environment. The EU level is particularly revealing in this regard. In a programmatic address to the European Parliament, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen recently pledged to “put research and innovation, science and technology at the heart of our economy” — a phrase also highlighted in her Political Guidelines and other Commission documents, including a 2025 communication on Horizon Europe, which argues that “now more than ever, R&I will shape Europe's future”.

The crucial point, however, is not merely the relative weight that the Commission gives to science and innovation, but their role in its overall strategic reasoning. In response to geopolitical instability — above all Russian expansionism — von der Leyen argued that “Europeans must once again fight for freedom and sovereignty”. These, she stressed, “depend more than ever on our economic strength” and “on our ability to compete, innovate and produce” — a chain of logic that directly leads to science as a driver of innovation and as a prerequisite for global competitiveness, defence capabilities, and geopolitical autonomy. Taken seriously, this establishes a perspective in which science and innovation no longer feature as sectoral issues, but as key assets tied to Europe's most important strategic goals.

## Science and innovation in recent EU flagship reports

This new perspective builds on a series of high-level strategic analyses, particularly those by Mario Draghi, Enrico Letta and the expert group led by Manuel Heitor. The Draghi report highlights R&I as a main driver of prosperity, stressing the strong link between R&I investment, productivity, and overall well-being. It also argues that the importance of R&I will grow, driven by the challenges of global competition and an ageing population. Importantly, the demographic aspect refers not only to the fact that a shrinking labour force must be offset by productivity gains if Europe is to maintain its level of economic wealth; it also highlights the need for substantial productivity growth to sustain Europe's welfare systems as large parts of the labour force retire within the next decade — a development with profound implications that underscores the systemic, as opposed to sectoral, importance of science and innovation.

The systemic relevance of R&I is also a motif in Enrico Letta's report. Letta famously calls for broadening the established freedoms of the European Single Market — the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital — to include a fifth: the freedom to “investigate, explore and create without disciplinary or artificial borders”. Letta's fifth freedom covers several areas, with activities related to science and innovation — such as open access, shared research infrastructures, and researcher mobility — standing out as particularly important. As Letta puts it, this means placing “research and innovation drivers at the core of the Single Market, thereby fostering an ecosystem where knowledge diffusion propels economic vitality”.

The Heitor report reinforces this view. It argues for a whole-of-government approach that aligns science and innovation with the EU's overarching agenda, treating it not as a silo but as a cross-cutting lever for the EU's strategic goals. It proposes a stronger framework

programme for science and innovation, characterized by clearer political ownership and simplified, faster financing instruments. Crucially, the report develops this argument not only against the backdrop of rapid technological change, for instance in artificial intelligence, but also in view of the changed geopolitical environment. In the authors' words: “In a more conflict-ridden, unstable and rapidly changing world, it is investment in research and innovation that will ensure Europe's future security, strength and freedom”.

## Science in an era of geopolitical rivalry

A common theme in these analyses is the importance of science and innovation given the geostrategic and geoeconomic landscape. Among the many challenges this entails, three stand out: competitiveness in key technologies, technological sovereignty, and civil and military defence.

Regarding competitiveness, it has often been remarked, with some irony, that Europe is content with regulating technology, while actual development in fields such as AI, semiconductors, biotech, or batteries takes place elsewhere. Private investment in the EU remains far lower than in the US or China — about 1.5% of GDP compared to roughly 2.6% and 2%. Europe is caught in a “middle-tech trap,” sustaining strong regulatory and scientific capacities but struggling to translate them into technological leadership. The result is a lag in patents and market shares, especially in information technologies and advanced computing. This weakens productivity growth just when it is most needed to confront demographic change, limits the creation of high-value jobs and industries, and ultimately erodes prosperity. Addressing these issues is clearly more than a sectoral task: it is a central priority that hinges on science and innovation.

A related concern is Europe's limited technological sovereignty and the resulting constraints on strategic autonomy. Despite some progress, Europe remains

heavily dependent in several fields of technology, including software and cloud infrastructure. Over 70% of the EU cloud market is controlled by US firms, with similar dominance in operating systems and software services. Given the centrality of these technologies, such dependencies weaken Europe's position in global negotiations and create risks of coercion. At the same time, the lack of competitive European alternatives in frontier fields such as AI limits Europe's ability to project principles like privacy or transparency into emerging tech standards. The result is a shrinking space for political manoeuvre, both in defending strategic interests and shaping normative principles. On a more positive note, however, it also shows that Europe can strengthen its autonomy if it reinforces its scientific base and translates it more effectively into key technologies.

A further dimension concerns the nexus between technology and security. The war in Ukraine has exposed Europe's dependence on the US for key defence capabilities, from intelligence and satellite surveillance to missile defence, long-range strike systems, and drones. Many of these are only rudimentarily available in Europe, or absent altogether. At the same time, resilience in civilian infrastructures has become a major concern. Russian hybrid operations have revealed vulnerabilities in energy grids, digital networks, and communication systems. Military and civil technologies are thus deeply intertwined: cyber-security, space assets, and secure digital infrastructures are as central as conventional weapon systems — and all hinge on science and innovation. The lesson is clear: if Europe is to enhance its security, investment in R&I is not optional, but a cornerstone of its geopolitical strategy.

## The way forward for science and innovation policy

There are signs that this insight is beginning to translate into policy. The EU Commission has proposed a €175 billion budget for the tenth Framework Programme for

research and innovation (FP10), which is set to succeed the current programme, Horizon Europe, in 2028. This would nearly double the current €95.5 billion budget. Under this proposal, FP10 would form part of a broader €409 billion European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), which pools investments in fields such as energy, biotech, digital technologies, or defence. While FP10 remains largely stand-alone, a sizeable share of one of its four pillars would be allocated through the ECF, reflecting a closer coupling of science with industrial and security priorities. At the same time, Germany's new government aims to raise total R&I investment from currently 3.1% to at least 3.5% of GDP by 2030 — not highly ambitious, but a step in the right direction. France, in turn, has launched its *France 2030* plan, mobilising €54 billion for areas such as energy, semi-conductors, or space.

As it stands, uncertainties remain as to whether Europe and its Member States will continue, or even intensify, the efforts outlined in these programmes. What is clear, however, is that the view of science and innovation as one sectoral concern among many is no longer tenable. They must be recognised as a central field of policy, with major implications for Europe's economy, welfare systems, global competitiveness, defence capabilities, and strategic autonomy. Achieving this requires balancing scientific openness with political steering, and fundamental research with its translation into technological application. Ultimately, Europe's prosperity, security, and self-determination will hinge on its ability to turn scientific strengths into strategic capacity.



**Markus Dressel**

Programme Director International Science,  
Körber-Stiftung

# “Europe needs to *Align, Act, Accelerate* research and innovation”

**Professor Heitor, in your report *Align, Act, Accelerate* you argue that disruptive innovation is unlikely to emerge from the EU’s conventional funding system. What needs to change to foster breakthrough innovation?**

The report must be read in the context of the current geopolitical situation — over three years into the war in Ukraine and with a new US administration in place. Alongside the *Letta*, *Draghi* and *Niinistö* reports, it underscores the need for Europe to unite its forces: we must accelerate our collective response to geopolitical threats, boost innovation in defence and security, and rethink our understanding of “science for policy”.

Europe is the world’s most reliable partner — and the most efficient in terms of outputs per resources, thanks to our diversity. While investment capacities still lag behind, we

now have a unique opportunity to advance research and innovation towards strategic autonomy on a world level. President von der Leyen’s *ReARM EU* initiative and the *Union Strategy on Preparedness* mark key steps in this direction. We must also reform our funding system to promote greater risk-taking, faster decisions, and institutional tolerance for failure. The ERC and EIC remain essential, but additional mechanisms are needed.

**You propose a dedicated experimental unit within the European Commission to test new instruments and faster funding. What could such a unit look like in practice?**

We all are facing an accelerating pace of technological change, in times of abundance of knowledge. New instruments are essential, inspired by models such as Germany’s

SPRIN-D and the UK’s ARIA. An Experimental Unit under the EIC could assess and test novel funding mechanisms, many already piloted by private foundations. It could also help attract more private investment through co-funding, especially in areas like industrial greening and food security. Additionally, it should develop effective tools for technology monitoring — a crucial capacity in times of rapid transformation — with strong private sector involvement. The aim is not to replace existing structures, but to complement them with agile, risk-tolerant approaches.

**Innovation is increasingly seen as a key factor for strategic autonomy and competitiveness. What role should the next European Framework Programme (FP10) play to position Europe as a leader in science-based transformation?**

An effective European research and innovation ecosystem — including a European Defence and Research Area, as recently proposed by the Commission’s Joint Research Centre — will require coordinated efforts on multiple fronts. FP10 must be strengthened and restructured around four interconnected spheres: competitive excellence, industrial competitiveness, societal challenges, and a more robust innovation ecosystem.

Europe must escape the “mid-tech trap” by prioritizing high added-value technologies such as AI, space systems, advanced materials, quantum and robotics. A stronger, more unified public procurement system at the EU level is needed to scale innovation, alongside a cohesion policy that fosters defence, security and space-related supply chains across all regions. At the global level, Europe must pursue tailored partnerships — including with the US, China, India and Brazil — while adopting a more targeted approach to research security, based on project-level evaluation rather than top-down controls.



**Manuel Heitor**  
Professor at IST Lisbon — University of Lisbon, Centre for Innovation, Technology and Policy Research  
Former Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education, Portugal (2015–2022)

As Chair of the European Commission’s High-Level Expert Group for the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe, Manuel Heitor served as lead author of the widely discussed report *Align, Act, Accelerate* (the “Heitor Report”), published in October 2024.

# “The most transformative breakthroughs come from curiosity-driven research”

**Professor Leptin, as the debate around the next framework programme FP10 gains momentum, questions arise about the ERC’s role in the broader innovation agenda. How can frontier research contribute to Europe’s innovation capacity while maintaining the ERC’s core mission of scientific excellence?**

Science and technological innovation are tightly intertwined — but innovation is not linear. The most transformative breakthroughs are often unpredictable and come from curiosity-driven research. This is why bottom-up research, selected only for its scientific excellence, is critical. The ERC supports precisely this kind of frontier science. While other funding programmes come with predefined priorities, the ERC lets researchers explore the unknown, often generating discoveries that later contribute to EU priorities. Without this complementary role,

FP10 risks prioritising incremental results and missing out on transformative breakthroughs.

Moreover, frontier research is also a training ground for Europe’s knowledge workforce. So far, ERC projects have hosted more than 100,000 team members, mainly PhD students and postdocs — Europe’s next generation of professionals, skilled in cutting-edge methods and technologies. Policy-driven and exploratory research complement each other, but long-term competitive advantage and societal resilience depend on the open-ended, bottom-up research the ERC champions.

**The ERC has become a global benchmark for scientific excellence. But many research institutions struggle with long-term funding, bureaucracy and fragmented careers. What structural conditions are needed to make Europe truly attractive for world-class science?**

Research investment, career prospects and systemic barriers remain key issues. President Ursula von der Leyen has recently proposed ambitious plans for the next long-term budget, stating that “an investment in science is an investment in our future”. But the EU cannot do it alone. National governments must also strengthen their commitment to R&I investments to reduce disparities across countries and to strengthen Europe. Reforms of academic careers — especially perspectives for independent careers — are critical for making research professions more attractive. Finally, we need to address systemic barriers such as reliable data accessibility. Centralised and accessible European data infrastructures, supported by harmonised regulation and dedicated financial resources, must become a strategic priority.

**Looking ahead ten years: What would success look like for the European Research Area — and what role should the ERC play in shaping that vision?**

The European Research Area is the ambition to create a single, borderless market for research, innovation and technology across the EU. We strongly support this ambition. As the ERC, we listen to the community, and try to lead through our policies, for instance by recognising diversity in career achievements.

The ERC also shapes Europe’s research landscape by creating a pan-European competition of ideas and people, and by setting a benchmark for excellence.

Europe has great potential, but we cannot take progress for granted. Complex geopolitics, shifting policy priorities, increasing fragmentation, and budgetary constraints all pose real risks. One sign of success would be if European researchers, as well as students could really move freely across borders without constraints to their academic and personal progress. Europe needs to be a leader — not a follower — if it is to achieve its ambitions.



**Maria Leptin**  
President of the European Research Council (ERC)  
Chair of the ERC Scientific Council

The ERC is the EU’s premier funding body for frontier research, supporting excellent scientists across Europe through competitive grants. ERC grants are widely considered to be among the most prestigious academic grants in Europe and worldwide.

# “The ultimate form of communication allowed by nature”

**Professor Wehner, quantum networks promise applications that go far beyond the capabilities of classical networks. What fascinates you about the quantum internet — and how do you envision its most transformative applications?**

On a fundamental level, I am fascinated by the idea that it would allow us to use an entirely new form of communication: quantum communication. If we believe that nature is governed by quantum mechanics, then this is the ultimate form of communication allowed by nature. It has very different properties from what we are used to — like the fact that quantum information cannot be copied. What’s more, two remote quantum bits can be in a special state called entanglement. This forms a fundamentally unsharable connection, enabling a kind of coordination that is impossible with any classical technology.

Historically, accessing new forms of communication has had

a major impact on society. There are already several example applications that illustrate how these unusual properties can help solve problems that are otherwise impossible or inefficient to tackle. For instance, quantum communication can provide security against any eavesdropper — even one equipped with a quantum computer now or in the future — because entanglement forms a fundamentally private connection.

**As Director of the Quantum Internet Alliance, you are leading Europe’s effort to realize a prototype quantum internet by 2030. Why is it strategically important for Europe to invest in quantum networking?**

There are fundamentally two reasons. First, the economic one. Quantum networking is already known to have interesting applications, so it’s an important future technology. The Draghi report shows that the GDP gap between the EU and the US widened from

15% in 2002 to 30% today, with 70% of that gap due to a productivity shortfall — largely because Europe didn’t lead in the first digital revolution. While we don’t yet know the full size of the future quantum industry, large investments outside Europe show that this technology will be developed. The question is whether Europe can turn its R&D lead into innovation and economic return.

Second, security. Although quantum internet technology supports many applications, one is untappable communication. This is being developed outside Europe — for example, in China. Failing to build European quantum communication technologies would mean relying on non-European security in the future. So it is vital that Europe not only supports quantum networking research, but also pushes to bring it from the lab to the field, developing a strong ecosystem and delivering to real users.

**With the Körber Prize, you receive one of Europe’s most prestigious science awards. How do you plan to use the €1 million in prize funds — and how might your work contribute to research and European industry?**

I am very humbled and excited by the award. I hope to use its visibility to highlight the large collaborative effort needed to make

quantum internet technology a success with and for Europe. We are in a strong scientific position, but it is crucial that academia and industry work together. I will continue to support this via the Quantum Internet Alliance, where we are building a prototype quantum internet in a large European collaboration. I plan to use most of the prize funds to discover new applications of quantum networking — applications that can make this technology genuinely useful to society. I am driven by the idea that quantum communication can and should be used by all — and new applications are key to that goal.



**Stephanie Wehner**

Antoni van Leeuwenhoek Professor in quantum information, Delft University of Technology  
Director, Quantum Internet Alliance

Stephanie Wehner is a leading figure in quantum communication and the 2025 recipient of the Körber European Science Prize. She recently led the development of QNodeOS, the world’s first operating system for quantum networks. Together with the Quantum Internet Alliance, she is working to realize the first large-scale quantum network.

# “Erasing uncomfortable truths is never the answer”

**Professor Jasanoff, you have been a leading figure in Science and Technology Studies since the 1980s. Looking back, how has the way we talk about science evolved over the years — especially in policy-relevant fields such as climate research?**

It is striking how little the public discourse on science for policy has changed in spite of our growing scholarly understanding of the social foundations of knowledge-making. The dominant view still remains that science represents nature and policy should follow science. One problem with this view is that it brackets off science as an ivory tower activity and absolves society at large of any responsibility for generating knowledge about its own condition. Political authorities are then at liberty to shut down lines of research they don't like, thereby creating a regime of self-inflicted ignorance.

A different picture emerges from Science and Technology Studies. We would recognize that knowledge and its uptake are co-produced —

that is, “we the people” accept certain topics and ways of knowing because we are actively committed to exploring the endpoints of knowledge: whether the distant origins of the universe or the causes of climate change. This perspective embraces science as an ongoing expression of society's best interests, and hence not to be shut down on the political whims of the moment.

**In a recent interview with DIE ZEIT, you described the United States as being caught in a “civil war of ideas” since the Trump era. What do you mean by this — and how does it affect the role of science in public policy?**

At the risk of oversimplifying, the “civil war” is between those who see scientific knowledge as a search for truth divorced from politics and those who see science as a powerful vessel for incubating particular forms of politics and ideology. Right now, in the United States, we seem to be in the grip of the “it's all politics” framing, enabling those in power

to erase knowledge created by their perceived opponents. The attacks have centered on knowledge that we might call cosmopolitan, that is, knowledge which makes us more inclined to take responsibility for our neighbors' problems. I mean areas such as climate research, pandemic preparedness, global hunger and poverty, mental health, or social diversity.

Policy needs science as much as science needs policy, and erasing uncomfortable truths is never the answer. At the same time, putting politics back into science policy could have beneficial consequences. It might force scientists to justify the value of what they do, so more people will buy in — not because science is value-free but because science is how we best know ourselves.

**We are seeing growing political pressure on science in the US, which has also fueled debates in Europe about encouraging American researchers to move across the Atlantic. In your view, how should Europeans respond to the current situation?**

It is tempting to say that Europe is doing a good thing in wooing American researchers because fine minds should be offered the best possible support, and right now the United States is less hospitable to science than Europe is. After all,

this just reverses the many episodes of brain drain that have affected European science, not just from Germany in the mid-20th century but also from Thatcher's Britain in the 1980s.

However, I can't help feeling that this moment calls for more than just incentives for the fortunate scientists who are mobile enough to benefit from international recruitment. I would like to see European science institutions join together to articulate a set of norms that would help guard against abuses of power by political authorities who dislike uncomfortable truths. We should recognize as a global community that scientific ideas are not just commodities for sale to the highest bidder, but that free inquiry is a human right and should be defended as such by the entire scientific world.



**Sheila Jasanoff**  
Pforzheimer Professor of Science and Technology Studies, Harvard University  
Director, Program on Science, Technology and Society, Harvard Kennedy School

Sheila Jasanoff is internationally regarded as a pioneer and leading figure in the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS). She is the founder and director of Harvard's STS Program and the author of several influential publications on science and technology.

# Programme

## Thursday, 18 September 2025

9:30	<b>Welcome coffee</b>
10:00	<b>Welcome address</b> Eva Nemela, Maryam Blumenthal
10:10	Keynote <b>Europe needs to <i>Align, Act, Accelerate</i> research and innovation</b> Manuel Heitor
11:00	Plenary table • Moderated by Terry Martin <b>Directions, please! Europe's agenda for science and innovation</b> Thierry Coulhon, Patrick Cramer, Maria Leptin
12:00	<b>Lunch</b>
13:15	Plenary table • In cooperation with Table.Media • Moderated by Tim Gabel <b>Bridge over troubled waters: The future of transatlantic relations in R&amp;I and beyond</b> Katrin Amian, Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln, Bettina Martin
13:15	Roundtable • Hosted by Joachim Herz Foundation, Stifterverband and Volkswagen Foundation • Moderated by Thorsten Lambertus <b>Shaping Europe's innovation ecosystems: Local roots, national strategies and European visions</b> Sabine Kunst, Volker Meyer-Guckel, Georg Schütte
13:15	Roundtable • Hosted by CoARA <b>Beyond 'excellence': What does it mean to support the best research?</b> Cameron Neylon, Mandy Boehnke, Mathijs Vleugel, Magali Weissgerber
14:15	Plenary table • Moderated by Helen Czerski <b>We did it our way — Europe's science and innovation model revisited</b> Lidia Borrell-Damián, Robbert Dijkgraaf, Sheila Jasanoff
14:15	Roundtable • Hosted by Max Planck Society <b>Scientific policy advice: Between policy relevance and scientific independence</b> Ricarda Winkelmann, Étienne Bassot, Nicole Grobert, Eric Guilyardi

14:15	Roundtable • Hosted by SPRIN-D <b>Closing the innovation gap: Does Europe need an agency for disruptive innovation?</b> Andreas Zaby, Eva Hansen, David Matthews, Christopher Palmberg
14:15	Roundtable • Hosted by Young Academy of Europe <b>Science by AI: Promise or threat?</b> Katalin Solymosi, Philip Campbell, Anna Fabijańska, Alison Noble, Oleg Ruchayskiy
15:15	<b>Coffee</b>
16:00	Plenary table • Moderated by Monika Jones <b>Going quantum? New strategies for digital leadership in Europe</b> Claudia Eckert, Georges-Olivier Reymond, Stephanie Wehner
16:00	Roundtable • Hosted by Leopoldina <b>The future of scientific freedom: Comparative perspectives</b> Bettina Rockenbach, Krzysztof Pyrc, Walter Rosenthal, Mark Walport
16:00	Roundtable • Hosted by DESY <b>Large-scale research: A cornerstone of Europe's R&amp;I strategy</b> Helmut Dosch, Lars Börjesson, Carla Seidel, Robert-Jan Smits
17:00	Live Podcast • Moderated by Ileana Grabitz and Peter Dausend <b>DIE ZEIT — Das Politikteil</b> Daniela Schwarzer
17:00	Young Science Meet-Up • Hosted by Young Science Hamburg <b>What's it like to be a scientist?</b> Lena Cords, Manuel Häußler, Stephanie Wehner
18:00	<b>Closing remarks</b> Matthias Mayer
18:30	<b>Conference dinner</b> Transfer to dinner venue

## Friday, 19 September 2025

8:45	<b>Rethinking Dual Use – New opportunities for science and industry</b> Breakfast dialogue (invitation only)
11:00	Award ceremony <b>Körber European Science Prize 2025</b> Previous registration and valid ID required

# Europe's Innovation Challenge

Plenary table  
Moderated by Terry Martin

11:00–12:00 © KörberForum

## Directions, please! Europe's agenda for science and innovation

**Thierry Coulhon** President, Institut Polytechnique de Paris; Board Member, Udice – French Research Universities  
**Patrick Cramer** President, Max Planck Society  
**Maria Leptin** President, European Research Council

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has pledged to put science and innovation at the heart of Europe's economy, echoing calls for stronger R&I investment in recent reports by Draghi, Letta and Heitor. However, Europe's new agenda is taking shape against a geopolitical backdrop. The next Framework Programme (FP10) will not only succeed Horizon Europe – a programme widely seen as a success – but also form part of Europe's response to a challenged security order, transatlantic tensions and concerns about strategic autonomy. This shift raises new questions about the balance between scientific independence and political priority-setting, exemplified by debates over the future role of the European Research Council and the relationship between research funding and the EU Competitiveness Fund. How can Europe maintain an open science system while adapting to new industrial and security imperatives? How should FP10 balance strategic goals with scientific openness and bottom-up, curiosity-driven research?

Plenary table  
In cooperation with Table.Media  
Moderated by Tim Gabel

13:15–14:05 © KörberForum

## Bridge over troubled waters: The future of transatlantic relations in R&I and beyond

**Katrin Amian** Head of North America, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation  
**Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln** President, WZB Berlin Social Science Center  
**Bettina Martin** Minister for Science, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; President, German Conference of Science Ministers

Recent shifts in US science policy under the Trump administration have cast doubt on the stability of transatlantic research cooperation. Budget cuts, political pressure on academic agendas, and the politicisation and restriction of access to scientific data – including environmental, health and demographic information – are undermining key pillars of the American

research system. In Europe, these developments are prompting difficult choices. Some advocate for stronger engagement: attracting talent, hosting data infrastructures, and reinforcing Europe's role in global science. Others warn that limited resources, unequal conditions and the risk of competitive fragmentation could undermine long-term cooperation and mutual trust. How can Europe respond in ways that combine strategic foresight with a clear commitment to academic openness and collaboration?

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Roundtable  
Hosted by Joachim Herz Foundation,  
Stifterverband and Volkswagen Foundation  
Moderated by Thorsten Lambertus

13:15–14:05 © Fleet Room

## Shaping Europe's innovation ecosystems: Local roots, national strategies and European visions

**Sabine Kunst** Board Chair, Joachim Herz Foundation  
**Volker Meyer-Guckel** Secretary-General, Stifterverband  
**Georg Schütte** CEO, Volkswagen Foundation

Europe stands at a pivotal moment in shaping its innovation ecosystems. Despite progress through Horizon Europe and national programs, the continent still lags in scaling startups, attracting investment, and turning research into market-ready technologies. Hosted by Joachim Herz Foundation, Stifterverband and Volkswagen Foundation, this roundtable explores strategies on a local, national, and European level to foster a more competitive and resilient innovation landscape. We will take a look at regional activities, such as Hamburg's bid to the Startup Factories competition, and the support foundations can provide. We will discuss Germany's innovation landscape and the strategic role of universities as anchor institutions in innovation ecosystems as well as regional development and policy interventions. And we will broaden the view to the European level, talking about cross-border collaboration, funding mechanisms, and the role of philanthropy in shaping a cohesive European innovation space.

Roundtable  
Hosted by CoARA

13:15–14:05 © Körber Start-Hub

## Beyond 'excellence': What does it mean to support the best research?

**Cameron Neylon** CoARA Steering Board; Curtin University Perth  
**Mandy Boehnke** Vice President International Affairs, University of Bremen  
**Mathijs Vleugel** Head, Helmholtz Open Science Office  
**Magali Weissgerber** Board Member, Eurodoc

Science, at its best, is a system that helps researchers to ask better questions, generate robust answers, and translate insights into societal benefit. Yet the incentives that guide scientific work are increasingly seen as too narrow — prioritising publication count over real-world impact, secrecy over knowledge sharing, and inward dialogue over societal engagement. In response, reform initiatives such as the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) have emerged to address these misaligned incentive structures. As their efforts mature from abstract ideas to implementation, this roundtable, hosted by CoARA, will explore concrete options for reform, aspirations for better science, and the progress made along the way.

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Plenary table  
Moderated by Helen Czerski

14:15–15:15 © KörberForum

## We did it our way — Europe's science and innovation model revisited

**Lidia Borrell-Damián** Secretary-General, Science Europe  
**Robbert Dijkgraaf** President-elect, International Science Council; former Minister of Science, Netherlands  
**Sheila Jasanoff** Harvard University

Rooted in the Enlightenment and Humboldt's ideal of *Bildung*, Europe's model of scientific enquiry has been shaped by the principles of academic freedom and a commitment to the common good. This contrasts with other models of science that place greater emphasis on economic utility or political control. Yet Europe faces a notorious underperformance in translating scientific discovery into marketable innovation, and appears to discourage scientific engagement with political priorities — most notably in areas such as defence. Should Europe revise the principles that have long guided its research culture — and, more broadly, the social contract between science and society — by opening science to

stronger political and economic direction? Or can its normative foundations be reimagined to meet today's economic and strategic demands?

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Roundtable  
Hosted by Max Planck Society

14:15–15:15 ☺ Fleet Room

## Scientific policy advice: Between policy relevance and scientific independence

**Ricarda Winkelmann** Director, Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology  
**Étienne Bassot** Director, EU Directorate for Transformation, Innovation and Health  
**Nicole Grobert** University of Oxford; former Chair, EU Group of Chief Scientific Advisors  
**Eric Guilyardi** Co-Chair, CNRS Working Group on Public Advocacy

As democracies navigate an increasingly complex political landscape, integrating scientific expertise into policymaking becomes both more urgent and more challenging. Ensuring that science informs political decisions without undermining academic independence requires careful design of advisory structures and mutual trust. The roundtable, hosted by the Max Planck Society, will examine how evidence-based policy advice can be embedded in democratic systems, highlighting institutional frameworks and mechanisms that support this exchange. Drawing on international perspectives, particular attention will be given to strategies for managing tensions between political expectations and the freedom of research, and to ways in which transparent, structured engagement can strengthen both policy outcomes and scientific integrity.

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Roundtable  
Hosted by SPRIN-D

14:15–15:15 ☺ Körber Conference Room

## Closing the innovation gap: Does Europe need an agency for disruptive innovation?

**Andreas Zaby** SPRIN-D; former President, Berlin School of Economics and Law  
**Eva Hansen** Head of Executive Secretariat, Innovation Fund Denmark  
**David Matthews** International Editor, Science|Business  
**Christopher Palmberg** Senior Director, Business Finland

Europe is lagging behind when it comes to translating basic research into breakthrough innovation. While the EU and its member states provide significant research funding, Europe's ability to finance the early development and scale-up phases of deep-tech innovation is failing. All

too often, the commercialization of European innovation takes place elsewhere in the world. To address this challenge, some member states have created national innovation agencies following the examples of the US (D)ARPA agencies. At the EU-level, the European Institute of Technology and the European Innovation Council have been created to foster innovation. However, both have received criticism for their lack of independence, high levels of bureaucracy and slow decision-making. Against this background, this roundtable — hosted by the German Federal Agency for Breakthrough Innovation SPRIN-D — will discuss the potential need for a new type of European agency for supporting disruptive innovation.

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Roundtable  
Hosted by Young Academy of Europe

14:15–15:15 ☺ Körber Start-Hub

## Science by AI: Promise or threat?

**Katalin Solymosi** Outgoing Chair, Young Academy of Europe  
**Philip Campbell** Former Editor-in-Chief, Springer Nature  
**Anna Fabijańska** Co-Chair, SAPEA Working Group AI in Science  
**Alison Noble** Vice President and Chair AI Working Group, Royal Society  
**Oleg Ruchayskiy** CEO, Prophy AI

Artificial intelligence has rapidly shifted from curiosity to essential collaborator. Researchers across disciplines are already using AI to scout literature, design experiments and prepare manuscripts. In scientific publishing, editors are beginning to explore AI tools, while reviewers are increasingly using them to draft review reports — not always in line with publishers' policies. Looking ahead, AI may routinely perform core tasks of scientific inquiry, including hypothesis generation and testing. Yet these developments raise pressing concerns, from questions of authorship and editorial responsibility to opaque algorithms, encoded biases and unequal access to AI tools. Hosted by the Young Academy of Europe, this roundtable convenes researchers, publishers, learned societies and AI companies to explore the impact of AI on the scientific enterprise, and to discuss principles and training pathways that ensure responsible use of AI in research and publishing.

## Going quantum? New strategies for digital leadership in Europe

**Claudia Eckert** President, acatech – National Academy of Science and Engineering  
**Georges-Olivier Reymond** Co-Founder and Chief of Strategic Alliances, Pasqal  
**Stephanie Wehner** Director, Quantum Internet Alliance

Quantum technologies are among the few fields where Europe remains highly competitive in R&I – in sharp contrast to other domains such as AI or cloud computing. Ambitious programmes in Germany, France and at EU level aim to enable the current leap from research experiments to real-world applications. Yet these developments raise crucial questions. On the one hand, efforts to build a European quantum internet promise a highly secure digital infrastructure, enabling data exchange protected by the laws of quantum physics. On the other, quantum computers could soon break the encryption underpinning today's internet – with far-reaching implications for data privacy, the financial sector and national security. How can Europe prepare for both the promise and the disruption? And how can it safeguard its lead as global investment accelerates?

Roundtable  
Hosted by Leopoldina

16:00–16:50 © Fleet Room

## The future of scientific freedom: Comparative perspectives

**Bettina Rockenbach** President, German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina  
**Krzysztof Pyrc** President, Foundation for Polish Science  
**Walter Rosenthal** President, German Rectors' Conference  
**Mark Walport** Vice President, Royal Society; former UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser

Recent years have seen growing pressure on democratic institutions and a corresponding erosion of scientific freedom in various contexts. As a cornerstone of liberal democracies, scientific freedom enables critical reflection on political and institutional developments. This is particularly important in times of geopolitical upheaval. To maintain its authority as a fundamental right, scientific freedom should be actively practiced even under difficult conditions and should shape researchers from the beginning of their studies. This roundtable, organised by the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, will explore how researchers

and scientific institutions can engage across borders to strengthen scientific freedom and respond collectively to adverse circumstances and vocal opponents.

Roundtable  
Hosted by DESY

16:00–16:50 © Körber Conference Room

## Large-scale research: A cornerstone of Europe's R&I strategy

**Helmut Dosch** Senior Advisor and former Director, German Electron Synchrotron DESY  
**Lars Börjesson** Council Member, European Spallation Source  
**Carla Seidel** Senior Vice President Analytical and Material Science, BASF  
**Robert-Jan Smits** President Emeritus, Eindhoven University of Technology; former Director-General, EU DG for Research and Innovation

In today's fast-changing geopolitical and technological environment, Europe must boost its competitiveness and reduce strategic dependencies. The Heitor Report *Align, Act, Accelerate* urges bold action to position Europe as a global leader in research, technology, and innovation. Scientific excellence alone is no longer enough – Europe must translate research into industrial leadership, scalable technologies, and strategic autonomy. Research infrastructures, both established and emerging, are key to this transformation. They drive innovation, support technological ecosystems, and strengthen Europe's resilience. This roundtable, hosted by DESY, brings together leaders from science, policy, and industry to explore how research infrastructures can fuel Europe's technological sovereignty. The German roadmap, featuring synchrotrons, Free Electron Lasers, and innovation hubs like Science City Hamburg-Bahrenfeld, will serve as a forward-looking case study. The event will conclude with actionable recommendations to embed these assets in Europe's industrial and geopolitical strategy.

# Our speakers



## **Katrin Amian**

Katrin Amian has been head of the North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania Division in the Sponsorship and Network Department at

the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Bonn since 2008. In this capacity she is responsible for the management of the Foundation's sponsorship programs and activities for fellows and awardees from these regions. Amian joined the Humboldt Foundation in 2007 as program director for strategic planning in the Department for Strategic Planning and External Relations. She previously served as assistant professor in the Department of English, American, and Celtic Studies at the University of Bonn.



## **Étienne Bassot**

Étienne Bassot serves as an official in the administration of the European Parliament. He is currently a Director in the Directorate General for the Economy, Transformation and Industry (ECTI),

a position covering the work of three key parliamentary committees: Industry, Research and Energy; Environment, Climate Change and Food Safety; and Public Health. His earlier career includes roles as Director of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), Head of the Policy Department for External Relations, and Member of the Cabinet of President Nicole Fontaine. Throughout his professional journey, he has developed products and services to support MEPs with research and knowledge, contributing to evidence-based policy making in the European Union.



## **Maryam Blumenthal**

Maryam Blumenthal is the Senator for Science, Research and Equality of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. From 2021 to 2025, she served as chair

of the Hamburg Green Party. Between 2020 and 2025, she was a member of the Hamburg Parliament and spokesperson for education and sport. From 2014 to 2020, she was a member of the Wandsbek District Assembly, where she chaired the Green parliamentary group. A teacher by training, she held teaching positions at various schools until 2024.



## **Mandy Boehnke**

Mandy Boehnke is a social scientist and Vice President for International Affairs, Academic Qualification and Diversity at the University of Bremen.

In this position, she fosters the university's international strategic orientation, for example, within the network YERUN (Young European Research Universities) and the European University alliance YUFE (Young Universities for the Future of Europe). As a member of the DAAD Executive Committee she contributes to shaping the future of international exchange.



## **Lidia Borrell-Damián**

Lidia Borrell-Damián is Secretary General of Science Europe, which represents national public organisations that fund and perform research

across Europe. She leads the association's strategic development and implementation of action plans. Her expertise spans EU Framework Programmes, the European Research Area, international cooperation, research infrastructures, ethics and integrity, assessment processes, university-business collaboration, regional innovation, gender and diversity, Open Science, doctoral education, and

energy science policy. She holds a PhD in Chemistry from the University of Barcelona. Before joining Science Europe in 2019, she was Director for Research & Innovation at the European University Association and previously held senior research roles at Universitat Pompeu Fabra and the University of Barcelona. She has also been a Visiting Scholar in Canada and the USA.



#### **Lars Börjesson**

Lars Börjesson is a Professor of Physics at Chalmers University of Technology, focusing on materials science and research infrastructures. He has served as Vice President of Chalmers, Secretary General at the Swedish Research Council, Chair of ESS and MAX IV, and Co-Chair of ESFRI, SKA, and XFEL. He is CESAER Envoy for Research Infrastructures, a Knight of the Order of Dannebrog, and a fellow of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences.



#### **Philip Campbell**

Philip Campbell has spent most of his career as a professional editor in science publishing, after postdoctoral research in upper-atmospheric physics. He was Editor-in-Chief of Nature from 1995–2018, then Editor-in-Chief of the publisher Springer Nature, until retiring from science publishing in 2023. He now does advisory work. He is an Honorary Fellow of Clare Hall Cambridge University and was knighted for services to science in 2015. In 2019 he was given the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Association of British Science Writers, and in 2024 was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.



#### **Lena Cords**

Lena Cords is currently a postdoctoral researcher at Helmholtz Munich in the unit of Precision Regenerative Medicine. She has an academic background in molecular medicine, immunology and systems biology. Her studies took her from Tübingen to Stockholm and Oxford before going to Zurich. She earned her PhD with distinction at the University of Zurich and ETH Zurich in 2023. In 2024, she won the German Thesis Award in natural and technical sciences awarded by the Körber Stiftung.



#### **Thierry Coulhon**

Thierry Coulhon is President of Institut Polytechnique de Paris, a leading science and technology institution uniting six top French engineering schools, and a board member of UDICE, a French association of prestigious research universities. A mathematician by training, he previously led Université de Cergy and PSL and advised President Macron on education and research. He also headed the Mathematical Sciences Institute (ANU, Australia) and chaired Hcéres, the independent public authority evaluating all higher education and research structures.



#### **Patrick Cramer**

Patrick Cramer has been President of the Max Planck Society since 2023. From 2014 to 2023, he was Director of the Department of Molecular Biology at the Max Planck Institute for Multidisciplinary Sciences. His research on gene transcription in eukaryotic cells earned him the Shaw Prize (2023), Gregori Aminoff Prize (2022), and Louis Jeantet Prize for Medicine (2021). Cramer is a member of the German National Academy Leopoldina, the American

National Academy of Sciences, and The Royal Society.



#### **Helen Czerski**

Helen Czerski is a physicist, oceanographer, broadcaster and writer. Her academic research at University College London focusses on breaking waves, bubbles and near-surface ocean physics, for which she has spent months at sea on research ships around the world. She has also presented a wide range of science documentaries for the BBC, and currently co-hosts Rare Earth, BBC Radio 4's climate and environment show. Her books and columns focus on the physics of everyday life and the natural world.



#### **Robbert Dijkgraaf**

Robbert Dijkgraaf is a distinguished mathematical physicist and academic leader who recently served as the Minister of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands. He is currently a Distinguished University Professor at the University of Amsterdam and the President-Elect of the International Science Council, representing the global science community. Prior to this he led the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.



#### **Helmut Dosch**

Helmut Dosch is Senior Advisor at DESY and served as its Chairman (2009–2025), guiding scientific advances and global partnerships. Previously, he was Director at the Max Planck Institute for Metals Research and held roles at ILL Grenoble, Cornell, and universities in Mainz, Wuppertal, and Stuttgart. He is known for pioneering work on semi-infinite phase transitions and holds honorary doctorates from TU Dortmund and Ukraine's Academy of Sciences. He is a member of Leopoldina and Ukraine's Academy.



#### **Claudia Eckert**

Claudia Eckert is President of acatech — National Academy of Science and Engineering. In this role, together with Co-President Thomas Weber, she heads the academy, which advises policymakers and society on issues relating to technology-driven innovation. Claudia Eckert is also executive director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied and Integrated Security AISEC in Garching and professor at the Technical University of Munich, where she holds the Chair for IT Security.



#### **Anna Fabijańska**

Anna Fabijańska is a Full Professor of Engineering and Technical Sciences at Lodz University of Technology in Poland. She holds a PhD (2007) and DSc (2013) in computer science. Her work focuses on computer vision, image processing and analysis, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, particularly developing automatic image analysis pipelines. She is also a member of the Committee on Informatics of the Polish Academy of Sciences and a former member of the Polish Young Academy.

**Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln**

Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln is President of the WZB Berlin Social Science Center and Professor of Macroeconomics at Goethe University

Frankfurt. She received her PhD from Yale University and was assistant professor at Harvard University. Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln is Program Director of the “Macroeconomics and Growth” program area at the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) in London/Paris. In 2018, she was awarded the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize by the German Research Foundation.

**Nicole Grobert**

Nicole Grobert is Professor of Nanomaterials at the University of Oxford. A fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, she is also a former Chair and

Alumna of the European Commission’s Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, a member of the Board of Trustees Sense about Science, one of the founding members as well as former Chair of the Young Academy of Europe, and Chair of the Oxford Advanced Materials Network. Her research focuses on advanced materials for health, energy, and engineering applications in extreme environments.

**Eric Guilyardi**

Eric Guilyardi is a climate scientist at the Institut Pierre-Simon Laplace in Paris and professor at the University of Reading, UK. His research deals with

tropical climate variability, El Niño, ocean and climate, and climate change. Eric Guilyardi was a Lead Author for the 5th IPCC report, contributed to the 6th and was elected highly cited scientist in 2018. He is President of the Office for Climate Education, under the auspices of

UNESCO, which develops climate change education resources and professional development for teachers. He is also a member of the Scientific Council of the French Ministry of Education and serves on the CNRS Ethics Committee.

**Eva Hansen**

Eva Hansen is Head of Executive Secretariat, Communication and External Relations at Innovation Fund Denmark since 2025. She has more

than 15 years of experience in the public and financial sectors, translating political visions into public financing initiatives to support growth, innovation and sustainable transformation. She holds a master’s degree in Economics from the University of Copenhagen.

**Tim Gabel**

Tim Gabel is an editor for the science policy briefing *Research.Table* by *Table.Briefings*. For the last year he worked as a foreign correspondent for

*Table.Briefings* to cover the political developments in the USA and transatlantic relations. Tim Gabel is an experienced reporter in the areas of research policy, innovation strategies and science management. Before joining *Table.Briefings* in 2023, he worked as a science editor for various newspapers and advised the German authorities and ministries as a science communicator.

**Manuel Häußler**

Manuel Häußler is a polymer chemist dedicated to pioneering future-proof and sustainable plastics. Following his PhD in 2021, he translated his research

into practice by founding the spin-off *aevoloop*. His innovative work was recognized with the *Studienpreis* from the *Körber-Stiftung 2022*. Since 2024, he has

advanced his research as a Group Leader at the Center for the Transformation of Chemistry (CTC).

**Manuel Heitor**

Manuel Heitor is Full Professor at the Center for Innovation, Technology and Policy Research, IN+, at IS Técnico, University of Lisbon, and served over

12 years in Portugal’s government as Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education (2015–2022) and Secretary of State (2005–2011). A mechanical engineer by training, he is a leading voice in European R&I policy, with a focus on science careers, international partnerships and innovation systems. As Chair of the European Commission’s High-Level Expert Group for the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe, he served as lead author of the widely discussed report *Align, Act, Accelerate* (the “Heitor Report”), published in October 2024. He founded the IN+ research centre and co-founded *Globelics*. He has held visiting posts at Harvard and NYU.

**Sheila Jasanoff**

Sheila Jasanoff is Pforzheimer Professor of Science and Technology Studies (STS) at Harvard Kennedy School, where she founded and directs

the Program on Science, Technology and Society. Formerly she was founding chair of the STS department at Cornell. Her research centers on the production and use of expert knowledge in law and politics. Her books include *The Fifth Branch*, *Science at the Bar*, *Designs on Nature*, and *The Ethics of Invention*. She is the winner of the 2022 Holberg Prize.

**Monika Jones**

Monika Jones is a news anchor at Deutsche Welle and an international conference moderator with over 20 years of experience. She began her TV

career as a business anchor at DW before moving to the Science Desk to report on the COVID-19 pandemic. On stage, Monika has chaired high-level panel discussions at the G7, the G20, and the UN Climate Change Conferences. One of her absolute favourite jobs so far has been hosting the livestream events for ESA’s historic Rosetta mission, during which the Philae space probe landed on a comet.

**Sabine Kunst**

Sabine Kunst has been Chair of the Board of the Joachim Herz Foundation since 2022. She is an environmental engineer and has a wealth of experience

in scientific and academic management positions. She was President of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (2016–2021), served one term as Brandenburg State Minister of Science, Research and Culture (2011–2016) and was President of the University of Potsdam (2007–2010). In her role as Chair of the Board of the Joachim Herz Foundation, she is responsible for the organization’s strategic direction.

**Thorsten Lambertus**

Thorsten Lambertus is Managing Director of DEEP at ESMT Berlin and Site Lead of the Creative Destruction Lab Berlin.

He built deep tech expertise across corporate innovation (e.g., Biogen), tech transfer (Fraunhofer, MaxPlanck), and with his own ventures. He has served as a mentor at Plug and Play, Techstars, and NATO DIANA. Thorsten holds a PhD from WU Vienna and a diploma in Business Engineering from RWTH Aachen.

**Maria Leptin**

Maria Leptin is the President of the European Research Council. After earning her PhD at the University of Heidelberg she conducted postdoctoral

research in the UK and lead a research group in Germany before becoming a Professor at the Institute of Genetics at the University of Cologne and Director of EMBO. Leptin is an elected member of EMBO, the Academia Europaea and the German National Academy of Sciences (Leopoldina), Honorary Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences, Foreign Member of the Royal Society and international member of the US National Academy of Sciences.

**Bettina Martin**

Bettina Martin is President of the Conference of Science Ministers of the German Länder. Since 2021 she has been Minister for Science, Culture,

Federal and European Affairs of the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. From 2019 to 2021, she was Minister for Education, Science and Culture and from 2017 to 2019, she was Plenipotentiary for Federal Affairs and Authorised Representative of the State of M-V to the federal government. Before that, she was the Chief of Staff of the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth from 2013 to 2017. From 2000 to 2013, she held various positions at the Federal Headquarters of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD).

**Terry Martin**

Terry Martin is an international TV news anchor (Senior Anchor, Deutsche Welle) and director of the science communications agency SPIA

(Science-Policy Interface Agency). Terry wrote the European Commission's

guidebook “Communicating Research for Evidence-based Policymaking” and served as final conference rapporteur for the EC’s public consultation on the creation of the European Research Area. Through SPIA, Terry has been a partner in multiple EU-funded research projects. Currently he’s working in the Horizon projects GAPs and Link4Skills.

**David Matthews**

David Matthews is International Editor at Science|Business. He reports on global science and technology policy, with a focus on the geo-

politics of science, and new ways of doing Research and Development (R&D). He also writes for Nature. Previously, David was Europe Correspondent for Times Higher Education. He is based in Berlin.

**Matthias Mayer**

Matthias Mayer has been with the Körber-Stiftung since 1996, serving as project manager for the German Study Prize, among other roles. In

2008, he took over as head of the foundation’s science department. He was a founding member of the National MINT Forum and had a seat on the MINT Research Council of the City of Hamburg; he participates in the ‘Siggenger Kreis’ for science communication and is a member of the Steering Committee of the #FactoryWisskomm of the German Ministry for Education and Science. He has worked as an expert for the Ministry and in the degree programme accreditation of the Friedrich Schiller University Jena. He is member of various committees and juries for science communication.

**Volker Meyer-Guckel**

Since January 2022 Volker Meyer-Guckel is Secretary General of the Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft. He studied

English Philology, Chemistry and Philosophy at the Universities of Kiel, Belfast, and New York. At the beginning of the 90s he joined the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, where he became Head of the Press and Communication office in 1995. From 1997 until 1999 he served on Federal President Roman Herzog’s staff. In 1999 he joined the Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft as Senior Manager for programmes focussing on Higher Education Reform. In 2005 he was promoted to Head of the Programmes Department and Deputy Secretary General.

**Eva Nemela**

Eva Nemela is a member of the Executive Board of the Körber-Stiftung. Before her appointment in 2025, she headed the Department of Aging

and Demographics and managed the KörberHaus in Hamburg-Bergedorf. Earlier roles include positions at the Nordmetall Foundation and the Robert Bosch Foundation. A trained foundation manager, she studied history and ethnology in Freiburg and Yale. She serves on the boards of the German Children and Youth Foundation, the German Foundation for Musical Life, and the Herbert and Elsbeth Weichmann Foundation.

**Cameron Neylon**

Cameron Neylon is a biomedical scientist who has transitioned into the humanities via Open Research advocacy. His research work focuses on

how the institutions that support research can be made sustainable and fit for purpose in the 21st century and how

communications technology is a help (and sometimes a hindrance) for this. He was a contributor to the Principles for Open Scholarly Infrastructure, the Altmetrics Manifesto, a past president of FORCE11 and currently serves on the steering board of CoARA.

**Alison Noble**

Alison Noble is currently the Oxford University Technikos Professor of Biomedical Engineering, known internationally for her research at the inter-

disciplinary interface of artificial intelligence (computer vision) and healthcare imaging. She is a Vice President and Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society, and chaired working groups of its science policy reports on *Protecting privacy in practice* (2019), *From privacy to partnership* (2023) and most recently *Science in the age of AI* (2024).

**Christopher Palmberg**

Christopher Palmberg heads Strategic Insight at Business Finland, where he is responsible for foresight, business intelligence, impact assessment and strategy. He has previously worked in RDI funding and programs, innovation policy at the

OECD, as a consultant, and a researcher at the Research Institute of the Finnish Economy and Technical Research Centre of Finland. He has served on several evaluation panels in Europe and holds a PhD in Industrial Economics and Management from the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm.

**Krzysztof Pyrc**

Krzysztof Pyrc is President of the Foundation for Polish Science and full professor of virology at Jagiellonian University. His research focuses on

emerging viruses, early viral infection, and antiviral drug development. He is advisor to the European Commission and the Polish Ministry of Health; previously he advised local and national governments, including the President of Poland. Krzysztof Pyrc is a Member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences.

**Georges-Olivier Reymond**

Georges pioneered the technology that is now at the heart of Pasqal, being the very first to demonstrate the control of single atom with optical tweezers.

He co-founded Pasqal in March 2019, with the vision to leverage the technology developed at Institut d'Optique (France) for more than 10 years to build quantum processors based on neutral atoms ordered in large 2D arrays. He now serves as Chief Strategic Alliances Officer.

**Bettina Rockenbach**

Bettina Rockenbach has been a member of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina since 2013 and serves as its President since 2025.

She is Professor of Behavioural Economics at the University of Cologne and Director of the Reinhard Selten Institute in Cologne and Bonn. She was Vice President of the University of Erfurt from 2008 to 2011 and Vice Rector of the University of Cologne from 2015 to 2023. Her research focuses on mechanisms that promote cooperation in social dilemmas and foster responsible economic behaviour.

**Walter Rosenthal**

Walter Rosenthal has been president of the German Rectors' Conference since May 2023. Earlier, the physician (specialized in molecular pharmacology)

and academic leader served as director of the Leibniz Institute of Molecular Pharmacology in Berlin (1996–2008), as Chair of the Board and Scientific Director of the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in Berlin-Buch (2009–2014) and as President of the University of Jena (2014–2023). In 2022, he was awarded the title "University Manager of the Year".

**Oleg Ruchayskiy**

Oleg Ruchayskiy is a Professor of Physics and Research Group Leader at the University of Copenhagen. His work focuses on particle and

astroparticle physics, as well as the application of machine learning in physics. He is also the co-founder and CEO of Propy.ai — a company that uses AI and semantic technologies to analyze research publications. The platform serves institutions like the European Research Council, ensuring fair evaluation of grants and manuscripts.

**Carla Seidel**

Carla Seidel is Senior Vice President at BASF Group Research, where she leads the department of Chemical, Material and Regulatory Science. She

is the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Max-Planck-Institute for Polymer Research, serves on the Board of the German Chemical Society (GDCh) and is a member of the Strategic Advisory Board Energy of the Helmholtz Association. Carla has held a variety of leadership roles at BASF, spanning R&D, strategy, marketing & sales, and

New Business Development. She joined BASF in 1996 as a laboratory team leader in Process Research & Chemical Engineering, following the completion of her PhD in Analytical Chemistry at the University of Hanover.

**Daniela Schwarzer**

Daniela Schwarzer is a member of the Executive Board of the Bertelsmann Stiftung and a leading expert on European and international affairs. She is

honorary professor of political science at Freie Universität Berlin and senior fellow at Harvard University. She previously served form as Executive Director for Europe and Central Asia at the Open Society Foundations, as director and CEO of the German Council on Foreign Relations, and as head of the Europe research group at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

**Georg Schütte**

Georg Schütte, former Secretary General of the Volkswagen Foundation, has been CEO since March 2025. Prior to that, he served as State Secretary in the German Federal Ministry of

Education and Research for ten years. He holds a doctoral degree in media and communication research from the Technical University of Dortmund, Germany, as well as a master's degree of the City University of New York, USA. He conducted research at Harvard University and the University of Siegen.

**Robert-Jan Smits**

Robert-Jan Smits is the Chairman of Naturalis, the natural history museum and biodiversity research centre in the Netherlands. Prior to this, he served

as President of Eindhoven University of Technology (2019–2025), where he

transformed the university into a showcase of the Fourth Generation University concept. From 2010–2018 he was Director-General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission where he shaped Horizon 2020, the €80 billion EU research and innovation programme, and played a key role in the development of its successor, Horizon Europe (budget: €95 billion). In his final year in Brussels (2019), he served as the European Commission's Open Access Envoy. Smits has received several recognitions and awards for his contributions to European science and innovation.

**Katalin Solymosi**

Katalin Solymosi is a plant biologist working as a habilitated associate professor at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary. Her research is

focused on the effect of environmental stresses on plastid structure, function and differentiation especially in the context of climate change and sustainable agriculture. Katalin is also active in science policy: she was founding member and co-chair of the Hungarian Young Academy and is currently the Outgoing Chair of the Young Academy of Europe.

**Mathijs Vleugel**

Mathijs Vleugel holds a PhD in biophysics/cell biology and has been Head of the Open Science Office at the Helmholtz Association since Sep-

tember 2024. In this role, he supports the Helmholtz Association, its research centres, and the broader research community in driving cultural change towards Open Science. Mathijs currently also serves as the coordinator of the German National Chapter of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA).

**Mark Walport**

Sir Mark Walport is Foreign Secretary and Vice President of the Royal Society and was Government Chief Scientific Adviser in the UK (2013 to

2017). He chairs Imperial College Health Partners, Imperial College Academic Health Science Centre, and the Kennedy Memorial Trust. He is a non-executive board member of NHS England, and a trustee of the British Museum and the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation.

**Stephanie Wehner**

Stephanie Wehner is Antoni van Leeuwenhoek Professor in quantum information at Delft University of Technology and Director of the European

Quantum Internet Alliance. She pioneered QNodeOS, the first operating system for quantum networks, and leads efforts to build a quantum internet connecting European cities by 2030. A co-founder of QCRYPT, the largest global conference on quantum cryptography, she is also a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and recipient of the KNAW Ammodo Award. In 2025, she was awarded the Körber European Science Prize.

**Magali Weissgerber**

Magali Weissgerber works at the German Institute for Integrative Biodiversity Research as a postdoctoral researcher. Her main research topics are land-

use change and ecosystem restoration. Since 2018 she has been involved in local, national, and European NGOs advocating for better living and working conditions for early-career researchers. She currently serves as a general board member of Eurodoc, the European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers.

**Ricarda Winkelmann**

Ricarda Winkelmann is Founding Director at the Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology. A physicist and climate

scientist, she has made significant contributions to our understanding of the complex dynamics of the Earth system, including Greenland and Antarctic ice dynamics, ecosystem resilience and tipping dynamics. She is a member of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and the Earth Commission and has been involved in several scientific expeditions to the Andes and Antarctica.

**Andreas Zaby**

Andreas Zaby is an Innovation Manager at the German Federal Agency for Breakthrough Innovation (SPRIN-D). Prior to that he served two terms

as the President of the Berlin School of Economics and Law (HWR Berlin). He worked as a consultant at Bain & Company in Munich and Zurich. Subsequently, he was the co-founder and CFO of a biopharmaceutical company in Germany and the USA. After studying business administration in Bayreuth and San Diego, he earned his doctorate at University of Jena.

# Imprint

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..... Public transport

..... On foot

Jungfernstieg

U+S

Hamburg City Hall

Rathaus

U3

Chamber of  
Commerce

Rödingsmarkt

U3

 **Penthouse Elb-Panorama  
at the Atlantic House**  
U3 to Landungsbrücken,  
then walk 7 min.  
From Baumwall, walk 20 min.

Baumwall

U3

Körper-Stiftung



