



Leopoldina  
Nationale Akademie  
der Wissenschaften

# Leopoldina

A tour of the German National  
Academy of Sciences Leopoldina







**Dear Readers,**

since being appointed German National Academy of Sciences in 2008, the Leopoldina has become a well-established advisory body on society and policy consulting, as well as consolidating international cooperation. In this advisory capacity, the Academy organizes important debates on topics such as climate protection, energy transition, air pollution control, genome editing, digitization, biodiversity and reproductive medicine.

Our office location in the government district of Berlin provides convenient proximity to policy makers, the media, and international partners. The collaboration with academies from abroad is also very successful: in cooperation with the science academies of the G7 and G20 countries, the Leopoldina contributes to the preparation of the annual summit meetings. The academies then jointly submit statements to the heads of state and government.

This brochure will serve as your guide of the Leopoldina. It describes our work and provides contact information to the reference person on any particular subject. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

Halle (Saale), February 2021

*Gerald Haug*  
*XXVII President of the Leopoldina*



*Conference Room*



*Lecture Hall*



*Grand Staircase*



*Grand Hall*

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*A relief of the Leopoldina emblem adorns the front door of the Academy building in Halle (Saale).*

## Leopoldina – German National Academy of Sciences

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

The idea behind founding a national academy was to create a legitimized scientific institution, operated irrespective of political and economic objectives, which would scientifically review and study future societal issues. Its findings should be conveyed to policy makers, made accessible to the public, and nationally and internationally advocated by the Academy.

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

### **Contact:**

**Prof. (ETHZ) Dr. Gerald H. Haug**

President

Jägerberg 1

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-914

E-mail: [praesident@leopoldina.org](mailto:praesident@leopoldina.org)

Chancellor Angela Merkel at the Annual Assembly 2015.



## Advice for Policy Makers and Society

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Providing guidance on current scientific and science policy issues to policy makers and society is a central task of the German National Academy of Sciences. These may include topics such as climate change, air pollution, energy transition, coronavirus pandemic, antibiotics research, genome surgery or biodiversity conservation. The aim is to deliver valuable statements and recommendations to cope with urgent social challenges and identify future issues, where a timely solution without the necessary scientific basis is improbable. It is also a matter of detecting, analyzing and commenting on scientifically indicated developments that may become of significance to society in the future.

### Contact:

#### Elmar König

Head of the Department Science – Policy – Society  
Jägerberg 1

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-860

E-mail: [elmar.koenig@leopoldina.org](mailto:elmar.koenig@leopoldina.org)

The Leopoldina conducts its *policy consultation* activities jointly with the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities, including the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and acatech – National Academy of Science and Engineering. Their work is guided by a permanent committee, which is led by the Leopoldina. In order to develop recommendations and statements, working groups or ad hoc commissions may be formed separately or in cooperation with other academies, scientific institutions or international partners. As a result, statements, recommendations and reports on interdisciplinary or subject-specific topics, long-term developments, and current, day-to-day political issues are formulated. All findings are subject to a peer review by the Leopoldina, and are subsequently submitted to decision makers and interested parties in the political sphere and society to serve as the basis for discussions and further political measures.

# International Relations

In the age of globalization, topics such as energy, climate change or health require supranational political measures. By cooperating with the academies of other countries, the Leopoldina promotes *international exchange* 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 and G20 member states 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 topics of global relevance, the Leopoldina is an active member of international umbrella organizations 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.

- All European Academies (ALLEA)
- Federation of European Academies of Medicine (FEAM)
- European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC)
- InterAcademy Partnership (IAP)
- International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRN)



*Under the leadership of the Leopoldina the science academies of the G20 states jointly prepared science-based recommendations in Halle to contribute to the 2017 G20 Summit in Hamburg, Germany. The so-called "Science20" dialogue forum, established at that time, has been maintained ever since.*

The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies supports persecuted scientists worldwide and addresses human rights and bioethical issues in science.

The office of the European Academies Science Advisory Council, to which all national academies of the European Union member states belong, moved to the Leopoldina in 2010. Each academy hosts the EASAC office for a certain period of time. EASAC is addressing its statements to the institutions of the EU.

## Contact:

**Dr. Marina Koch-Krumrei**

Head of the International Relations Department  
Jägerberg 1

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-830

E-mail: [marina.koch-krumrei@leopoldina.org](mailto:marina.koch-krumrei@leopoldina.org)



▲ In her evening lecture at the 2018 Annual Assembly, Leopoldina member Antje Boetius spoke about the protection of the oceans and the cryosphere.



▲ At the Leopoldina Night 2018, visitors had the opportunity to experience a deep-sea lounge, a science slam, a scientific puppet show, and a commons debate.

## Public Events

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Policy advice always includes advising society as well. In order to participate in political discussions, the public should be provided the opportunity to access all information on current scientific topics. Issues of societal importance, such as demographic change, the fight against infectious diseases, or the security of energy supply, are therefore presented and discussed in diverse *events*. Within an array of lectures, exhibitions, and discussion events, participants are given the opportunity to exchange views on current issues with one another and with experts.

On the first Friday in July, the Leopoldina opens its main office in Halle (Saale) as part of the Long Night of Sciences. A multifaceted programme illustrates science for visitors of all ages. Regularly, guided tours offer interested visitors the opportunity to get to know the Leopoldina's main office and the archive.

To promote interdisciplinary discussions between scientists and to disseminate their scientific findings, the Leopoldina regularly organizes symposia, often in cooperation with universities, research institutes, and other academies. The Annual Assemblies of the Leopoldina provide members, scientists, and individuals interested in science with an additional opportunity for exchange. They each address a currently relevant topic, such as genome surgery or biodiversity.

### Contact:

**Katharina Schmidt**

Event Management

Jägerberg 1

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-928

E-mail: [katharina.schmidt@leopoldina.org](mailto:katharina.schmidt@leopoldina.org)



# Publications

The German National Academy of Sciences informs the public about its work through the interactive Leopoldina-Newsletter. Alongside reports on current events and new policy advice statements, interviews with experts are also featured. The Leopoldina-Newsletter is published in German and English and is accessible via subscription at [www.leopoldina.org/de/abo](http://www.leopoldina.org/de/abo). Comprehensively decorated with many images, the Leopoldina's Illustrated Book offers insights into the work, projects and history of this venerable academy.

The Leopoldina makes its scientific discussions accessible to the public. Its journal “Nova Acta Leopoldina” reflects the Academy's spectrum of events. It is the continuation of the world's first medical and scientific journal and dates back to the year 1670. The journal “Acta Historica Leopoldina” is dedicated to the history of science.

With the “NAL-live,” the Leopoldina added a new online publication format in 2020 where all articles are freely accessible and updated regularly.

Leopoldina publications are available in the digital library at: <https://levana.leopoldina.org>.



*The Leopoldina's Illustrated Book provides a comprehensive overview of the National Academy.*

## Contact:

### **Caroline Wichmann**

Head of the Press and  
Public Relations Department  
Jägerberg 1  
06108 Halle (Saale)  
Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-800  
E-mail: [presse@leopoldina.org](mailto:presse@leopoldina.org)

### **Dr. Renko Geffarth**

Editorial Manager Scientific Publishing  
Emil-Abderhalden-Str. 37  
06108 Halle (Saale)  
Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-146  
E-mail: [renko.geffarth@leopoldina.org](mailto:renko.geffarth@leopoldina.org)

# Distinctions and Fellowships

The Leopoldina honors outstanding scientific achievements by awarding *medals and prizes*. These awards are presented, for example, in recognition of lifetime achievement, significant scientific discoveries or research achievements, and contributions to the Leopoldina or science as a whole.

- Honorary Membership
- Cothenius Medal
- Carus Medal
- Mendel Medal
- Schleiden Medal
- Medal of Merit
- Emperor Leopold I Medal
- Leopoldina Early Career Award of the Commerzbank Stiftung
- Georg Uschmann Prize for the History of Science
- Leopoldina Prize for Junior Scientists

The Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker Prize is of particular importance. It is endowed with 50,000 Euros and is jointly granted every two years in cooperation with the Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft. It is awarded for outstanding scientific contributions and social commitment.



*In 2016, Bärbel Friedrich, former Vice President of the Leopoldina, was honored with the Medal of Merit for her outstanding contributions to the benefit of the Academy.*

Since 1997, the Leopoldina has been supporting outstanding young post-doctoral students from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland by providing post-doctoral scholarships in its *Fellowship Programme*. The programme enables them to carry out independent research at a renowned scientific institution abroad (or in Germany) for up to two years. Following their return from abroad, the Leopoldina supports its fellows with post-doctoral funding and a mentoring programme for up to five years to facilitate integration into the German academic landscape. The programme is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the State of Saxony-Anhalt.

## Contact:

### **Dr. Jörg Beineke**

Senior Scientific Coordinator

Jägerberg 1

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-954

E-mail: [joerg.beineke@leopoldina.org](mailto:joerg.beineke@leopoldina.org)

### **Dr. Andreas Clausing**

Coordinator of the Fellowship Programme

Emil-Abderhalden-Str. 37

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-150

E-mail: [stipendium@leopoldina.org](mailto:stipendium@leopoldina.org)

# Library and Archive

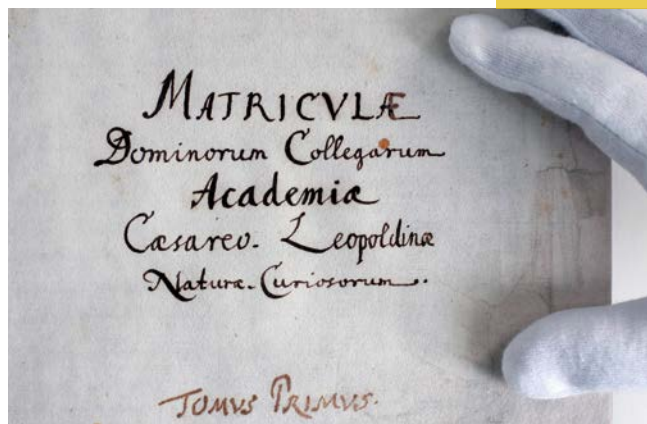
The Leopoldina *library* was founded in Nuremberg in 1731. With over 260,000 books, monographs and journals on natural sciences and medicine, it is a rich resource of traditional and modern knowledge. The focus of the collection is on publications about the history of science, particularly of natural sciences and medicine, as well as on publications by scientific societies and associations. The literature can be viewed or borrowed in the reading room of the Leopoldina in Emil-Abderhalden-Straße 36 in Halle (Saale). External users may request materials by interlibrary loan. The electronic catalogue is available at <https://opac.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/LNG=DU/DB=4/>.

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 personalities, 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.



▲ A view of the storeroom of the Leopoldina library, which was built in Halle (Saale) in 1903.

Document from the early days: the Leopoldina's first matriculation book from the year 1652. ▶



## Contact:

**Dr. Danny Weber**

Head of Archive and Library

Emil-Abderhalden-Str. 35

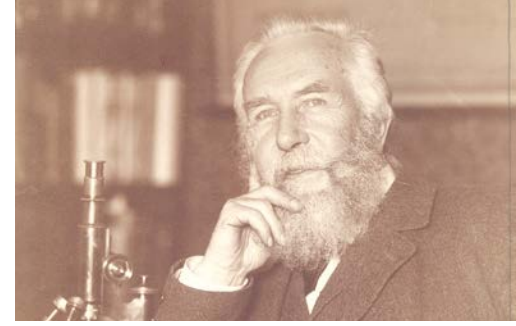
06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-124

E-mail: [danny.weber@leopoldina.org](mailto:danny.weber@leopoldina.org)



▲ In autumn 2013, the Centre for Science Studies staged an exhibition of globes that showed how our view of the Earth, the moon, and other planets has changed since the early modern age.



▲ Zoologist Ernst Haeckel was appointed to the Leopoldina in 1863.

## Centre for Science Studies

The *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".

### Contact:

**Prof. Dr. Rainer Godel**

Head of the Centre for Science Studies

Emil-Abderhalden-Str. 36

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0)345 472 39-115

E-mail: [rainer.godel@leopoldina.org](mailto:rainer.godel@leopoldina.org)

### 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 popularization 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](http://www.leopoldina.org/en/haeckel)



The charter with which Kaiser Leopold I awarded the academy special privileges in 1687 is made of bound parchment with red satin binding and an imperial seal.

## A National Academy with a Long Tradition

The Leopoldina, which was named *Academia Naturae Curiosorum* at the time, was founded by four physicians in 1652 in the Free Imperial City of Schweinfurt. They aimed to deepen knowledge of the natural sciences and improve communication among the natural scientists of that era.

In 1677, the independent Academy was officially recognized 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 Curiosorum*, from which its current abbreviated name, Leopoldina, was derived. Since 1878, the Academy has been based in Halle (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. 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.

# Organization

The Leopoldina is a supranational association of scientists. More than a quarter of its members come from outside Germany. Prospective members are first proposed by an Academy member and then election is carried out by the Presidium in a multi-stage selection process. Each member belongs to a specific section in accordance with his or her scientific discipline. Among its members, each section elects a representative to the Senate. Other members of the Senate are notable personalities from other scientific organizations and the public. Election of Presidium members, statement of accounts audit and decisions on the Academy's scientific strategy are the responsibilities of the Senate.

The Academy is a registered non-profit association. It is financed by public funds from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (80 %) and the state of Saxony-Anhalt (20 %), where its main office is located. The Executive Board is comprised of the President and four Vice Presidents. The Presidium is additionally complemented by other members and bears responsibility for all Leopoldina's activities. A full-time Secretary General heads the office and is supported by the administration.



*Leopoldina members and the city of Schweinfurt/  
Germany donated this president's chain of office  
to the Academy in 1955.*

## Contact:

### **Franziska Hornig**

Secretary General

Jägerberg 1

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-912

E-mail: [leopoldina@leopoldina.org](mailto:leopoldina@leopoldina.org)

### **Nora Küster-Dammaschke**

Head of Administration

Jägerberg 1

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-925

E-mail: [nora.kuester-dammaschke@leopoldina.org](mailto:nora.kuester-dammaschke@leopoldina.org)

# Presidium



*The Presidium of the Leopoldina in September 2020, back row (from left to right): Bärbel Friedrich, Volker ter Meulen, Sigmar Wittig, Thomas Lengauer, Jörg Hacker, middle row (from left to right): Ulla Bonas, Gerald Haug, Franziska Hornig, front row (from left to right): Thomas Krieg, Regina Riphahn. Other members not pictured here are Robert Schlögl, Claus Bartram, Ute Frevert, Hans-Peter Zenner, Wolfgang Baumjohann, Martin Quack.*

## Presidium

<b>President</b>	Gerald Haug, Halle (Saale)
<b>Vice Presidents</b>	Ulla Bonas, Halle (Saale) Thomas Krieg, Köln Regina Riphahn, Nürnberg Robert Schlögl, Mülheim an der Ruhr, Berlin
<b>Class Secretaries</b>	Claus Bartram, Heidelberg Ute Frevert, Berlin Sigmar Wittig, Karlsruhe Hans-Peter Zenner, Tübingen

<b>Members</b>	Wolfgang Baumjohann, Graz Thomas Lengauer, Saarbrücken Martin Quack, Zurich
<b>Secretary General *</b>	Franziska Hornig, Halle (Saale)
<b>Former Council Members *</b>	Bärbel Friedrich, Berlin Jörg Hacker, Berlin (XXVI President) Volker ter Meulen, Würzburg (XXV President)

\* With a consultative vote

# Members, Sections, and Classes

With currently around 1,600 *members* from more than 30 countries, the Leopoldina is the member strongest among German academies. All members are organized in specialized 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 recom-

mendations and also strengthen interdisciplinary exchange. The classes focus on natural sciences, life sciences, medicine, humanities, and social and behavioral sciences. They also serve as a platform for international exchange and the selection of new members.

The Annual Assemblies provide a forum for all members.

## The 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: Medicine

- 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



# Associated Institutions

## The Young Academy

**Dr. Marion Schulte zu Berge**

Head of Office

Jägerstraße 22/23

10117 Berlin

Phone: +49 (0) 30 203 70-650

E-mail: [office@diejungeakademie.de](mailto:office@diejungeakademie.de)

[www.diejungeakademie.de](http://www.diejungeakademie.de)

## Global Young Academy

**Dr. Beate Wagner**

Managing Director

Emil-Abderhalden-Straße 37

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-170

E-mail: [info@globalyoungacademy.net](mailto:info@globalyoungacademy.net)

[www.globalyoungacademy.net](http://www.globalyoungacademy.net)

## European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC)

**Dr. Christiane Diehl**

Executive Director

Jägerberg 1

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-831

E-mail: [christiane.diehl@leopoldina.org](mailto:christiane.diehl@leopoldina.org)

[www.easac.eu](http://www.easac.eu)

## Joint Committee on the Handling of Security-Relevant Research

**Dr. Johannes Fritsch**

Head of Office

Reinhardtstraße 14

10117 Berlin

E-mail: [johannes.fritsch@leopoldina.org](mailto:johannes.fritsch@leopoldina.org)

[www.leopoldina.org/ausschuss-dual-use](http://www.leopoldina.org/ausschuss-dual-use)

## Friends of the Leopoldina

On the initiative of the Leopoldina Presidium, Friends of the Leopoldina was founded in August 2007 with the objective of intellectually and materially promoting science and research at the Leopoldina. All interested parties are welcome to join the Friends of the Leopoldina.

### Contact:

**Dr.-Ing. Horst Dietz**

Chairman

Leopoldina Akademie Freundeskreis e. V.

Jägerberg 1

06108 Halle (Saale)

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-600

E-mail: [freundeskreis@leopoldina.org](mailto:freundeskreis@leopoldina.org)

[www.freundeskreis-leopoldina.de](http://www.freundeskreis-leopoldina.de)

# Leopoldina Locations



All Leopoldina locations in Halle (Saale) are within short walking distance of the tram stop Moritzburgring. It is served by line 7 from the main railway station Halle Hauptbahnhof.

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The Berlin offices are within short walking distance of the railway station Friedrichstraße.

You can find detailed directions at [www.leopoldina.org/en/service/contact](http://www.leopoldina.org/en/service/contact)

**Leopoldina Main Office**

Jägerberg 1  
06108 Halle (Saale)



**Archive**

Emil-Abderhalden-Str. 35  
06108 Halle (Saale)



**Library**

August-Bebel-Str. 50a  
06108 Halle (Saale)



**Reading Room**

Emil-Abderhalden-Str. 36  
06108 Halle (Saale)



**Berlin Offices**

Unter den Linden 42  
10117 Berlin

Reinhardtstr. 14  
10117 Berlin



## Contact Information

**Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher  
Leopoldina e. V. – Nationale Akademie der  
Wissenschaften**

Jägerberg 1  
06108 Halle (Saale)

Postfach 110543  
06019 Halle (Saale)  
Germany

Berlin Office:

**Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher  
Leopoldina e. V. – Nationale Akademie der  
Wissenschaften**

Reinhardtstraße 14  
10117 Berlin  
Germany

Academy Office:

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-600  
Fax: +49 (0) 345 472 39-919  
E-mail: [leopoldina@leopoldina.org](mailto:leopoldina@leopoldina.org)

Press and Public Relations:

Phone: +49 (0) 345 472 39-800  
Fax: +49 (0) 345 472 39-809  
E-mail: [presse@leopoldina.org](mailto:presse@leopoldina.org)

Berlin Office:

Phone: +49 (0) 30 203 89 97-415  
Fax: +49 (0) 30 203 89 97-409

[www.leopoldina.org](http://www.leopoldina.org)