



Leopoldina
Nationale Akademie
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Leopoldina news

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German National Academy of Sciences

Halle (Saale), 5 June 2020



Anästhesie / Intensivmedizin
Schmerztherapie



CHIRURGISCHE AMBULANZ

Anmeldung Chirurgische Ambulanz

Treppenhaus

Fourth ad-hoc-statement on the
coronavirus pandemic

For a resilient and
adaptive healthcare system

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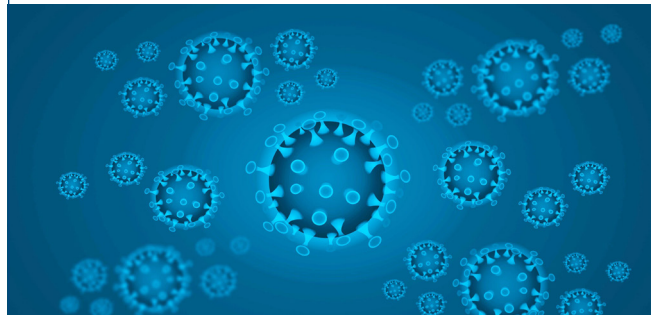
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The Leopoldina on Social Media



Editorial

Dear Members and Friends of the Leopoldina,

The coronavirus pandemic continues to shape the work of our academy. The Leopoldina's fourth ad-hoc-statement on the pandemic was published a few days ago and, like the previous papers, has attracted considerable attention (see page 4). We have gained a great deal of visibility as the National Academy of Sciences. This is first and foremost a positive outcome, as it will amplify the impact of our science-based policy advice.

However, visibility also has its downsides. It means we are increasingly likely to come under attack. Some criticism is based on the unrealistic expectation that scientists should be able to tell us exactly what to do in situations such as the coronavirus pandemic, or even set a timetable for overcoming the crisis. But this is not the role of science or of the National Academy. The Leopoldina uses its statements to set out potential courses of action. Deciding between these options is the job of democratically legitimised political institutions – that is, the federal government or the state governments.



Prof. (ETHZ) Dr. Gerald Haug, President of the Leopoldina

Image: David Ausserhofer

Time and time again, the Leopoldina must explain the aims and limitations of policy advice and how this process functions. As a member of the Academy, you can help with this. If you receive enquiries from the media, please feel free to contact our Academy office for support.

I would like to thank all of the scientists who have worked so tirelessly on the Leopoldina's policy advice over the last few months and encourage you all to keep going. Because even if certain media reports suggest that the public has had enough of expert advice, the majority of people feel differently. A special coronavirus edition of the science barometer created by Wissenschaft im Dialog (Science in Dialogue, WiD) has substantiated this (see page 7). Three quarters of survey respondents said that they generally have confidence in science. Seventy percent stated that they trust scientific statements on the issue of the coronavirus. This should be an incentive for us to keep supporting politicians and the general public on the basis of the latest scientific findings.

On that note, I hope you enjoy reading this new edition!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerald Haug'.

For a resilient and adaptive healthcare system

Leopoldina presents fourth ad-hoc-statement on the coronavirus pandemic

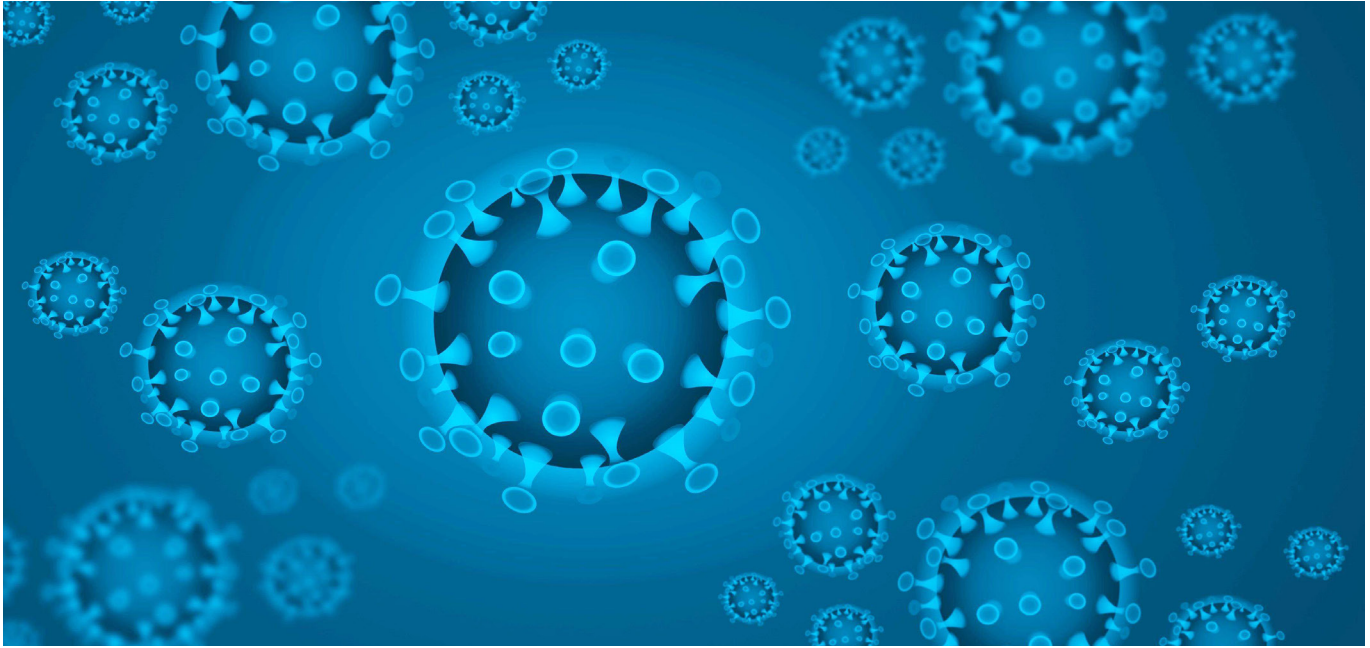


Image: iXimus_Pixabay

The new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 is changing life as we know it in Germany and around the world. For a number of weeks now, scientists convened by the Leopoldina have been working on ad-hoc-statements to support politicians in addressing the crisis. The latest publication, “Coronavirus Pandemic: Medical Care and Patient-Oriented Research in an Adaptive Healthcare System”, was published on 27 May.

The coronavirus pandemic has posed extraordinary challenges to the German healthcare system in recent weeks. Confronting a new viral disease has shown the importance of healthcare that focuses on patients’ wellbeing and has close ties with research, says the statement. Preventive measures to avoid infection with SARS-CoV-2 and the restructuring of medical care to prepare for potentially high numbers of severely ill COVID-19 patients mean that care for people with other conditions has taken

a back seat. According to the statement, even important preventive measures and research activities have been interrupted. Now, needs-based preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic measures for all patients need to be resumed promptly and, whenever possible, to their full extent.

To ensure this can be done even as the pandemic continues, the authors consider several short- and medium-term framework conditions necessary: There is a need to keep stationary, ambulatory, and post-stationary capacities as well as staff, room and equipment reserves available for treating COVID-19 patients. At the same time, it is essential to develop a regional and in-hospital early warning system for SARS-CoV-2 infections as well as to implement science-based targeted testing strategies. Last but not least, steps must be taken to increase public confidence in safe, patient-oriented medical treatment. In this connection, high-quality care and health services for all patients can also be ensured by promptly

integrating new research findings into clinical practice, says the statement.

The paper goes on to set out long-term measures for a resilient and adaptable healthcare system that should appreciate all employees and integrate innovations as well as digital solutions. In this system the ambulatory and stationary sectors as well as the public health service work together well. The authors recommend a needs-based system focusing on patient well-being and quality assurance, rather than a primarily profit-oriented approach. They emphasise that it is the state’s responsibility to provide healthcare in crises and ensure high-quality, science-based medical care for the population as a whole. ■ LQ

Ad-hoc-statement
 “Coronavirus Pandemic:
 Medical Care and Patient-
 Oriented Research in an
 Adaptive Healthcare System”

Sharing expertise with international partners to overcome the coronavirus crisis

German National Academy of Sciences publishes third ad-hoc-statement on the COVID-19 pandemic

After two ad-hoc-statements on health policy options for curbing the spread of the coronavirus disease, the third paper addresses psychological, social, legal, pedagogical and economic aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also describes strategies for a gradual return to normality. The Leopoldina's international network supplied crucial inspiration for the study.

The coronavirus pandemic is causing psychological, social, economic, civil societal and political problems. Rapidly curbing the spread of the pandemic must therefore be of highest priority, says the ad-hoc-statement "Coronavirus pandemic – Sustainable Ways to Overcome the Crisis". The paper, published by the Leopoldina in mid-April, also calls for the development of criteria and strategies to ensure a gradual return to normality.

While the pandemic will continue to affect our lives for some time to come, the acute restrictions on key fundamental rights must be minimised. The framework for overcoming the crisis consists of the following principles: protecting every individual person and enabling a dignified standard of living while gradually restoring the ability of the general public to participate in social, economic, political, and cultural life.

"New chains of infection must be detected rapidly."

Thomas Krieg ML,
Vice President of the Leopoldina

All measures taken must be based on the concepts of sustainability and resilience. "Of course, there are a lot of requirements to be met before we can begin to gradually loosen the restrictions",

says the Vice President of the Leopoldina Thomas Krieg ML. "For example, the number of new infections must remain low and new chains of infection must be detected rapidly. And it goes without say-

"Science provides a number of highly precise yet different logical approaches – from the perspective of virologists, sociologists, pedagogical experts, and so on. The thorny issue of weighing these logics against one another is for politicians to solve."

Christoph Markschies,
co-author of the Leopoldina statement

ing that certain behavioural rules such as the wearing of face masks have to be observed."

The Leopoldina's third paper on the COVID-19 pandemic also addresses the process of weighing different legally protected rights against one another. The statement sets out potential courses of action for politicians to take, says Christoph Markschies, the newly elected President of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, who along with Thomas Krieg was one of the paper's authors. "Science provides a number of highly precise yet different logical approaches – from the perspective of virologists, sociologists, pedagogical experts, and so on. The thorny issue of weighing these logics against one another is for politicians to solve."

The statement also sets out measures for the economic and financial sector and the education system. "Reopening pre-

schools and schools will be a balancing act between the desire to allow people to go back to work, children's rights, and the risk of another rapid increase in the number of infections", says Claudia Wiesemann, Professor of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine at the University of Göttingen and another of the paper's authors.

In the process of writing the statements on the coronavirus, early dialogue with states which were particularly hard-hit by the pandemic was enormously helpful – for both the Leopoldina and its partners abroad. "By sharing expertise and ideas with one another, the academies have gained a deeper understanding of the challenges created by the coronavirus pandemic in different countries", says Naama Barkai of the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot/Israel. The biologist liaised with the authors of the Leopoldina statements on behalf of the

"By sharing expertise and ideas with one another, the academies have gained a deeper understanding of the challenges created by the coronavirus pandemic."

Naama Barkei, Weizmann Institute of
Science, Rehovot/Israel

Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities. The Leopoldina also had contact with experts in Italy, China and South Korea. ■ LQ

Ad-hoc-statement
"Coronavirus pandemic –
Sustainable Ways to
Overcome the Crisis"

Science20 launches with four working groups

National Academies emphasise the role of science-based policy advice



The Science20 process is currently taking place via virtual meetings in order to prepare focal points for science-based policy advice at the G20 summit. Screenshot: Christian Weidlich | Leopoldina.

This year's G20 process for science-based policy advice was launched on 23 April. While all meetings will be virtual until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Saudi Arabia's G20 Sherpa underlined how important the National Academy of Sciences' expertise will be for the G20 states' consultations in November in Riyadh.

This year's Science20 process is being overseen by Saudi Arabia's national scientific organisations as part of the country's G20 Presidency. The joint positions of the science academies will be developed in four working groups.

Three of these groups will address the future of global health care and pandemic prevention, the circular economy and energy efficiency, and the challenges of digitalisation, respectively. A fourth overarching working group will explore the question of how scientific expertise can support effective policy-making to help the global community tackle both current and future crises and upheavals.

The academies' statements are set to be presented and handed over to the Saudi Arabian G20 Presidency at the Science20 summit in Jeddah/Saudi Arabia in late September 2020. The G20 summit of the heads of state and government is planned for 21 and 22 November in Riyadh. In March of this year, the science academies of the G20 states published an ad-hoc-statement on the COVID-19 pandemic and issued a clear appeal for international co-operation.

Providing advice for the annual summits of the G7 and G20 countries is a strategic responsibility that forms a core part of the Leopoldina's international policy advice work. Experts from the Leopoldina play a major role in drafting the statements submitted.

The Science20 process was established in the run-up to the G20 summit in Hamburg in 2017 and was first organised under the oversight of the Leopoldina. Nineteen nations belong to the G20 along with the European Union.

■ CHW

G-Science Academies present statements

Summit of the G7 countries is expected to take place in autumn

At the end of May, the science Academies of the G7 countries and six other countries – the so-called G-Science Academies – presented three statements for the G7 summit of heads of state and government, which is expected to take place in autumn. In addition, an ad-hoc-statement on international cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic had been published in March.

In the statement "Digital health", the academies emphasise the advantages of digital technologies in medicine. These technologies enable more precise diagnoses and treatment recommendations as well as greater access to medical expertise in rural areas. The availability, reliability, and comparability of digital health data is described as crucial for better patient care and more rapid progress in research. To strengthen international co-operation, the academies are calling for global standards for data exchange and greater efforts to safeguard individuals' privacy. The two other statements are devoted to the risks of a global recession of insect populations and the resulting decline in biodiversity, and the importance of fundamental research in guaranteeing scientific progress.

The recommendations were drawn up under the oversight of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and agreed upon in consultations with the academies of the G7 states. The G7 countries are Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Canada, and the USA. The European Union is also represented. The G-Science Academies are the forum for the science academies of the G7 countries and additional academies in other countries. ■ CHW



[G7 statements 2020](#)

Greater trust means greater responsibility: coronavirus edition of the science barometer

Representative survey reveals a positive image of science in the middle of the coronavirus crisis

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the public relies on scientists for credible advice on managing the crisis. This is one of the conclusions of the most recent science barometer. However, the question of whether researchers should take part in political debate polarised respondents.

The non-profit initiative Wissenschaft im Dialog (Science in Dialogue, WiD), a partner of the Leopoldina, has carried out a representative opinion poll every year since 2014. It investigates the German public's attitudes towards science and publishes the results in the form of a "science barometer". In late April, WiD published a special edition of its science barometer focusing on the coronavirus pandemic.

Among the key findings, 73 percent of respondents trust science and research, 89 percent believe science to be

„With public opinion so deeply polarised, greater trust in science means greater responsibility for researchers.“

important in the fight against the coronavirus, and 81 percent believe that political measures to curb the pandemic should be based on scientific evidence. The President of the Leopoldina, Gerald Haug ML, commented on this high level of respect for science in his blog article for wissenschaftskommunikation.de: "I would be delighted by the findings of the special coronavirus edition of the science barometer, if not for the fact that the representative survey was occasioned by a global pandemic that has plunged our

society into what is, for the vast majority of people, a distressing situation."

Like previous surveys, the latest science barometer also shows that it would be wrong for scientists to base their dialogue with the general public on the idea that there is a general crisis of faith in science. Now more than ever, scientists can gain a realistic picture of the significant and sometimes contradictory expectations placed on them – as they seem to be meeting these expectations better than ever during the coronavirus crisis.

For example, 51 percent of respondents agreed that most researchers differentiate clearly between what they are and are not sure about, despite the complexity of making such a distinction.



WISSENSCHAFTS
BARO METER
CORONA
SPEZIAL

www.wissenschaftsbarometer.de

The special edition of the science barometer focusing on the coronavirus shows that trust in science and research has increased in Germany against the backdrop of the pandemic.

Graphics: Wissenschaft im Dialog | Kantar, CC BY-ND 4.0

One of the science barometer's findings is particularly noteworthy: 39 percent of respondents believe that scientists should play a role in politics, but 32 percent believe that they should not. With public opinion so deeply polarised, greater trust in science means greater responsibility for researchers. When they provide policy advice, they should not rely solely on their scientific expertise, but should also communicate as clearly as possible that their recommendations are not tied to the agenda of any political party or lobby group. ■ ART



Special coronavirus edition
of the science barometer

“We want to develop new treatment strategies for heart failure”

Leopoldina member Gerd Hasenfuß discusses his research on aortic valve stenosis



The cardiologist Gerd Hasenfuß researches heart failure in Göttingen. As chair of the Heart Center at the University Medical Center Göttingen, he also oversees studies on adjuvant therapy for aortic valve stenosis.

Image: Ronald Schmidt | Heart Center at the University Medical Center Göttingen

Gerd Hasenfuß ML, one of the scientists elected to the Leopoldina in 2019, was scheduled to give a public evening lecture on 8 July in Halle. His lecture – along with the Class III symposium – has been postponed. The chair of the Heart Center at the University Medical Center Göttingen spoke to Leopoldina news about conducting research in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

How much has the coronavirus pandemic disrupted work at the Heart Center in Göttingen?

Gerd Hasenfuß: The pandemic has had a huge impact on research, teaching and medical care. Although we have scaled back our research activities considerably, one of our research groups is working on

a treatment for COVID-19 and we have increased our efforts in this area accordingly. In terms of teaching, we have been able to shift from in-person to digital instruction thanks to a tremendous effort. At the hospital, we initially suspended all non-urgent medical care in order to create additional intensive care capacity for the expected wave of coronavirus patients – fortunately this wave never came.

Which types of surgeries did you postpone?

Hasenfuß: In cardiac surgery, for example, we postponed heart bypass and vascular operations that were not considered particularly urgent. We carry out a lot of aortic valve implantations at our Clinic for Cardiology and Pneumology. Due to the coronavirus, we resche-

duled most of these surgeries – initially 90 percent and later 80 percent – for a later date. But before rescheduling, we had to critically examine each case to ensure that the delay would not endanger the patient. By postponing surgeries we were able to keep many beds open for coronavirus patients. At the same time, we continued to provide emergency care for patients with heart attacks or pulmonary embolisms. Interestingly, we saw a decline in the number of these emergencies. We are currently analysing why this was the case.

Can you say when it will be possible to resume normal operations at the Heart Center?

Hasenfuß: We have been able to step up our work a little since early May. Ho-

wever, an order by the state government of Lower Saxony requires us to keep 25 percent of intensive care beds and 20 percent of standard beds empty until 30 September. That's a long time to bridge, especially since we're already experiencing strong demand again.

As a cardiologist and spokesperson for the collaborative research centre on heart failure in Göttingen, you study adjuvant therapies for aortic valve stenosis. What exactly does this mean?

Hasenfuß: We want to develop new treatment strategies for heart failure. Heart failure most often arises after a heart attack or because the heart is under particular stress due to factors such as high blood pressure or aortic stenosis, i.e. a heart valve defect.

And as a result, too little oxygen-rich blood is pumped through the circulatory system ...

Hasenfuß: That's right. Aortic stenosis is very common, affecting one in ten people over 80 years of age. One treatment option involves using a catheter to implant a heart valve. This is known as a transcatheter aortic valve implantation or TAVI. It's a minimally invasive procedure that does not require general anesthesia, and we perform it around 350 times a year in Göttingen.

What does the follow-up treatment look like?

Hasenfuß: We have performed detailed examinations on patients treated with TAVI at our hospital. The data we have collected suggest that the connective tissue content of the heart muscle, in other words the degree of fibrosis, is a key parameter in determining whether the patient will recover well from surgery or suffer complications, or perhaps even die within a year of valve implantation.

Can you explain what that means?

Hasenfuß: If the patient has minimal fibrosis, the prognosis is very good, but with a high degree of fibrosis, mortality rates are significantly higher. In light of

this, proper treatment requires not just the standard heart valve therapy, but also antifibrotic therapy. Our molecular biological and epigenetic research has shown that the drug hydralazine, which has long been used to treat high blood pressure, has the required antifibrotic effects. In other words, this already approved drug has been proven to inhibit fibrosis in our experiments.

Will it be possible to use hydralazine to treat fibrosis in the near future?

Hasenfuß: We have a two-year clinical study planned and have applied for funding from the German Centre for Cardiovascular Research (DZHK). The study will likely start in January 2021. Since the drug has already been approved for treating high blood pressure, it should become available for this new indication more quickly after the study is complete.

You were named a member of the Leopoldina last year. What makes this such an honour for you?

Hasenfuß: The Leopoldina performs an important service by providing policy advice. Particularly now, during the coronavirus pandemic, it shows how science works and what science means for health. The Leopoldina's considerable efforts have the potential to take respect and esteem for science to new heights.

■ THE INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED
BY BENJAMIN HAERDLE

MEDICINE SYMPOSIUM

[Postponed]

The Class III symposium was scheduled for 9 July. Due to the measures introduced to curb the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the event has now been postponed, along with the evening lecture "From the research laboratory to the patient – treating aortic valve stenosis" by Gerd Hasenfuß ML on 8 July. Information on an alternative date will be published on our website.

▶ Information

Alliance welcomes funding extension

Mitigating the effects of the coronavirus pandemic for young researchers

The coronavirus pandemic has also had negative consequences for research and teaching, with researchers in the qualification phase particularly affected. The protective measures currently in effect have placed sometimes significant limitations on their scientific work. In May, the upper and lower houses of the German parliament responded by resolving to amend the German law on fixed-term contracts in academia (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz).



Foto: Adobe Stock Visual Generation

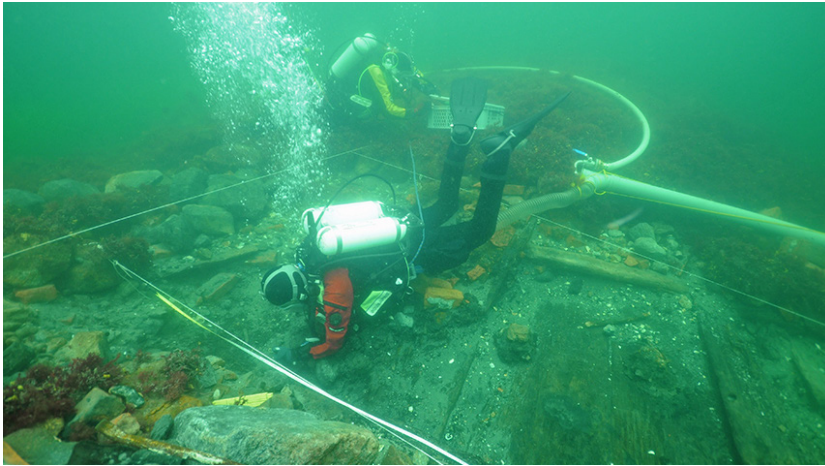
This change allows employment contracts to be extended for six months beyond the previous maximum term and applies to any contracts in place between 1 March and 30 September 2020. A decree by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research provides for another six-month extension should this become necessary in the course of the pandemic.

The Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany, of which the Leopoldina is a member, actively welcomed the amendment and called upon scientific institutions to seize these new opportunities for the benefit of young scientists. ■ ART

▶ Alliance of Science
Organisations

Researching cultural heritage in the North Sea and Baltic Sea

Invited article on Leopoldina's recently released discussion paper on underwater archaeology



The depths of the North Sea and Baltic Sea are home to innumerable archaeological sites that currently enjoy little protection. Among these are shipwrecks such as the Swedish warship Prinsessan Hedvig Sophia, which sunk in 1715 near Kiel/Germany.

Image: Gerhard Lorenz, Wendtorf and F. Wilkes | Lower Saxony Institute for Historical Coastal Research

The Leopoldina has released the discussion paper “Traces under Water – Exploring and Protecting the Cultural Heritage in the North Sea and Baltic Sea” to raise awareness of the valuable relics found in the depths of these waters. The paper’s authors outline the importance of this underwater heritage and recommend measures to ensure it is effectively protected.

BY HAUKE JÖNS AND
MIKE BELASUS*

Excavations ahead of major road and housing construction projects routinely reveal spectacular archaeological discoveries. But the media rarely report on similar finds in the North Sea and Baltic Sea, although these waters are increasingly being used for activities such as gravel harvesting, the laying of supply lines and the expansion of energy and transportation infrastructure. The problem is that these activities often occur more than 12 nautical miles from the shoreline in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), where the heritage preservation laws of adjacent countries do not apply.

The cultural heritage found there thus enjoys far less protection than that found on land, and archaeological excavations are rarely carried out as part of construction work in the EEZ as a result. The underwater environment is low in oxygen and allows exceptional preservation of organic materials such as wood or bone. On land these materials typically decompose quickly, meaning that we cannot use them to reconstruct the living conditions of our ancestors. When the last ice age reached its peak approximately 20,000 years ago, sea level was around 120 metres lower than it is today. What is now the North Sea was then part of the mainland connecting the British Isles and southern Scandinavia. This vast expanse of land was home to large mammals such as reindeer and aurochs, which were soon followed by humans who specialised in hunting them, science-based medical care for the population as a whole.

As temperatures increased and the ice melted, the sea level rose and the landscape – including the hunters’ camps – sank further and further beneath the surface to be sealed under layers of sediment. Today

the remains of these settlements serve as repositories of basic information about climate-related changes in sea level and coastlines as well as prehistoric settlement history. Later on, humans learned to use the seas for food and transportation and as a battlefield. Many of the vessels that were developed for these purposes over long periods of time remain preserved on the seafloor today – archaeological sites that serve as time capsules from bygone eras. In modern times, these relics have come to include airborne objects such as airships, aeroplanes and rockets, which bear witness to the sea as a theatre of war. The seafloor therefore holds tremendous, largely untapped potential for maritime and military history.

In order to realise this potential and ensure that the cultural heritage found at the bottom of the North Sea and Baltic Sea can be thoroughly explored, archaeological sites and discoveries in the EEZ should be afforded similar protection to those on land. One major step forward would be for Germany to ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage and rigorously apply the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage underwater as well as on land. This would lay the foundation for ensuring that archaeological considerations are taken into account in the planning stage of construction projects. In addition, the information obtained would increase the amount of data available for research and analysis.

* Hauke Jöns (Lower Saxony Institute for Historical Coastal Research, Wilhelmshaven/Germany) and Mike Belasus (University of Copenhagen/Denmark) are two of the authors of the discussion paper.

► Discussion paper
“Traces under Water”

“The victims should also be identified”

Anneliese Maier Research Award funding renewed for Leopoldina member Paul Weindling

The British medical historian Paul Weindling ML received the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation’s Anneliese Maier Research Award for historical research in 2015. Now, his award funding has been renewed. In this interview with Leopoldina news, he talks about the research made possible by the award.

Can you describe the focus of your research?

Paul Weindling: The Anneliese Maier prize has supported research on two groups of victims: first, the victims of coerced research under National Socialism. We take the notion of experiments very broadly, for example we include persons who were measured, like the Mengele twins. They were not necessarily part of an experiment as such, but they were part of coerced research. The second group concerns the forced migration of medical personnel.

How big is the database?

Weindling: It covers 30,679 victim biographies. There are still about 1,500 research victims of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft’s brain research experiments to be added.

You are looking especially at victims of psychiatric brain research whose brains ended up in German scientific collections. Did German researchers want to prove that Jewish brains are inferior?

Weindling: No, for example the brain researcher Julius Hallervorden didn’t separate the Jewish brains from the ones he obtained from the German military. He was interested in lesions in the brain caused by typhus. They were just research material for him.

Haven’t there been a lot of investigations of the Nazi history of German research organisations?

Weindling: Yes, but there are still open issues regarding the victims. To give you



Paul Weindling has been a guest of the Leopoldina in Halle on several occasions, including here at the Centre for Science Studies in 2016.
Image: Markus Scholz | Leopoldina

an example: I was advising on the writing of the history of the Robert Koch Institute, and I said: we need not just a perpetrator study, the victims of the research should also be identified. We should do a full provenance analysis of all the specimens as far as possible, looking at every individual.

Do you still find those specimens?

Weindling: Yes, they surface on a regular basis. There was a time when people thought they could draw a line and put all the specimens into a hole in the ground, and then move forward. That didn’t work. We had a phase of denial, then a phase of disposal. And we’re now in a third phase, which is provenance research and ethical reflection. And I think that’s a better phase to be in.

What did you do with the prize money from the Anneliese Maier Prize?

Weindling: One focus was the attempt to promote research in areas which looked rather neglected, like the case of the psychiatric victims. Another major project has been the editing of a text on epi-

demic control by the SS hygiene expert Joachim Mrugowsky. Finally, I invited Heinz Waessle ML from the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research to a small symposium on brain research on euthanasia victims.

What was the contribution of the Leopoldina?

Weindling: We have transferred the experiment victim database into an online database. Making it accessible and sustaining it in the long term, that’s where the Leopoldina has made a remarkable offer and I’m very grateful for that. In addition, the spring meeting of the Leopoldina’s Centre for Science Studies in 2021 will focus on the role of the life sciences and medicine in Nazi Germany. This symposium will also be the concluding event of the Anneliese Maier Prize.

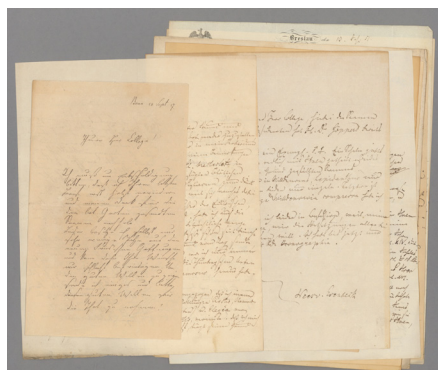
■ THE INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED BY CHRISTOPH DROESSER



Project: “Medicine and biosciences in National Socialism”

Letters from Nees von Esenbeck acquired

The Leopoldina's youngest president made an impact from Wrocław



The Leopoldina has acquired seven letters written by its former president Nees von Esenbeck.

Images: Autographenhandlung J. A. Stargardt GmbH & Co. KG

The Leopoldina archive has purchased seven letters penned by its 11th president Christian Gottfried Daniel Nees von Esenbeck from a renowned auction house. The letters were written between 1826 and 1851. With one exception, they are from his time in Wrocław (1830 to 1858).

It's too early to offer a definitive assessment of the letters of Nees von Esenbeck, the Leopoldina's longest serving president as well as the youngest to ever take office. But while they have yet to be properly stored and made available in digital form, one thing is already clear. They are a rare treasure. Most of the letters currently held in the Leopoldina archive were originally addressed to the Academy. There are few letters sent by its Presidents, especially from earlier periods, and those which are available are typically only copies. The letters also shine a light on the inner workings of the Leopoldina up into the middle of the 19th century and document the impact of its former president.

Nees von Esenbeck joined the Leopoldina as an independent scholar in 1816 and was made President just two years later. He worked to elect a large number of distinguished and young scientists and also resumed the Academy's publishing programme. His endeavours contributed to the progressive development of the Leopoldina. ■ DYW

IAP

Volker ter Meulen re-elected president

At its annual general meeting, the Executive Committee of the Inter-Academy Partnership (IAP) extended the term of Volker ter Meulen ML as Üresident for another year. The former President of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina has served as co-chair of the IAP since 2013.

The meeting of 140 academies focused on responses to the coronavirus pandemic and to "fake science". A new IAP project will take a close look at journals, conferences and publishers that exploit the reputation of science for exclusively commercial purposes without engaging experts or using peer review. ■ JMO, CSD

▶ [Combatting Predatory Academic Journals](#)

IAP

A call for solidarity and collaboration

In late March 2020, the IAP network of academies published a communiqué addressing the global dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic and calling on politicians to come together and collaborate across national borders.

The authors highlight the need to more quickly and effectively translate research findings into measures to combat the pandemic, while also keeping the global picture in mind. This is the only way to mitigate negative socio-economic consequences and sustainably promote public welfare worldwide, they say. They also urge solidarity with countries with weak healthcare systems, especially in Africa. ■ JMO, CSD

▶ [IAP Communiqué on COVID-19](#)

EASAC

"Green" recovery following the pandemic

At the end of May, the European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC) published a commentary on a sustainable "green" recovery in Europe in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The commentary draws on EASAC's earlier substantial work on energy, the life sciences and the environment.

In particular, the European academies call for a rapid reduction in the production and use of high-carbon energy, greater recognition of the value of ecosystem services, and the consideration of health impacts in all areas of policy – to protect the health of humans and the environment. ■ CSD

▶ [European Union's green recovery after COVID-19](#)

GYA

Young Academies promote knowledge

Young Academies are also helping to collect and exchange important information and new knowledge about the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In late March, the Global Young Academies (GYA) has published a statement on the current situation from the perspective of young scientists, including recommendations for governments and global stakeholders.

Since the early days of the pandemic, the GYA has also maintained a website providing an up-to-date overview of all of the different National Young Academies' work on COVID-19 around the globe. In May 2019, the GYA counted 258 alumni in addition to its 200 members. ■ AMG

▶ [A Message from young scientists on COVID-19](#)

People

Awards and Honours

■ **Eduard Arzt** ML, member of the Physics Section, was elected an international member of the US National Academy of Engineering.

■ **Ben L. Feringa** ML, member of the Chemistry Section, was elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Society, the United Kingdom's academy of sciences.

■ **Daniel Frost** ML, member of the Earth Sciences Section, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, the United Kingdom's academy of sciences.

■ **Regine Kahmann** ML, member of the Genetics/Molecular Biology and Cell Biology Section, was elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Society, the United Kingdom's academy of sciences.

■ **Peter Hegemann** ML, member of the Biochemistry and Biophysics Section, was awarded Shaw Prize in Life Science and Medicine 2020 by the Shaw Prize Foundation Hongkong.

■ **Ottoline Leyser** ML, member of the Organismic and Evolutionary Biology Section, was named Chief Executive of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the United Kingdom's national organisation for research promotion.

■ **Gero Miesenböck** ML, member member of the Neurosciences Section was awarded Shaw Prize in Life Science and Medicine 2020 by the Shaw Prize Foundation Hongkong.

■ **Wendelin Werner** ML, member of the Mathematics Section, was elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Society, the United Kingdom's academy of sciences.

■ **Ada Yonath** ML, member of the Biochemistry and Biophysics Section, was elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Society, the United Kingdom's academy of sciences.

Deceased members

■ **Karl Heinz Büchel** ML | 10 December 1931 to 11 January 2020 | Leverkusen/Germany | Chemistry Section

■ **Gerhard H. Giebisch** ML | 17 January 1927 to 6 April 2020 | Branford/USA | Physiology and Pharmacology/Toxicology Section

■ **Rolf Huisgen** ML | 13 June 1920 to 26 March 2020 | Munich/Germany | Chemistry Section

■ **Karl Zilles** ML | 1 April 1944 to 26 April 2020 | Jülich/Germany | Neurosciences Section

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Abbreviations:

ML = Member of the Leopoldina