

The Leopoldina in Halle is Germany's national academy of sciences.

The German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina is the first national academy of sciences in Germany. This was confirmed by Germany's state and federal science and research ministries on February 18, 2008. The German science minister, Annette Schavan, said that unlike other European countries or the USA, Germany has not had an institution to produce evidence-based statements as a basis for discussions and political decisions and continued that she was pleased that Germany finally had a national academy of sciences as well. In its new role, the Leopoldina will advise the government, the parliament, and the public about socially relevant scientific issues. Thanks to the Leopoldina the cooperation between politicians and scientists can be intensified, in matters such as global warming, genetics and demographic change. The Leopoldina will cooperate with other academies, especially with the German Academy of Science and Engineering acatech on issues involving technology and engineering and with the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities on questions involving the humanities and social sciences. There has been a close and successful cooperation with both academies for several years.

The Leopoldina is a member of several international boards, e. g. EASAC, FEAM, and the national academies of the G8-countries, and participates in international networks regularly issuing recommendations and statements for political institutions and the general public.

The Leopoldina represents the German academies in the European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC), an association of national academies from EU member states. EASAC is a body in which evidence-based statements on topics from politics and science policy are drafted and adopted. From the EU Commission EASAC receives recommendations on scientific topics communicated by EU member states with the request to review them before they are put on the agenda of the working groups of the EU Commission. Increasingly, EASAC addresses topics and submits recommendations independently. A series of recommendations on infectious diseases were issued with Leopoldina President Volker ter Meulen in overall charge: "Infectious diseases – importance of co-ordinated activity in Europe" (2005), "Vaccines: innovation and human health" (2006), "Tackling antibacterial resistance in Europe" (2007), "Impact of migration on infectious diseases in Europe" (2007), "Combating the threat of zoonotic infections" (2008). In June 2007 the Leopoldina president was elected chairman of EASAC.

For several years, the Leopoldina has been a member of the Federation of the European Academies of Medicine (FEAM), an association of medical academies from 14 European countries. Statements on medical topics of social relevance are published. The following statements were authored with the participation of the Leopoldina: „Childhood obesity“; „Food safety“; „Vaccines“; „Organ transplants“; „Alternative medicines“; „The evaluation of medical teaching in Europe“; „The European Directive on Clinical Trials“.

On the initiative of the Leopoldina two statements were prepared before the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm in June 2007 together with the academies of the G8+5 countries (Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom and the U.S.A. plus Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa) and the Network of African Science Academies. The topics of the statements were "Sustainability, energy efficiency and climate protection" and "The promotion and protection of innovation". In May 2007 the statement on climate protection was handed over to the German chancellor Angela Merkel who had invited all representatives of the participating academies to Berlin. Joint statements were already adopted in preparation

of the G8 Summits in Gleneagles in 2005, in St. Petersburg in 2006, and in Hokkaido, Japan, in 2008.

The Leopoldina is the world's oldest continuously existing academy for medicine and natural sciences with a tradition of more than 355 years. The Leopoldina draws its members (approx. 1300) from across the nation as well as from 30 foreign countries. Until the 1990s, the Leopoldina members were divided into two departments: natural scientists and medical scientists. In recent years however, the Academy also includes members working in areas peripheral to the natural sciences and medicine but with close links to empirically founded social, economic and psychological disciplines.

The Leopoldina organises a large number of national and international meetings and symposia, issues statements and recommendations, counsels national and international parliaments and bodies on scientific matters, as well as supports and promotes young scientists. Projects on the history of science are carried out in the Academy.

In 2000, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the Leopoldina founded the Young Academy (Die Junge Akademie) as a joint project. This is the only project in Germany for the institutional support of junior scientists with a record of academic excellence.

The Joint Academy Initiative on Aging in Germany is a joint project of the Leopoldina and the German Academy of Science and Engineering acatech. It comprises 25 members from several disciplines such as philosophy, history and jurisprudence, sociology, economics, psychology, behavioural sciences, medicine, engineering sciences as well as representatives from industrial partners.

In communist times the Leopoldina demonstrated its independence and its moral and scientific integrity.