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Fraunhofer General Assembly Meeting in Essen

Sustainable growth – both financial and structural

Last year, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft achieved more than 2.1 billion euros in business volume – an impressive new record. In line with this strong performance, Fraunhofer pushed ahead with its strategy to expand its scope: the Senate decided to establish a Fraunhofer Research Institution for Casting, Composite and Processing Technology IGCV. The expansion of Fraunhofer High Performance Centers is also continuing. For instance, the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia is supporting three new High Performance Centers to the tune of some eight million euros.

“In the past year we have continued to pave the way for Fraunhofer’s lasting success, while at the same time achieving positive results,” says Prof. Reimund Neugebauer, President of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. “In its 67th year, Fraunhofer has again proved what a truly dynamic organization it is. Our commercial success shows once more that scientific sustainability pays off.”

One current example of this strategic development is the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft Senate’s decision on May 10 to establish the Fraunhofer Research Institution for Casting, Composite and Processing Technology IGCV in Augsburg. This unites and builds on the existing Function-Integrated Lightweight Design branch of the Fraunhofer Institute for Chemical Technology ICT and the Resource-Efficient Mechatronic Processing Machines RMV branch of the Fraunhofer Institute for Machine Tools and Forming Technology IWU. A third department, for casting technology, will be added at the Garching location near Munich. The future Fraunhofer Research Institution’s three departments will be led by professors from Technische Universität München (TUM): Prof. Gunter Reinhart (executive director), Prof. Klaus Drechsler and Prof. Wolfram Volk.

“Considering the importance of lightweight design in Germany, there are only a handful of research locations that focus on the combination of casting, composite materials and intelligent automation,” says Prof. Neugebauer. “In setting up this new research institution, Fraunhofer is bringing together materials and manufacturing competencies that hold great promise for new lightweight structures.” During its planning phase, the new research institution was supported by a panel of prominent advisors from industry, politics and academia. One key focus is on introducing to lightweight design novel structures that differ from each other on the basis of manufacturing concepts, joining techniques, and the complexity or compactness of the

Editorial Notes

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components. The Senate voted to establish the research institution on July 1, 2016, subject to approval by the Fraunhofer Committee of the Federal and State Governments of the research institution's entitlement to mixed funding.

Centers for business and science

Fraunhofer High Performance Centers are another strategic tool, serving to help excellent research results be seamlessly implemented in industry. The aim is for them to strengthen collaboration between universities, research institutions and business through agreed research roadmaps at leading technology locations, and to turn these locations into internationally renowned and attractive centers. In North Rhine-Westphalia, planning is at an advanced stage for three new High Performance Centers: one is planned in Bochum and Oberhausen, with a focus on technologies for the transition in energy and raw materials (DYNAFLEX PRO); a second in Dortmund, for logistics and IT; and a third in Aachen, for connected adaptive production. Speaking at the Fraunhofer General Assembly Meeting in Essen, Svenja Schulze, North Rhine-Westphalia's Minister for Innovation, Science and Research, announced that her state would provide some eight million euros of funding to these High Performance Centers.

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Focus on people

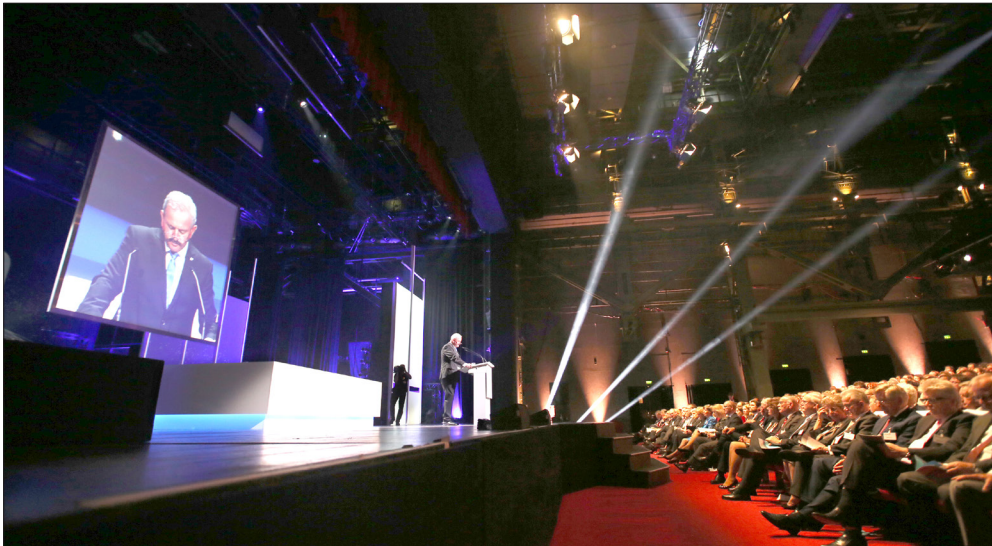
Fraunhofer's new guiding principle has a central role in the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft's future development. In order to put into words how Fraunhofer sees itself, those responsible for formulating the guiding principle took a participatory approach, shaping the shared mission and vision in discussions with employees. "We have adapted the guiding principle to the needs of today and tomorrow. In doing this, we felt it was important to give all employees an opportunity to actively influence this redesign," says the Fraunhofer President. "This was very positively received, and all suggestions were considered. As a result, we can definitely say our guiding principle is built on consensus between staff and managers."

The guiding principle's key points are sustainable development, a balanced interplay between excellent research and application-oriented development, customer orientation, the consolidation of innovative strength, trust and cooperation both within Fraunhofer and with partners, as well as outstanding working conditions and a high degree of autonomy for employees.

"Fraunhofer's success can be attributed directly to Fraunhofer's people," says Prof. Neugebauer. "That is why the motto of our General Assembly Meeting, 'Focus on people,' was a fitting choice in several respects: because people play such an important role in scientific work, and because we want our work to benefit people in general. At Fraunhofer, we conduct real research for real people."

This is becoming ever more important in a world in which collaboration and the exchange of ideas between machines, objects and employees will be the norm. If daily life is to be full of networked, flexible working, diversification and customization, then at its heart there must be people to manage these processes. And new, innovative products, services and business models must be designed to serve those people's needs.

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At the Fraunhofer General Assembly Meeting in Essen President Prof. Reimund Neugebauer presented the strategy of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. © Ines Escherich/Fraunhofer | Picture in color and printing quality: www.fraunhofer.de/en/press

The **Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft** is the leading organization for applied research in Europe. Its research activities are conducted by 67 Fraunhofer Institutes and research units at locations throughout Germany. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft employs a staff of 24,000, who work with an annual research budget totaling more than 2.1 billion euros. Of this sum, more than 1.8 billion euros is generated through contract research. More than 70 percent of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft's contract research revenue is derived from contracts with industry and from publicly financed research projects. Branches in the Americas and Asia serve to promote international cooperation.