

RESEARCH NEWS

RESEARCH NEWS

April 2, 2024 || Page 1 | 2

Alice Kirchheim succeeds Michael ten Hompel

Prof. Alice Kirchheim becomes new institute director at Fraunhofer IML

Change at the top of the Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML: As of April 1, Prof. Alice Kirchheim is taking over the Material Flow Systems department at Fraunhofer IML, along with the Chair of Material Handling and Warehousing at TU Dortmund University. Kirchheim, a scientist with outstanding experience in automation in intralogistics, will also be a valuable addition to the institute in Dortmund thanks to her expertise relating to the digital transformation and the use of AI in logistics. She is succeeding Prof. Michael ten Hompel, who is retiring after 24 years as the institute director at Fraunhofer IML and the holder of the same chair.

Kirchheim, a computer scientist and IT engineer, discovered her passion for intralogistics right after finishing her studies, when she went to work at the Bremer Institut für Produktion und Logistik (BIBA) at the University of Bremen. While there, she conducted research on automatic systems for unloading packaged goods from containers. Excited about the idea of not only furthering automation but also researching cognitive logistics systems, she worked on one of the first research projects with participation from industry as part of the information and communication technologies thematic area under the EU's Seventh Framework Programme. A desire for an even deeper understanding of how intralogistics works in practice took her into the private sector. Kirchheim joined the KION Group, where she worked on the planning and design of manual and automatic intralogistics systems in sales at affiliates STILL and Dematic. After that, she used her years of practical experience to do holistic applied research in intralogistics and share her knowledge with young people. This role took her to professorships first at Aalen University and then, in the past three years, at Helmut Schmidt University / University of the Federal Armed Forces Hamburg.

Prof. Holger Hanselka, President of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, explains: "With its holistic approach, Fraunhofer IML develops solutions for all fields of internal and external logistics. Thanks to this expertise and with additional key research areas in the fields of artificial intelligence, smart finance, and the internet of things, the institute is helping to strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of the German and European economies on a lasting basis. I am delighted that we were able to bring Prof. Kirchheim in as a director at Fraunhofer IML, as she is such an accomplished and experienced scientist. With her expertise, she will be instrumental in advancing the institute's outstanding development and industry-shaping research work."

Contact

Thomas Eck | Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Munich, Germany | Communications | Phone +49 89 1205-1333 | presse@zv.fraunhofer.de

Bettina von Janczewski | Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML | Phone +49 231 9743-612 | [Joseph-von-Fraunhofer-Strasse 2-4](https://www.fraunhofer.de/en/press)
| 44227 Dortmund, Germany | www.iml.fraunhofer.de/en.html | bj@iml.fraunhofer.de

"I think it's important to deliver results that really work. Michael ten Hompel showed how successful this connection between science and real-world practice is here at Fraunhofer IML over the decades. I'm really excited and energized about taking over from him and continuing the tradition of cutting-edge research here in Dortmund. The next few years will show just how much change artificial intelligence will bring to intralogistics as part of autonomous systems. For now, though, I'm looking forward to getting to know the people and projects at the institute better and to diving into the world of Fraunhofer," Kirchheim says.

The change means the institute management now consists of Prof. Alice Kirchheim (Material Flow Systems), Prof. Uwe Clausen (Logistics, Traffic and Environment), and Prof. Michael Henke (Enterprise Logistics), who is serving as interim executive director.

About Fraunhofer IML

Fraunhofer IML is a leader in holistic logistics research, working across all fields of internal and external logistics. In line with Fraunhofer's mission, the institute devises solutions for immediate use by companies while also engaging in pre-competitive research for periods of two to five years and in some cases even longer. The institute was founded in 1981 and currently has over 700 employees, about 470 of whom are research scientists.



Fig. 1 Prof. Alice Kirchheim is the new institute director at Fraunhofer IML.

© Fraunhofer IML

RESEARCH NEWS

April 2, 2024 || Page 2 | 2
