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Fraunhofer senate sets the course for the future

Hildegard Müller Re-elected as Senate Chair, Deputies Are Oliver Zipse and Anna-Katharina Wittenstein

At its fall meeting on November 6, 2025, the senate of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft unanimously re-elected Hildegard Müller, President of the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA), as chair of the senate. Her term will begin on January 1, 2026. The committee also confirmed Oliver Zipse, Chairman of the Board of Management of BMW AG, and elected Anna-Katharina Wittenstein, Member of the Supervisory Board of Wittenstein SE, as deputy chairs of the senate. Both will take office on January 1, 2026.

The [senate](#) of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft comprises up to 26 members—outstanding individuals from industry, research and public life, representatives from the German federal and state governments as well as members of Fraunhofer's scientific and technical council.

Its main tasks include:

- advising and monitoring the executive board in its management decisions
- appointing the president and the other executive board members
- adopting the business plan including financial planning
- assisting in defining the main features of Fraunhofer's research strategy
- approving the establishment, restructuring or closure of Fraunhofer entities

In the fall of 2023, Hildegard Müller, Chair of the Senate, and Holger Hanselka, President of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, agreed with the senate and the executive board to revise the statutes of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. The aim was to provide the organization with a modern governance structure that is appropriate to Fraunhofer's position in industry and research (see [Fraunhofer governance reform](#)).

The new statutes, which were adopted by the annual general meeting in June 2024, require the executive board to report to the senate and standing committees—such as an audit committee—to further increase transparency and accountability and thus ensure a viable and resilient governance structure for Fraunhofer. The new statutes have been in effect since January 2025.

Contact

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Fig. 1 Re-elected as chair of the senate: Hildegard Müller, President of the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA)

© German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA)

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Fig. 2 Confirmed as deputy chair of the senate: Oliver Zipse, Chairman of the Board of Management of BMW AG

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Fig. 3 Newly elected as
deputy chair of the senate:
Anna-Katharina Wittenstein,
Member of the Supervisory
Board of Wittenstein SE

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