

Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities

(received: January 2009)

Brief history and structure

Most German Academies of Sciences and Humanities came into being when they were granted substantial privileges by the rulers of their States and, in some cases, even governed by them. Germany saw the foundation of the world's first academy of natural and medical sciences, the German Academy of Natural Scientists Leopoldina, in 1652. Finally, in 1700 Leibniz succeeded in establishing a single academy covering all disciplines, the "Brandenburg Society for the Sciences" in Berlin, which later became the Royal Academy of Prussia. The Brandenburg Society has remained the model for the German academies of sciences and humanities until today. Between 1700 and 2004 five academies have been founded, three in the 18th century, one in the 19th century and four in the 20th century.

Academies of sciences and humanities of the German language area actually began to cooperate in a systematic manner more than a hundred years ago, forming the so-called "Cartel" at Leipzig in 1893, intended to put into effect joint research projects.

The Union was founded in 1973 and at first called "Conference of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities. In 1998 the Conference was renamed into "Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities". The Union is a registered association.

The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities is not an academy itself. Rather, it is an affiliation of eight German Academies of Sciences and Humanities that have joined together to achieve their common goals:

- Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (founded:1992/1700), seat: Berlin and Potsdam
- Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities (founded: 1751)
- Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities (founded: 1759), seat: Munich
- Saxonian Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Leipzig (founded: 1846)
- Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (founded: 1909)
- Academy of Sciences and Literature, Mainz (founded: 1949)
- North Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences and Humanities (founded: 1970), seat: Düsseldorf
- Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Hamburg (founded: 2004)

The member academies assemble more than 1600 scientists and academics who are outstanding representatives of their disciplines, both nationally and internationally, and whose work covers a broad range of subject areas. They have joined forces to promote scientific exchange, excellent research, and the emergence of new talent in science and the humanities.

Academies of sciences and humanities in Germany are fellowships of scholars, elected for distinction and achievement in their disciplines. Thus, an academy is a scholarly society that offers its members the opportunity for regular interdisciplinary discussion of their work and results. In commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences, the former President of the Federal Republic, Johannes Rau, described the significance that academies for science as follows:

"No other institution lets scientific dialogue take centre-stage as much as the academies do. Nor is any other institution as firmly rooted in the scientific tradition as they are. In my view, this is more important than ever. After all, science can only withstand the increasing pressure from

society and the economy and even transform it into positive energy if it maintains places of refuge for itself which are at a safe distance from day-to-day business.”

Expanding on this quote, academies may be characterised as places where science is the only thing to be considered. They are the places where science can take shape and find its own identity – both of which are prerequisites of a fruitful dialogue between science and society.

The German Academies of Sciences and Humanities are non-university research organisations, and provide funding for long-term projects in basic research. Thanks to their organisational structure they are able to carry out large-scale research projects processing vast amounts of data at competitive costs while meeting high scientific standards. Witness the “Academies’ Programme”: coordinated by the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities, it is Germany’s most significant and comprehensive research programme in cultural studies and the Humanities. Even in an international context, the Academies’ Programme is quite unique: academies of other nations also have projects of their own, most of them carried out in cooperation with German projects, but nby and large they lack a similar programme based on research cooperation. The latter is a peculiarity of the German tradition, as Professor Volker Gerhardt, the chairman of the Union’s Scientific Commission, has pointed out.

The German academies of science and humanities are guardians of classical education. They organise scientific conferences and public lectures series, and also promote the emergence of new talent in science and the humanities. To honour outstanding research achievements they award prizes and medals.

The Union promotes the exchange of information and experience between academies, engages in public relations work and organizes events to discuss today’s relevant questions from the field of science. Furthermore, the Union represents its member academies abroad, and sends delegates to national and international science organisations.

Membership

The Union itself has no personal membership. The members of the Union are eight German academies of sciences and humanities.

The member academies have two kinds of membership: All member academies have altogether full-members (1208) and corresponding members (732). Furthermore there are a few members who are honorary members. The members are elected by the academies out of the community of excellent scientists.

- Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (156 full members/ 56 corresponding members)
- Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities (146 full members/ 211 corresponding members)
- Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities (160 full members/ 159 corresponding members)
- Saxonian Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Leipzig (134 full members / 76 corresponding members)
- Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (171 full members/ 70 corresponding members)
- Academy of Sciences and Literature, Mainz (132 full members/ 120 corresponding members)
- North Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences and Humanities (200 full members/ 110 corresponding members)
- Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Hamburg (31 members)

The Member Academies of the Union have full members, corresponding members and honorary members. The individual academy is managed by a president and vice-presidents, who are supported by the Board of the academy. Each academy has a kind of General Assembly. Furthermore there are in each academy commission and working groups.

The academy is structured into classes, representing the different groups of scientific disciplines, which are assembled under the roof of the academy. Some academies have two classes (natural sciences and humanities), some have three classes (natural sciences, humanities, technical sciences) and some have four classes (natural sciences, humanities, technical sciences and literature).

Support is given to young researchers: many young researchers are employed under almost all research-projects, especially in the "Akademie Programme". Furthermore, young scientists also receive awards and prizes for excellent research from the member academies.

There are several special programmes for young scientists offered by the member academies of the Union e.g. the Young Academy under the patronage of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and the German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, the WIN-Kolleg of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences or the Young College of the Northrhine-Westfalian Academy.

There are no proactive measures to increase female membership in the Member Academies; currently, only 6% to 10% of the members of the academies are females. In the research projects of the academies more than 50% of the scientific staff are women. The amount of female members in the member academies is increasing from year to year.

Governance and structure

The Organs and Committees of the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities are:

General Assembly (meets once a year)

Members of the Union are the seven German academies of sciences and humanities. The General Assembly of the Union receives and approves the report of the Executive Board, establishes the budget and also decides on the admission of new members and on any amendments to the Statutes.

Executive Board (meets several times a year)

The Executive Board of the Union consists of the President and of the Vice President. The President manages the daily affairs of the Union and, together with the Vice President, represents the Union externally. The Executive Board is supported in the fulfilling of its tasks by the Union's office.

Executive Committee (meets three times a year)

The Executive Committee is the central decision-making organ of the Union. Members of the Executive Committee are the presidents of the member academies and the President of the Union.

Scientific Commission for the Academies' Programme (meets three times a year)

The Union's scientific commission is the central advisory organ on all scientific questions concerning the Academies' Programme. Each member academy delegates an expert to the scientific commission. Further members of the commission are seven representatives chosen by the Deutsche

Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation, DFG) as well as one representative each of the Federation and the Länder not entitled to vote.

Committee for Musicological Editions (meets three times a year)

The committee was set up in 1976 to coordinate individual projects for complete historical and critical editions of musical works. The committee consists of the president of the Union, the president of the academy in charge, one representative of each of the Union's member academies, and the President of the Society for Music Research. The committee also has the right to co-opt up to three musicologists who are not academy members.

The task of the committee is to coordinate long-term musicological projects. It reports on project results and requirements and also furnishes advice and expertise on musicological projects and editorial questions relating to them.

Patristic Commission (meets once a year)

In the academies of sciences and humanities important research is conducted on the writings and the doctrines of the Church Fathers. The Patristic Commission was founded in 1960/61. It is now jointly supported by seven academies of sciences and humanities. The Commission's main task is to coordinate and supervise work carried out inside the academies as well as to publish the "Patristic Texts and Studies" series. Further information on patristic research projects can be found in the yearbooks of the academies.

Working Group Electronic Publishing (meets twice a year)

The working group "Electronic Publishing" has been set up by the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities in order to provide guidance to the Executive Committee on all matters of electronic digital publishing that are relevant to projects in the Academies' programme and in order to suggest common standards. Among the issues under discussion are questions of copyright, difficulties with publishing houses, monopolies of software sellers, the threat of data loss posed by access facilities becoming obsolete, the difficulty of finding search engines suitable for large texts, and the development of additional data storage facilities securing future access as well as new technologies for electronic publishing.

The Union has two budgets: the basic budget of €354.700 (2008) is financed by the federal states of Germany where the academies are located. The budget for the coordination of the joint Akademie research programme of €596.700 (2008), financed jointly by the Federal Republic of Germany and the federal states. Furthermore there is the budget transferred to the academies for conducting the joined Akademie programme. The total was €45.303.300 in 2008, financed by the Federal Republic of Germany and the federal states. Member academies of the Union have budgets of their own, ranging from €3 Mio. to €30 Mio. p.a., financed by the federal state, where the academy is located.

Activities

The Union itself does not grant any prizes and awards. The member academies grant approximately 50 prizes, medals and awards, as follows:

Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities:

- Academy Prize of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities
- Academy Scholarship of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities
- Eva and Klaus Grohe Prize of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities
- Helmholtz Medal

- Leibniz Medal
- Prize of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (endowed by the publishing house de Gruyter)
- Prize of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (endowed by the Commerzbank Foundation)
- Prize of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (endowed by the Monika Kutzner Foundation for the Promotion of Cancer Research)
- Prize of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (endowed by the Gottlieb Daimler and Karl Benz Foundation)
- Prize of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (endowed by the Peregrinus Foundation [Rudolf Meimberg])

Göttingen Academy of Sciences:

- Academy Prize for Biology
- Academy Prize for Chemistry
- Academy Prize for Physics
- Brothers Grimm Medal
- Dannie Heineman Prize
- Hans Janssen Prize
- Hanns Lilje Prize
- Lichtenberg Medal
- Sartorius Prize
- Wallstein Prize
- Wedekind Prize (Academy Prize for History)

Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities:

- Academy Prize
- Arnold Sommerfeld Prize
- Max Weber Prize
- Bene merenti medal
- Peregrinus Prize
- Robert Sauer Prize

Saxonian Academy of Sciences in Leipzig:

- Friedrich Weller Prize
- Friedrich Weller Scholarship and Most Promising Award
- Kurt Schwabe Prize
- Leipzig Science Award
- Theodor Frings Prize
- Wilhelm Ostwald Medal

Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities:

- Academy Prize
- Karl Freudenberg Prize
- Walter Witzenmann Prize

Academy of Sciences and Literature, Mainz:

- Academy Prize of the Land Rhineland-Palatinate
- Commerzbank Prize (donated by the Commerzbank Foundation)
- Academy Ring of Honour

- Most Promising Young Scientists Award for Biodiversity
- Joseph Breitbach Prize
- Leibniz Medal
- Hans Erich Nossack Academy Prize
- Rudolf Meimberg Prize
- Walter Kalkhof-Rose Memorial Prize
- Wilhelm Heine Medal

The Academy of Sciences and Literature, Mainz, also awards scholarships and other means of support funded by the following foundations:

- Erwin Wickert Foundation
- Kurt Ringger Foundation
- Walter and Sibylle Kalkhof-Rose Foundation

The North Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences and Humanities:

- Hendrik Casimir-Karl Ziegler Research Prize (awarded jointly with the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences)
- Karl Arnold Prize

Academy of Sciences in Hamburg awards the Hamburger Science Prize of the Foundation für Sciences, Development and Culture in Hamburg Helmut und Hannelore Greve.

For details please see www.akademienunion.de/preise/english.html.

Only one member academy, the Bavarian Academy, has affiliated research institutes. Furthermore there is a strong cooperation between the Academies and the Universities, especially in the Academies' Programme, in Germany.

The German Academies of Sciences and Humanities are non-university research organisations, and provide funding for long-term projects in basic research. Thanks to their organisational structure they are able to carry out large-scale research projects processing vast amounts of data at competitive costs while meeting high scientific standards. Witness the "Academies' Programme": coordinated by the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities, it is Germany's most significant and comprehensive research programme in cultural studies and the Humanities. Even in an international context, the Academies' Programme is quite unique: academies of other nations also have projects of their own, most of them carried out in cooperation with German projects, but nby and large they lack a similar programme based on research cooperation. The latter is a peculiarity of the German tradition, as Professor Volker Gerhardt, the chairman of the Union's Scientific Commission, has pointed out.

The academies affiliated in the Union conduct various activities besides the research programme, e.g. lectures, symposia, discussion panels, research days etc.

International activities

The member academies of the Union have partnerships and agreements with numerous academies in Europe and worldwide and are internationally oriented and there a numerous international scientific co-operations between the scientist working in the academies and their colleagues worldwide.

Their close cooperation with researchers across both political and disciplinary borders has been a trademark of the German academies of sciences and humanities from the beginning. And it has remained so to this day. The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities assembles more than 1600 scientists and academics who are outstanding representatives of their disciplines, both nationally and internationally. They have numerous international contacts, and carry out their research in a network of cross-border research projects and a busy exchange of persons and ideas.

It is one of the responsibilities of the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities to represent its member academies abroad. The Union is a member of the following international bodies and research organisations± ALLEA, ESF, IAP, IAMP, UAI, as well as the ``International Amaldi-Conference of Academies of Sciences and the National Scientific Societies on Scientific Questions of Global Security` and the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies`.

Publications

The Union issues a quarterly electronic newsletter (former Academies Journal) plus several Publications of Symposia per year.

The member academies of the Union issue altogether about 350 publications of their research results a year. Furthermore they all issue a yearbook and some issue an electronic newsletter.