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Maria Leptin welcomed as Leopoldina Member

Heidelberg, 17 May 2017 – The German National Academy of Sciences, Leopoldina, today welcomes EMBO Director Maria Leptin as one of its members. Election to the Leopoldina membership is the highest academic honour awarded by an institution in Germany and it is bestowed on scientists who are experts in their fields.

Maria Leptin, together with 14 other eminent researchers from Germany and abroad, was elected in 2016, and will today be officially welcomed at a ceremony in Halle (Saale), Germany.

Following the presentation of the membership certificates, Maria Leptin will deliver a lecture on the role of cellular coordination during the development of organs and whole organisms.

Through her election, Maria Leptin became part of a membership of over 1,500 individuals from more than 30 countries. Other EMBO Members elected to the Leopoldina Membership in 2016 include Aaron Ciechanover, Haifa, Israel, Veit Hornung, Munich, Germany, Edvard Moser, Trondheim, Norway, May-Britt Moser, Trondheim, Norway, Christian Spahn, Berlin, Germany.

For more information (in German):

<https://www.leopoldina.org/de/presse/pressemitteilungen/pressemitteilung/press/2487/>

Biography

Maria Leptin received her PhD in 1983 for work on B cell activation carried out at the Basel Institute for Immunology under the supervision of Fritz Melchers. She switched to the study of development in *Drosophila* when she joined the laboratory of Michael Wilcox at the Medical Research Council's Laboratory of Molecular Biology (LMB) in Cambridge, UK, for her postdoctoral work on *Drosophila* integrins. After a research visit at the lab of Pat O'Farrell at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF), where she began studying gastrulation, she spent the years from 1989 to 1994 as a group leader at the Max Planck Institute in Tübingen. In 1994, she became Professor at the Institute of Genetics University of Cologne.

In January 2010 Maria Leptin became the Director of EMBO and established a research group in Heidelberg at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL). The group studies the development of complex cell shapes in the respiratory system of *Drosophila* and the role of RNA localisation in generating cell shape. Professor Leptin is an elected member of EMBO, the Academia Europaea and the German National Academy of Sciences (Leopoldina). She also serves on the editorial boards of *Developmental Cell*, *Developmental Biology* and on advisory boards of several academic institutions.

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