

Johann-Dietrich Wörner Receives the 2018 Heinrich Hertz Guest Professorship

Public Lecture of the Director-General of the European Space Agency ESA – Followed by a Ceremony on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the KIT-Fördergesellschaft e.V.



Professor Johann-Dietrich Wörner, Director-General of the European Space Agency ESA. (Photo: Philippe Sebirot, ESA)

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Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and the KIT-Fördergesellschaft e.V. (KFG, friends of KIT) grant the 2018 Heinrich Hertz Guest Professorship to Professor Johann-Dietrich Wörner. The Director-General of the European Space Agency ESA will speak about “Space 4.0” on Wednesday, July 04, 2018, 17 hrs at the Johann-Gottfried-Tulla-Hörsaal on KIT Campus South (building 11.40, Englerstraße 11, Karlsruhe). Prior to his lecture, he will head a seminar for students. The lecture will be followed by a ceremony on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the KIT-Fördergesellschaft e.V. at 18.20 hrs.

In his presentation “Space 4.0,” Johann-Dietrich Wörner will highlight the ongoing rapid change in the aerospace sector, as reflected by several astronautics actors, private investors, new applications, and new technologies. In this time of change, positioning of the space agency and its future profile are of particular importance. Space technology today means infrastructure for applications and research. In parallel, it serves scientific and exploration tasks. Publicly funded projects, private investments, and mixed financing schemes have to be

organized. The role of ESA as an intergovernmental organization additionally means a special responsibility for considering national interests and interconnecting various disciplines. This multi-dimensional area of work will be illustrated by concrete projects and challenges.

Please register for the event at event@kit.edu (the event will be in German).

About the Heinrich Hertz Guest Professorship

Every academic year, the KIT-Fördergesellschaft (KFG) and KIT grant the Heinrich Hertz Guest Professorship to honor an outstanding personality from science, industry, culture, and politics for his/her achievements and contributions to research and the society. The KFG is committed to supporting academic education of KIT and endowed the guest professorship in 1987, one hundred years after the detection of electromagnetic waves by physicist Heinrich Hertz at the then Technical University of Karlsruhe, a predecessor institution of KIT.

About the Person

Johann-Dietrich Wörner became ESA Director-General on July 1, 2015. Previously, from March 2007 to June 2015, he was Chairman of the Executive Board of the German Aerospace Center (DLR). Wörner was born in Kassel, Germany, in 1954. He studied civil engineering at the Technical University of Berlin and TU Darmstadt, where he was conferred his doctorate in 1985. In 1990, he was appointed professor of civil engineering at TU Darmstadt and took over the direction of the test and research institute. Before he was elected President of TU Darmstadt in 1995, he held the position of Dean of the newly established Civil Engineering Faculty. Wörner headed the university from 1995 to 2007 and succeeded in making it one of the first autonomous universities of the Federal Republic of Germany. Wörner received a number of prizes and honors, such as the Prize of the Organization of Friends of Technical University Darmstadt for "outstanding scientific performance." He received the Federal Cross of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for his merits for Germany as a location of science, technology, and industry and his continuous efforts for supporting young scientists in the STEM subjects of mathematics, computer science, natural sciences, and engineering. Moreover, he has been awarded the honors of Knight of the French Legion of Honor. In addition, he was appointed to the energy expert group (PEPP) of the German Government.

Being “The Research University in the Helmholtz Association,” KIT creates and imparts knowledge for the society and the environment. It is the objective to make significant contributions to the global challenges in the fields of energy, mobility and information. For this, about 9,300 employees cooperate in a broad range of disciplines in natural sciences, engineering sciences, economics, and the humanities and social sciences. KIT prepares its 25,500 students for responsible tasks in society, industry, and science by offering research-based study programs. Innovation efforts at KIT build a bridge between important scientific findings and their application for the benefit of society, economic prosperity, and the preservation of our natural basis of life.

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