

Start of the Ulm Helmholtz Institute

New Battery Technologies to Be in the Focus of the Research Facility of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology in Cooperation with Ulm University – Opening Ceremony with Federal Minister of Research Schavan and Minister President Stefan Mappus – DLR and ZSW Are Associated Partners

Development of efficient battery systems for future energy supply and mobility is the objective of the Ulm Helmholtz Institute for Electrochemical Energy Storage (HIU). Today, this new research institution celebrated its opening in Ulm. “The new Helmholtz Institute for Electrochemical Energy Storage in Ulm shall be the basis of future high-performance battery generations. This is of high importance to Germany as a location of technology and industry and to Baden-Wuerttemberg with its strong automotive industry,” underlined Federal Minister of Research Professor Annette Schavan and Minister President of Baden-Wuerttemberg Stefan Mappus.

The new Ulm Helmholtz Institute is founded and organized by Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), member of the Helmholtz Association, in cooperation with Ulm University. Associated partners are the German Aerospace Center (DLR), also member of the Helmholtz Association, and the Center for Solar Energy and Hydrogen Research Baden-Wuerttemberg (ZSW). A first step towards the close cooperation of these four partners was made in 2009 by establishing the BMBF Alliance of Competence in Electrochemistry for Electromobility in Southern Germany. The new center of viable battery research will be located on the campus of Ulm University and bridge the distance between locations of Ulm and Karlsruhe.

“The Ulm Helmholtz Institute will be a center of excellence for electrochemical storage pooling the vast expertise of the partners KIT and Ulm University as well as of the associated partners DLR and ZSW in various fields of battery research,” emphasized KIT President Professor Eberhard Umbach during the opening ceremony. “It is the need of the moment to develop high-performance and low-cost battery systems, as they are the prerequisite for the future economic efficiency of electromobility and the integration of renewable energies like wind and sun in the energy system.”

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“Electrochemistry has been of high priority to our university for a long time already. Selection of Ulm as the location of the new institute again underlines our high competence in battery research. Apart from the directly involved institutions, the science city as a whole will profit,” said Professor Karl Joachim Ebeling, President of Ulm University.

“The Helmholtz Association systematically extends research into batteries and other types of energy storage, as the development of efficient solutions is of decisive strategic importance to securing energy supply and mobility in Germany in a post-fossil era,” explained Professor Jürgen Mlynek, President of the Helmholtz Association. “We are also pooling the competences existing in Germany by the close cooperation with universities, our preferred partners. With the setup of the Helmholtz Institute in Ulm, our cooperation with Ulm University is now placed on a stable foundation.”

Foundation of the HIU is an integral component of strategic focusing of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology on battery research. Parallel to the establishment of HIU in Ulm, the Competence E project is presently being set up at KIT to extend research into electromobility from individual components to the entire system level. Competence E pursues an integrated approach from the molecule to the battery, to the electric motor, to the functioning electric drive and links the fundamentals with industrial processing and fabrication technologies. The future “research factory” of KIT will close the gaps between university and non-university research and industrial production. The HIU will link excellent fundamental research with application.

As a Helmholtz institution, the HIU will be funded via KIT by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg at a ratio of 90 to 10. The DLR share will be funded via the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology. The annual budget of the new institute will amount to EUR 5 million.

“This money is spent well, an investment in the future,” said Minister Schavan. “It secures tomorrow’s mobility – a clean mobility.”

“It is not the first time that Baden-Wuerttemberg has pointed the way and been responsible for crucial developments in the field of mobility. With the new institute, our state will once again be among the most important research locations for the development of electromobility in Europe,” Minister President Stefan Mappus pointed out.

Together with Ulm University, the state will spend EUR 12 million for a new building in the Ulm Science City that will be ready for occupancy in 2013. It will accommodate up to 80 employees. In this and the coming year, 35 new positions will presumably be established at Ulm and Karlsruhe with a main focus initially lying on fundamental research for new lithium-ion technologies. At the partners involved, a total of 200 scientists work on the development of new battery systems.

Apart from the use of the partners' resources, four new professorships will be established at the HIU, one of which will be funded by the DRL to contribute to the development of energy storage, energy conversion, and electromobility. It is also planned to establish a research training group to specifically prepare young scientists for international competition in battery research.

On the official founding date of January 01, 2011, the HIU Board of Directors started its work. It consists of the Professors Horst Hahn (KIT; Founding Director of HIU), Dieter Kolb (Ulm University), Axel Groß (Ulm University), and Werner Tillmetz (ZSW) as well as the associated members Dr. Andreas Gutsch (KIT) and Professor Ulrich Wagner (DLR).

Detailed information on the individual fields of research of HIU may be obtained from pressestelle@kit.edu.

A photo of the event may be downloaded under www.kit.edu. Other photos may be requested by mail to pressestelle@kit.edu or phone +49 721 608-47414.

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is a public corporation and state institution of Baden-Württemberg, Germany. It fulfills the mission of a university and the mission of a national research center of the Helmholtz Association. KIT focuses on a knowledge triangle that links the tasks of research, teaching, and innovation.

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