

## Helle Ulrich elected to the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina

**Mainz, 08 July 2021** - Professor Helle Ulrich, scientific director of IMB, has been elected as a member of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. This is one of the highest honours for scientists awarded by a German institution.

The German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina is a prestigious scholastic society of around 1,600 members that represents the German scientific community internationally. Members are chosen for their outstanding scientific achievements and extraordinary contributions to advancing their field of research. Approximately 50 new members are elected each year from almost all branches of science. Candidates must be nominated by current Academy members, followed by a multi-stage selection process.

As a Leopoldina member, Helle will contribute to the academy's tasks of reviewing and addressing key issues of significance to society to provide policymakers and the public with science-based evidence. Helle's research specialises in understanding how cells repair DNA damage caused by genotoxic agents (e.g. UV radiation, mutagenic chemicals) and how they ensure that their genetic material is accurately replicated during cell division. This is extremely important for preventing mutations that could lead to cancer and ageing. Some of her top achievements at IMB include discovering when and where damaged DNA is repaired during replication, deciphering how cells regulate and activate different DNA repair pathways, and developing a new method to map single-strand breaks and other types of DNA damage in a genome-wide manner.

### Further details

Helle is a Scientific Director at IMB and a Professor of Biology at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. Further information about research in Ulrich lab can be found at [www.imb.de/research/ulrich](http://www.imb.de/research/ulrich).

### About the Institute of Molecular Biology gGmbH

The Institute of Molecular Biology gGmbH (IMB) is a centre of excellence in the life sciences that was established in 2011 on the campus of Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU). Research at IMB focuses on three cutting-edge areas: epigenetics, developmental biology, and genome stability. The institute is a prime example of successful collaboration between a private foundation and government: The Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation has committed 154 million euros to be disbursed from 2009 until 2027 to cover the operating costs of research at IMB. The State of Rhineland-Palatinate has provided approximately 50 million euros for the construction of a state-of-the-art building and is giving a further 52 million in core funding from 2020 until 2027. For more information about IMB, please visit: [www.imb.de](http://www.imb.de).

### About Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU) is a globally recognized research-driven university with around 31,500 students. Its main core research areas are in particle and hadron physics, the materials sciences, and translational medicine, while its most outstanding research achievements in the humanities have been attained in the fields of American Studies and Historical Cultural Studies. JGU's academic excellence is reflected in its success in the Excellence Initiative of the German federal and state governments: In 2012, the university's Precision Physics, Fundamental Interactions and Structure of Matter (PRISMA) Cluster of Excellence was approved and the funding of its Materials Science in Mainz (MAINZ) Graduate School of Excellence was extended. Moreover, excellent placings in national and international rankings, as well as numerous other honors and awards, demonstrate just how successful Mainz-based researchers and academics are. Further information at [www.uni-mainz.de/eng](http://www.uni-mainz.de/eng)

### Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation

The Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization that is committed to the promotion of the medical, biological, chemical, and pharmaceutical sciences. It was established in 1977 by Hubertus Liebrecht (1931–1991), a member of the shareholder family of the Boehringer Ingelheim company. Through its Perspectives Programme Plus 3 and its Exploration Grants, the Foundation supports independent junior group leaders. It also endows the international Heinrich Wieland Prize, as well as awards for up-and-coming scientists in Germany. In addition, the Foundation funds institutional projects in Germany, such as the Institute of Molecular Biology (IMB), the department of life sciences at the University of Mainz, and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg. [www.bistiftung.de](http://www.bistiftung.de)

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