

Press release

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2026 Fraunhofer annual assembly in Leipzig

Transferring Technology to Industry: the Key to Germany's Future

Under the theme “Fraunhofer—Transfer for Our Future,” leaders from research, industry and government gathered on the evening of June 10, 2026, at Congress Center Leipzig as part of the Fraunhofer annual assembly. The event focused on how scientific excellence can be translated more quickly and effectively into economic value, technological sovereignty and societal progress.

In his speech, Holger Hanselka, President of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, emphasized that research findings must be translated into marketable applications more quickly: “If we want to remain competitive and ensure our long-term success as an industrial base, innovation is key,” Hanselka said. “We need to be better, faster and more innovative than our competitors. That is why Germany needs a comprehensive approach to improving technology transfer across all channels—from contract research for industry to licensing to spin-offs.”

The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft translates scientific excellence into practical applications

Looking back on the past year, Hanselka painted a positive picture. “Given the current economic challenges, performance this year is particularly noteworthy. I am especially pleased that, even in these times of crisis, we secured an all-time high in industrial revenue in 2025.” According to Hanselka, this demonstrates that applied research makes a real difference, especially in difficult times: “Fraunhofer research really does make an impact. And it does so where it is needed: in and for industry and society.” At the same time, Hanselka explained why Fraunhofer relies primarily on partnerships with industry to drive innovation: “We deliberately use spin-offs as a fast track for disruptive technologies. Fraunhofer’s main focus, however, is contract research for industry because our partners and customers need solutions that work immediately in a competitive environment.”

This message is especially relevant during UNESCO’s commemorative year marking the 200th anniversary of Joseph von Fraunhofer’s death. “He was a craftsman, a researcher and an entrepreneur all rolled into one. For Joseph von Fraunhofer, research and its commercialization were closely intertwined. It is precisely this spirit that continues to define the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft to this day,” said Hanselka. According to the Fraunhofer president, looking at the organization’s eponym makes one thing clear: Technology transfer does not begin at the end

of a development process but must be considered from the very start, with a focus on the specific needs of industry and society.

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Oliver Zipse, Deputy Chair of the Fraunhofer Senate and CEO of BMW AG until May 13, 2026, praised applied research as a key driver of innovation. In his keynote address, he emphasized: “Here at Fraunhofer, the transfer of research findings to industry is truly put into practice. This is crucial because research, industry and government can only achieve transformation by working together.” Especially in times of global uncertainty, the ability to innovate, a technology-neutral approach and sustainable growth must be considered together, he said. In this context, Zipse also highlighted the importance of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft for Germany’s innovative strength and, consequently, for its long-term viability: “Fraunhofer combines scientific excellence with the translation of research into practical applications, assuming responsibility for Germany’s economic strength, technological sovereignty and a sustainable future. This not only makes companies and society resilient; it makes us antifragile. In other words, we grow through our challenges.”

Rolf-Dieter Jungk, State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR), stated in his address: “The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is one of the most influential research institutions in the German research ecosystem. Especially in times of crisis, we realize how essential new ideas and developments are for driving society and industry forward and opening up new opportunities. Germany is exceptionally well-positioned to tackle today’s major global challenges. However, we can only achieve growth if we invest in new technologies. The German federal government’s High-Tech Agenda provides the framework to catapult our country back to the forefront of international technological competition. This will allow us to pool our resources, unlock potential and overcome current bottlenecks in the innovation pipeline. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft will play a key role in this.”

Michael Kretschmer, Minister-President of the Free State of Saxony, said in his video message: “We are delighted that the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is holding its annual assembly in Saxony. Germany can only succeed by pursuing scientifically grounded economic policies, and this is exactly where Fraunhofer serves as a vital partner for government and businesses. This is also reflected in the numerous partnerships we have maintained in the Free State of Saxony over the past 35 years. Our close collaboration, dedication, expertise and collective effort to develop new ideas have made Saxony stronger, more innovative and more forward-thinking, and we intend to continue along this path for the years and decades to come.”

The High-Tech Agenda for Germany sends a strong message for innovation policy

Speaking about the High-Tech Agenda, Hanselka made clear what matters most now: “The success of the High-Tech Agenda will depend crucially on the ability to quickly and effectively transform research findings into marketable applications. Strategic roadmaps must translate into industrial practice and tangible economic value.” At the same time, Germany needs an innovation-friendly environment, he said. According to Hanselka, the proposed Freedom of Innovation Act addresses key prerequisites for faster and more effective innovation processes: “This legislation needs to be passed quickly.” Hanselka also emphasized the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft’s role as a reliable partner for implementation: “The German federal government views us as a key player. As an important innovation partner to industry, we are fully committed to supporting the implementation of the High-Tech Agenda. For us, technology transfer is not just a task; it is part of our DNA.”

Presentation of the Fraunhofer research prizes

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The presentation of the Fraunhofer research prizes during the Fraunhofer annual assembly shows how we put this commitment into practice. Three Joseph von Fraunhofer Prizes were awarded, along with the Stifterverband Science Prize “Forschung im Verbund” (Joint Research). The prize-winning research projects are prime examples of research that successfully makes the transition to practical application. From more efficient production of green hydrogen and chemical products to innovative measurement technology based on resonant photoacoustics to a novel production system for precision optical coatings: The diversity and innovative strength of the prize-winning research projects clearly demonstrate how ideas are translated into applications that drive industry and society forward. “Thanks to the work of our prize winners and our ongoing efforts to support young researchers, we are well-positioned to implement the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft’s vision and mission,” Hanselka said at the prize ceremony.

Fraunhofer as a key innovation partner for industry

For the Fraunhofer president, the task is clear: “Germany needs bold innovation policies, strong innovation ecosystems and close collaboration between research, industry and government.” According to Hanselka, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is ready to do its part: “Despite our organization’s technological achievements, we too feel the pressures facing Germany as an industrial base. This also affects our market-driven funding model, which is why we have launched a comprehensive transformation process to ensure our organization is well positioned for the future. However, especially in these challenging times, it is also important to seize opportunities and make targeted investments in innovation that will help us strengthen our industry’s international competitiveness. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is ready to play its part as a key innovation partner for industry.”

For more information on the prize-winning research projects, please visit: [Fraunhofer Research Awards 2026](#)



Fig. 1 In his speech, Holger Hanselka emphasized the role of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft as an essential innovation partner for industry. © Fraunhofer / Markus Jürgens

The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, headquartered in Germany, is one of the world's leading organizations for applied research. It plays a major role in innovation by prioritizing research on cutting-edge technologies and the transfer of results to industry to strengthen Germany's industrial base and for the benefit of society as a whole. Founded in 1949, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft currently operates 74 institutes and research units throughout Germany. Its roughly 30,000 employees, predominantly scientists and engineers, work with an annual business volume of 3.6 billion euros; 3.2 billion euros of this stems from contract research.

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