

# Press Release

**Freiburg**  
**March 31, 2016**  
**No. 04/16**  
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## **Photovoltaic Pioneer Celebrates Birthday**

### **Professor Dr. Joachim Luther Turns 75**

Prof. Dr. Joachim Luther, director of Fraunhofer ISE from 1993 to 2006, celebrates his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on March 31, 2016. For decades, his commitment to the field of solar energy has been impressive. In 1993 he took over as director of Fraunhofer ISE in Freiburg upon the retirement of its founder Prof. Dr. Adolf Goetzberger. For twelve years, Prof. Luther headed Fraunhofer ISE, the largest institute for applied solar energy research in Europe. He led the Institute during a decisive phase in its history. Under his leadership, the number of employees doubled, reaching 450 employees in 2006. Today the staff totals about 1100.

Under Prof. Dr. Joachim Luther's leadership, two milestones stand out in particular: For one, through his efforts, the Institute was able to move out of its rental facilities into its own building. A second important milestone was the realization of the Photovoltaic Evaluation Technology Center in 2006, made possible with the financial support of the former German Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMU). The Center was the first PV evaluation line for the solar cell production and gave technology transfer a decisive push.

During his directorship at Fraunhofer ISE, Prof. Luther simultaneously was professor of solar energy at the Albert Ludwigs University Freiburg. He was also active at the Freiburg Material Research Center (FMF) where he supported the development of new technologies for solar energy conversion. When he transferred his directorship to his successor and current Institute's Director, Prof. Dr. Eicke R. Weber, in 2006, he by no means retired from the field. He moved to Singapore and founded the Solar Energy Research

**Fraunhofer Institute for  
Solar Energy Systems ISE**  
Heidenhofstrasse 2  
79110 Freiburg  
Germany  
Press and Public Relations  
Karin Schneider  
Phone +49 761 4588-5150  
Fax +49 761 4588-9342  
info@ise.fraunhofer.de

[www.ise.fraunhofer.de](http://www.ise.fraunhofer.de)

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Institute of Singapore (SERIS), becoming founder director and CEO.

Prof. Luther also performed a central function within the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft, the largest German organization for applied research, as member of the Senate and of the European Advisory Board. He also served as chairman on Fraunhofer's Scientific and Technical Council. Luther recognized the significance of "Energy" for the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft and initiated the Fraunhofer Energy Alliance, becoming its first spokesperson.

For the duration of four years, Luther served as a member of the German Advisory Council on Global Change (WGBU) as well as the Expert Commission on Research and Innovation that annually writes expert reports for the federal government. His achievements have been distinguished with many prizes and honors. In 2005 he received the European Becquerel Prize, one of the highest honors in the field of solar technology, as well as the Special Service Award of the International Solar Energy Society. For his contribution to the research and market entry of solar energy systems, the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU) bestowed Prof. Luther with the Environment Prize 2005. In 2006, he received the Fraunhofer Medal, and in 2008 he was named "Hero of the Environment" by TIME magazine. In 2009, the International Solar Energy Society (ISES) awarded him the "Achievement through Action Award".

Joachim Luther was born on March 31, 1941 in Hanover, Germany. After completing his doctoral work in experimental physics in Hanover, he worked in the field of atomic physics and laser spectroscopy. In 1974 he became professor for experimental physics at the newly founded university in Oldenburg. There he began his scientific research on the fundamental physics of renewable energies. At that time he focused on the theory of renewable energy systems and the energy meteorology. Parallel to his

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professorship in Oldenburg, Luther took over as director of the Lower Saxony Institute for Solar Energy Research GmbH, which now has become the Institute for Solar Energy Research Hameln (ISFH). In 1993 he moved to Freiburg.

Prof. Luther remains connected to Fraunhofer ISE as consultant. The Institute congratulates him warmly on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Text of the PR and photos** can be downloaded from our website: [www.ise.fraunhofer.de](http://www.ise.fraunhofer.de)



Prof. Joachim Luther ©Fraunhofer ISE

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Heidenhofstrasse 2  
79110 Freiburg  
Germany  
Press and Public Relations  
Karin Schneider  
Phone +49 761 4588-5150  
Fax +49 761 4588-9342  
[info@ise.fraunhofer.de](mailto:info@ise.fraunhofer.de)

[www.ise.fraunhofer.de](http://www.ise.fraunhofer.de)