

Press release**European XFEL GmbH****Gerhard Samulat**

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**European XFEL opens modern exhibition and conference centre**

A permanent exhibition explains research with the world's largest X-ray laser. Furthermore, the Xcool Lab offers school students courses in molecular biology and physics. Council Chair Federico Boscherini, Schleswig-Holstein State Secretary Guido Wendt and Hamburg State Councilor Eva Gümbel praise the successful architectural and didactic concept.

Schenefeld, 20.11.2024 - Together with high-ranking guests, European XFEL today opens the modern Lighthouse exhibition and conference centre on its campus in Schenefeld near Hamburg to the public. The two-storey building offers space for a 350 m² permanent exhibition, 200 m² of special exhibition space, the Xcool Lab with two laboratories for students, and rooms for conferences and events. The name Lighthouse was suggested by the staff.

The new Lighthouse exhibition and conference centre of European XFEL offers a fascinating scientific experience. Together with the DESY visitor centre DESYUM, which is due to open in 2025, it will take visitors on an even more comprehensive journey of discovery into modern research with X-ray light sources and particle physics.

Guido Wendt, State Secretary for Science, Research and Culture, Schleswig-Holstein: “European XFEL enables cutting-edge international research, with outstanding experiments and brilliant results that inspire the global scientific community. We also want to communicate this to the public – and especially to schoolchildren. The new exhibition and conference centre with its two laboratories for schoolchildren will provide us with excellent support in the future.”

Eva Gümbel, State Councilor, Authority for Science, Research, Gender Equality and Districts of Hamburg: “At the European XFEL, researchers from all over the world carry out unique experiments and develop new research opportunities. With the new exhibition and conference centre, this can be experienced directly by students: through interactive exhibits, original pieces and multimedia presentations. The combination of excellent research and knowledge transfer is a real benefit for our science location and a great experience for all visitors.”

Schenefeld's mayor Christiane Küchenhof: “Every lighthouse is unique, but the town of Schenefeld now has the most unique lighthouse in the world. The visitor and conference centre with this beautiful name will now share its light with many guests. I am delighted about this important new attraction on the Schenefeld science campus.”

Council Chair Prof. Federico Boscherini: “The European XFEL Council unanimously approved the construction of the visitor centre in November 2018. It was highlighted that the main goal of the centre is to communicate European XFEL activities on different educational levels and to provide a clear picture of the societal impact of the facility. As electrons and photons are not visible, it is of great importance to explain to the public what research with high-intensity X-rays is about.”

Prof. Thomas Feurer, Chairman of the Management Board of European XFEL: “With our new exhibition and conference centre, we have created a state-of-the-art, prestigious home for science communication. Here we welcome visitors from

all over the world in an open and inviting atmosphere and offer them fascinating insights into our pioneering and socially highly relevant research. This centre is a symbol of our aspiration to make science tangible and promote exchange between science and the public.”

Nicole Elleuche, Managing Director and Administrative Director of European XFEL, adds: “The Lighthouse is a new focal point for school students from near and far. We are delighted to have significantly expanded our offer for schools with the Xcool Lab and thus have even more opportunities to promote young people's interest in science.”

The building was designed by David Bucker, architect and managing partner of the DBCO Group: “Despite many years of experience, testing in 3D models and visualisations, a building like the Lighthouse is also an experiment, the results of which never cease to amaze. Today, we can jointly recognise that the experiment has been very successful. The play of light that the façade conjures up on the exposed concrete, for example, is something we could not have visualised so beautifully in advance,” explains Bucker.

The exhibition, which centres on a model of the X-ray laser, was conceived and designed by the research facility together with the Berlin agency Archimedes Exhibitions. Interactive exhibits bring the research facility to life for the public and explain applications of the results. Additional rooms are planned for virtual reality and film screenings.

“The fascination of research and the close cooperation between Archimedes Exhibitions and the European XFEL teams have resulted in a special exhibition that is well worth seeing. It makes visible and tangible what is actually hidden from our eyes,” says Jörg Schmidtsiefen, who as former managing director of Archimedes Exhibitions has been involved in the project from the very beginning.

A distinct highlight are objects specially created for European XFEL by the Hamburg-based artist collective Well Wired Team: a light installation of oversized sculptures crocheted from wire, which will be opened on 28 November. The sculptures are inspired by biomolecules being researched at European XFEL.

In the Xcool Lab, school students can carry out their own physics or molecular biology experiments in line with the curriculum. Both are important fields of work at European XFEL. Teachers can book the all-day events for their classes or courses on the website <https://www.xfel.eu/xcoolab.de>.

The construction costs for the Lighthouse totalled about 15 million euros. The costs were borne by the European XFEL partner countries in proportion to their shares; Germany—the Federal Ministry of Education and Research as well as the states of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein—accounted for about 7.5 million euros. Schleswig-Holstein in addition contributes 2 million euros and one teaching position for the Xcool Lab.

Opening hours and the booking system for guided tours can be found at <https://www.xfel.eu/lighthouse>.

About European XFEL

European XFEL is an international research facility of superlatives in the Hamburg metropolitan region: 27,000 X-ray laser flashes per second and a luminosity that is a billion times higher than the best conventional X-ray radiation sources offer completely new research opportunities. Research groups from all over the world can use the European X-ray laser to decipher atomic details of viruses or cells, take three-dimensional images of the nanocosmos, film chemical reactions and investigate processes that occur inside planets.

The non-profit research organisation works closely with the Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron DESY in Hamburg Bahrenfeld and other international institutions. European XFEL employs more than 500 people. Twelve countries are currently involved in the research facility: Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland,

Slovakia, Spain, Hungary and the United Kingdom. More information at https://www.xfel.eu/index_eng.html.

URL for press release: https://www.xfel.eu/index_eng.html (Homepage of European XFEL)

URL for press release: <https://www.xfel.eu/lighthouse> (Lighthouse)

URL for press release: https://www.xfel.eu/xcoolab_de (Xcool Lab)



A walk through the interactive exhibition.

Axel Heim

Foto: European XFEL



The cutting of the red ribbon marks the official opening of the Lighthouse exhibition and conference centre.
Axel Heimken
Foto: European XFEL