



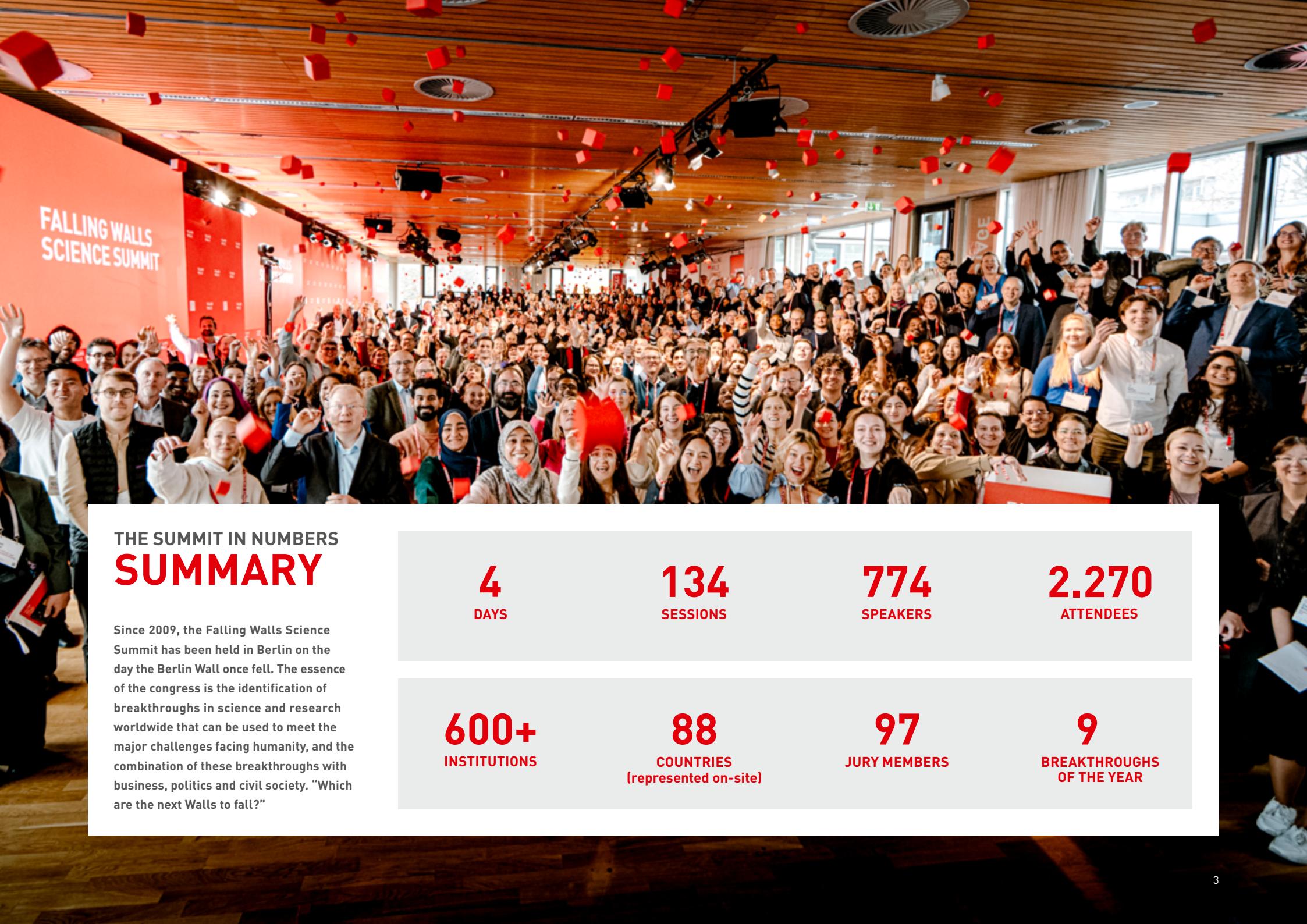
**REPORT 2025 THE GLOBAL MEETING  
FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION LEADERS**  
PARTNERSHIP OFFER 2026

**FALLING  
WALLS  
SCIENCE  
SUMMIT**

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## THE SUMMIT IN NUMBERS **SUMMARY**

Since 2009, the Falling Walls Science Summit has been held in Berlin on the day the Berlin Wall once fell. The essence of the congress is the identification of breakthroughs in science and research worldwide that can be used to meet the major challenges facing humanity, and the combination of these breakthroughs with business, politics and civil society. "Which are the next Walls to fall?"

**4**  
DAYS

**134**  
SESSIONS

**774**  
SPEAKERS

**2.270**  
ATTENDEES

**600+**  
INSTITUTIONS

**88**  
COUNTRIES  
(represented on-site)

**97**  
JURY MEMBERS

**9**  
BREAKTHROUGHS  
OF THE YEAR

## THE FALLING WALLS SCIENCE SUMMIT CONCEPT

# FOUR DAYS OF BREAKTHROUGH THINKING

Explore countless opportunities to connect, network and engage across scientific disciplines. Participate in person or join virtually from anywhere in the world.

## PITCHES



World-class pitch competitions in Emerging Talents, Science Start-Ups and Science Engagement welcome their Finalists to pitch their projects live on stage. The winners in these categories and the winner of the Women's Impact Award receive the Falling Walls Science Breakthrough of the Year title and present their scientific breakthroughs on the final day of the Summit.

### FALLING WALLS LAB

An international pitch competition for the next generation's leading scientists.

### FALLING WALLS FEMALE SCIENCE TALENTS

Promoting female leadership in science, business and society.

### FALLING WALLS ENGAGE

A global platform for science engagers who actively involve the public in science.

### FALLING WALLS VENTURE

An international platform for the most promising science start-ups.

6 NOV

## GIPFEL FÜR FORSCHUNG UND INNOVATION

7 NOV



The Gipfel für Forschung und Innovation 2025 brings together politics, science and business to debate research and innovation policy. Under the theme "Time to act—For greater competitiveness in Germany and Europe," it explores solutions for transformation, cooperation and security.

## BCG CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

7 NOV



BCG's Climate & Sustainability Summit examines how evolving economic systems, informed by climate science, political realities, and business leadership, can overcome short-termism and turn sustainability challenges into opportunities.

## THE FALLING WALLS SCIENCE SUMMIT CONCEPT



### CIRCLE

Falling Walls bridges science and society by bringing together global leaders from research, business, policymaking and media to discuss solutions to today's most pressing issues.



### BREAK-THROUGHS

On the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, Falling Walls showcases outstanding research in inspiring talks. Every 9 November, "the brightest minds on the planet" (BBC) gather to ask: Which are the next walls to fall in science and society?

FALLING  
WALLS  
**PLENARY  
TABLES**

FALLING  
WALLS  
**IMPACT  
DIALOGUES**

FALLING  
WALLS  
**INSIGHTS CAFÉ**

FALLING  
WALLS  
**GLOBAL  
CONNECTIONS**

FALLING  
WALLS  
**ROUND  
TABLES**

FALLING  
WALLS  
**EXECUTIVE  
TABLES**

FALLING  
WALLS  
**SYMPOSIUM**

FALLING  
WALLS  
**BREAKTHROUGHS  
OF THE YEAR**

FALLING  
WALLS  
**BREAKTHROUGH  
FORUM**

SUMMARY | THE FALLING WALLS WORLD MAP 2025

# 128 COUNTRIES—A WORLDWIDE AUDIENCE

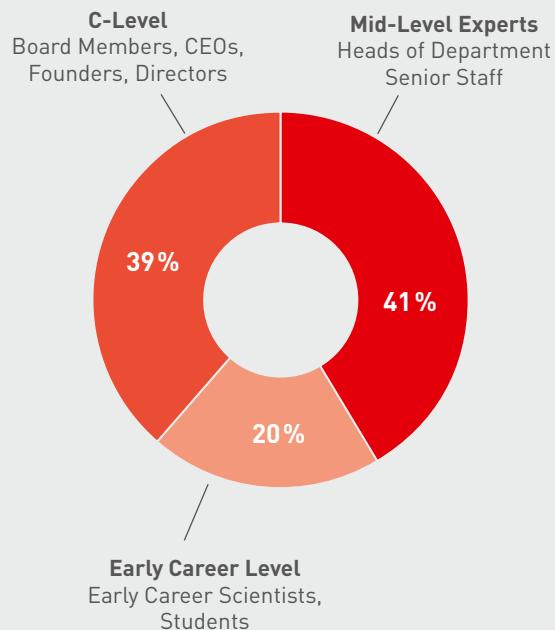
Participants from all over the world gather—online and on-site—for the Falling Walls Science Summit.



## SUMMARY

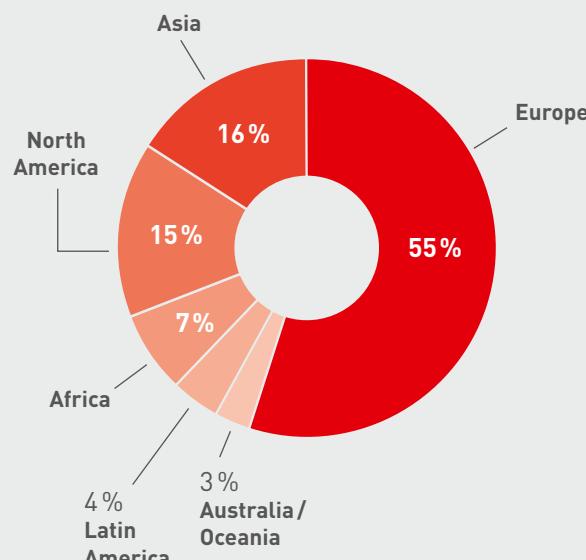
# HIGH LEVEL

Falling Walls brings together the leaders of today and tomorrow.



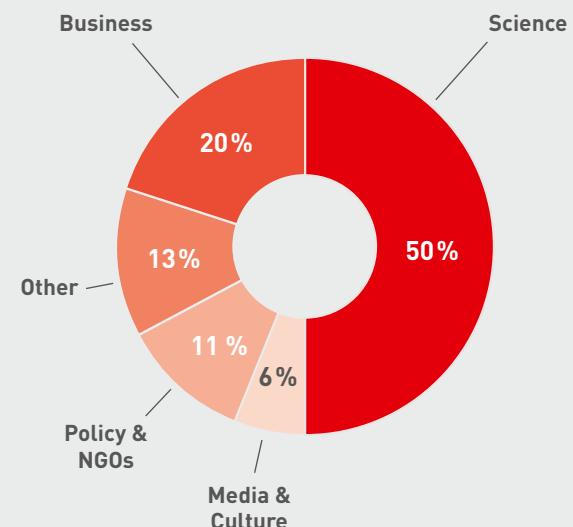
# INTERNATIONAL GUESTS BY REGION

Falling Walls brings together all the world regions\*.



# ALL SECTORS

Falling Walls brings together all sectors.



\*International participants not including those from Germany.

# OPEN



**“THIS IS THE BEST SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION SUMMIT ANYWHERE. I THINK IT’S A BIT LIKE THE MODERN DAY DAVOS FOR SCIENCE.”**

**David Gann** Chair of UK Industrial Fusion Solutions, GB



**“THE CONTENT IS ALWAYS FRESH. THE SPEAKERS ARE ALWAYS NEW. YOU NEVER GET BORED. THIS IS THE ONLY SCIENCE CONFERENCE I COME TO EVERY YEAR.”**

**Evrim Bunn** Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), US

# FALLING WALLS PITCHES

# PITCH COMPETITIONS

The next generation of global talent takes the stage with breakthrough ideas for the future.



## FALLING WALLS LAB

Falling Walls Lab is a global pitch competition that brings together an interdisciplinary pool of students and early-career professionals, providing a stage for their breakthrough ideas in three-minute pitches. Leading academic institutions send a total of 100 winners to the Global Finale in Berlin, where they compete for the prestigious Breakthrough Winner title in the Emerging Talents category.



## FALLING WALLS FEMALE SCIENCE TALENTS

The Female Science Talents programme encourages early-career women researchers to take a step forward in their career through tailored workshops, peer-to-peer coaching, global networking and high-level events. The programme seeks to both broadly promote female talents and elevate exceptional female researchers.



## FALLING WALLS ENGAGE

Falling Walls Engage highlights the most inspiring Science Engagement projects worldwide. Supported by the Hannover Re Foundation, the programme builds bridges between science and society, focusing on projects that address climate change, sustainability and innovation. The 15 Finalists presented their 5-minute project pitches on stage at the Falling Walls Science Summit.



## FALLING WALLS VENTURE

Falling Walls Venture is a pitch competition for the most promising science start-ups, nominated by outstanding academic institutions from around the world. Pioneering founders who have turned science into business demonstrate how entrepreneurial solutions can help solve today's most pressing challenges.

FALLING WALLS LAB PITCHES

# INNOVATIVE IDEAS FROM EMERGING TALENTS



## FALLING WALLS LAB

2,750+  
APPLICATIONS

82  
INTERNATIONAL  
LABS

100  
INTERNATIONAL  
LAB WINNERS  
AT THE GLOBAL  
FINALE

9100+  
PRESENTERS  
SINCE 2011

Falling Walls Lab is an international and interdisciplinary pitch competition where students and early-career scientists present their breakthrough ideas on stage. In 2025, renowned institutions around the globe hosted 82 international Labs in 60 countries and sent their 100 Winners to compete at the Global Finale at the Falling Walls Science Summit in Berlin.

Together with its partner DAAD, Falling Walls Lab curated an inspiring multi-day experience for these young innovators. Programme highlights included a welcome event at the Italian Embassy and a deep dive into the German research ecosystem during Research Insight Day—offering participants first-hand information on the opportunities for them in Germany.

### How to get involved

- Apply to a Lab: You have a breakthrough idea, are over the age of 18 and are currently enrolled at university or already have a degree? Our local Labs look forward to your application.
- Launch a Lab: Contact us if you want to bring an international science competition to your institution and join the Falling Walls Lab family.

➤ Become a partner: Get in touch with the next generation's leading scientists and help create opportunities for them to excel.

Visit: [falling-walls.com/lab](http://falling-walls.com/lab)



FALLING WALLS FEMALE SCIENCE TALENTS

# PROMOTING FEMALE LEADERSHIP



**"THIS IS MORE THAN A PROGRAMME, IT'S A MOVEMENT"**

Maira Jimenez Sanchez, University of British Colombia, CA – Intensive Track 2025

## FALLING WALLS FEMALE SCIENCE TALENTS

**471**

APPLICATIONS  
FROM  
82 COUNTRIES

Intensive Track

**85**

APPLICATIONS  
FROM  
41 COUNTRIES

Women's Impact Award



| Foundation

**DFG** Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft

THE ELSEVIER  
FOUNDATION

 VolkswagenStiftung

The programme empowers visionary women with a strong research background to take up a leadership role in science, business or society. Falling Walls promotes responsible leadership, diversity of talent, and encourages participants to become part of an international network of outstanding female science talents.

### OUR ACTIVITIES:

- › Leadership skills webinar series
- › Career talks
- › Peer-to-peer exchange
- › International Spring Gathering in Berlin—workshops and talks
- › International Fall Gathering in Berlin—workshops and talks

- › The Women's Impact Award including celebratory dinner
- › Executive Table and/or other direct involvement in the Falling Walls Science Summit

Visit: [falling-walls.com/female-science-talents](http://falling-walls.com/female-science-talents)

FALLING WALLS ENGAGE PITCHES

# THE MOST INSPIRING SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS



**“IT’S ENCOURAGING TO SEE HOW INNOVATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ACTION COME TOGETHER IN SUCH MEANINGFUL WAYS.”**

Olaf Brock, Member of the Hannover Re Foundation's Board of Directors, DE

## FALLING WALLS ENGAGE

**236**  
APPLICATIONS  
FROM  
84 COUNTRIES

**30**  
SHORTLISTED  
APPLICATIONS  
FROM 25  
COUNTRIES

**15**  
FINALISTS

**10**  
INTERNATIONAL  
FALLING WALLS  
ENGAGE HUBS

**3,500+**  
COMMUNITY  
MEMBERS FROM  
150+ COUNTRIES

Hannover Re Foundation

Falling Walls Engage is an international pitch competition that showcases the most impactful projects that actively promote public participation in science. The programme is dedicated to advancing solutions for climate adaptation through best practices in science engagement, emphasising innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration to make a real difference. 15 Finalists

from 15 countries presented their projects in five minutes at the Falling Walls Science Summit in Berlin. In addition to the pitch competition, Falling Walls Engage builds hubs for science engagement globally. Ten hubs across Argentina, Australia, Canada, Greece, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, South Africa and Sweden connect scientists and the public with events throughout the year.

### How to get involved

- › Apply: You run a science engagement initiative and are over the age of 18? We are looking forward to your application.
- › Join a hub: Become part of our local networks and connect with science engagers worldwide or contact us to launch your own Engage Hub.

› Become a partner: Help science engagers compete, connect globally and create impactful initiatives together with us.

Visit: [falling-walls.com/engage](http://falling-walls.com/engage)

## FALLING WALLS VENTURE PITCHES

# THE MOST PROMISING SCIENCE-BASED START-UPS



**“THE SHEER AMOUNT OF THOUGHT, INNOVATION, TIME, SCIENCE, AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT IS SIMPLY INFECTIOUS.”**

Cyriac Roeding co-founder and CEO of Earli, US

## FALLING WALLS VENTURE

**300+**

NOMINATIONS  
+55 % compared  
to 2024

**187**

SHORTLISTED  
START-UPS  
+62 % compared  
to 2024

**37**

COUNTRIES

**3**

CLUSTERS  
• Sustainability  
• Engineering of the Future  
• Health Solutions



Falling Walls Venture is a pitch competition for the most promising science start-ups nominated by outstanding academic institutions around the world. These include, among others, MIT, Stanford University, University of Cambridge, Oxford University, ETH Zürich and the University of Adelaide. Pioneering founders who have turned science into business demonstrate how

entrepreneurial solutions can help solve today's most pressing challenges. Venture's mission is to spotlight the most groundbreaking science-based start-ups from around the world. In 2025, the Advisory Board carefully selected 25 start-ups from eight countries, and the esteemed Jury—chaired by Stefan von Holtzbrinck—faced the difficult task of choosing the winners in the

categories Sustainability, Engineering of the Future and Health Solutions. Beyond the competition, Venture is part of Falling Walls Science-preneurs and fosters a network of scientific institutions, incubators and investors to create an ecosystem that helps science-based start-ups succeed. In several cases, Venture has helped start-ups with both investments and exits.

### How to get involved

- Are you a research institution? Nominate your best start-up(s) and encourage them to apply.
- Work with Venture on tailoring a programme for science start-ups that connects them to the people who will help them succeed.

Visit: [falling-walls.com/venture](http://falling-walls.com/venture)

THE CONFERENCE INSIDE THE CONFERENCE

# THE GLOBAL FORUM FOR SCIENCEPRENEURS

Our Sciencepreneurs Forum's mission is to build connections that help science-based start-ups succeed. We create events that connect spin-offs, industry leaders, research organisations, venture capital and policy makers for success.

Business leaders and VCs flock to the Falling Walls Science Summit to meet with esteemed scientists and the next generation of science start-ups for the most cutting-edge insights into deep tech. The Sciencepreneurs Forum creates opportunities for them to unite forces, including meet-ups, panel discussions and a pitch competition at the Science Summit and year-round.

**440**

BUSINESS  
LEADERS

**35**

SCIENCE-BASED  
START-UPS FROM  
OVER 10 COUNTRIES

**50**

VENTURE  
CAPITALISTS

**100+**

NOMINATING  
ACADEMIC  
INSTITUTIONS

**“THERE'S SO MUCH ENTHUSIASM, SO MUCH BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATION IN SCIENCEPRENEURSHIP THAT'S REALLY INSPIRING.”**

**Andreas Zaby** Federal Agency for Disruptive Innovation (SPRIND), DE





**“IT'S AMAZING, THE ENTHUSIASM, THE YOUNG PEOPLE SHOWING THE WAY. SO WE ARE VERY EXCITED TO BE PART OF THIS.”**

**Violeta Vázquez-Rojas Maldonado** Undersecretary at the Secretariat of Science, Humanities, Technology, and innovation, Secihti, MX



## PROGRAMME SPECIAL

# IG NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS

The Ig Nobel Prize is an annual award honouring scientific research that is unusual, imaginative and surprising, works that make people laugh and then think. While the prizes are a playful counterpart to the prestigious Nobel Prizes, real Nobel laureates often take part in the ceremonies, and at least one scientist has won both an Ig Nobel and a Nobel Prize.

At the Falling Walls Science Summit 2025, the Ig Nobel Face-to-Face brought together past and current Ig Nobel laureates to discuss their unconventional findings. The winners gathered on stage to ask each other questions about their work alongside Ig Nobel Prize founder Marc Abrahams.

Featuring:

**Marc Abrahams** Founder of the Ig Nobel Prize

**Kees Moeliker** 2003 Ig Nobel Biology Prize winner

**Vincenzo Maria Schimenti** 2025 Ig Nobel Physics Prize winner

**Ivan Di Terlizzi** 2025 Ig Nobel Physics Prize winner



**“FIRST MAKE THEM LAUGH, THEN MAKE THEM THINK.”**

**Marc Abrahams** Founder of Ig Nobel Prize, US



Marc Abrahams

# SEARCH CIRCLE



# “IT'S THAT SENSE OF OPTIMISM THAT MAKES FALLING WALLS SO GOOD.”

**Brian Schmidt**, Nobel Laureate in Physics, AU



# “THE SCIENCE SUMMIT IS UNIQUE FOR ITS MIX OF SCIENTISTS, POLITICIANS, MEDIA AND INDUSTRY—ALL COMING TOGETHER OVER COFFEE OR WINE. THAT'S WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS.”

**Daniel Chamovitz**, President of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, IL

## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

# DEBATES & SYMPOSIA

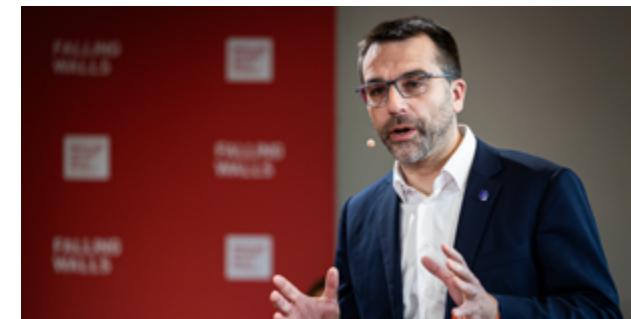
Falling Walls offers dynamic discussion formats for leaders in science, policy and industry to tackle pressing issues, foster cross-disciplinary dialogue and shape the future of innovation. Ministers, Nobel laureates and experts explore the topics defining our era.

### FALLING WALLS SUMMITS



This year, the Stifterverband presented the “Gipfel für Forschung und Innovation” and BCG presented its “Climate and Sustainability Summit”—unique conferences for high-level scientific debate. — [page 22/23](#)

### FALLING WALLS ROUND TABLES



From presentations to open discussions—drawing attention to topics from broader issues in science and society to specific scientific developments. — [page 28](#)

### FALLING WALLS PLENARY TABLES



Plenary Tables are the most prestigious format offered by Falling Walls Circle. International experts, ministers, CEOs and presidents debate global challenges and strategies in a TV talk show-style setup. — [page 24](#)

### FALLING WALLS INSIGHTS CAFÉ



The “Insights Café” turns a public space into a hub of innovation. It simplifies complex scientific concepts, with interactive and compelling presentations. — [page 38](#)

## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

### FALLING WALLS IMPACT DIALOGUES



Impact Dialogues offer dynamic, engaging scientific discussions across multiple venues. They encourage movement and audience interaction, fostering impactful discourse. — [page 40](#)

### WILHELM & ELSE HERAEUS SYMPOSIUM BREAKTHROUGHS IN PHYSICAL SCIENCES



Wilhelm and Else Heraeus Foundation and Falling Walls hosted this unique format to bring together international researchers in such fields as quantum physics and chemistry. — [page 42](#)

### FALLING WALLS GLOBAL CONNECTIONS



Global Connections is a bespoke, interactive format that highlights national or international research and innovation agendas, science networks or initiatives and connects them globally. — [page 44](#)

### FALLING WALLS EXECUTIVE TABLES



Invitation-only events with a strong focus on networking, bringing global science leaders together to connect and develop new ideas. — [page 48](#)

# GIPFEL FÜR FORSCHUNG UND INNOVATION

The Gipfel für Forschung und Innovation (Summit for Research and Innovation) offers a forum for politics, science and business to debate current developments in research and innovation policy. This high-level summit addresses our time's key challenges: transformation, cooperation and security.



## KEYNOTE

**Dorothee Bär** Minister of Research, Technology and Space, DE



## PANEL 1: STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION SYSTEM

This panel examined how the research and innovation system must adapt to new challenges by reshaping its structures, strengthening collaboration and improving fund and labour division. It explored how science, industry and politics can work together more effectively to accelerate innovation and drive the necessary transformations.

**Holger Hanselka** Fraunhofer Society, DE  
**Reinhold Geilsdörfer** Dieter Schwarz Foundation, DE / **Sabine Klauke** Airbus, DE / **Wolfgang Wick** German Science and Humanities Council (Wissenschaftsrat), DE / **Thomas Jarzombek** German Bundestag, DE

**Moderator:** **Irene Bertschek** Chairwoman of the Expert Commission for Research and Innovation (EFI), DE



## PANEL 2: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COOPERATION IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD

This panel explored how international scientific cooperation can be maintained despite a more fragmented global order, and what this means for research security, data flows and knowledge exchange. It discussed how Germany and Europe can attract top talent and reinforce their role as centres of open, free science, while examining how industrial research should position itself within the shifting geopolitical landscape.

**Astrid Lambrecht** Forschungszentrum Jülich, DE / **Stefan Asenkerschbaumer** BOSCH, DE / **Hugh Brady** Imperial College London, GB / **Thierry Coulhon** Institut Polytechnique de Paris, FR / **Maria Leptin** European Research Council, BE

**Moderator:** **Bettina Rockenbach** President of the National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, DE



## PANEL 3: INNOVATION FOR SECURITY – INNOVATION THROUGH SECURITY

This panel examined Europe's current position in security-relevant research and the extent of existing collaboration between business and science. It addressed the cultural, structural and regulatory barriers that hinder cooperation and discussed which new structures and responsibilities are needed to strengthen joint efforts in this field.

**Tanja Brühl** Technical University Darmstadt, DE / **Thomas Mason** Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), US / **Christian Hummert** Cyberagentur, DE / **Nils Schmid** Ministry of Defence, DE / **Chiara Pedersoli** OHB System AG, DE

**Moderator:** **Georg Schütte** CEO of the Volkswagen Foundation, DE

# BCG CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

BCG's Climate & Sustainability Summit, Back to Square Zero for Sustainability? From Evidence to Earnings: Breaking the Wall of Economic Short-Termism, brings the business lens to the challenges of sustainability, scientific urgency and climate action, with high-level panels examining how sustainable leadership can foster a competitive advantage.

**"[FALLING WALLS SCIENCE SUMMIT] IS A PLACE TO LEARN TO TEAR DOWN SILOS AND THINK HOLISTICALLY. BECAUSE ONLY IF WE BRING ALL DISCIPLINES TOGETHER WILL WE SOLVE THE BIG PROBLEMS OF OUR TIME."**

**Marcus Pleyer** State Secretary of the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space, DE



## PART 1: POLITICS MAY HAVE CHANGED, THE SCIENCE HASN'T

This opening chapter brought together Johan Rockström, Maria Leptin and Nobel Laureate Brian Schmidt to discuss the stark realities of climate science and the urgency for action. Despite shifting political priorities, the facts remain unchanged. A policy perspective from Frank Wetzel highlighted how governments can drive real progress.

**Michael Brigl** Boston Consulting Group, DE / **Johanna Pütz** Boston Consulting Group, DE / **Johan Rockström** Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, DE / **Brian Schmidt** Australian National University, AU / **Maria Leptin** President of European Research Council, BE / **Michael Bröcker** Table.Briefings, DE / **Frank Wetzel** Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy, DE

**Moderators:** Michael Brigl, Johanna Pütz, Michael Bröcker



## PART 2: HOW CLIMATE ACTION CAN BE A BUSINESS CASE

BCG's Patrick Herhold and Jens Burchardt reassessed the business case for climate action. They showed that the economics of decarbonisation are shifting fast—across many sectors, green solutions can drive growth and resilience as the green economy benefits from the second highest growth rate across sectors.

**Jens Burchardt** Boston Consulting Group, DE / **Patrick Herhold** Boston Consulting Group, DE

**Moderators:** Jens Burchardt & Patrick Herhold

## SPEAKER AND CEO DINNER AT STUDIO OLAFUR ELIASSON

Selected guests were invited to an exclusive dinner in this unique artistic setting.



## PART 3: MARGIN WITH MISSION—WHAT COMPANIES CAN ACCELERATE

Executives from leading companies, green tech innovators and senior economic experts explored how to turn climate ambition into measurable progress. Three deep dives looked at scaling green tech and steering the energy transition.

**Saskia Bruysten** Carbon Equity and Yunus Social Business, DE / **Veronika Grimm** Technische Universität Nürnberg, DE / **Stefan Kapferer** 50Hertz Transmission, DE / **Michael Karrer** ZF Group, DE / **Guido Kerkhoff** Klöckner & Co, DE / **Frank Meyer** Robert Bosch GmbH, DE / **Lucio Milanesi** Proxima Fusion, DE / **Georg Stamatelopoulos** EnBW Energie Baden-Württemberg AG, DE / **Katharina Tomoff** DHL, DE / **Ulf Zillig** Mercedes-Benz AG, DE / **Kai Monheim**, CEMUNE (Centre for Multilateral Negotiations), DE / **Lilian Schwich** cylib GmbH, DE

**Moderators:** Johanna Pütz, Jens Burchardt, Patrick Herholdt

## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

# PLENARY TABLES

The centrepiece of the Falling Walls Circle are the Plenary Tables, where global challenges are debated publicly, in a series of moderated panel discussions. We invite leading international experts to share their perspectives on how science can be employed to better benefit humanity and the world around us. To further extend the discourse to the audience, we invite participants at the venue to contribute their questions. Together, we set new topics on the international scientific agenda.

**“[WHAT’S] PARTICULARLY ENCOURAGING FOR ME IS THE INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION; THE CONVERSATION ABOUT HOW WE COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER ACROSS THE WORLD IN TERMS OF THE SCIENCE WE’RE DOING.”**

Paul Kearns Director Argonne National Laboratory, US



## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE



**FRONTIERS PLANET PRIZE: CAN SCIENCE SAVE THE PLANET?**

**Robert Arlinghaus**  
Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries, DE

**Michiel Scheffer**  
European Innovation Council, BE

**Johanna Pütz**  
Boston Consulting Group, DE

**Genevieve Biggs**  
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, US

**Moderator**  
**Jean-Claude Burgelman**  
Frontiers Planet Prize, CH

**Zahra Kalantari**  
KTH Royal Institute of Technology, SE

**AFRICA'S ENERGY SHIFT: JUST AND GLOBAL COLLABORATION**

**Moderator**  
**Jennifer Porto**  
NYU Berlin, DE

**Bernd Rech**  
Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin, DE

**Catherine Ngila**  
African Foundation for Women and Youth in Education, Sciences, Technology and Innovation, KE

**Candace Eslick**  
University of Cape Town, ZA

**Sven Godorr**  
Sasol, DE

**ACADEMIA UNDER ATTACK: ACTION AGAINST ANTIDEMOCRATIC THREATS**

**Moderator**  
**Jens Martin Gurr**  
University of Duisburg-Essen, DE

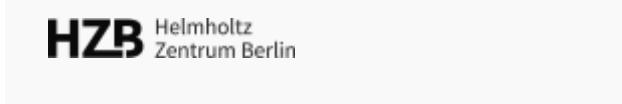
**Patrick Cramer**  
Max Planck Society, DE

**Daniel Ziblatt**  
Harvard University, US

**Eva Inés Obergfell**  
Leipzig University, DE

**Maria Leptin**  
European Research Council, BE

**Anna-Sara Lind**  
Uppsala University, SE



## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

# PLENARY TABLES



**FUSION MADE IN GERMANY: DREAM OR FUTURE REALITY?**

**Moderator**  
Melanie Windridge  
Fusion Energy Insights, GB

**David Gann**  
UK Industrial Fusion Solutions, GB

**Hartmut Zohm**  
Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics, DE

**Peter Schrotth**  
Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space, DE

**Frank Nürnberg**  
Heraeus Covantics, DE



**BACKING WILD IDEAS: HEIS, RESEARCH & INNOVATION IN EUROPE**

**Heinrich Arnold**  
EIT, DE

**Mark Thomson**  
CERN, CH

**Milena Stoycheva**  
The Edge, BG

**Rafael Laguna de la Vera**  
Federal Agency for Disruptive Innovation – SPRIND, DE

**Moderator**  
Stacie Bloom  
New York University, US

**Orla Feely**  
University College Dublin, IE

**SPRIN-D**



**WILDFIRE RESILIENCE: HARNESSING DATA, MODELS AND AI**

**Moderator**  
Michael Falkowski  
Earth Fire Alliance, US

**David Winnacker**  
XyloPlan, US

**Cesilia Mambile**  
University of Dodoma, TZ

**Ilkay Altintas**  
University of California San Diego, US

**Karen O'Connor**  
Earth Fire Alliance, US

**Hussam Mahmoud**  
Vanderbilt University, US



# FALLING WALLS CIRCLE KEY RESULTS



**THE FUTURE OF IMAGING IN THE AGE OF AI**

**Moderator**  
George Caputa  
Nature, DE

**Martin Hetzer**  
Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA), AT

**Jason Swedlow**  
Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, US

**Paul Matthews**  
Imperial College London, GB

**Stephani Otte**  
Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, US

CHAN ZUCKERBERG Biohub Network



## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

# ROUND TABLES

Round Tables are a discussion format that allows for presentations, interviews and open debate. The topics can range from broader issues in science and society to very specific aspects of scientific developments, which are addressed by international experts in their respective fields. In many cases, the audience is invited to actively participate, and Round Tables are also available to watch via livestream.

**“I'M DEEPLY IMPRESSED BY THE ATMOSPHERE, THE PANELS AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AN ENORMOUS NUMBER OF VERY INTERESTING PEOPLE.”**

Rolf-Dieter Jungk State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space, DE

The infographic features a central white circle with the text "SCALING UP NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS: PITFALLS AND POTENTIALS" in red. Surrounding this central circle are six circular portraits of speakers, each with their name and affiliation below it. The speakers are: Moderator Conny Czymoch (DE), Franziska Tanneberger (Greifswald Mire Centre, DE), Alan W. Organschi (Yale School of Architecture, US), Alexander Bonde (German Federal Environmental Foundation, DE), Niklas Fanelsa (Technical University of Munich, DE), and Heike Riel (IBM Research, CH). The DBU logo is at the bottom left.

The infographic features a central white circle with the text "A QUANTUM FUTURE: JOINING FORCES OF ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY" in red. Surrounding this central circle are six circular portraits of speakers, each with their name and affiliation below it. The speakers are: Sebastian Blatt (planqc, DE), Ian Walmsley (Imperial College London, GB), Stefan Filipp (Technical University of München, DE), Aimee Gunther (National Research Council of Canada (NRC), CA), and Munich Quantum Valley (represented by a stylized infinity symbol). The DBU logo is at the bottom left.

## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE



**KIWI POLICY TALK: KNOWLEDGE SECURITY IN PRACTICE**

**Jessica Adam**  
Carleton University, CA

**Annette Barkhaus**  
Science Council, DE

**Tommy Shih**  
KTH Royal Institute of Technology, SE

**Jennifer Johnson**  
Loughborough University, GB

**Moderator** **Marianna Evenstein**  
Deutsche Welle, DE

**TECHNOLOGY FORESIGHT: SHAPING TOMORROW'S INNOVATIONS**

**Claudia Eckert**  
Fraunhofer Institute for Applied and Integrated Security AISEC, DE

**Moderator** **Georg Schütte**  
Volkswagen Foundation, DE

**Joël Mesot**  
ETH Zurich, CH

**Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln** **WZB Berlin Social Science Center, DE**

**Norbert Holtkamp**  
Hoover Institution, US

**Moderator** **Marianna Evenstein**  
Deutsche Welle, DE

**BIOMANUFACTURING: SCALING THE SUSTAINABLE BIOECONOMY**

**Siobhan Coster**  
Eclipse Ingredients, AU

**Denys Villa Gomez**  
University of Queensland, AU

**Claudia Vickers**  
Queensland University of Technology, AU

**Volker Sieber**  
Technical University of Munich, DE

**Moderator** **Ian O'Hara**  
Queensland University of Technology, AU

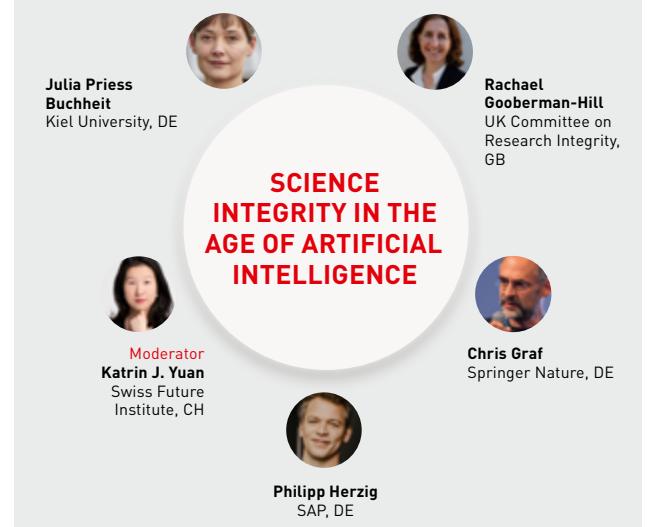


Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service



# FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

## ROUND TABLES



## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE



**SUPER-CHARGING HEALTH-CARE: AI, DATA & INFRASTRUCTURES**

Philip Gerbert  
TUM Venture Labs, DE

Carsten Marr  
Helmholtz Munich, DE

Deepali Sood  
United Nations Population Fund, US

Peter Robinson  
Berlin Institute of Health at Charité (BIH), DE

**Moderator**  
Petra Ritter  
Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin, DE

**PRECISION HEALTH: ADVANCING MEDICINE AND CARE WITH AI**

Caroline Gubser Keller  
Novartis, CH

Stephen Quake  
Stanford University, US

Fabian Theis  
Helmholtz Munich, DE

**Moderator**  
Eicke Latz  
German Rheumatology Research Center (DRFZ), DE

**Moderator**  
Frank Laukien  
Bruker Corporation, US

**RESILIENT PHARMA: INNOVATION AMID GEOPOLITICAL SHIFTS**

Moderator  
Krysia Sommers  
Bayer, DE

Hendrik Streeck  
German Bundestag, DE

Gustavo Pesquin  
AskBio, US

Alice Aiken  
Dalhousie University, CA

Julianne McCall  
California Council on Science and Technology (CCST), US



# FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

## ROUND TABLES



**LONG-TERM INVESTMENT IN QUANTUM RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

**Moderator**  
**Jeanne Rubner**  
Technical University of Munich, DE

**Javad Shabani**  
New York University, US

**Scott Crowder**  
IBM Quantum, US

**Peter Leek**  
Oxford Quantum Circuits, GB

**Lauri Sainiemi**  
Microsoft Quantum, DK



**BOOSTING BIOMEDICAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS IN EUROPE**

**Trine Bartholdy**  
BioInnovation Institute, DK

**Alex Mihailidis**  
University of Toronto, CA

**Dora Handrea**  
University of Oxford, GB

**Christopher Baum**  
Berlin Institute of Health at Charité (BIH), DE

**Moderator**  
**Alexander Betts**  
University of Oxford, GB



**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COOPERATION – LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE**

**Moderator**  
**Jean-Claude Burgelman**  
Frontiers Planet Prize, CH

**Jana Havlíková**  
Ministry of Science, Research and Innovation, CZ

**Violeta Vázquez-Rojas Maldonado**  
Secretariat of Science, Humanities, Technology, and Innovation, MX

**Andrzej Szeptycki**  
Ministry of Science and Higher Education, PL



## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE



**KIWI POLICY TALK: INNOVATION & INDO-GERMAN ACADEMIC EXCHANGE**

**Suman Chakraborty**  
Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, IN

**Tessa Flatten**  
Technische Universität Dortmund, DE

**Moderator**  
**Andreas Zaby**  
Federal Agency for Disruptive Innovation (SPRIND), DE

**Alexandra-Gwyn Paetz**  
German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space, DE

**Katja Lasch**  
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), DE



**DEFENCE AS AN INNOVATION DRIVER: FROM LABORATORY TO LINE**

**Johannes Boie**  
Helsing, DE

**Moderator**  
**Constantin Häfner**  
Fraunhofer Society, DE

**Susanne Wiegand**  
Quantum-Systems, DE

**Roderich Kiesewetter**  
German Bundestag, DE

**Marten Tossings**  
Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research TNO, NL



**TREATING ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: RECENT ADVANCES AND CHALLENGES**

**Moderator**  
**David Patrician**  
RTL Nord, DE

**Ludger Dinkelborg**  
Lantheus, US

**Hanno Svoboda**  
Roche, CH

**Frauke Pohlki**  
AbbVie, DE

**Joachim L. Schultze**  
Deutsches Zentrum für Neurodegenerative Erkrankungen (DZNE), DE



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service



**vfa** Die forschenden  
Pharma-Unternehmen

# FALLING WALLS CIRCLE ROUND TABLES



Michelangelo  
Canzoneri  
Merck, DE



Yvonne Rode  
Siemens, DE

**INDUSTRIAL AI:  
UNLOCKING  
EUROPE'S  
GROWTH ENGINE  
TOGETHER**

**Moderator**  
**Krysia Sommers**  
Bayer, DE

**Cord Dohrmann**  
Evotec, DE



Mark Owen  
Sartorius, DE



Ola Engkvist  
AstraZeneca, GB

**THE RISE OF  
AUTONOMOUS  
LABS IN LIFE  
SCIENCES**



Rob Harkness  
Biosero, US

**SIEMENS**

**SARTORIUS**



**Moderator**  
**Georg Schütte**  
Volkswagen  
Foundation, DE



**Jenny Hestermann**  
Heidelberg  
University of  
Jewish Studies, DE



**Menahem Ben Sasson**  
Hebrew University of Jerusalem, IL



**Gabriele Hermani**  
German Federal  
Ministry of Research,  
Technology and  
Space, DE



**Patrick Cramer**  
Max Planck  
Society, DE

**60 YEARS OF  
ISRAELI-GERMAN  
SCIENCE  
DIPLOMACY:  
A ROLE MODEL?**

  
GEMEINNÜTZIGE  
**Hertie  
Stiftung**

## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE



**DEEP TECH: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF SMES**

Moderator  
Dagmar Schuller  
AudEERING, DE

Helmut Schönenberger  
UnternehmerTUM, DE

Gunther Wobser  
LAUDA, DE

Constantin Häfner  
Fraunhofer Institute for Lasertechnology ILT, DE

Hadas Erel  
Reichman University, IL



**EVIDENCE & PUBLIC DISCOURSE: ACADEMIA'S ROLE IN DEMOCRACY**

Moderator  
Silke Mülherr  
Alfred Landecker Foundation, DE

Fabian Klose  
University of Cologne, DE

Andrew Thompson  
Nuffield College, GB

Sudha David-Wilp  
German Marshall Fund, US



**NEURO-DEGENERATION: BREAKTHROUGHS AND NOVEL THERAPIES**

Moderator  
David Patrician  
RTL Nord, DE

Mathias Jucker  
German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE), DE

Angela Schulz  
University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, DE

Anastasia Khvorova  
UMass Chan Medical School, US



# FALLING WALLS CIRCLE ROUND TABLES



**Moderator**  
**Hadas Erel**  
Reichman University, IL

**Irit Hadar**  
University of Haifa, IL

**FUTURE OF KNOWLEDGE:  
AI, ETHICS AND GLOBAL INNOVATION**

**Daniel Senff**  
VDI Technologie-  
zentrum, DE

**Mikotaj Morzy**  
Poznan University of  
Technology, PL

**FALLING  
WALLS  
FOUNDATION**



**“THIS SUMMIT IS  
BRILLIANT ...  
REALLY IMPRESSIVE,  
REALLY EXCITING!”**

**Mark Thomson** Director General of CERN, CH





**“THE SUMMIT BRINGS TOGETHER POLITICIANS, SCHOLARS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE, BUT ALSO YOUNG RESEARCHERS WHO DISCUSS TOGETHER HOW TO ADVANCE SCIENCE AND INNOVATION.”**

**Andrzej Szeptycki** Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, PL



**“WE DISCUSSED INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION. IT WAS CONCRETE, IT WAS CLEAR, IT REVEALED NEW PERSPECTIVES.”**

**Thierry Coulhon** President of the Management Board of Institut Polytechnique de Paris, FR



Georg Schütte

FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

# INSIGHTS CAFÉ



**“THE SCIENCE SUMMIT IS SO IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT'S INSPIRING. YOU GET MANY NEW IDEAS THAT WILL CARRY YOU THROUGH THE YEARS.”**

Georg Schütte CEO of the Volkswagen Foundation, DE

The “Insights Café” brings scientific discourse into the heart of the venue, turning an ordinary public space into a hub of innovation and exchange.

## UNLOCKING INNOVATION POTENTIAL: STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

**Natascha Eckert** Academia-Business Advisor, Senior Fellow UIDP, DE / **Tove Rømo Grande** Kristiania University of Applied Sciences, NO / **Laura Sager** Director Science Talents & Entrepreneurship, Falling Walls Foundation, DE / **Rosanna West** EIT Higher Education Initiative, ES



YOUNG  
ENTREPRENEURS  
IN SCIENCE

## UNLOCKING INNOVATION POTENTIAL: A SCIENCEPENEURSHIP GAME

**Eva Kirchner** Young Entrepreneurs in Science, Falling Walls Foundation, DE / **Katharina Rosin** Young Entrepreneurs in Science, Falling Walls Foundation, DE



## BUILDING THRIVING INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

**Andrea Tüttenberg** ActiTrex, DE / **Philippa Köhnk** BRYCK Startup Alliance, DE / **Balzhan Orazbayeva** UIIN, NL / **Sarah Scheck** Falling Walls Foundation, DE



## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE



**“WHAT MAKES THE FALLING WALL SUMMIT SO SPECIAL AND UNIQUE FOR ME IS TO BE WITH SO MANY AMAZING PEOPLE WHO ARE SUCH CHAMPIONS FOR SCIENCE AT A TIME WHEN SCIENCE IS REALLY UNDER THREAT.”**

Stacie Bloom, incoming President and CEO of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, USA

### INSIGHTS CAFÉ: FLEXIBLE MINDS, INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP—REIMAGINING SCIENCE THROUGH COGNITIVE OPENNESS

Leor Zmigrod University of Cambridge, GB /  
Moderator: David Patrician RTL Nord, DE

FALLING  
WALLS  
FEMALE SCIENCE  
TALENTS

### BEYOND THE PARIS PROMISE: INSIGHTS FROM CLIMATE SCIENCE

Martin Keller Helmholtz Association, DE / Katja Matthes GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel, DE / Antoine Petit CNRS, FR / Julia Vismann radioeins/rbb, DE

HELMHOLTZ KLIMA  
Dialog-Plattform

### HIDDEN STRUCTURES: THE SECRET LIFE OF YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Monika Frech HPI d-school, DE / Anja Lehmann Hasso Plattner Institute, University of Potsdam, DE / Felix Naumann Hasso Plattner Institute, University of Potsdam, DE

**HPI** Hasso  
Plattner  
Institut  
Digital Engineering • Universität Potsdam

### START-UP NATION: BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS START-UP ECOSYSTEM

Allison Dring MADE OF AIR, DE /  
Julia Scheerer Bertelsmann Stiftung, DE

BertelsmannStiftung

FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

# IMPACT DIALOGUES



Impact Dialogues introduce a dynamic approach to scientific discourse, with diverse sessions unfolding across multiple venues throughout the day. Unlike other formats confined to a single room and style of exchange, Impact Dialogues encourage movement and feature a structure that fosters audience engagement. Whether it's a panel discussion, an open forum, or a workshop, Impact Dialogues pave the way for meaningful discourse.

## FALLING WALLS PITCHES: MEET THE 2025 SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS

Science Breakthrough of the Year, Science Start Ups  
Breaking the Wall of Inefficient AI Computation  
Lumai, James Spall Lumai, GB

Science Breakthrough of the Year, Science Engagement  
Breaking the Wall of Restoration with Indigenous Knowledge  
Nondas Ferreira da Silva, Seeds of Change, BR

Science Breakthrough of the Year, Emerging Talents  
Breaking the Wall of Molecular Monotony  
Karen de la Vega-Hernández Institute of Chemical Research of Catalonia (ICIQ), ES

## AI AGE & TRUST: ETHICS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR SCICOMM

David Caswell StoryFlow, GB / Alice Henchley Springer Nature, GB / Volker Stollorz Science Media Center, DE / **Moderator:** Dagmar Schuller audEERING, DE



## UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS MEETING

Falling Walls invited the 51 university presidents from 13 countries present at the summit to discuss key challenges in higher education, academic freedom and global collaboration in times of geopolitical tensions and a rapidly changing world.

## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE



### WATER MANAGEMENT IN DECISION THEATER – LEARNING FROM OTHERS

**Patrick Bräutigam** University of Stuttgart, DE / **Jochen Büttner** Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology, DE / **Nicole Cox** Arizona State University Decision Theater, US / **Karol Gonçalves** Ben-Gurion University, IL / **Manfred Laubichler** Arizona State University and Santa Fe Institute, US / **Rosa M. Roman-Cuesta** European Commission, Joint Research Centre, IT / **Lina Schwab** Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology, DE / **Shuang Song** Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology, DE / **Moderator: Jürgen Renn** Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology, DE



MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE  
OF GEOANTHROPOLOGY

### LEADERSHIP DIALOGUES: INNOVATING AT INTERFACES

Sixty thought leaders from industry and science discussed the pressing challenges to leadership stemming from AI and possible solutions.



### DEEP-UV INNOVATION: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF PHOTONICS

**Åsa Haglund** Chalmers University of Technology, SE / **Tanja Mehlstäubler** Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt, DE / **Martina Meinke** Charité, DE / **Michael Kneissl** DE



### SCIENCE DIPLOMACY TRACK

#### SCIENCE DIPLOMACY BY EUROPE: SHAPING GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

**Thierry Damerval** French Ministry of Higher Education and Research, FR / **Jan Marco Müller** European Commission, DG / **E.M. Mouhoud** PSL University, FR / **Simone Schwanitz** Generalsekretärin, Max Planck Society, DE



#### THE CHANGING ROLE OF SCIENCE IN DIPLOMACY

**E. William Colglazier** AFAvH, US / **Ona Ambrozaite** British Consulate-General Boston, US / **Martin Wählisch** University of Birmingham, GB / **Moderator: Tim Gabel** Table.Briefings, DE



FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

# WILHELM AND ELSE HERAEUS SYMPOSIUM FOR BREAKTHROUGHS IN PHYSICAL SCIENCES



The Symposium for Breakthroughs in Physical Sciences offered an update on progress in the field. In partnership with the Wilhelm and Else Heraeus Foundation, it gathered speakers, including emerging talents, thought leaders and Falling Walls Global Call Finalists.

## GLOBAL CALL 2025 FINALISTS: PHYSICAL SCIENCES

**Tanja Mehlstäubler** Breaking the Wall of Time & Frequency Standards, Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt, DE / **Martin Harmer** Breaking the Wall of 100 Years of Superalloys, Lehigh University, US / **Claudio Emma** Breaking the Wall of Intense Particle Beams, Slac National Accelerator Laboratory, US / **Henry Chapman** Breaking the Wall of Observing Molecules in Action , Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron (Desy), DE / **Richard Norte** Breaking the Wall of Miniaturisation in Nanotechnology, Delft University Of Technology, NL

## NEXT GENERATION RESEARCHER PITCHES

**Mattia Cesaro** Max Planck Institute for Gravitational Physics, DE / **Anahita Khammari** Max Planck Institute for Dynamics of Complex Technical Systems, DE / **Svetlana Vasileva** Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics, DE / **Aditya Tamar** Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy, DE / **Joppe Widstam** Max Planck Institute for Physics of Complex Systems, DE

**Stefan Jorda** Wilhelm and Else Heraeus Foundation, DE  
**Brian Schmidt** Australian National University, AU  
**Miho Janvier** European Space Agency, NL

### Moderation:

**Thomas Elsaesser** Max-Born-Institut für Nichtlineare Optik und Kurzzeitspektroskopie, DE  
**Cigdem Issever** Humboldt University Berlin, DE

WILHELM UND ELSE HERAEUS-STIFTUNG 

FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

# FIRESIDE CHATS

Hosted by the Falling Walls Board, the Fireside Chat is an intimate format during which five of our time's leading minds from science, business and academia share their ideas, experiences and perspectives on a specific topic, engaging directly with the audience.



## FIRESIDE CHAT: PETER KÖRTE

Peter Körte Siemens AG, DE



## FIRESIDE CHAT: PERMJOT VALIA

Permjot Valia Nava Develop Inc, CA



## FIRESIDE CHAT: MARC ABRAHAMS

Marc Abrahams Improbable Research, US



## FIRESIDE CHAT: BRIAN SCHMIDT

Brian Schmidt Australian National University, AU



## FIRESIDE CHAT: CYRIAC ROEDING

Cyriac Roeding Earli, US



## FIRESIDE CHAT: ELENA BARBA SARASUA

Elena Barba Sarasua Complutense University of Madrid, ES

**“WHAT MAKES FALLING WALLS IMPORTANT FOR ME, IT'S OBVIOUS, IT'S THE PEOPLE I MEET HERE.”**

Patrick Cramer President Max Planck Society, DE

FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

# GLOBAL CONNECTIONS – BUILDING BRIDGES FOR SCIENCE BEYOND BORDERS



Science thrives on international collaboration, and Global Connections is where it starts. The programme showcases national and international research and innovation initiatives to science and business leaders, diplomats and policy makers worldwide. Together with our partners, we design bespoke, interactive formats that create meaningful connections. Contact us to learn more: [global-connections@falling-walls.com](mailto:global-connections@falling-walls.com)

## BREAKING THE WALLS OF TRAUMA: PSYCHEDELICS AND RECOVERY

**Dimitris Repantis** Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin, DE / **Eric Vermetten** Leiden University Medical Center, NL / **Roy Salomon** University of Haifa, IL / **Moderator: Anat Brunstein Klomek** Reichman University, IL

## 60 YEARS AND BEYOND – ISRAELI-GERMAN SCIENCE COLLABORATION

**Katja Becker** German Research Foundation, DE / **Christian Doeller** Max Planck Society, DE / **David Harel** Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Weizmann Institute of Science, IL / **Ron Milo** Weizmann Institute of Science, IL / **Daniel Zajfman** Israel Science Foundation, IL / **Moderator: Helga Nowotny** European Research Council, BE

## SCIENCE REBUILDS: ASYLUM LABS AND CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION

**Daniel Chamovitz** Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, IL / **Christian Doeller** Max Planck Society, DE / **Ron Milo** Weizmann Institute of Science, IL / **Moderator: Marie Wildermann** Diplomatics Magazin, DE

## MOBILITY IN SCIENCE, PATHWAY TO INNOVATION AND PEACE

**Menahem Ben Sasson** Hebrew University of Jerusalem, IL / **Violeta Vázquez-Rojas Maldonado** Secretariat of Science, Humanities, Technology, and Innovation (SECIHTI), MX / **Beate Wagner** Global Young Academy, DE / **Moderator: Annette Julius** German Academic Scholarship Foundation, DE

## FALLING WALLS CIRCLE



### GLOBAL CONNECTIONS: CAN SCIENCE PAVE THE WAY FOR PEACE?

**H.E. Ahmed Alattar** United Arab Emirates Embassy Berlin, DE / **H.E. Jiří Čístecký** Embassy of the Czech Republic Berlin, DE / **H.E. Ron Prosor** Embassy of the State of Israel, DE / **Edelgard Bulmahn** Humboldt University Berlin, DE / **Moderator: Christoph Marksches** Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, Humanities and Union of German Academies of Science, DE

### SCIENCE DIPLOMACY AT SESAME: LIGHT BEYOND BORDERS

**Britta Redlich** DESY, DE / **Antje Vollmer** Helmholtz Zentrum Berlin für Materialien und Energie HZB, DE / **Murat Kazancı** Istanbul Medeniyet University, TR / **Moderator: Rolf-Dieter Heuer** CERN, CH

### THE WORLD OF QUANTUM: SHOWCASING CUTTING-EDGE START-UPS

**Henry Ainouz** Classiq, IL / **Ruti Ben-Shlomi** LightSolver, IL / **Yuval Gilady** Elisra, IL / **Jan Heine** Twin Photonics GmbH, DE / **Joern Hoepfner** Quantum Machines, DE / **Disha Mandaliya** QubeDot GmbH, DE / **Nissan Maskil** Qarakal, IL / **Oded Melamed** Quantum Source, IL / **Eugene Oleynik** Kipu-Quantum, DE / **Naz Pourmalek** QVLS, DE / **Marcel Quenneret** Quantistry GmbH, DE / **Christian Schmitz** EvolutionQ, DE / **Nir Sharon** Quantum X Labs, IL / **Nikola Strah** Classiq Technologies, DE / **Daniel Thürk** anabrid GmbH, DE / **Lucas Wetzel** anabrid, DE / **Janik Wolters** Advanced Quantum Light Sources, DE / **Moderator: Jeanne Rubner** Technical University of Munich, DE

### UNIVERSITIES WITHOUT BORDERS: ADVANCING GLOBAL COLLABORATION

**Gur Alroey** University of Haifa, IL / **Daniel Chamovitz** Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, IL / **Thierry Coulhon** Institut Polytechnique de Paris, FR / **Walter Rosenthal** German Rectors' Conference, DE / **Moderator: Laura Hassink** Elsevier, NL

Guests from 60 countries participated in this year's Global Connections.

### NEXT GEN FRONTIERS: EMERGING VOICES IN SCIENCE

**Hamid A. Abud Russel** Universität Heidelberg, DE / **Shira Baror** Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences, DE / **Ziv Ben-Zion** University of Haifa, IL / **Johanna Koehler** Wageningen University, NL / **Nour Mahmoud Eldabah** Benha Faculty of Engineering, Benha University, EG / **Shohya Matsuda** The University of Osaka, JP / **Mouna Sellami** Mineralogy, RO / **Raíza Tourinho Lima** Centre for Data and Knowledge Integration for Health (CIDACS), BR / **Teodora Žižak** Astronomical Observatory of Belgrade, RS / **Moderation: Elad Arad** Columbia University, US / **Asya Svirinovsky Arbeli** Columbia University, US

FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

# GLOBAL CONNECTIONS: INTRODUCING ITALY'S INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM FOR SUSTAINABILITY



MUSA—Multilayered Urban Sustainability Action is an Innovation Ecosystem funded by the Ministry of University and Research under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan of Italy. At Global Connections, the MUSA researchers presented their results and connected with our international community on innovations and technologies shaping the cities of tomorrow.

## GLOBAL CONNECTIONS: ITALY – OPENING

**H.E. Fabrizio Bucci** Embassy of Italy, Berlin, DE / **Gianluca Marchi** University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, IT / **Salvatore Torrisi** University of Milano-Bicocca, IT

## DESIGNING TOMORROW: PROTOTYPES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

**Oscar Azzimonti** University of Milano-Bicocca, IT / **Marco Boffi** Università degli Studi di Milano, IT / **Matteo Colleoni** University of Milano-Bicocca, IT / **Beatrice De Santes** University of Milano-Bicocca, IT / **Andrea Doldi** University of Milano-Bicocca, IT / **Luca Ferrero** University of Milano-Bicocca, IT / **Paolo Galli** University of Milano-Bicocca, IT / **Marco Giustra** University of Milano-Bicocca, IT / **Gabriele Stancato** Politecnico di Milano, IT

## MEET THE RESEARCHERS: ETHICS, ECOSYSTEMS AND INNOVATION

**Marco Boffi** University of Milan, IT / **Margherita Herold** University of Milano-Bicocca, IT / **Gianluca Marchi** University of Modena, IT / **Costanza Nardocci** University of Milan, IT / **Claudio Tebaldi** Università Bocconi, IT

## RESEARCH TO REALITY: ITALIAN STARTUPS FOR GLOBAL INNOVATION

**Tommaso Castelli** i2d, IT / **Andrea Faviere** GeneSys Bio, IT / **Alessandro Franzese** The Paac, IT / **Pierluigi Freni** LIFT, IT / **Andrea Orlando** Vado, IT

## INNOVATION PATHWAYS: FROM RESEARCH TO REAL-WORLD IMPACT

**Nicola Redi** Oblo Capital, IT / **Valentina Tartari** Stockholm School of Economics, SE / **Norbert Holtkamp** Stanford University, US / **Moderator: Antoine Petit** CNRS, FR





**“EVERYONE THAT HAS TO DEAL WITH SCIENCE IS HERE—THIS IS QUITE UNIQUE.”**

**Jean-Claude Burgelman** Director of the Frontiers Planet Prize, CH



**“SOME STRONG STATEMENTS WERE MADE, SOME OPTIMISM ABOUT THE FUTURE. AND THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST PLEASURABLE MEETINGS TO GO TO FOR ME.”**

**David Harel** President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, IL



Helga Nowotny, David Harel

# FALLING WALLS CIRCLE EXECUTIVE TABLES

Executive Tables are private discussions between high-level experts who review the current state of specific challenges, identifying future strategies.

## WHICH FUNDING SCHEMES CAN SUPPORT EUROPEAN COLLABORATION?

This Executive Table, organized by Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (BBAW), All European Academies (ALLEA), and Union der deutschen Akademien der Wissenschaften (Akademieunion), explored European funding for cross-border scientific cooperation.



allea



## THE TRANSATLANTIC BIG SCIENCE CONFERENCE

An invitation-only table that addressed the challenges and perspectives in global research alliances amid shifting realities, while advocating for the Transatlantic Big Science Initiative and the strengthening of existing partnerships. This exchange highlighted key ideas, current successes, potential new collaborations and relevant topics for the TTBC 2026 conference in North America.



## MEDICINE OF THE FUTURE: PRECISION HEALTH AND PRECEPTIVE CARE

An invite-only think-and-do session where cross-disciplinary experts explored how deep, multimodal data beyond basic omics—such as proteoforms, PTMs, glycosylation, spatial context, and dynamic structure—can unlock AI's full potential in precision medicine.



## DEEP DIVE STARTUPS: INNOVATION POLICY BEHIND THE SCENES

A confidential session that brought together founders, policy-makers and innovation experts to examine how political strategy translates into effective innovation support, where the federal startup and scaleup strategy can have real impact, and what challenges arise in its implementation.



## EU TECH LEADERSHIP: ALIGNING RESEARCH & INNOVATION POLICIES

An invite-only discussion that brought leaders together to explore how Europe can strengthen tech sovereignty by better aligning EU and national innovation policies, valuing fundamental research across the full innovation chain and designing inclusive, flexible, impact-driven funding strategies.



SPRIN-D

## ADVANCING INNOVATION AT ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTERS

An exclusive Executive Table that examined how Academic Medical Centers can strengthen their role in biomedical innovation by integrating clinical data, expertise and research infrastructures, and by leveraging key success factors to build open, collaborative innovation ecosystems.



## THE FUTURE OF CYBER CHALLENGES AND COUNTER-MEASURES

An exclusive session that explored the promise and risks of rapidly advancing AI-generated deepfake technology, bringing participants together to discuss its benefits and develop ethical frameworks for its safe and transparent use.

FALLING  
WALLS  
FOUNDATION

## GLOBAL BIG SCIENCE: SHAPING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

An exclusive session where participants explored how large-scale science infrastructures can evolve through new partnerships and institutional models to meet the challenges posed by their growing scale, complexity, and global context.



## BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: RESILIENT RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

This invitation-only discussion examined how fluctuations in US federal research funding influence global scientific collaboration—affecting mobility, facility access, and partnerships—while exploring alternative funding models and cross-border strategies to build resilient, future-proof research networks.



## DATA INFRASTRUCTURES – CONNECTED & RESILIENT AI ENABLERS

An invite-only table that examined how research data infrastructures—key enablers of AI and Europe's digital sovereignty—can ensure resilience and sustainability by addressing their legal, technical, and social conditions.



## DUAL USE RESEARCH SIDE BY SIDE OPEN SCIENCE: LESSONS LEARNED

An elite session that explored how dual use research can be conducted alongside open science, drawing on lessons from the U.S. Department of Energy National Laboratories and fostering discussion to strengthen transatlantic collaborations.



## FOSTERING INCLUSIVE AND FAIR AFRICA-EUROPE RESEARCH NETWORKS

During this exclusive discussion, experts explored how to strengthen Africa-Europe academic and research collaborations, overcome barriers to joint projects, and foster new connections in areas such as climate, health, sustainability, and food security.



## REBUILDING SCIENCE IN UKRAINE

At this exclusive table, participants discussed the challenges facing Ukrainian science due to the war, exploring urgent support needs, international aid, research funding, and strategies to strengthen long-term resilience and global integration.



## STRATEGIC PREVENTION: TURNING HEALTH INTO ECONOMIC VALUE

In this exclusive session, leaders from science, industry, and finance explored how research, entrepreneurship, and systems thinking can create scalable, investable business models for cancer prevention that deliver both health and economic value.



## UNLOCKING GROWTH CAPITAL FOR EUROPE'S DEEPTech SCALEUPS

At this elite table, start-up, investment, and policy experts discussed how to overcome the structural lack of growth capital for Europe's deeptech start-ups and explored solutions to build a resilient financing ecosystem for scaling innovation.



## PROTOTYPING A NEW PARADIGM IN SECURE QUANTUM COMMUNICATION

At this exclusive session, experts explored how current ion trap quantum computers can enable novel security paradigms for future quantum communication, providing protection grounded in the laws of nature—even with few qubits and imperfect operations—beyond PQC and QKD.



## PHILANTHROPY IN SCIENCE IN A CHANGING WORLD

In a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape, the role of philanthropy in science is evolving. This invite-only session invited leaders of foundations to reflect on how global shifts shape their focus areas and strategies.



# BREAK- THROUGH S



Katalin Karikó

**“IT’S GREAT WHEN ALL THESE PEOPLE COME TOGETHER—SCIENTISTS AND BUSINESS-MEN AND ARTISTS.”**

**Katalin Karikó** Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine, University of Szeged, HU



Nondas Ferreira da Silva



Friedrich Merz



Carlo Ratti

**“THERE COULD BE NO MORE MEANINGFUL WAY TO MARK THIS DAY, THE 9TH OF NOVEMBER, THAN BY BRINGING TOGETHER BRILLIANT MINDS FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD.”**

**Friedrich Merz** Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, DE



Olaf Brock, Apple Pui Yi Chui, Melanie Smallman



# THE FALLING WALLS SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS OF THE YEAR

THE MOST GROUNDBREAKING  
DISCOVERIES OF THE YEAR IN  
9 FIELDS:

LIFE SCIENCES  
PHYSICAL SCIENCES  
ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY  
SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
ART AND SCIENCE  
WOMEN'S\* IMPACT AWARD  
EMERGING TALENTS  
SCIENCE START-UPS  
SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT

NOMINATE  
YOUR  
SUPERSTARS

Global Call 2026 opens  
FEBRUARY 1ST

[https://falling-walls.com/  
global-call](https://falling-walls.com/global-call)

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MUSEUM FÜR  
NATURKUNDE  
BERLIN

Federal Ministry  
of Research, Technology  
and Space

1

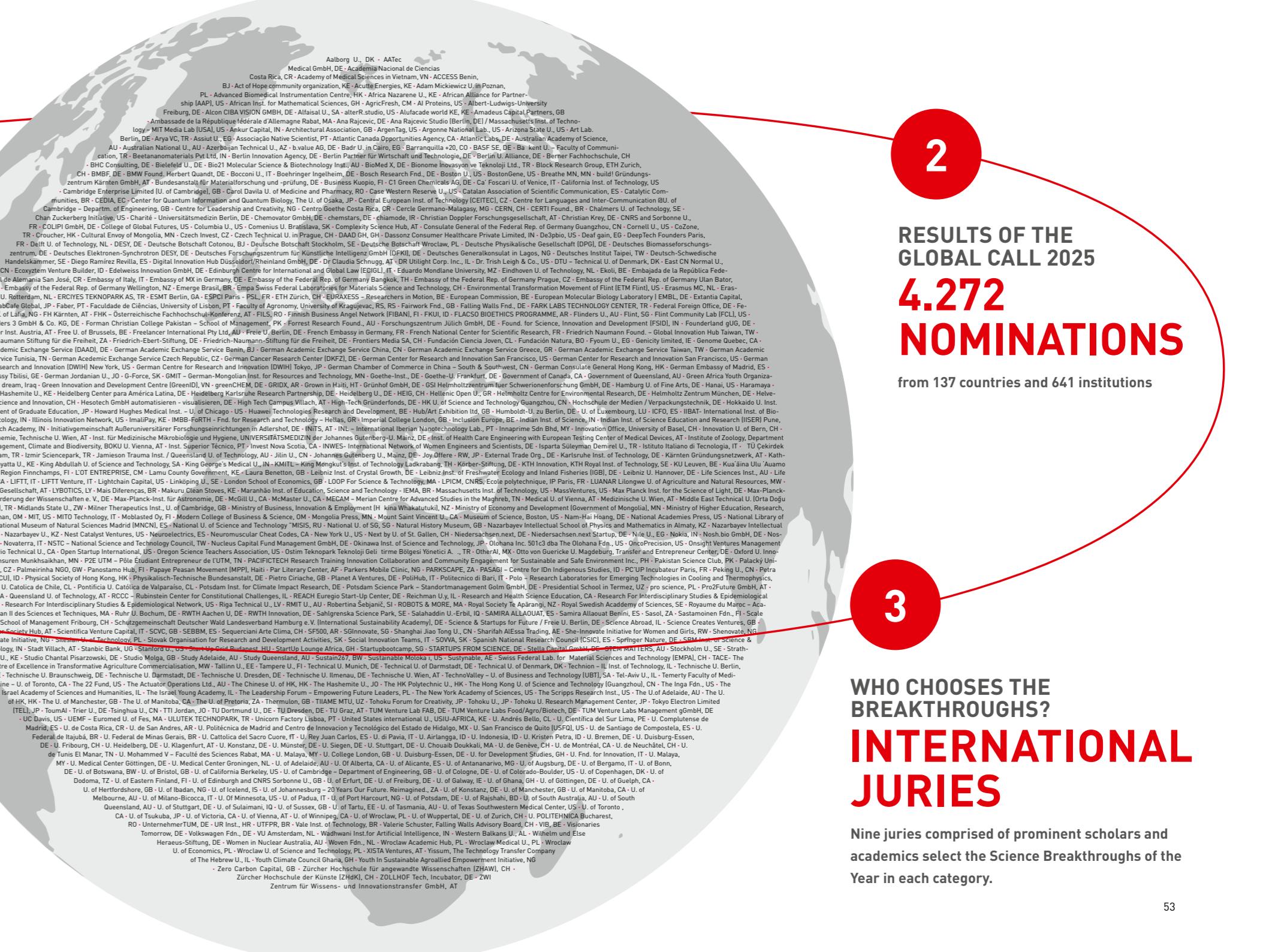
## HOW DO WE FIND THEM? GLOBAL CALL

Leading individuals and institutions in  
science, research and innovation worldwide  
are asked to nominate the most pioneering  
discoveries.

4

## GLOBAL FINALE BREAKTHROUGH DAY

On November 9, the anniversary of the fall of the  
Berlin Wall, the winners in all categories present their  
breakthroughs on stage, answering the question "What  
are the next walls to fall in science and society?"



2

## RESULTS OF THE GLOBAL CALL 2025 4,272 NOMINATIONS

from 137 countries and 64 institutions

3

## WHO CHOOSES THE BREAKTHROUGHS? INTERNATIONAL JURIES

Nine juries comprised of prominent scholars and  
academics select the Science Breakthroughs of the  
Year in each category.

## FALLING WALLS SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS

# JURY MEMBERS ALL CATEGORIES

96 judges—prominent experts in their fields—identify the most exceptional contributions in each category.

### LIFE SCIENCES

**Amy Bernard** — Kavli, US  
**Yoke-Fun Chan** — University Malaya, MY  
**Chuan He** — University of Chicago, US  
**Ricarda Gaentzsch** — IQVIA, US  
**Sirpa Jalkanen** — University of Turku, FI  
**Rob Knight** — UC San Diego, US  
**Michael Platten** — German Cancer Research Center, DE  
**Nicole Rinehart** — Monash University, AU  
**Michael Schütz** — Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, AU  
**Peter Seeberger** — Max Planck Institute, DE  
**Matthias Tschöp** — Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, DE

### PHYSICAL SCIENCES

**Ricky Ang** — Singapore University of Technology and Design, SG  
**Thomas Elsaesser** — Max-Born-Institut, DE  
**Erna Frins** — University of the Republic Uruguay, UY  
**JoAnne Hewett** — Brookhaven National Lab, US  
**Stefan Jorda** — Wilhelm and Else Heraeus Foundation, DE  
**Tammy Ma** — Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, US  
**Suzana Nunes** — KAUST, SA  
**Halina Rubinsztein-Dunlop** — The University of Queensland, AU  
**Cather Simpson** — University of Auckland, NZ  
**Saw Wai Hla** — Ohio University / Argonne National Laboratory, US  
**Ian Walmsley** — Imperial College London, GB

### ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

**Kai Bongs** — German Aerospace Center / Ulm University, DE  
**Hui-Ming Cheng** — Shenyang National Laboratory for Materials Science, CN  
**Norbert Holtkamp** — SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, US  
**Jinxing Li** — Michigan State University, US  
**Faith Njoki Karanja** — University of Nairobi, KE  
**Rokia Raslan** — University College London, GB  
**Jamie Paik** — EPFL, CH  
**Tamlyn Sasha Naidu** — University of Copenhagen, DK  
**Cao Thang Dinh** — Queen's University, CA  
**Guizhu Yu** — University of Texas at Austin, US

### SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES

**Rajeev Bhargava** — Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, IN  
**Pablo Boczkowski** — Northwestern University, US  
**Emilie Caspar** — Ghent University, BE  
**Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln** — WZB Berlin Social Science Center, DE  
**Martin Kahanec** — Central European University, AT  
**Nora Kottmann** — Volkswagen Stiftung, DE  
**Genoveva Martí** — University of Barcelona, ES  
**Louise McNally Seifert** — Universitat Pompeu Fabra, ES  
**Dilip Menon** — University of Witwatersrand, ZA  
**Rafael Prieto-Curiel** — Complexity Science Hub, AT  
**Anu Realo** — University of Warwick, GB  
**Yasemin Soysal** — WZB Berlin, DE

### ART & SCIENCE

**Kat Austen** — Studio Austen / UCL, GB  
**Elaine Chew** — King's College London, GB  
**Carsten Hucho** — Paul Drude Institut, DE  
**Christophe de Jaeger** — Gluon, FR  
**Yuko Hasegawa** — 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, JP  
**Daniel Jay** — Tufts University, US  
**Bettina Kames** — LAS Art Foundation, DE  
**Juliet Koss** — Scripps College, US  
**Christina Landbrecht** — Schering Stiftung, DE  
**Marcus Lobbes** — Academy for Theatre and Digitality, DE  
**Tiange Wang** — IDEO, US

### LAB

**Alice Aiken** — Dalhousie University, CA  
**Gabriele Hermani** — BMFTR, DE  
**Barbara Ischinger** — University of Cologne, DE  
**Nesrine el Abed** — RAK Art Foundation, AE  
**Kathrin Kohs** — DFG, DE  
**Pewee Koluhba** — KAUST, SA  
**Valerie Makoge** — IMPM, CH  
**Wolfgang Marquardt** — Forschungszentrum Jülich (retired), DE  
**Swati Meherishi** — Springer Nature, DE  
**Céline Nauer** — Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, DE  
**Ursula Painter** — DAAD, DE

**Eusebio Scornavacca** — Arizona State University, US  
**Sven Wagner** — Sartorius, DE

### VENTURE

**Mali Baum** — WLOUNGE, DE  
**Luca Beverina** — University of Milano-Bicocca, IT  
**Klemens Brunner** — Heraeus Group, DE  
**Iris ten Have** — Visionaries Tomorrow, NL  
**Stefan von Holtzbrinck** — Holtzbrinck, DE  
**Inga vom Holtz** — UnternehmerTUM, DE  
**Pawel Konzal** — Chevron Technology Ventures, US  
**Detlev Mennerich** — Boehringer Ingelheim Venture Fund, DE  
**Cyriac Roeding** — EARLI, DE  
**Milena Stoycheva** — The Edge – Research & Business Development, BG  
**Andrew Tauhert** — XPRIZE Foundation, US  
**Andrea Tüttenberg** — Actitrex, DE  
**Andreas Zaby** — SPRIND, DE

### ENGAGE

**Olaf Brock** — Hannover Re Foundation, DE  
**Bardin Borde** — Siemens Stiftung, DE  
**Evrilm Bunn** — FEMA, US  
**Apple Pui Yi Chui** — The Chinese University of Hong Kong, HK  
**Mario Andrés de Leo Winkler** — Autonomous Metropolitan University, MX  
**Abraham Mamela** — University of Botswana, BW  
**Jeanne Rubner** — Technical University of Munich, DE  
**Jylana Sheats** — Tulane University, US  
**Melanie Smallman** — University College London, GB

### WOMENS IMPACT AWARD

**Rana Dajani** — Hashemite University, JO  
**Domiziana Francescon** — Elsevier Foundation, NL  
**Annabella Hübler-Fick** — Volkswagen Foundation, DE  
**Fiona Moejes** — Mawazo Institute, KE  
**Marianna Prokopi-Demetriades** — RSL Revolutionary Labs Ltd / Promed Bioscience Ltd, GB  
**Ylann Schemm** — Elsevier Foundation, NL

## FALLING WALLS SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS

# JURY CHAIRS



### LIFE SCIENCES

Jury Chair

**MICHAEL SCHUETZ**

Queensland University of Technology, AU



### PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Jury Chair

**IAN WALMSLEY**

Imperial College London, GB



### ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

Jury Chair

**ROKIA RASLAN**

University College London, GB



### SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES

Jury Chair

**GENOVEVA MARTI**

University of Barcelona, ES



### ART & SCIENCE

Jury Chair

**JULIET KOSS**

Scripps College, US



### FALLING WALLS VENTURE

Jury Chair

**STEFAN VON HOLTZBRINCK**

Holtzbrinck, DE



### FALLING WALLS LAB

Jury Chair

**WOLFGANG MARQUARDT**

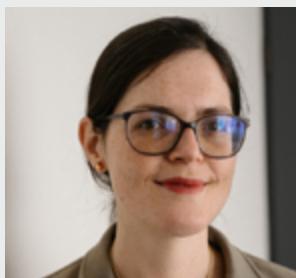
Forschungszentrum Jülich (retired), DE



### WOMEN'S IMPACT AWARD

YANN SCHEMM

Elsevier Foundation, NL



### WOMEN'S IMPACT AWARD

**ANNABELLA HÜFLER-FICK**  
Volkswagen Foundation, DE

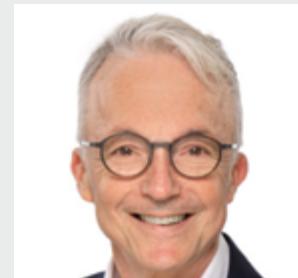


### FALLING WALLS ENGAGE

Jury Co-Chair

**MELANIE SMALLMAN**

University College London, GB



### FALLING WALLS ENGAGE

Jury Co-Chair

**OLAF BROCK**

Hannover Re Foundation, DE

ALL CATEGORIES, JURY MEMBERS AND WINNERS

# SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS OF THE YEAR 2025

## LIFE SCIENCES



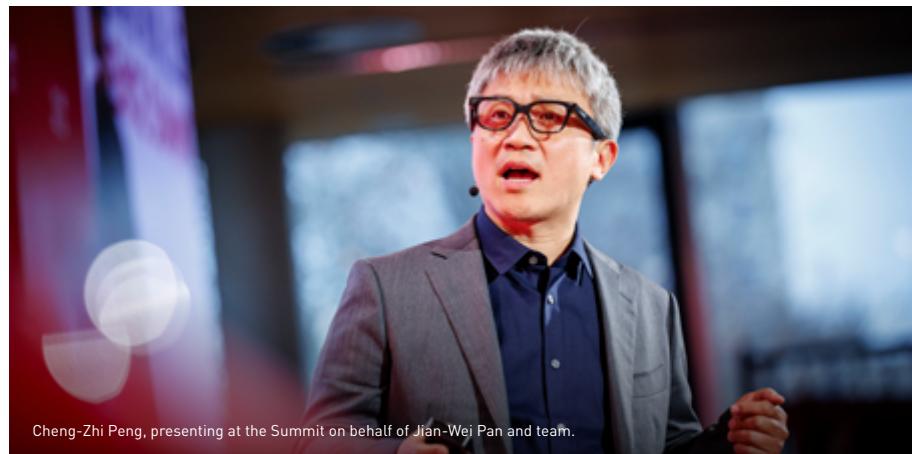
### BREAKING THE WALL OF INVISIBLE OVULATION

MELINA SCHUH, Max Planck Institute for Multidisciplinary Sciences, DE

Melina Schuh has developed the first live-imaging platform to visualise ovulation in real time at the cellular level. Her breakthrough reveals the molecular mechanisms of this process, opening new paths in fertility research, women's health and the development of non-hormonal contraceptives. **Jury Chair: Michael Schuetz** Queensland University of Technology, AU

**About the Life Sciences category:** The Life Sciences jury focuses on recognising the most groundbreaking advancements in the field. This category celebrates the pioneering contributions to the understanding of living systems, encompassing areas such as biology, neuroscience and zoology, with a strong emphasis on addressing the world's most critical challenges through innovative research.

## PHYSICAL SCIENCES



Cheng-Zhi Peng, presenting at the Summit on behalf of Jian-Wei Pan and team.

### BREAKING THE WALL OF PRACTICAL SATELLITE QKD

JIAN-WEI PAN, University of Science and Technology of China, CN

Jian-Wei Pan and his team developed the world's first quantum microsatellite for real-time quantum key distribution (QKD) using mobile ground stations. This innovation overcomes the limitations of terrestrial QKD and enables secure global communication networks for the future. **Jury Chair: Ian Walmsley**, Imperial College London, GB

**About the Physical Sciences category:** The Physical Sciences jury focuses on identifying the most groundbreaking advancements in the field. The category celebrates pioneering contributions to the understanding of natural phenomena, encompassing areas such as chemistry, physics and astronomy, with a strong emphasis on addressing the world's most critical challenges through innovative research.

## SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS OF THE YEAR 2025

### ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY



### BREAKING THE WALL OF HIGH-POWER AI NEEDS

LU FANG, Tsinghua University, CN

Lu Fang paved the way for photonic AI with the "Taichi" chip—a breakthrough architecture offering extreme energy efficiency and computational power for AI. Her approach transforms the shift from electronic to photonic data processing, laying the groundwork for a sustainable, intelligent future. **Jury Chair: Rokia Raslan** University College London, GB

**About the Engineering & Technology category:** The Engineering & Technology jury focuses on identifying innovative solutions and transformative technologies that address global challenges and revolutionise industries. This category celebrates groundbreaking advancements that redefine technological boundaries and create impactful solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges.

### SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES



### BREAKING THE WALL OF WAR AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN

MYRIAM DENOV, McGill University, CA

Myriam Denov breaks the silence surrounding children born of sexual violence in war. Her participatory approach involves affected youth as co-researchers and develops strategies for policy and practice to strengthen the rights and opportunities of these children worldwide. **Jury Chair: Genoveva Martí** University of Barcelona, ES

**About the Social Sciences & Humanities category:** The Social Sciences & Humanities jury focuses on recognising groundbreaking advances in understanding human society and interpersonal relationships. This category highlights pioneering contributions in fields such as politics, economics and philosophy, emphasising innovative research that addresses the world's most significant challenges.

ALL CATEGORIES, JURY MEMBERS AND WINNERS

# SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS OF THE YEAR 2025

## ART & SCIENCE



### BREAKING THE WALL OF ECOLOGICAL HEALING THROUGH SOUND

MARCO BAROTTI, Marco Barotti Studio, IT

With the artwork Coral Sonic Resilience, Marco Barotti merges art and science: 3D-printed, solar-powered sculptures emit the sounds of healthy coral reefs into damaged ecosystems to support their regeneration. This project transforms art into an active tool for environmental protection. **Jury Chair: Juliet Koss** Scripps College, US

**About the Art & Science category:** The Art & Science jury focuses on recognising groundbreaking projects at the intersection of artistic expression and scientific discovery. This category celebrates innovative works by artists whose creations, inspired by science, illuminate societal issues, explore natural phenomena or capture the wonder of scientific breakthroughs, highlighting the profound connection between these complementary disciplines.

## WOMEN'S IMPACT AWARD



### BREAKING THE WALL OF HEALTHY AGEING IN WOMEN

ÂNGELA GONÇALVES, GERMAN CANCER RESEARCH CENTER (DKFZ), PT

Ângela Gonçalves leads research on healthy ageing and the evolution of somatic mutations to improve cancer outcomes. Combining AI, molecular biology and clinical insight, she develops treatment for endometriosis, ovarian cancer and menopause. **Jury:** **Ylann Schemm** Elsevier Foundation, NL; **Domiziana Francescon** Elsevier Foundation, NL; **Annabella Hüfner-Fick** Volkswagen Foundation, DE; **Marianna Prokopi-Demetriades** RSL Revolutionary Labs Ltd, CY; **Fiona Moejes** Mawazo Institute, KE; **Rana Dajani** Hashemite University, JO

**About the Women's Impact Award:** The Women's Impact Award recognises women in science whose research aligns with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting groundbreaking research and advancing gender equality in science.

## SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS OF THE YEAR 2025

### SCIENCE START-UPS FALLING WALLS VENTURE



#### BREAKING THE WALL OF INEFFICIENT AI COMPUTATION

**WINNER: JAMES SPALL, Lumai, GB**

James Spall is co-founder and CTO of Lumai, an Oxford University spinout developing a 3D optical processor for AI acceleration that offers orders-of-magnitude improvements in energy efficiency. Their technology not only enables but vastly accelerates a whole range of AI-driven applications at scale and is based on many years of groundbreaking research.

**Jury Chair: Stefan von Holtzbrinck** Holtzbrinck, DE

### SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT FALLING WALLS ENGAGE



#### BREAKING THE WALL OF RESTORATION WITH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

**WINNER: NONDAS FERREIRA DA SILVA, Instituto New Era, BR**

This year's Falling Walls Engage Breakthrough of the Year is Nondas Ferreira da Silva from the Instituto New Era in Brazil. His community-driven initiative Seeds of Change empowers traditional communities and indigenous Xaciabá people to restore degraded ecosystems in Brazil's Cerrado biome, integrating agroforestry, citizen science and sustainable economic models to enhance climate resilience and biodiversity conservation. Through hands-on training, participatory research and local partnerships, the project bridges science and community action to create environmental and social impact.

**Jury Chair: Melanie Smallman** University College London, GB

### EMERGING TALENTS FALLING WALLS LAB



#### BREAKING THE WALL OF MOLECULAR MONOTONY

**WINNER: KAREN DE LA VEGA-HERNÁNDEZ,  
Institute of Chemical Research of Catalonia (ICIQ), ES**

Karen de la Vega-Hernández has developed a novel reagent and skeletal editing strategy that enables the structural and functional diversification of drug molecules at late stages. This breakthrough accelerates drug discovery, allowing rapid and sustainable modification of molecular cores to create new and improved therapeutic candidates.

**Jury Chair: Wolfgang Marquardt** Forschungszentrum Jülich, DE

## FALLING WALLS SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS

# THOUGHT LEADERS AND BREAKTHROUGH SPEAKERS



### BREAKING THE WALL OF GENETIC BARRIERS

KATALIN KARIKÓ

University of Szeged / University of Pennsylvania (Emerita), HU/US



### BREAKING THE WALL OF LIFE'S ORIGIN

JOHN SUTHERLAND

Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology, GB



### BREAKING THE WALL OF MAPPING THE BODY

STEPHEN QUAKE

Stanford University, US



### BREAKING THE WALL OF OUR SUN'S MYSTERIES

MIHO JANVIER

European Space Agency, NL



### BREAKING THE WALL OF TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

PETER SCHLOSSER

Arizona State University, US



### BREAKING THE WALL OF FUTURE CITIES

CARLO RATTI

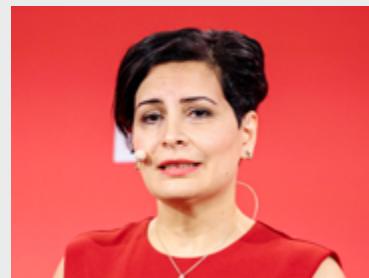
Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sensible City Lab / Carlo Ratti Association, US



### BREAKING THE WALL OF RNA THERAPEUTICS

ANASTASIA KHVOROVA

UMass Chan Medical School, US



### BREAKING THE WALL OF CARBON NEUTRAL CITIES

ZAHRA KALANTARI

KTH Royal Institute of Technology, SE



### IN CONVERSATION WITH MATTHIAS MAURER

MATTHIAS MAURER European Astronaut Centre, Cologne, DE

URMILA CHADAYAMMURI Nature, DE

Moderated by Urmila Chadayammuri, the Astronomy & Astrophysics Editor at Nature, German astronaut Matthias Maurer shares firsthand the emotional, scientific and personal impacts of living and working in orbit.

FALLING WALLS SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGHS

# BREAKTHROUGH FORUM



During the Breakthrough Forum, top scientists and the public come together to discuss the societal and ethical considerations of scientific breakthroughs.

## FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: SOCIETAL DIMENSIONS OF BREAKTHROUGHS

**John Sutherland** Medical Research Council  
Laboratory of Molecular Biology, UK / **Alicia Johnson** Baker Institute for Public Policy, US /  
**Moderator: Elodie Chabrol** Pint of Science, GB

## FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: SOCIETAL DIMENSIONS OF BREAKTHROUGHS

**Christine Custis** Institute for Advanced Study, US  
**Stephen Quake** Stanford University, US /  
**Moderator: Elodie Chabrol** Pint of Science, GB

## FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: SOCIETAL DIMENSIONS OF BREAKTHROUGHS

**Anastasia Khvorova**, UMass Chan Medical School, US / **Erica Palma Kimmerling** Association of Science and Technology Centers, US / **Moderator: Elodie Chabrol** Pint of Science, GB

BREAKTHROUGH SPEAKERS IN DIALOGUE

# SPACE BUSINESS LUNCH TALK



Matthias Maurer



Miho Janvier



This Lunch Talk with ESA astronaut Matthias Maurer and ESA astrophysicist Miho Janvier gave a selected group of participants the chance to discuss the future of space travel, economic opportunities, and the connection between science, business, and society.

in cooperation with





**“PEOPLE AND SCIENCE WORKING TOGETHER—THAT IS THE FUTURE.”**

**Matthias Maurer** Astronaut, European Space Agency and European Astronaut Centre, Cologne, DE



**“IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE VARIETY OF MANY, MANY IDEAS THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE.”**

**Wolfgang Marquardt** Lab Jury Chair, RWTH Aachen, DE



Wolfgang Marquardt

# MEDIA COVERAGE



## KEY SUMMIT MEDIA RESULTS

14	LIVESTREAMS
8,200	VIEWERS
177	COUNTRIES (AUDIENCE)
4,8M	SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS
43K	NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS
57	JOURNALISTS ON SITE
>600	PRESS MENTIONS

MEDIA COVERAGE

# REPRESENTED MEDIA FALLING WALLS SCIENCE SUMMIT

alexandria	 ABC	Capital	 Deutschlandradio	 Deutsche Welle
DIE ZEIT	DGP   Dziennik Gazeta Prawna	 news	Forschung & Lehre ALLES WAS DIE WISSENSCHAFT BEWEGT	 Frankfurter Allgemeine ZEITUNG FÜR DEUTSCHLAND
Handelsblatt	Klimafakten	<i>Le Nouvelliste</i>	manager magazin	Neue Zürcher Zeitung
POLITICO	 Qlio Magazin	 rbb	 RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland	 SCIENCE BUSINESS®
 Space Watch Global	 Spektrum der Wissenschaft	 SPRINGER NATURE	 SZ DOSSIER	 TABLE BRIEFINGS
TAGESSPIEGEL BACKGROUND	 Venture TV	 DER WIARDA BLOG	 ZME SCIENCE	

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Health and Long-Term Care

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Berthold Leibinger  
Stiftung

Boehringer  
Ingelheim

BRUKER

BRAIN CITY  
BERLIN

bdr

CERN

CHAN ZUCKERBERG  
Biohub Network

DFG Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft

DESY

DIE ZEIT  
VERLAGSGRUPPE

EIT Higher Education Initiative

Else  
Kröner  
Fresenius  
Stiftung

ELSEVIER

THE ELSEVIER  
FOUNDATION

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DE FRANCE  
EN ALLEMAGNE  
Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité

Ambasciata d'Italia  
Berlino

European  
XFEL

EXPERTENKOMMISSION  
FÖRschung  
und Innovation

EFI

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Forschungszentrum

FORWIT  
Austrian Council  
for Sciences, Technology,  
and Innovation

Fraunhofer

 <b>frontiers</b> planet prize	 <b>DAAD</b> Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst German Academic Exchange Service	 <b>dkfz.</b> DEUTSCHES KREBSFORSCHUNGZENTRUM IN DER HELMHOLTZ-GRUENDECKE	 <b>DBU</b> Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt	 <b>nfdi</b> Nationale Forschungsdaten Infrastruktur	 <b>DRFZ</b> Deutsches Rheuma-Forschungszentrum	 <b>2025 GIPFEL</b> FÜR FORSCHUNG UND INNOVATION
<b>GORDON AND BETTY MOORE FOUNDATION</b>	 <b>HPI</b> Hasso Plattner Institut Digital Engineering • Universität Potsdam	<b>HELMHOLTZ</b>	<b>HZI</b> HELMHOLTZ Centre for Infection Research	<b>HELMHOLTZ KLIMA</b> Dialog-Plattform	<b>HELMHOLTZ MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>HZB</b> Helmholtz Zentrum Berlin
<b>Heraeus</b>	 <b>her</b> CAREER	 <b>GEMEINNÜTZIGE Hertie Stiftung</b>	 <b>Joachim Herz Stiftung</b>	 <b>JGU</b> JOHANNES GUTENBERG UNIVERSITÄT MAINZ	 <b>Julius-Maximilians-UNIVERSITÄT WÜRZBURG</b>	 <b>KIT</b> Karlsruher Institut für Technologie
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 <b>MUSA</b>	 <b>NEW YORK UNIVERSITY</b>	 <b>NOMIS</b> FOUNDATION Creating the Spark	 <b>NOVARTIS</b>	 <b>Quantum Valley Lower Saxony</b>	 <b>RITA ALLEN</b> FOUNDATION	<b>SARTORIUS</b>
<b>SCHOTT</b> glass made of ideas	<b>SIEMENS</b>	<b>SIM NS</b> FOUNDATION	<b>SPRINGER NATURE</b>	 <b>Stiftung Deutsches Herzzentrum</b>	 <b>TABLE MEDIA</b>	<b>TUM</b> Technical University of Munich
 <b>TRADE + INVESTMENT QUEENSLAND</b>	 <b>Universität Münster</b>	 <b>Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg</b>	 <b>UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD</b>	 <b>University of Potsdam</b>	 <b>University of Stuttgart</b> Germany	 <b>VDI</b> Technologiezentrum
<b>vfa.</b> Die forschenden Pharma-Unternehmen	<b>WomenX Collective</b>	 <b>YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS IN SCIENCE</b>	 <b>ZEISS</b>	 <b>BECOME OUR PARTNER AND JOIN THE FALLING WALLS COMMUNITY</b> <i>Please contact andreas.kosmider@falling-walls.com</i>		67

# SCIENCEPRENEURSHIP AS A DRIVER FOR TRANSFER AND INNO- VATION IN SCIENCE

Young Entrepreneurs in Science (YES) is a training and education programme that imparts entrepreneurial thinking and acting in science. The initiative contributes to a cultural shift towards greater enthusiasm for startups and the entrepreneurial spirit, promoting impactful research in Germany and beyond.

YES works with a clear impact logic and follows a systemic, participatory and needs-based approach. We offer interactive online and in-person workshops that foster entrepreneurial mindsets and skills among PhDs, postdocs and master's students. For academic institutions, we train entrepreneurship and transfer officers to become qualified trainers in entrepreneurship education and idea scouting.

With funding from the:



SARTORIUS



Niedersächsisches Ministerium  
für Wissenschaft und Kultur



# CREATING IMPACTFUL INNOVATION—ACROSS BORDERS

Building on seven years of experience, Young Entrepreneurs in Science (YES) has recently scaled its positive impact to the international level. Through tailored workshops and training programmes, YES unlocks entrepreneurial potential, turns promising ideas into impactful solutions, and empowers academic staff to support sciencepreneurial careers—while building an international network for innovation and sciencepreneurship.

**Unlock the innovation potential of your scientists and elevate sciencepreneurship within your institution. Join us in shaping a future where research creates real-world impact.**

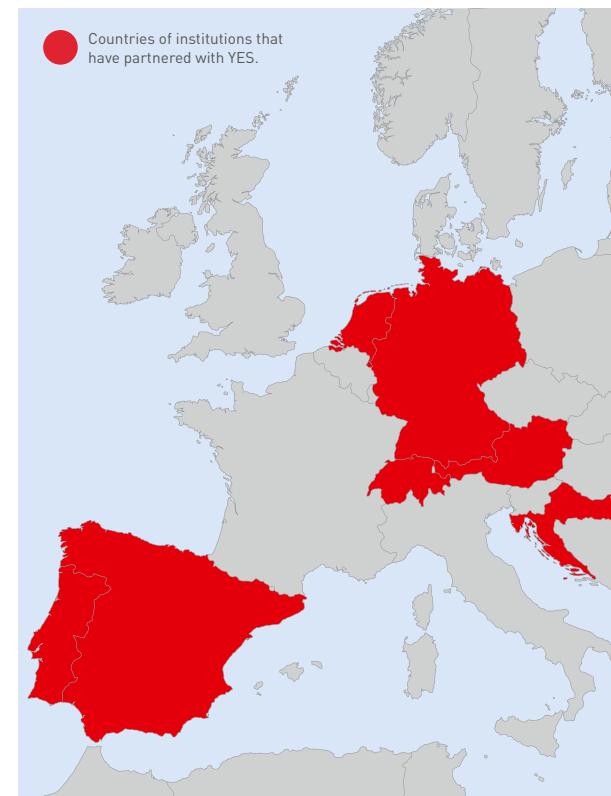
Let's amplify our impact—together!

## GET IN TOUCH.

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**“YES NOT ONLY OFFERS HANDS-ON TRAINING AND INSPIRATION—IT ALSO BUILDS A CROSS-UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY WHERE PHDS CONNECT WITH PEERS AND MENTORS BEYOND THEIR OWN DISCIPLINES AND INSTITUTIONS. THAT KIND OF EARLY, EMPOWERING EXPOSURE IS EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED MORE OF.”**

Dr Isabelle Schiffer YES Advisory Board

# BERLIN SCIENCE WEEK

Beyond Now

1–10 NOV  
2025

FALLING  
WALLS  
FOUNDATION



Stiftung für  
Wissenschaft  
Gesellschaft und  
Politik



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NATURKUNDE



Tagesspiegel



Yorck  
Kino Gruppe



tipBerlin



radioeins



AM  
DX



THE BERLINER

Falling Walls Science Summit is a part of  
Berlin Science Week

## BERLIN SCIENCE WEEK— THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL

Berlin Science Week breaks science out of institutions and into the city. Every year from 1–10 November, it transforms Berlin into a playground of scientific ideas with hundreds of free events.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the 2025 festival edition brought together more than 200 partner organisations with 35,000 festival participants. Guided by the theme “Beyond Now,” the festival explored how science could help overcome the crises of the present and open up new perspectives for the future.

Through a citywide programme of over 350 events at more than 80 locations, including the two Festival Hubs — CAMPUS (1–2 November) at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin and FORUM (7–9 November) at Holzmarkt 25 — Berlin Science Week invited participants to experience cutting-edge research, interdisciplinary exchange, and artistic engagement.

10  
DAYS

200+  
PARTNER  
ORGANISATIONS

350+  
EVENTS

700+  
SPEAKERS

35,000  
VISITORS

40M+  
PRESS REACH

2M  
SOCIAL MEDIA VIEWS

# 2025 FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

## Exhibition: Beyond Us

For its 10th anniversary, Berlin Science Week presented Beyond Us, its debut exhibition featuring the Falling Walls Science Breakthrough of the Year 2025 in Art & Science, Marco Barotti. The exhibition showcased works exploring the precariousness of coral reefs and the need for harmony with the underwater world, including his award-winning project, Coral Sonic Resilience.



## Festival Hubs

At the festival's heart were two hubs: CAMPUS, a hands-on science space at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, and FORUM at Holzmarkt 25, a transdisciplinary hub. Both offered exhibitions, workshops, stages, and networking, allowing visitors to experience science up close while giving scientific institutions the opportunity to test interactive ways of presenting their work.



## Inspiration Stage

New this year was the Inspiration Stage at CAMPUS, featuring short popular science talks on topics ranging from inequality research and healthy ageing to quantum physics. Designed for early-career researchers looking to present their work to an engaged, non-specialist audience, these TED-talk style sessions connected the public with emerging voices driving the international science scene in Berlin and beyond.



## Citywide Programme

The Citywide Programme showcased Berlin's vibrant science scene, with over 100 institutions opening the doors to universities, research centres, museums, and cultural venues. Featuring exhibitions, talks, workshops, performances, and bar nights, the events transformed Berlin Science Week into a citywide celebration, engaging diverse audiences across the city.



Become  
our partner  
and join the  
Berlin Science Week  
Community  
Please contact  
[info@berlinscienceweek.com](mailto:info@berlinscienceweek.com)



**“YOU’LL LEAVE FEELING SO ENERGISED AND SO HOPEFUL ABOUT THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE AND WHAT IT CAN DO FOR OUR PLANET.”**

**Carrie Boyce** Executive Director of the Royal Canadian Institute for Science, CA

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VOICES IN SCIENCE, POLICY AND INNOVATION

# SHAPE THE FUTURE

What shapes the future? We posed this question to some of the most influential voices in science, policy and innovation—and their answers are as diverse as they are insightful. Through thought-provoking statements and symbolic constructions, these leaders share what drives progress in their fields: ideas, people, questions, risks, failures, collaboration, imagination.

Each contribution reflects how the future is shaped—not in isolation, but through bold thinking and shared responsibility. This collection is both visual and intellectual: a gallery of perspectives that challenge, inspire, and expand how we think about change. We invite you to reflect on the question: **HOW DO YOU SHAPE THE FUTURE?**



## VOICES IN SCIENCE, POLICY AND INNOVATION

Thank you to the visionary thinkers and scientific leaders who took part in our Shape the Future project. Your openness to play and creative expression gave bold ideas about shaping the future a visceral impact. Our sincere thanks go to the photographer Dominik Butzmann, and Katalin Karikó, Stephen Streiffer, Verena Shiffrman, Daniel Zajfman, Dorothee Bär, Nigel Smith, Marc Abrahams, Violeta Vázquez-Rojas Maldonado, Jan Hesthaven, Lucresse Adikponsi, Menahem Ben-Sasson,

Natalie Fardian-Melamed, Maria Leptin, Brian Schmidt, Dana Berenson, Matthias Maurer, Edelgard Bulmahn, and Alain Aspect (on the front cover) and Milena Stoycheva, Olaf Brock, Nereyda Ortiz de Lemus, Toni Krüger, Bettina Rockenbach, David Spergel, Katja Becker, Erin Beilharz, Marcus Pleyer, Tshiamiso Makwela, Constantin Häfner, Simone Schwanitz, Jeanne Rubner, Nathanael Liminski, Johanna Pütz, Helmut Schönenberger, Sabine Kunst, Shohya Matsuda (on the back cover).





**WELCOME BACK TO BERLIN**  
**7-9 NOV 2026**

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