

Founding  
Year  
1953

**Mission: to build trust**

In the first year after establishing the Foundation in 1953, 78 fellows come to Germany. The Secretary General welcomes each and every one of them with a handshake. Germany's image is still dominated by the Second World War and the Nazi period; the Foundation's principal task is to build trust. Physicist Werner Heisenberg is the first President of the Foundation, one of several Nobel Laureates to hold this office.



1959 XXX

**First cracks in the Iron Curtain**

In 1959, the Foundation welcomes its first two fellows from the Eastern Block – one from Poland and one from Hungary. A diplomatic coup: freedom of travel is unheard of, and a research stay with the enemy in the West the absolute exception. Meanwhile, intelligence services in Germany keep a suspicious eye on certain fellows who might after all turn out to be communists.

The 60s

**The Rolls Royce of diplomacy**

The Foundation's means increase with its reputation. By the mid-1960s, its budget has grown exponentially to over eight million DM. A German diplomat describes the Foundation as the Rolls Royce of foreign cultural policy.



1963

**Roofs over Humboldtians' heads**

In 1963, the Foundation begins to construct guesthouses and International Meeting Centres to accommodate its fellows. By 1997, residences have been established in 50 university towns.



**Regulars in the President's garden**

Beginning in 1955 and continuing to the present day, the Federal President hosts a reception every year for current Humboldtians in the grounds of the official presidential residence as part of the Foundation's annual meeting. By 1981, the originally modest attendance figure has grown to over one thousand Humboldtians with kith and kin.



**BMWs for the brightest minds from the USA**

Initially only intended for natural scientists from the USA, the Humboldt Research Award is introduced in 1972 and opened up to all countries and disciplines in the following years. For the first time, the Foundation is also able to reach experienced researchers. In its early days, the award is valued at 6,000 DM plus special conditions when buying a BMW – a perk enthusiastically exploited by around one in three award winners.



**Development policy joins the agenda**

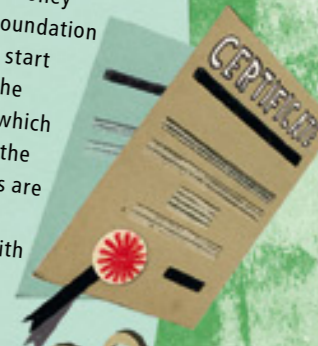
In 1996, the Georg Forster Research Fellowship is established specifically to meet the needs of developing countries. It is designed to assist in the reciprocal transfer of methods and knowledge.



1996

**The arrival of the million-euro awards**

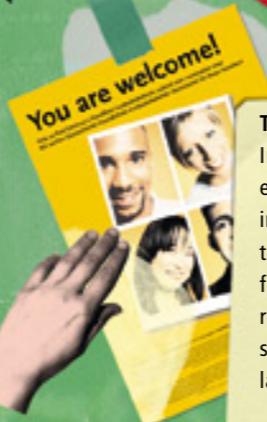
Germany auctions off GSM licences and makes billions of euros in revenue; some of that money goes to science. The Foundation benefits and is able to start offering the Paul and the Kovalevskaja Awards, which are worth millions. For the first time, Humboldtians are brought to Germany for extended periods and with the aim of establishing long-term structures.



2000

**The culture of welcome is invented**

In 2003, the Foundation begins its campaign to establish a culture of welcome in Germany by granting the Award for Germany's Friendliest Immigration Office. The Foundation wants researchers from abroad to feel comfortable and welcome. The response is overwhelming. Subsequent initiatives, such as the Welcome Centres competition, are emulated throughout Germany in the following years.



2003

**New award draws international stars to Germany**

From 2008, the Foundation's Alexander von Humboldt Professorship brings the international crème de la crème to German universities. Financed by the Ministry of Research, the professorships – up to ten per year – are valued at five million EUR each.



**EU chooses Humboldt**

From 2003, the Foundation is home to the EU's National Contact Point and advises researchers on European research funding programmes.



2003

**One of Germany's largest foundation budgets**

The Foundation's budget continues to grow, due in no small part to the Humboldt Professorship, but also as a result of other new programmes and partners. It increases from approximately 64 million EUR in 2007 to over 100 million EUR today, making the Humboldt Foundation one of Germany's top foundations in terms of expenditure on funding. Today, the Humboldt Network embraces more than 26,000 Humboldtians around the globe.



2013

# A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

MILESTONES FROM SIX DECADES OF FOUNDATION ACTIVITY ON FAST FORWARD