



**Leopoldina**  
Nationale Akademie  
der Wissenschaften

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## **The G7 Network of Academies: Science-Based Policy Advice in a Period of Extraordinary Global Change**

**G7 Science Conference  
Rome, 3 May 2017**

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President of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina**

**– Check against delivery –**

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President Quadrio-Curzio,  
Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Representatives of the National  
Academies of Sciences of the G7 countries,  
Presidents of the International Academy Networks,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

it is a great pleasure to be here today at the *Palazzo Corsini* – among so many well-known colleagues from the G7 Network of Academies. On behalf of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, I would like to express our special gratitude to President Quadrio-Curzio and the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* for coordinating the policy advice

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activities of the G7 Academies in 2017 and for organizing the G7 Academies meeting in March and the G7 Science Conference today.

Due to the trustful cooperation during the last weeks and months, we were again able to show that we as scientists are aware of our responsibility. The members of the G7 Network of Academies did not shy away from the long journey to Rome to express that the scientific community is willing to use its expertise and energy to tackle global challenges. We are united in our view that political decisions need to be based on the best available scientific evidence – especially in periods of extraordinary global change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

since 2005, the National Academies of Sciences have been advising heads of state and government in the lead-up to the annual G8 and – since 2014 – G7 summits. It is a well-established tradition that the Academies identify urgent scientific issues relating to the summit agenda that also carry wider implications and require a multilateral approach. In 2007, the Leopoldina has chaired these efforts for the first time in the context of Germany's then-G8 Presidency.

Seven years later, in 2015, under the leadership of Leopoldina, the G7 Academies prepared statements on three topics: resistance to

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antibiotics, neglected tropical diseases, and the future of the ocean. The three statements were handed-over to Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel at the G7 Science Conference in Berlin in the presence of representatives from academia, business and civil society.

I believe that we gave timely and precise advice which was heard on the political level. The recommendations were discussed at the G7 Health Ministers' and G7 Science Ministers' meetings as well as at the G7 Leaders Summit in Elmau. Finally, they were incorporated into the Leader's Summit Declaration.

This year – under the leadership of the the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* – we have successfully worked on three topics: “Cultural Heritage: Building Resilience to Natural Disasters”, “The Challenge of Neurodegenerative Diseases in an Aging Population” and “New Economic Growth: The Role of Science, Technology, Innovation and Infrastructure”.

Without going into the details of the three statements – they have been presented already very eloquently by the three coordinators –, I would like to highlight that the statements stand symbolically for our joint mission: To ensure that up-to-date science is appropriately discussed and taken into account as the basis for sound policy decisions.

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It is therefore our understanding that the Academies' recommendations need to be fed into the preparation processes of the G7 Summit in Taormina. The Sherpa meetings represent important points of reference in this respect. Let us hope that the ministerial meetings will consider our recommendations – the G7 Science Ministers meeting will take place in Turin on 28-29 September. We are very much looking forward to the hand-over of the three statements to President Sergio Mattarella.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

in my opinion, the success of our joint endeavor can be explained by three reasons:

- First, the seven Academies are mandated to provide science-based policy advice to their own heads of state and government in the context of the G7 process. In this setting, policy-makers tend to be more open towards listening to the recommendations of the Academies and to considering the advice seriously.
- Second, the format of the G7 Network of Academies includes face-to-face meetings that enable in-depth discussions of scientific findings. The open and trustful discussion of evidence and the exchange of arguments provide the basis for the scientific recommendations that are jointly developed. Working together and speaking with one voice reinforces the recommendations of the seven Academies at the international level.

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- Third, the independence of our Academies greatly contributed to build a successful relationship of mutual trust at two levels: among the members of the G7 Network of Academies as well with regard to the sherpas, ministers and heads of state and government of the G7 countries who trust that our recommendations are exclusively based on evidence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

the G7 Network of Academies served as the role model for the newly established Science20 Dialogue Process. This year, the National Academies of the G20 countries have joined their forces for the first time to provide science-based policy advice to the G20 Summit in Hamburg. By establishing the Science20 Dialogue Process, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel decided to officially include the research and science community into the G20 process for the first time and mandated the Leopoldina to chair this process.

Six weeks ago, the Leopoldina organized the first Science20 Dialogue Forum and the G20 Academies jointly handed-over the first Science20 Statement to Chancellor Merkel. Professor Brunori was representing the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* at this occasion. With our recommendations “Improving Global Health” we want to draw the leaders’ attention to an important global health issue: the prevention

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and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases and their risk factors.

More than 350 representatives from the G20 Academies, science and academia, representatives of international organizations, industry and civil society, students as well as interested citizens participated in the Science20 Dialogue Forum. Directly after the meeting, I had the opportunity to meet the sherpas of the G20 at their consultations in Frankfurt to present the Science20 Statement and to feed the recommendations directly into the preparatory work for the G20 Summit in Hamburg.

So let me thank the G7 Academies once again for participating in the Science20 process and for contributing to the great success of this new initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

at its core, science is aimed at seeking answers to build a better understanding of the world. Science allows us to constantly expand and revise our knowledge, based on peer-reviewed evidence. It can and should influence policy and guide our decision-making. By providing science-based policy advice in the G7 and G20 context, the National Science Academies take this mission seriously.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

as National Academies, we aim at shaping the global agenda and making a real difference. We trust in the power of science. The G7 Network of Academies is a successful example of international cooperation between National Academies and we are confident that our science-based advice will be well received by the G7 member countries. This success should further strengthen us in our conviction that science is the basis for sound policy decisions and a powerful resource to tackle global challenges.

Thank you for your kind attention.