



# The Human Right to Science: New Directions for Human Rights in Science

International Conference  
Friday, 22 May 2015  
Haus der Universität, Schösslistrasse 5, Berne  
Switzerland



Akademien der Wissenschaften Schweiz  
Académies suisses des sciences  
Accademie svizzere delle scienze  
Academias svizas da las ciencias  
Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences



Leopoldina  
Nationale Akademie  
der Wissenschaften



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The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences are engaged in the promotion of an equitable dialogue between science and society, and they provide scientific advice to politics and society. They represent sciences across institutions and disciplines. Established in the scientific community, they have access to expertise and excellence and can therefore contribute specific knowledge to assist the resolution of societal challenges. Their Delegate for Human Rights seeks to secure respect for the human rights of researchers in their scientific activities, provide information and taking measures related to human rights violations against scientists worldwide as well as to promote knowledge regarding the significance and function of human rights for scientists.



**Leopoldina**  
Nationale Akademie  
der Wissenschaften

The German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina brings together the expertise of some 1,500 distinguished scientists to bear on questions of social and political relevance, publishing unbiased and timely scientific opinions. The Leopoldina represents the German scientific community in international committees and pursues the advancement of science for the benefit of humankind and for a better future. Its Human Rights Committee (HRC) consists of members of the Leopoldina from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. As a member of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies, the HRC assists scientists and scholars, students and their lawyers around the world who are subjected to repression.

### **Conference organisers and sponsors**

This international conference is the fifth edition of the Symposium “Human Rights and Science”, initiated by the HRC of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, presided by Prof. Hans-Peter Zenner (University of Tübingen, Germany). The local conference organisers are Prof. Samantha Besson (Delegate for Human Rights of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, University of Fribourg, Switzerland), Prof. Bruno Gottstein (HRC of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, University of Berne, Switzerland) and Dr Roger Pfister (Head of International Cooperation at the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences).

The organisers gratefully acknowledge funding provided by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) and by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

# The Human Right to Science:

## New Directions for Human Rights in Science

The protection of human rights in science has long been provided for in international law, namely in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Still, the issue has been by and large neglected by the scientific community, the discussions that have taken place barely scratched the surface. They have often glossed over the freedom of scientists, neglecting the rights of others to benefit from scientific progress, but also the other moral considerations in light of which the rights of scientists may have to be restricted, including other human rights, except maybe for intellectual property. Additionally, debates have been mostly concerned with the human rights of scientists abroad, rather than at home, and have also understated the concurrent human rights duties and/or responsibilities of other states, international organisations and private individuals or groups such as corporations, but also private or semi-public research institutions.

Things have started to change, largely thanks to the UN Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights and her work on the content and scope of what she referred to as the "human right to science". This conference aims to bring the first results of the discussions launched at the UN to bear on discussions at the level of national academies, therefore contributing to a broader debate. Following a general presentation of the main issues in contention by the UN Special Rapporteur, an afternoon panel of specialists and stakeholders will explore these issues in a specific context, namely that of international seed policy.

# Programme

## The Human Right to Science: New Directions for Human Rights in Science

### International Conference on Friday, 22 May 2015

Haus der Universität, Schöllisstrasse 5, Berne, Switzerland

- 9 h 45      **Welcome and Introduction**
- **Prof. Samantha Besson**  
Delegate for Human Rights of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences,  
University of Fribourg, Switzerland
  - **Prof. Jörg Hacker**  
President of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina,  
Germany
- 10 h 00      **Session “The Human Right to Science: Main Issues in Contention”**
- Chair: Prof. Bruno Gottstein,  
Human Rights Committee of the German National Academy of Sciences  
Leopoldina, University of Berne, Switzerland
- Keynote**
- **Farida Shaheed**  
UN Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights, Pakistan
- 10 h 40      Coffee break
- 11 h 00      **Comments and discussion**
- **Prof. Samantha Besson**  
Delegate for Human Rights of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences,  
University of Fribourg, Switzerland
  - **Prof. Gereon Wolters**  
Human Rights Committee of the German National Academy of Sciences  
Leopoldina, University of Konstanz, Germany
- 11 h 30      **General discussion**
- 12 h 00      Lunch break

13 h 30

**Session “The Human Right to Science Contextualized: International Seed Policy”**

- **Chair: Prof. Hans-Peter Zenner**  
Chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, University of Tübingen, Germany

**Short statements and panel discussion**

- **Dr François Pythoud**  
Head of Unit for International Sustainable Agriculture at the Federal Office for Agriculture, Berne, Switzerland
- **Dr Christophe Golay**  
Research Fellow at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, Switzerland
- **Marco Aléman**  
Acting Director at the Patent Law Division, World Intellectual Property Organization, Geneva, Switzerland
- **Garlich von Essen**  
Secretary General of the European Seed Association, Brussels, Belgium
- **François Meienberg**  
Head of Agriculture, Biodiversity and Patents at the Berne Declaration, Zurich, Switzerland
- **Prof. Evert Jacobsen**  
Chair for Plant Breeding at Wageningen University, Netherlands
- **Prof. Eva Maria Belser**  
Chair for Constitutional and Administrative Law at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland

15 h 15

Coffee break

15 h 45

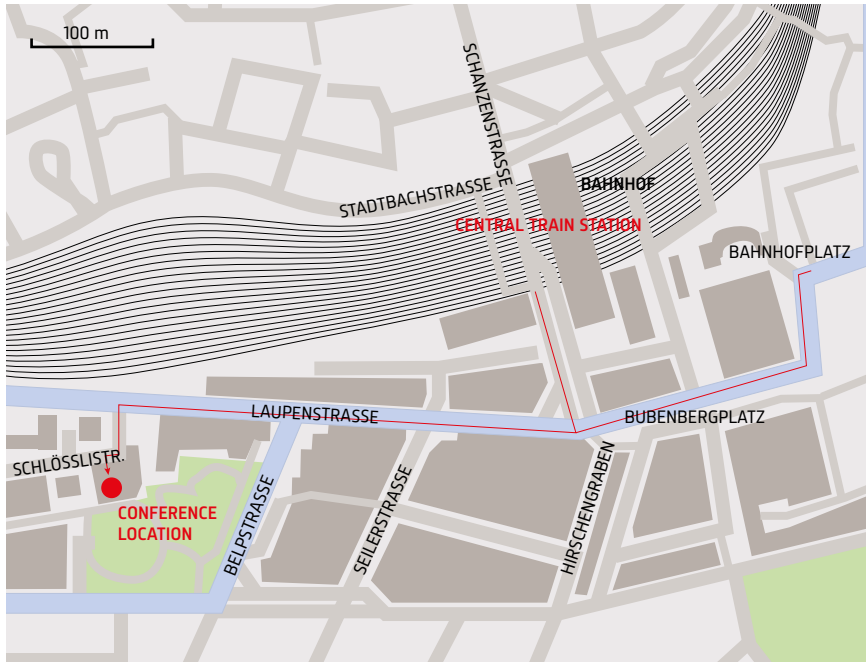
**General discussion**

16 h 30

**Closing remarks by the conference organisers**

16 h 45

**End of conference**



**Conference location**

Haus der Universität  
Schlösslistrassen 5, Berne, Switzerland

**Getting there**

600 metres from Berne central train station, with connections to airports in Berne (30 minutes), Zurich (75 minutes), Basel (80 minutes) and Geneva (120 minutes)

**Registration**

Registration is required due to limited space:  
[swiss-academies.ch/en/agenda](http://swiss-academies.ch/en/agenda)

**Contact**

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