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Executive board of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft soon to be fully staffed

The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft Welcomes Constantin Häfner as its New Executive Vice President of Research and Transfer

On February 17, 2025, Constantin Häfner will take up his new position as Fraunhofer's executive vice president of Research and Transfer. The Fraunhofer senate elected him to the board at its meeting on June 12, 2024. The renowned laser physicist has been the executive director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Laser Technology ILT in Aachen since 2019. With Häfner taking office, the executive board of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft will be complete.

The Research and Transfer executive unit at the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is responsible for the organization's strategic alignment. Its main objective is to promote the commercialization of research results and the collaboration between research and industry. The unit manages Fraunhofer's research resources, supports the institutes in translating research results into market-ready applications and develops research fields to expedite the application of technology and enhance the competitiveness of German industry.

"I am delighted that, with Constantin Häfner taking office, the executive board of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft will once again be fully staffed," said Holger Hanselka, President of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. "Constantin Häfner's international experience at renowned research institutes will be an important asset for the advancement of the Research and Transfer executive unit, especially with an eye to its international activities. The executive board will work together to develop and consolidate the strategic position of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft on the basis of the Fraunhofer model, to exploit transfer paths to industry and to expand our technological leadership. I wish Constantin Häfner the best of luck and every success for his new tasks, and I am very much looking forward to working with him."

Hildegard Müller, Chair of the Senate of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, added: "On behalf of the senate, I wish Constantin Häfner every success in his new role as a Fraunhofer executive vice president. I am sure that we have made an excellent choice when it comes to strengthening Fraunhofer's research and transfer activities. With his remarkable national and international career and his extensive experience, particularly in laser and photonics research, he will contribute many innovative ideas for shaping and strengthening the key business units in the Research and Transfer executive unit."

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Häfner appreciates the close ties between academic and applied research at Fraunhofer: “The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft acts as a catalyst for dialogue between academic and applied research, translating scientific findings into innovative, market-ready solutions for industry. Our close collaboration with research and industry stakeholders is a key pillar for Germany's success in international competition.”

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After graduating in physics from the University of Konstanz, Häfner began his research career at the Centre for Heavy Ion Research before being awarded his doctorate at Heidelberg University at the end of 2003. In 2004, he moved to the U.S., where he first worked at the Nevada Terawatt Facility at the University of Nevada, Reno, before moving to the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) in Silicon Valley in 2006. As the director of the Advanced Photon Technologies Program, he was responsible for the development of the world's most powerful laser systems and led research and development projects on groundbreaking laser technologies, especially on applications in high-energy density physics and nuclear fusion. In November 2019, Häfner took over as director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Laser Technology ILT in Aachen and as director of the Chair of Laser Technology LLT at RWTH Aachen University. Under his leadership, the institute positioned itself for the future in the fields of new laser technologies and laser applications, in particular in digital photonics production, secondary sources, quantum technologies and key technologies for laser-based fusion.



Fig. 1 Prof. Constantin Häfner will take up his new position as Fraunhofer executive vice president of Research and Transfer on February 17, 2025.

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