



Kick-off Meeting of the Leibniz Postdoc Network in Borstel

In October 2017 postdoc representatives from 45 different Leibniz institutes gathered in Borstel to lay the foundation for the first Leibniz postdoc network. From all over Germany and from all five sections 57 representatives were present for the formation of the network and its structure. Also present were Dr. Liz Elvidge of the Postdoc and Fellows Development Center of the Imperial College London and Dr. Sabine Müller, scientific consultant for career development of the Leibniz office, providing insight into possible career perspectives and sharing their experience therein.

The term postdocs describe young scientists, who have completed their PhD studies, therefore being post-doctorate, and then are broadening their knowledge at Universities or other scientific institutes in order to gain a professorship or a comparable position within or outside the academic system. Short time contracts, frequent changes of the place of work and very high commitments are not uncommon. During this career phase good networking and the possibility to exchange experiences is extremely important. Therefore the Postdoc Initiative was founded at the FZB in 2015.

At the beginning of 2017 postdocs in Borstel took the initiative to establish a nationwide network of postdoc representatives within the Leibniz association. With the support of Prof. Kleiner and Prof. Ehlers, director of the science center Borstel, an extensive planning phase began in which postdocs of all institutes had to be reached and coordinated. Postdoc representatives from all over Germany gathered in Borstel where the structural foundation was laid during a two day meeting. Spokespersons and section leaders were elected and six working groups with the following topics were formed: career development of Leibniz postdocs, structure and mission of the network, foundation and preservation of postdoc initiatives, communication and networking, event organization and future perspectives.

Specific goals of the network are:

- to create a communication platform between Leibniz and its postdocs.
- to offer Leibniz postdocs a centralized career development by establishing yearly career retreats.
- to promote the interdisciplinary exchange between the different postdocs thereby strengthening the exchange with the institutes.
- to work on global challenges like air pollution, digitization, antibiotic resistances et cetera as united Leibniz postdocs using its interdisciplinary to develop possible solutions.

The newly appointed spokesperson Dr. Sabine Bartel stated, “I think our first meeting surpassed our expectations and was distinguished by the excellent discussions and its constructive suggestions regarding the structure and the further steps of this network. Especially the high motivation of the Leibniz postdocs will be a big help in the future to consolidate the network structure as well as to increase the awareness in Leibniz and to reach the set goals. We are looking forward to further cooperating within the Leibniz association and to our next meeting.”