



# Press release

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## **Chancellor Merkel and Minister Schavan see off exhibition train “Expedition Future” before it sets off across Germany as part of the Year of Science 2009**

### **Science Express sets off from Berlin / Stopping at 62 German cities**

Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, Federal Research Minister Annette Schavan and President of the Max Planck Society Peter Gruss opened the “Expedition Future” train exhibition at Berlin Central Station on Thursday. More than 300 metres long, the train – organized by the Max Planck Society – features interactive exhibits, interesting background information and fascinating pictures, giving visitors an opportunity to learn about and experience the future. The mobile exhibition shows how research and technology will affect our lives in the near future. The train will travel through Germany until the end of November, stopping at 62 cities. Visitors from Berlin can see the exhibition on platform 2 at the Central Station between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m on Friday.

At the opening of the mobile exhibition, Federal Minister of Research Annette Schavan said: “The ideas of researchers, scientists, engineers and inventors have played a significant role in making our country what it is today. ‘Expedition Future’ is part of the Science Year 2009 and has the aim of showing that science and research have always been and will remain the basis for prosperity, innovation and democracy. The exhibition illustrates this in a very hands-on way. It is especially designed to stimulate pupils’ interest in research, which offers them a wide range of different prospects for the future and confronts them with the fascinating challenge of preparing the ground for the world of tomorrow and beyond. Particularly in times like these, we have to focus on education, science, research and development to ensure that we emerge from the economic crisis even stronger.”

In its twelve cars, each dedicated to one research topic, the exhibition shows scientific trends and perspectives until the year 2020. The focus is on global challenges such as climate change, energy shortage and demographic developments. The exhibition consists of installations, hands-on exhibits and numerous interactive activities.

“Science and industry open up many new possibilities. But in today’s fast-paced world, it is more important than ever before for them to engage in an open dialogue with society. If Germany wants to stay abreast of global changes, we need to be open to innovation. It is important for us to get involved in as many fields of research as possible to ensure that our children have the knowledge necessary to safeguard the welfare of future generations. The ‘Expedition Future’ offers an insight into the opportunities that research and development will create”, said Peter Gruss, President of the Max Planck Society.

Another aim of the exhibition is to improve the relationship between science and industry. The project “Expedition Future” is exemplary in this regard. The exhibition is financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and run by the Max Planck Society. The companies Siemens, Bayer and Volkswagen and other carriage/subject partners have also supported the “knowledge train” by supplying know-how and exhibits. A large number of universities as well as the Fraunhofer Society, the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres, the Leibniz Association and the German Research Association are also “on board”. The train’s next stop will be Frankfurt on the Main, where the “Expedition Future” will stop from 25 to 27 April before pulling into Darmstadt and Jena. China has expressed an interest in taking over the exhibition train after its voyage through Germany, so the “Science Express” may soon travel through China, as well.

The Science Year 2009 is the BMBF’s contribution to events marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall. It is organized by the BMBF in cooperation with the initiative Science in Dialogue (WiD). Other participants include the German Academy of Natural Scientists Leopoldina, the Robert Bosch Foundation and the Donors' Association for the Promotion of Sciences and Humanities in Germany.

***Further information about the Science Year 2009 – Research Expedition Germany is available at [www.forschungsexpedition.de](http://www.forschungsexpedition.de). More detailed information about the train and the individual stops is available at***

***[http://www.forschungsexpedition.de/generator/wj2009/de/03\\_\\_Veranstaltungen/02\\_\\_Der\\_20Ausstellungszug.html](http://www.forschungsexpedition.de/generator/wj2009/de/03__Veranstaltungen/02__Der_20Ausstellungszug.html)***

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