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Berndt Feuerbacher is the new President of the International Astronautical Federation

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Berndt Feuerbacher

At their 59th Congress in Glasgow, the members of the General Assembly of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) appointed Professor Berndt Feuerbacher from the German Aerospace Center (DLR) as their president. Feuerbacher is, after IAF founding president Eugene Sanger in 1951, the second German to assume the post.

A core task of Prof. Feuerbacher's future work involves the integration of organisations from emerging space-faring nations into the IAF. A second focus lies in the promotion of young scientists and youth and a third task is setting up technically-oriented conferences such as the 2010 Symposium in Beijing on the subject of lunar exploration.

Feuerbacher successfully headed the DLR Institute for Space Simulation in Cologne (nowadays the Institute for Materials Physics in Space) for many years and was founding director of the DLR Institute for Space Systems in Bremen. His election to this international body also reinforces the profile of Germany as a space nation: "I am delighted at being elected - it provides the opportunity to place both DLR and the excellence of space research in Germany on an international platform" said Feuerbacher.

Berndt Feuerbacher assumes the office of his American colleague James Zimmerman upon the expiry of the latter's four year term. James Zimmerman is also managing director of aerospace consulting firm International Space Services. "Under his tenure, Jim Zimmerman has provided four years of excellent achievement and has enhanced the reputation of the Federation enormously. The IAF has a lot to thank him for", underscored Feuerbacher.

The International Astronautical Federation was founded in 1951 and is an association of nearly 200 institutional members from 60 nations in the space sector. Among the main tasks of the Federation include the promotion of space cooperation, exchange of expertise in the field of space research and organising an international congress - the IAC - every year.

The Congress allows organisations to network, exchange information, and to start and continue joint programmes and projects. The IAF continues to grow because, as more and more emerging organisations enter the high technology aerospace sector, cooperation becomes increasingly relevant.

The Federation gives special attention to the next generation of scientists - trying to inspire young people to join technical professions and space and thus halt the declining number of students in science subjects.

The next Congress - the 60th - occurs between 12 and 16 October 2009 in Daejeon, Korea.

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