Birthday

The WZB has pursued problem-oriented basic research for fifty years, and in 2019 we have presented many forward-looking essays and books on the great social challenges of our time. From the outset, the mission of the WZB has extended beyond conducting pure research, a responsibility that we take to heart and included participating in the scientific discourse throughout Europe and the world at large. We care deeply about communicating with policy-makers, providing our results to society, and contributing to a broad public debate. In recent years, we have also expanded our relationships to embrace art, music, and film.

This year we can really celebrate, rejoice, and even rock. The evaluation of the WZB by the Leibniz Association in 2018 went very well, the addition of two floors to the basilica is progressing marvelously, and our work with partner institutes on education, the Internet and society, civil society, and migration is generating new, stimulating ideas every day. We are also getting new impulses from being a member of the Leibniz Association and from the fabulous Berlin research landscape.

This year’s celebration is shared with all those for whom we conduct research, starting with the decision and policy-making community. Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier came to the WZB on 14 March, and discussed aspects of democracy with young scholars, before continuing the conversation with the WZB directors. On 19 June, we took the next step in our celebrations in a place...
that stands like no other in Berlin for peace, for reconciliation, for democracy –
the Pierre Boulez Concert Hall. Daniel Barenboim invited the WZB to explore the
intersections of science, music, art, and society.

Our theme was “Europe: Myth and Vision.” It was launched into the world of music
by a world premiere of a piece by Jörg Widmann. Joining us on stage were chil-
dren from the Kreuzberg art laboratory “S27,” who told us about their ideas and
dreams for Europe. “The Gold Projections” by Joe Ramirez also debuted, a unique
art installation created in cooperation with the WZB interpreting the theme of
the evening. In the foyer of the Boulez Hall, short films offered the 800 guests
glimpses into current WZB research.

On 5 November, during Berlin Science Week, we will celebrate with our colleagues
from the scientific community. Academic peers joining us include Margaret Levi,
Jennifer Hochschild, Charles F. Manski, and the winner of the A.SK Prize 2019, Raj
Chetty. At the end of the year, on the 4th and 5th of December, we will honor the
great Lord Ralf Dahrendorf, our former research professor, by commemorating the
tenth anniversary of his passing at an event organized jointly with the University
of Oxford and the London School of Economics and Political Science.

We are thrilled to celebrate in and with Berlin, keenly aware of the support we
receive, the trust we enjoy, and the responsibility we bear.

Jutta Allmendinger