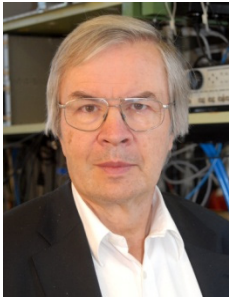


Garching, 18.03.2011

Press Release

Professor Theodor W. Hänsch is named Honorary Member of the German Physical Society



The German Physical Society (DPG) has elected Prof. Theodor W. Hänsch, Director at the MPQ and Carl Friedrich von Siemens Professor for physics at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, as new honorary member of the society. The society herewith honours “a personality who has excelled in outstanding contributions to the DPG as well as to the field of physics”. The DPG unites more than 59000 professionals, thus being the world’s largest specialist society. Its tradition goes back to the “Physikalische Gesellschaft zu Berlin”, founded in 1845, and to the “Deutsche Gesellschaft für technische Physik e.V.”, founded in 1919.

Professor Hänsch was born in Heidelberg in 1941. He studied physics at the University of Heidelberg, earning his doctorate in 1969. He went on to post-doctoral study in the United States, and was a professor of physics at Stanford University from 1975 to 1986. Since 1986 he has been Director at the Max Planck Institute of Quantum Optics and Professor of Experimental Physics at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich.

His main research fields are the high-precision laser spectroscopy of hydrogen and other elementary atoms and the investigation of ultracold quantum gases. His early work includes the first narrowband tunable dye laser, the invention of commonly used techniques of Doppler-free laser spectroscopy, and the first proposal for laser cooling of atomic gases. The Nobel Prize in Physics 2005 was awarded to him for the development of the frequency comb technique.

In particular, the DPG honours Prof. Hänsch for “his pioneering work in laser physics and quantum optics with which he has especially influenced the field of cold atoms by the method of laser cooling and enabled precision measurements of atomic parameters. By the development of the frequency comb technique Prof. Hänsch greatly improved the precision of atomic clocks and set the basis for new experiments in metrology.” The certificate of the honorary membership was awarded to Prof. Hänsch during the ceremony of the 75th annual meeting of the German Physical Society at the Technische Universität Dresden on March 15, 2011.

Professor Hänsch has received many scientific prizes and awards. Among others he was awarded the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft in 1988. In 2006 the Große Bundesverdienstkreuz mit Stern (Great Cross of Merit with Star) of the Federal Republic of Germany was conferred upon him. In June 2008 he became member of the 'Order Pour le mérite' which was established by the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1842. [O.M.]

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