

NRW Science Dialogue – Strengthening Leadership Programmes and their Networks in NRW

**German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)
in cooperation with Charlemagne Prize Foundation**

5 November 2026

Venue: Aachen

Time: 11:00 – 18:00

Background & Rationale of the NRW Science Dialogue

The *Science Dialogue* is a collaborative format initiated by the Managing Global Governance (MGG) Programme at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS). It aims to strengthen exchange and cooperation among leadership academies and training programmes in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) that are committed to sustainable development and international cooperation.

Across NRW, a multitude of research, training, and policy-oriented institutions have established academies and capacity-building initiatives to prepare young professionals and emerging leaders for global challenges. These programmes share a belief in the power of dialogue, peer learning, and evidence-based leadership development to advance the 2030 Agenda and foster just, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

At the same time, many of these initiatives operate independently, with limited opportunities for regional coordination and peer learning across institutional boundaries. The *Science Dialogue* series was established to address this gap — creating a platform for structured reflection, mutual learning, and collaboration among leadership programmes in NRW. The format allows directors and coordinators to share approaches, compare methodologies, and identify complementarities, ultimately contributing to a more cohesive regional ecosystem of transformative leadership development.

Objectives of the Science Dialogue 2026

Building on two years of structured exchange, the third NRW Science Dialogue focuses on two priorities:

1. **Joint positioning:** Finalise our shared opinion piece and identify next steps to bring our collective voice into the public and political debate.
2. **Understanding our networks:** Map and compare our alumni networks to move from parallel operation to active complementarity.

Expected Outcomes

- A finalised and co-signed opinion piece ready for publication.
- A shared mapping of alumni networks across participating programmes, with initial ideas for joint activation.
- A strengthened sense of collective identity and purpose as a network of networks in NRW.

The NRW Science Dialogue at A European Summit

The NRW Science Dialogue 2026 takes place in parallel to the „A European Summit: Freedom of Research“, an international conference organised by the Charlemagne Prize Foundation, the RWTH Aachen, and the Käthe Hamburger Kolleg Research Cultures. The Summit brings together thought leaders, researchers, and policy-makers from across Europe to reflect on the conditions needed to protect academic freedom, sustain international knowledge cooperation, and strengthen Europe's democratic and innovative capacity in times of geopolitical uncertainty.

This parallel timing is an opportunity. As a network of leadership programmes that actively builds the very cooperation culture the Summit seeks to protect, we are uniquely positioned to contribute a practitioner's voice to this debate. At 16:00, coordinators from our network will participate in a public panel as part of the Summit programme, making the case for why leadership programmes and their alumni networks are essential infrastructure for democracy and international knowledge cooperation — and what is at stake when they are cut. This panel is one concrete example of how the NRW Science Dialogue creates synergies: turning our internal exchange into external visibility and translating our shared work into a broader public and political conversation.

Programm draft details tbc

11:00 – 11:15

Welcome and Introduction

- Charlemagne Foundation and IDOS introduce the Science Dialogue Day format and objectives of the meeting.

11:15 – 12:00

Discuss the Joint opinion piece

- Final comments and outreach process

12:00 – 13:00

Explore the Alumni Networks

- 3 min presentation of each Network & yearly activities

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break and Networking

14:00 – 15:00

Explore the Complementariness & Synergies

- Based on network presentations: identify overlaps, gaps and concrete collaboration opportunities

15:00 – 15:30

Transfer to Summit venue

15:30 – 16:15 Panel at a European Summit: Freedom of Research (Science Dialogue)

Please see for the further Programme: <https://for-summit.eu/>

List of Participants (tbc)

Becker	Manuel	Academy of International Affairs (AIA) NRW	Head of Scientific Programme
Bolz	Max	Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg (H-BRS)	Administrative Director of the MBA programme in CSR & NGO Management
Büscher	Chris	Shaping Futures (IDOS)	Head of Network
Christ	Simone	Postgraduate Programme for Sustainability Cooperation (PGP) (IDOS)	Head of Programme
Dietrich	Christine	Charlemagne Prize Academy	Deputy Managing Director
Freistein	Katja	Academy of International Affairs (AIA) NRW	Academic Coordinator Fellowship Programme
Grimm	Sven	Department Knowledge Cooperation and Training (IDOS)	Head of Department
Heckel	Jutta	GIZ Development Cooperation Trainee Programmes	Head of Department
Ramiro	Vera-Fluixá	Bundesagentur für Arbeit	Office Executives for International Organizations (BFIO)
Reiber	Tatjana	Managing Global Governance Programme (IDOS)	Head of MGG Academy
Reiners	Wulf	Managing Global Governance Programme (IDOS)	Head of Programme
Schellpepper	Almuth	Deutsche Welle Akademie	Coordinator International Media Studies
Schwachula	Anna	Managing Global Governance Programme (IDOS)	Senior Researcher
Verweyen	Georg	LEAD! (University of Cologne)	Programme Coordinator
Vogel	Johanna	Managing Global Governance Programme (IDOS)	Senior Researcher
Weinlich	Silke	Learning and Knowledge Services · United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC)	Deputy Director
Yamanian	Janette	Joint MSc in Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security (UNU-EHS)	Programme Coordinator
Zein Al Din	Mayssoun	Academy of International Affairs NRW	Executive Director Academy of International Affairs NRW