

Press Release (under embargo till June 1, 2019, 11:00 AM CET)

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New Scientific Association in German-Speaking Europe Explores the Question if there is Real Purpose and Design in Nature

On occasion of the opening event for the new scientific association “*Zentrum für BioKomplexität und NaturTeleologie*”, seated in Austria, an international conference on teleology in nature was held from May 29th to June 1st 2019 at the town hotel in Waidhofen an der Thaya in scenic Lower Austria. The initiators were the German paleontologist Dr. Günter Bechly, now based in Austria, and the biologist Prof. Dr. Siegfried Scherer from the Technical University of Munich. The event was sponsored by the *Discovery Institute* in Seattle. The closed conference was attended by 31 invited participants, mainly scientists and philosophers from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein, as well as Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Israel, Italy, UK, USA, Australia, and New Zealand. The schedule included 18 lectures from various disciplines like biology, paleontology, physics, astronomy, and philosophy. The overarching topic was the question, whether there is evidence in nature that suggests real purpose and intelligent design instead of only apparent design, thus if there are natural phenomena that cannot be sufficiently explained by mere chance and necessity (laws of nature). Possible examples are the origin of all space and time with the Big Bang, the fine-tuning of the universe, the origin of life and of complex new biological structures, and the origin of consciousness, as well as the fundamental questions, where the laws of nature do come from, how abstract mathematical laws can interact with physical nature, and why there is anything rather than nothing.

The new association will explicitly not pursue a religious approach such as Biblical creation research, but will endorse an unbiased open-ended inference to the best

explanation exclusively based on scientific evidence and rational philosophical arguments. The symposium in Austria was one of the biggest conferences on this subject that ever took place in Europe. The association intends to organize annual academic conferences and summer seminars for students, and to offer public lectures and media in German language. Further information is available on the internet at the association's website, which is still under construction: <https://www.biocomplexity.at>.

Dr. Günter Bechly

Chairman *Zentrum für BioKomplexität & NaturTeleologie*

Echsenbach, Austria, May 25, 2019