



International Space Education Institute

Институт Международного Космического Образование

*gemeinnütziges freies Institut zur Förderung der Studien- und Berufsorientierung im Ingenieurwesen und der Luft- und Raumfahrt e.V.
charitable free institute to support the study- and occupational orientation in engineer's being and aerospace industries (registered association)
общественно полезный свободный институт к содействию исследований и профессиональной ориентации
в инженерном деле и космическом полете (зарегистрированный союз)*

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Dear Consul General Ken Toko,

We are grateful for your visit to our school and our team in April this year, as well as for the invitations to Independence Day and the Youth Council. We are gladly welcoming any new action that will deepen and expand transatlantic relations between our countries and around the world for our generation.

Our school is an institution that continues to develop the legacy of its German-American founder, Prof. Dr. Jesco von Puttkamer, along the paths he prepared for the development of young scholars, and to expand it with high performance at the grassroots level. This includes international relations between schools and universities, exchange programs and sponsorship for international competitions. We are particularly proud of the fact that our Executive Board, in tandem with Prof. Dr. von Puttkamer, has been able to allow international teams to participate in U.S. competitions such as the NASA Moonbuggy Race / NASA Roverchallenge as part of a long-term pilot project since 2007.

In the meantime, several hundred international teams have followed this example, and with them thousands of high school and university students who see our team as a role model to be emulated because of its excellent performance. This results in exchange programs, internships and further competitions. We only follow the NASA Core Values and the pedagogical advice of Prof. Dr. von Puttkamer, who was in charge of the ISS as a strategist at NASA Headquarters until 2012.

Above all, the multinational and interdisciplinary cooperation with students from up to 30 countries "over all borders", which is particularly characteristic of us, was honored by the former NASA Administrator Charles Bolden in April 2012 with the words: "This has a future and this is what we need. This is how we built the International Space Station" (source: NASA 2012 Spin Off Report).

Träger: Freie Jugendhilfe der Stadt Leipzig; Kinder-und Jugend-Umweltpreis der Stadt Leipzig; 3 x Platz 1 der NASA Roverchallenge; uvm
Mitglied im: Jesco von Puttkamer Society, AMF, BVMW, DEHOGA
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They became our guiding principle and we succeeded in recruiting other international teams as "Racehorses for US-students". Similarly, we strengthened our relationships with US schools in Ashburn, Greenfield, Washington DC, and Houston. NASA Headquarters nominated our institution as the award sponsor of our proposed "Jesco von Puttkamer International Team Award" in April 2013, which was offered to 12 teams between 2014-2019. One of its sponsors was also the former Prime Minister of Thuringia.

Furthermore, we inspired the "Telemetry Award" by integrating electronics and wrote its rules after we succeeded in significantly improving our design through digital measurement methods. The Telemetry Award was then a permanent part of the Challenge for 10 years (2010-2019).

In 2013, we donated one of our rovers to the Hallmark film production "Space Warriors" for the production of the children's adventure film of the same name. This enjoys great popularity among children and the Rover is an excellent actor for 10 minutes in the 2-hour film.

For this NASA awarded our institution in particular the Leipzig founders Yvonne and Ralf Heckel in April 2017 for "10 years of international team participation". The award was presented by the former director of the Marshall Spaceflight Center (MSFC), Todd May. This motivated us all to do more and especially to "trailblaze" according to the rules of space exploration established by Prof. von Puttkamer. Since then, we as a school and team have been traveling around the globe 2 times a year, giving lectures in numerous schools and universities between New Delhi and Rio de Janeiro, passing on tips, visions and experiences. These "road shows" are becoming increasingly popular around the world. All this serves the unique goal of our generation - to create the future.

At the same time, however, the political situation in the USA changed and we are facing increasing repression by the organizer of the NASA Rover Challenge in Huntsville Alabama. We are convinced that this development is not covered by NASA, the Congress or the positive forces of the USA and it worries us:

1. Our school received attorney mail regarding alleged trademark violations the allegations of which were all refuted and/or misunderstandings clarified. Since then, the rules of the competition have been regularly changed, making it more difficult for international teams only, even to the point of prohibiting young people from working together, which is an intrusion on the autonomy of any school.
2. During the Covid-19 pandemic, a so-called "application procedure" was introduced by the organizers, which required the submission of a proposal. Again, rules were established that made this submission more difficult for international teams. The deadline was set for the summer vacations, when schools are not open. Although a proper proposal was submitted, our team got excluded from the competition with reasons that could be completely refuted already in the same week after they became known.

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3. The organizer of the NASA-Roverchallenge is no longer physically reachable since 2020. Neither is there an imprint with responsible persons, a telephone number, nor a proper appeal procedure against decisions, which is usual according to the rules of the rule of law.

4. The Jesco von Puttkamer International Team Award and also the Telemetry Award were cancelled without comment by the organizers in 2020. This means a lasting damage to the reputation and life's work of NASA's longest serving scientist and a reduction of team capability and performance by excluding modern and contemporary technologies.

Dear Consul General Ken Toko,

our institution operates on a non-profit basis, is independent of government funding of any kind according to Puttkamer's guidelines, is financially self-sufficient through its own operations, sustainable environmental techniques and regular donations, and has spun a bond of cooperation between young people around the globe primarily for space travel and environmental techniques. Our team consists of young people who take responsibility for their future and our planet. This example is followed by more and more companies as our sponsors, schools, students and parents.

Our team is made up of 14-17 year olds who have a right to be treated equally and engaged by the pandemic. In the last decade, we won the NASA Rover Challenge 3 times and achieved 4 other second and third places. 30 times rovers built in Leipzig drove the course in Alabama and further tens of thousands of kilometers on roadshows through Europe, Asia, North and South America. We are especially proud of our Ukraine tour in 2009 and 2010 as well as the invitations to Asia, Africa and South America. Even Taikonauts already tried themselves out with us. We are especially strong with girls and young engineers.

Alumis of our team today are engineers, teachers, aspiring female astronauts and successful businesspeople. They also include employees at Tesla in California, Boeing in Texas or scientists and entrepreneurs in Saxony's SME sector. There is no need to go into detail about the perspectives this opens up for cooperation, business and education.

All this is damaged in its reputation by the actions shown above. Schools in cooperation and befriended young people cannot understand why "NASA obviously excludes international high-performance as a driver of a fair competition", but on the other hand invites as NASA VIPs to the rocket launch of the new moon rocket Artemis 1. All of this creates uncertainty for teachers, parents and school administrators worldwide and damages the flawless commitment of our school and participants.

Here we see a contradiction between the actions of the "non-transparent judges and authors of the rules and non-transparent admission procedures of the NASA Rover Challenge" and the actions as well as invitations of NASA Headquarters under the rules of Core Values and Space Exploration, referred to as the "Artemis Generation."

We wish to continue to shape our future unhindered, to share experiences and to be a moral and

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scientific bridge into the world and between the shores of our worlds - no matter what color.

We have had countless conversations and phone calls over the last 2 weeks for this reason. Among them were the people listed in the attached CONTACT-LIST document. Included are influential people in spaceflight such as former NASA Human Spaceflight Administrator and astronaut William Readdy. Also the former head of the Washington office of the DLD (German Space Agency) and nowadays for technology transfer, Jürgen Drescher. As well as international and US teachers.

No one is comfortable with the changed rules against international youth participation, and the rejection of our team. All refer to this as "Unacceptable". All advised us to inform both NASA management and ESA Director General about this, because both are partners and have an interest in a sustainable cooperation.

After now 20 successful years as an international school for STEM and as an internationally respected team, we want to continue this and gladly revive it with an own competition for young talents under the logo of the cooperation. In addition, we are able to offer a temporary home to a team of Ukrainian students with know how, a roof and workshop facilities in Leipzig (which would be prohibited under the current and obsolete rules of the NASA Rover Challenge).

We are asking you:

1. Please check the correctness of our proposal to participate in the NASA Roverchallenge itself with these documents:

- Guidebook (competition rules)
- Proposal (our application, written under high time pressure during the summer vacations and between Artemis launch dates as a guest of NASA).
- Objection and justification

2. Forward our objection through diplomatic channels to the key agencies of the U.S. Government, Congress, NASA and responsible decision makers as deemed by you and our advisors with a request for:

- Withdrawal of our team's rejection along with a redress of grievances
- Deletion of all NASA Rover Challenge rules that disadvantage international teams, disparage or prevent cooperation between young people of all nations.

3. Pull together with us to set up a new competition gladly under the leadership of our institution for EU and USA together with ESA and NASA. It is going back to the moon and this can only be done with our generation and only multinationally. This requires diplomatic channels to all states of the EU and the USA up to the Directors General of both space agencies.

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Attachments:

- Contact list
- Proposal of the Rovernauts
- Objection with justification
- Email conversation with advisors
- our concept for a new chapter in the new decade

The team of the Rovernauts from Leipzig
of the Jesco von Puttkamer Campus

and the international members and advisors of the
International Space Education Institute

Cosma Heckel
Arthur Sommer

Yvonne & Ralf Heckel, CEO

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