PRESS RELEASE 08/2026

Ethics Council asks German students: What is the good life?

Berlin, 9 November 2026

On November 11, the German Ethics Council invites students from all over Germany to its autumn conference, "Meet the Ethics Council! Your Ideas of a Good Life," in Leipzig. Approximately 250 young people will share their ideas and discuss them with the Council. The event will be live-streamed from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and is open to the press during this time.

"The future belongs to young people – yet at the same time, they are excluded from the political decisions that shape that future," Cornelia Betsch, the Council's spokesperson for the conference, emphasizes. "We want to know what hopes and fears they have and how the Ethics Council can place greater emphasis on their needs." "In a world marked by multiple crises and a great deal of uncertainty, we need all ideas on the table," Helmut Frister, Chair of the German Ethics Council, adds. "It's not enough to just talk about young people; we also want to talk with them."

Back in autumn 2025, the Council had called on young people in what were then Years 8 and 9 to take part in the interactive campaign "Your ideas of a good life – what counts, who counts and who pays what?". Several hundred students across Germany responded by submitting their creative ideas on the topic. Twelve classes were ultimately selected to present their contributions in Leipzig and engage in discussion with the Council members.

"From short films, poetry slams, artwork and songs to thought experiments – the variety and creativity of the pieces are impressive," Jutta Allmendinger, the Council's deputy spokesperson for the conference, says. In terms of content, contributions range from the effect of AI on life satisfaction, through schools of the future, performance pressure and gender equality, to the matter of responsibility for others. "A big thank you already to all the young people who have contributed so enthusiastically and who will be joining us in Leipzig," Allmendinger adds. "We look forward to seeing you there!"

Programme

The day begins with a music performance by HAVET (formerly Mimi & Josy). Following the presentation and recognition of the students' contributions, they will have the opportunity to engage in dialogue with individual Council members under the theme "Students advise the Ethics Council". Finally, the young people will discuss ethical issues raised in their contributions together with TV presenter Nadine Hadad and several Council members.

Members
Prof. Dr. iur. Helmut Frister (Chair)
Dr. rer. nat. Uta Eser (Vice-Chair)
Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Susanne Schreiber (Vice-Chair)
Prof. Dr. med. Dr. phil. Eva Winkler (Vice-Chair)

Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Jutta Allmendinger
Prof. Dr. Rana Alsoufi
Prof. Dr. phil. Cornelia Betsch
Prof. Dr. iur. Hans-Georg Dederer
Prof. Dr. Aldo Faisal
Military Bishop Dr. theol. Bernhard Felmberg
Prof. Dr. rer. pol. Nils Goldschmidt
Prof. Dr. theol. Elisabeth Gräb-Schmidt
Prof. Dr. med. Winfried Hardinghaus
Dr. phil. Ute Kalender
Hedy Kerek-Bodden
Prof. Dr. phil. Armin Nassehi
Prof. Dr. phil. habil. Annette Riedel
Prof. Dr. iur. Dr. phil. Frauke Rostalski
Prof. Dr. rer. soc. Dr. theol. Jochen Sautermeister
Prof. Dr. theol. Kerstin Schlögl-Flierl
Dr. med. Dr. h. c. Josef Schuster
Prof. Dr. iur. Gregor Thüsing
Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Achim Wambach

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Public and non-public sessions

The event will be livestreamed **from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** on the German Ethics Council's website (www.ethikrat.org/live). During this time, **members of the press are warmly invited to attend the conference in person in Leipzig**. Following the morning programme, interviews with young people, Council members or presenter Nadine Hadad can be conducted during the lunch break until 1:30 p.m.

Students who have the necessary declaration of consent can be identified by the **red dot on their name badge**. Please ensure that you only approach these young people for individual portraits and interviews. All other participants may only appear in general conference footage.

To ensure a safe environment, the **afternoon session is closed to the press**. No audience other than the students and their teachers will be attending the event in person, held in German.

Autumn conference of the German Ethics Council
"Meet the Ethics Council! Your Ideas of Good Life"

When: 11 November 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
(Break: 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.)
Where: University of Leipzig, Paulinum, Augustusplatz 10, 04109 Leipzig
and online at www.ethikrat.org/live
Programme: www.ethikrat.org/veranstaltungen/tagungen/eure-vorstellungen-vom-guten-leben

Participating schools and institutions

- Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Gymnasium, Filderstadt
- Johann-Gottfried-Herder-Gymnasium, Berlin-Lichtenberg (three courses)
- Johanna-Moosdorf-Schule, Leipzig
- Kinder- und Jugendhaus BOLLE, Berlin-Marzahn
- Königin-Luise-Gymnasium, Erfurt
- Kosmos-Schule, Berlin-Lichtenberg
- Lyonel-Feininger-Gymnasium, Halle (Saale)
- Otto-Kühne-Schule Godesberg, Bonn
- Rosa-Luxemburg-Gymnasium, Berlin-Pankow
- Ursulaschule, Osnabrück