

Prof. Dr. Axel Horstmann

**EU Conference Giving More for Research in Europe:
The Role of Foundations**

**Promotion of Social Science and Research
- Focus on the Humanities -
Joint Program of the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung
and the VolkswagenStiftung**



Focus on the Humanities

Joint Program of the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung and the VolkswagenStiftung

I. Background

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I. Background

- **Facts and figures**
- **The two foundations**
- **Humanities in Germany 2006**

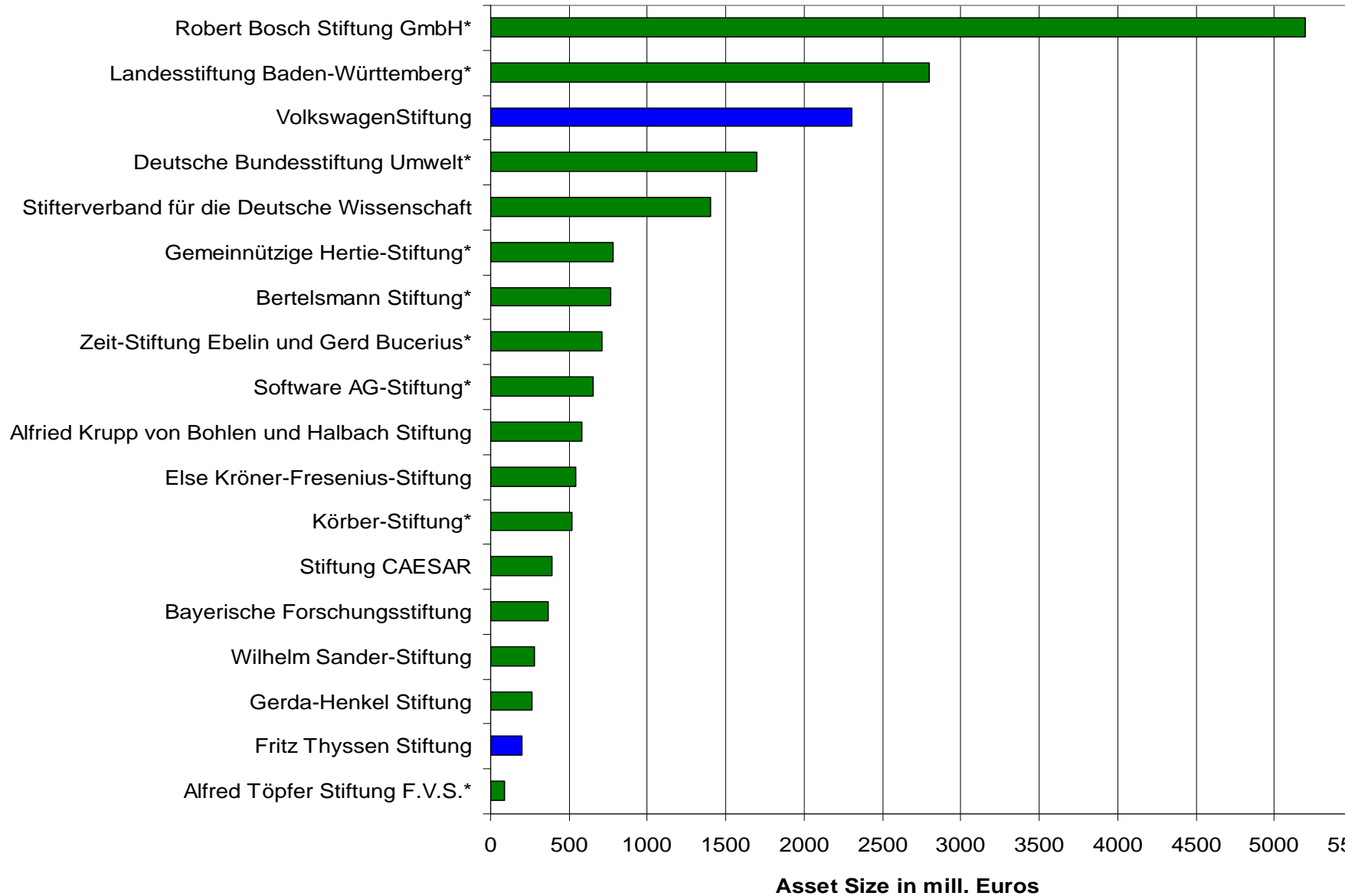
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Facts and Figures

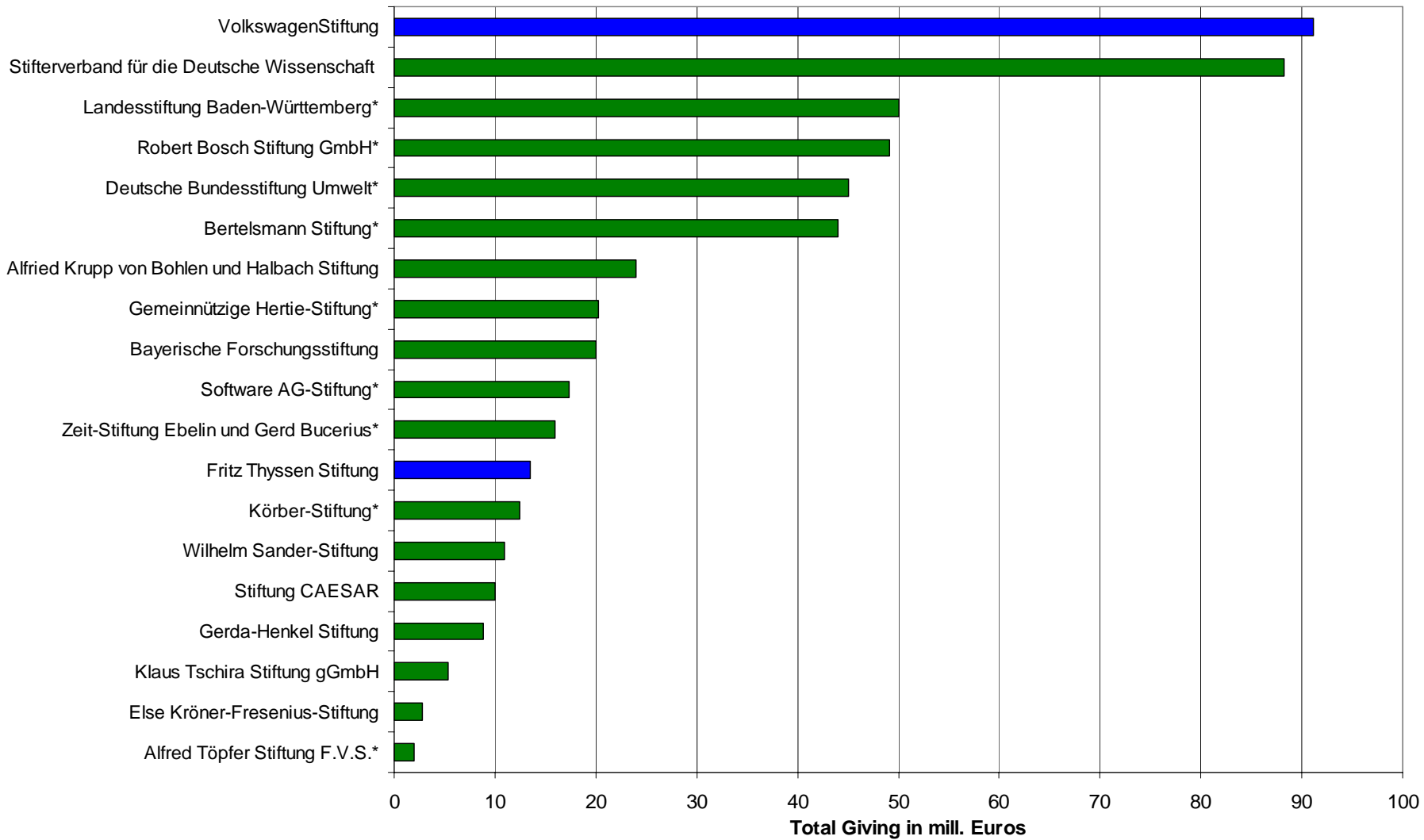
Private Charitable Foundations in Germany and Europe

German Private Charitable Foundations by Asset Size (2003-2005)



Foundations marked by * are not exclusively engaged in research funding.

German Private Charitable Foundations by Total Giving p.a. (2003-2005)



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Fritz Thyssen Stiftung

Fritz Thyssen Stiftung Köln

www.fritz-thyssen-stiftung.de

Founded:	1959
Founder:	Amélie Thyssen and Anita Gräfin Zichy-Thyssen
Legal status:	non-profitmaking foundation under private law
Scope of funding:	scientific research at universities and other scientific institutions, with a special focus on humanities and social sciences
Governance:	managing committee, board of trustees, scientific advisory board
Assets:	200 mill. Euros (2003)
Funding p.a.:	13.6 mill. Euros (2003)
Type of activity:	grantmaking
Special features:	focus on younger scholars and researchers

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VolkswagenStiftung

VolkswagenStiftung Hannover

www.volkswagenstiftung.de

Founded: 1961 (privatizing the Volkswagenwerk GmbH)

Founder: Federal Republic of Germany, State of Lower Saxony

Legal status: non-profitmaking foundation under private law

Scope of funding: **science and technology, including social sciences
and humanities, in research and academic teaching**

Governance: board of trustees, secretary general

Assets: 2.4 billion Euros (2005)

Funding p.a.: 91.8 mill. Euros (2005)

about 45 % of the general funding given to the
humanities and social sciences

Type of activity: grantmaking

Special features: focus on interdisciplinarity, internationality and younger
academics, grants only to scientific institutions

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Humanities in Germany 2006

- Critical situation
- Remarkable capacity – low (self-)esteem
- Budgetary reductions
- Huge / increasing number of students
- Complaints about lack of suitable funding instruments
- Endangered ‘small’ disciplines (“Kleine Fächer”)
- Low reputation in the wider public

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II. The Program

> Focus on the Humanities <

- Rationale and outlines
- The three components
- Implementation
- Resonance

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Rationale and Outlines

- The joint program “**Focus on the Humanities**” is tailored to the most urgent needs of these disciplines, in particular the lack of time and a long-term perspective especially for younger scholars as two basic requirements for ground-breaking research in the risky ‘twilight zones’ outside the mainstream. The addressees are the *individual* scholars.
- The program will run for five years (with one call for applications per year) and is mainly addressed to the **humanities** but in principle also open to the **social sciences** in a wider sense. There are no thematic strings attached.
- The aim is both to encourage highly qualified junior researchers to pursue careers in the humanities, as well as to make the humanities more attractive for those who have already attained renown and are firmly established by virtue of their outstanding work to date.

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The three Components

- The **Dilthey-Fellowships** – named after the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833 to 1911) – offer financial support to outstanding junior scholars (Postdocs) for a long-term period (in principle up to ten years).
- The component “**opus magnum**” is targeted to exceptional scholars having already made outstanding contributions to research and offers them a leave of between six months and two years from their normal duties in order to write an “opus magnum”. The costs of deputy teaching will be borne by the foundations.
- The third component “**Humanities and the public**” encompasses support for thematic conferences and workshops promoting the image and standing of the humanities to the public at large.

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Implementation

- The program was published in March 2005 with a first call for proposals. In this first round **93** applications were submitted for “Diltheys-Fellowships”, **56** applications for “opus magnum”.
- The **review process** is running, organised by the Volkswagen-Stiftung. The **final decision** on the overall 149 applications will be made at the end of April. It is planned to give grants for (up to) 10 “Dilthey-Fellowships” and (up to) 10 “opera magna” per year. This would / could mean a total amount of (up to) 5 mill. Euros for the first year to be borne by the two foundations.
- The **cooperation** between the partners is going without any problems. A main positive factor in this respect is that the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung and the VolkswagenStiftung have a common understanding of research funding and that there are close personal relations between the staff members.

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Resonance

- Overwhelming response within the humanities and beyond
- Involvement of two other German foundations
 - > Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft
 - > Zeit-Stiftung Ebelin and Gerd Buceriusparticipating in the conference program as the “third component”
- Cooperation of foundations as a signal of trust and encouragement
- Supporting statement of the German “Wissenschaftsrat”
- Remarkably strong interest of the public media

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III. Perspectives

- **Next steps**
- **Cooperation**
- **Continuation**

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Next steps

- Selection of the scholars setting quality standards
- Opening conference in Berlin at the end of May 2006
Erinnern – Verstehen – Vermitteln – Gestalten:
Die Geisteswissenschaften in der Wissensgesellschaft
starting the “third component” of the program
- Follow-up conferences and workshops dealing with the role and function of the humanities in modern societies
- Second call for proposals started

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Cooperation

- Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft and Zeit-Stiftung organising the conferences and workshops on “Humanities and the public” as the third component of the initiative
- Encouraging other private foundations to participate in the program
- Close contacts in particular to the German Research Council (“Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft”) to exchange views and information on the respective programs and possible follow-up activities

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Continuation

- Corresponding program “Schumpeter Fellowships” just launched by the VolkswagenStiftung with a special focus on the social sciences
- Intensifying the cooperation with other foundations in Germany and abroad to support especially younger scholars – e.g. Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (Sweden), Compagnia di San Paolo (Italy).
- Exploring new possibilities of “Public Private Partnerships” with regard to mid- and long-term continuation of funding programs

VolkswagenStiftung

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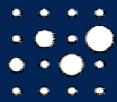
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