



Statement of the Max Planck Society regarding the China Science Investigation published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on May 19, 2022

1. The Max Planck Society primarily promotes basic research. Application-oriented research is not the focus of research at its Institutes. This particularly applies to military research. The MPG rejects **military research or research used as dual-use for military purposes in problematic countries**. Ultimately, however, it is almost impossible to rule out dual use potential in any type of research, even if this is not apparent initially.
2. The MPG has guidelines for the **responsible approach to freedom of research and research risks**, see: <https://www.mpg.de/197392/researchFreedomRisks.pdf>. In this document, the MPG explicitly recommends to its researchers, from a risk minimization perspective, to restrict international cooperation in individual cases or to refrain from using partners or staff from institutions in certain states if there is knowledge of potential misuse of the research results. In this context, the MPG has also established a **Committee on Ethics in Security-Relevant Research (KEF)**, which is available to Max Planck researchers on questions of research ethics and can make recommendations on the implementation of research projects. This support explicitly refers to all dual-use issues in research projects.
3. The research referred to by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* evaluates publication data from the past 20 years (it did not check whether there is a formal cooperation). Our own data analysis (figures from the Scopus database of Elsevier - processed by the SCImago Research Group) shows that between 2017 and 2021, around 50,000 publications were produced in cooperation between China and Germany. Of these, around 7,500 publications are attributable to the MPG. Nine articles published during this period list researchers with an affiliation to the Chinese National Defense University of Science and Technology (NUDT).
4. The *China Tracker Defense Universities database* (<https://unitracker.aspi.org.au>), to which the report refers, classifies a number of Chinese universities as high-risk. Among them are the best universities in China, with which the Max Planck Institutes cooperate (presumably like most German research organizations). In reviewing the 157 cooperation projects with China recorded in 2021 in the MPG research database, we found 17 projects that are classified as high risk according to *China Tracker Defense Universities*. A random analysis of the relevant projects shows that there are all basic research projects, primarily in the fields of astronomy, particle physics and quantum and information technology, which – if at all (example: dark matter) – are years away from any application. All research results are published in publicly accessible journals. **These projects are not based on formal collaborations with the institutions classified as critical (this is especially true for NUDT)**. Rather, the research involves Chinese collaborators who published jointly with Max Planck researchers after they left their Max Planck institutions and who are then listed with their new affiliation in China.
5. In addition, the Max Planck Society is readjusting its approach to international cooperation against the background of changing political conditions. In 2021, it therefore adopted the "**Guidelines for the development of international collaborations of the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft**". These guidelines are intended to raise the awareness of Max Planck scientists of potential risks, acquaint them with the applicable legal rules and internal requirements, inform them of the existing options for obtaining advice, and to suggest possible solutions in the event of risks or conflicts. Cooperation agreements with a foreign connection are also checked with regard to their **relevance to export control regulations**. This includes not only the obligatory sanctions list check, but also queries on dual-use, war weapons lists, as well as military end use in arms embargo countries or misuse for weapons of mass destruction and human rights violations.