



Press Release

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Outstanding apprenticeship in Düsseldorf

Alper Kasirga wins the Max Planck Apprenticeship Award and the Max Planck Institute for Sustainable Materials is recognised as an excellent training institution

The Max Planck Society has awarded this year's Apprenticeship Prize to Alper Kasirga, an industrial mechanic trainee, and to the Max Planck Institute for Sustainable Materials (MPI-SusMat) in Düsseldorf for its outstanding training programme. The award recognises Kasirga's exceptional professional and social achievements as well as his personal development. The Apprenticeship Prize is endowed with €750 for each awardee and was given this year to 19 trainees across the 84 Max Planck Institutes. The award for the institute itself is endowed with €7,500 and was given to three institutes.

"I'm absolutely thrilled to receive the Apprenticeship Prize and want to thank my trainers and team members for their fantastic support," says Kasirga. Now in his final year of training as an industrial mechanic, he also serves as the youth and trainee representative at MPI-SusMat in Düsseldorf: "I see myself as a bit of a puzzle piece connecting the trainees from the various professions here at the institute." He particularly values the friendly, family-like atmosphere at MPI-SusMat and intentionally chose to train at a non-profit research institute. His career path is remarkable: he began at a lower secondary school, then earned a mid-level secondary certificate before progressing to a vocational college, where he qualified for university entrance. He went on to study mechanical engineering and production technology at Düsseldorf University of Applied Sciences. "During my studies, I realised I preferred hands-on work," he explains. That is why he successfully applied to MPI-SusMat for an apprenticeship.

The institute as a whole also received recognition as an excellent training provider. "It is a great honour to be recognised by the Max Planck Society for our apprenticeship programme. This is only possible thanks to the outstanding commitment of our trainers and their trainees – the praise belongs to them," says Professor Gerhard Dehm, Director at the institute.

MPI-SusMat offers a range of apprenticeships, with its trainees regularly honoured as top of their year by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK). In 2024, former trainee Jana Kuschke was even named Germany's best apprentice in materials testing and now works as a technician operating the institute's scanning electron microscopes. In addition, trainers Heidi Bögershausen and Herbert Faul have been recognised for decades of commitment to training with the Max Planck Society's *Communitas Award* 2025. They, along with trainer Ralf Selbach, have also received the IHK's Golden Badge of Honour in 2022 and 2023 respectively, for their work on examination boards.

MPI-SusMat currently offers apprenticeships in six professions: chemical laboratory assistant, IT specialist for system integration, industrial mechanic, office management assistant, mathematical-technical software developer, and materials tester. Career opportunities after training are diverse: some graduates remain at the institute, others move into industry, or decide to pursue a university degree. More information: <https://www.mpie.de/ausbildung>



The Max Planck Society awarded Alper Kasirga, industrial mechanic trainee at MPI-SusMat, with this year's Apprenticeship Prize. Copyright: Max-Planck-Institut für Nachhaltige Materialien GmbH



Trainees, trainers and management of MPI-SusMat celebrating being awarded the Apprenticeship Award 2025 for the institute. Copyright: Max-Planck-Institut für Nachhaltige Materialien GmbH

At the Max Planck Institute for Sustainable Materials (MPI-SusMat), we develop new ways to design, produce, and recycle materials for a climate-neutral future. From green steel and circular aluminium to advanced batteries, our research tackles key challenges in energy, mobility, and resource efficiency. By combining cutting-edge materials science with artificial intelligence, we drive sustainable innovation. Until 2024, the institute was known as the Max-Planck-Institut für Eisenforschung GmbH.

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