

# Fifty years - shaping the future



**Pulling together: The foundation always focuses its work on people. Below: The seal of the foundation document from 50 years ago.** Photos: Björn Hänsler/Bosch Historical Communications



## The Robert Bosch Stiftung celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2014

It is my intention, apart from the alleviation of all kinds of hardship, to promote the moral, physical, and intellectual development of the people....” That was the philanthropic bequest of company founder Robert Bosch. Examples of how his philanthropic vision should be realized: “Health, education, training, support for gifted children, international reconciliation and the like.” This quotation from Robert Bosch may sound old fashioned today, but the content remains relevant. The Robert Bosch Stiftung has been conducting charitable work since 1964. The foundation is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year.

The history of the foundation began on 26 June 1964. That Friday, the beneficiaries of Robert Bosch met with the estate trustees in what was then the company headquarters in Stuttgart. They signed a share purchase and transfer agreement. With that, the Bosch family handed the company over to a non-profit corporation, which was renamed the Robert Bosch Stiftung five years later.

### Over 20,000 projects

The Robert Bosch Stiftung grew to become one of the largest private foundations in the whole of Europe. In its first half-century, the Stiftung has launched and supported more than 20,000 charitable projects in Germany, Europe, America, and Asia. In the process, it has invested close to €1.3 billion. In the early years, the Stiftung

focused on the construction and subsequent expansion of the Robert Bosch Hospital in Stuttgart, which Robert Bosch himself founded. The Stiftung developed the hospital into a modern center for medical care, where today over 40,000 patients receive in-patient treatment every year. Right from the start, the foundation placed special importance on the reconciliation of France and Germany and the promotion of education. Over the years, the foundation widened its focus from international understanding, education, and health to include science, society, and culture.

### Pioneering work in Poland

The successful work in promoting German-Polish relations since the 1970s is just one example of the activities in which the Robert Bosch Stiftung is involved. It may seem obvious today, but it was pioneering work at the time. Contacting people in communist Poland was difficult. As a result, the Stiftung aimed to avoid “spectacular steps visible to the public, and focus on information and awareness,” as the former German President Richard von Weizsäcker wrote in a commemorative publication in 2000. The Stiftung “quietly and uniquely” focused on bringing together people with backgrounds in culture, science, and education to counteract the ideological politics that were dividing East and West.

By the time the Iron Curtain fell, 28,000 schoolchildren and university students from Germany and Poland had traveled to the other country. The Robert Bosch Stiftung promoted 150 school partnerships until the German-Polish Youth Office took over responsibility for carrying out this



**Ready for the world: UWC Robert Bosch College will open in 2014.**

Photo: Deutsche Stiftung UWC

task, and supported cultural dialogue with translations of literary works. It established a further training program for German teachers and university lecturers from Poland at end of the 1970s, from which 1,700 Polish specialists in German studies benefited. As a result, the Robert Bosch Stiftung developed into a central mediator with Poland. The many projects and partnerships generated a close, viable network of personal contacts that still exists today.

### What makes Bosch special

After the fall of communism and the reunification of Germany, the Stiftung began expanding its activities to countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and is currently focused on supporting the development of a lively civic society. The foundation has also had success stories similar to those in German-Polish relations in the fields of nursing, education, and promoting literature.

For its work, the foundation receives a portion of the profit that is generated by the associates of the company. A few days after the agreement was signed in 1964, a special notice was issued in all Bosch

plants and subsidiaries: “Bosch profits will primarily serve the general public in the future.” To this day, this is where Bosch differs from almost all other companies. At the same time, as a shareholder, the Stiftung can also think and act for the long term in difficult economic times.

### The largest single project

This year, the Robert Bosch Stiftung is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary under the motto “Fifty Years - Shaping the Future.” The Stiftung is using this anniversary as an opportunity to look back on its long history and half a century of proud achievements. It is also looking ahead in order to contribute to addressing social challenges in the future. As always, the Stiftung places the focus on people.

The same holds true for the UWC Robert Bosch College in Freiburg, which is set to open in September. The grounds of a former monastery are being converted into an international school - the first United World College (UWC) in Germany. The school will be home to 200 high school students from around the world. They will live and learn together and acquire an internationally recognized high school diploma. UWC Robert Bosch College is the largest project ever to be undertaken in the history of the Robert Bosch Stiftung, which has worked together with Robert Bosch GmbH to make it possible.

**50** Fifty Years  
Shaping the Future

**W** Join us during our anniversary year: Information on our campaigns is available at [www.bosch-stiftung.de](http://www.bosch-stiftung.de).