

PRESS RELEASE

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AKL'26: Broadening business insights and expanding the technology spectrum

From April 22 to 24, 2026, the Fraunhofer Institute for Laser Technology ILT is hosting the 15th "AKL – International Laser Technology Congress." For three days, Aachen will once again become the center of the international laser and photonics industry. The congress program has been significantly expanded and is aimed at laser users, manufacturers, and developers, focusing on the latest research results, industrial trends, and practical solutions. Thanks to over 500 participants, more than 80 presentations, and 53 exhibitor stands, AKL has established itself as the leading European platform for applied laser technology.

The AKL'26 program is setting new priorities: For the first time, there will be four parallel sessions on both days of the technology conference, offering a wider range of topics than ever before. New to the program are topics of the future such as high-energy lasers for fusion and secondary sources, as well as artificial intelligence in photonics. By making these changes, the organizers are responding to the industry's growing need for strategic orientation.

Technology Business Day: Market insights and industry trends

The congress begins on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, with Technology Business Day, which features expanded content. In the morning, participants will gain in-depth insight into the global photonics and laser markets and be presented with analyses of the sales markets in Europe, China, and the USA, as well as other regions. In the afternoon, laser users from relevant companies in six core industries – automotive engineering, aerospace, energy, microelectronics, quantum technology, and medical technology – will report on how they are successfully using laser technologies in their products and processes to strengthen their ability to compete in international markets. Several presentations will also address industry trends on the potential applications of lasers. At the end of the first day, the Arbeitskreis Lasertechnik e.V. will bestow the "Innovation Award Laser Technology 2026" in the Coronation Hall of Aachen City Hall.

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FRAUNHOFER INSTITUTE FOR LASER TECHNOLOGY ILT

Technological conference: Broader spectrum thanks to four parallel sessions

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The technological conference will come to the fore on Thursday, April 23, 2026, and Friday, April 24, 2026. In four parallel sessions, experts will offer deep dives into their research and innovations, covering the entire field of laser material processing, beam source development, system and optics technology, and digitalization. Particularly noteworthy are the new focal topics: high-energy lasers for fusion applications and AI-supported photonic processes. This structure allows participants to target specific areas of specialization while also gathering information relevant across various industrial sectors.

A key element of the first day of the conference is the Gerd Herziger Session. Many prominent decision-makers will talk about new perspectives for lasers in science and industry, including Damien Buet, President and CEO of Amplitude Laser Group (France), Trevor D. Ness, Chief Revenue Officer (CRO) of IPG Photonics Corporation (USA), Dr. Christopher Dorman, Executive Vice President of Coherent Corp. (USA), Dr. Hagen Zimer, Chief Executive Officer for Laser Technology and Member of the Executive Board of TRUMPF SE + Co. KG (Germany), and Prof. Constantin Häfner, Executive Board Member for Research and Transfer at Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft e.V. (Germany). They will then discuss the role of these laser beam sources for future production environments in the panel discussion "High-Power and High-Energy Lasers – Quo Vadis?"

At the sold-out exhibition accompanying the conference, more than 50 international companies specializing in laser technology and photonics will present innovative products and processes to interested participants. Between sessions and during breaks, conference visitors will have the opportunity to discuss specific issues.

On April 23, 2026, the evening event "30 Years of AKL" will take place in the exhibition area of AKL'26 and offer participants ample opportunity for networking and professional exchange in a relaxed atmosphere.

Laser Technology Live: Innovation up close!

Another highlight of the congress in 2026 will be the "Laser Technology Live" event on April 23, 2026: In the laboratories of Fraunhofer ILT, Europe's most extensive R&D laser facility, scientists from Fraunhofer ILT and RWTH Aachen University will present their current work in approximately 60 live demonstrations. By sharing their direct insights into systems, processes, and research results, they create space for dialogue between science and industry.

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Future orientation for industry

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Since it has expanded its program and is focusing on strategic markets and technological innovations, AKL'26 is aimed particularly at companies seeking guidance and inspiration in the face of rapid technological change. Whether it's about advances in laser beam source development, new applications in key industries, or the role of digitalization and AI, the congress provides practical knowledge and promotes exchange across industries.

Registration for AKL'26 is now open!

Registration for AKL'26 is now open at www.lasercongress.org. Participants can take advantage of an early bird discount until February 24, 2026. The registration deadline is March 24, 2026. All presentations will be simultaneously translated into German and English. Further information on the program and conditions of participation can also be found on this website.

Supporting organizations

The European Commission, the European Photonics Industry Consortium EPIC, OptecNet Germany, and the industry associations SPECTARIS, VDA, VDMA, and VDI support AKL'26 as sponsoring organizations.



Image 1:
"AKL International Laser
Technology Congress" in
Aachen: The place to meet
for the international laser
world. Here: presentation at
AKL'24 at Eurogress, Aachen.
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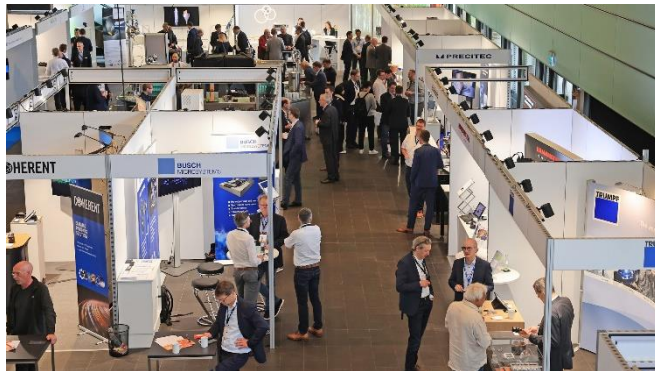


Image 2:
More than 500 participants
at AKL'24 took advantage of
the exhibition accompanying
the conference for
professional exchange and
networking.
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Image 3:
Experience "Laser
Technology Live" in Europe's
largest laser facility park – a
popular item on the AKL
program. Here: laboratory
tours during AKL'24.
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Germany.

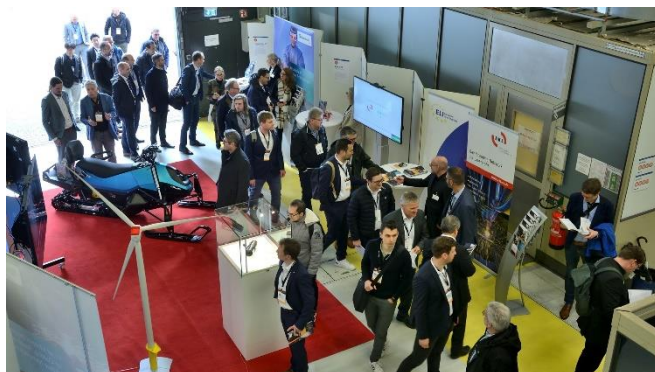


Image 4:
Fraunhofer ILT opens its
doors every two years:
Numerous participants of
the AKL'24 visited the
laboratories of the
Fraunhofer ILT.
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Germany.



Image 5:
AKL'26 Logo.
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Based in Germany, the **Fraunhofer Gesellschaft** is one of the leading organizations for application-oriented research. It plays a central role in the innovation process, focusing on research into key technologies of the future and transferring research results to industry to strengthen our economic location and benefit our society.

Since its foundation as a non-profit association in 1949, it has occupied a unique position in the science and innovation system. Nearly 32,000 employees at 75 institutes and independent research facilities in Germany generate an annual financial volume of €3.6 billion. Of this, €3.1 billion is attributable to Fraunhofer's core business model, contract research.