

Inaugurating the second edition of the BBVA Foundation awards, with 3.2 million euros prize money spread over eight categories

Klaus Hasselmann wins the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award for identifying the human imprint on Climate Change

- “We have been able to demonstrate with the data at hand that man is changing climate, and that has been an important scientific breakthrough. So I am very pleased that it has been recognized”, says Hasselmann, founder of the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology.
- The Frontiers of Knowledge Awards address the great global challenges of the 21st century. They are also the only awards reserving a category for climate change.
- The breadth of disciplines addressed and their monetary amount - 400,000 euros per category - place them among the world’s foremost award schemes.

January 15, 2010.- The BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award in the Climate Change category goes in this second edition to German physicist and mathematician Klaus Hasselmann (Hamburg, 1931) for “developing methods which established that recent global warming trends are primarily attributable to human activities”. Hasselmann “has crucially advanced the frontiers of scientific and public understanding of climate change”, concludes the jury in its citation.

The BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Awards honor world-class research and artistic creation across eight prize categories. Their uniqueness lies in their close alignment with the scientific, technological, social and economic challenges of the present century. Thus categories are reserved for Development Cooperation; Information and Communication Technologies; Ecology and Conservation Biology; and Climate Change, alongside the awards going to outstanding contributions in Economics, Finance and Management; Basic Sciences; Biomedicine and Contemporary Music.

The Climate Change category is the first to be decided in the 2009 edition. In the inaugural 2008 edition, the award went to U.S. scientist **Wallace S. Broecker**, a pioneer in climate change research and coiner of the term “global warming”.

The new awardee is author of a method known as “fingerprinting”, able to discriminate between natural contributions to climate change and the perturbations caused by the accumulation of atmospheric greenhouse gases.

“This landmark research overcame the prior difficulty of distinguishing human impact” in observed climate change, in the opinion of the jury. Thanks to Hasselmann's method, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), could commit to paper in its 4th report (2007) that climate change was attributable to human factors.

“Copenhagen was a disappointment”

“The prize has been awarded to me for my work on developing climate models, but also for demonstrating that observed climate change can be attributed with a high degree of certainty to human impact. We have been able to demonstrate with the data at hand that human action is changing our climate, and this is an important scientific breakthrough. So I am very pleased it has been recognized. Everybody now understands that we are in danger from climate change,” were Hasselmann's first words on hearing of the award.

On the subject of the recent Copenhagen summit he is frankly pessimistic: “Copenhagen was a disappointment, a typical example of individual countries pursuing their own interest and not perceiving that they have a common problem to solve”. The failure of the summit means we must now resign ourselves, “unless new measures are forthcoming”, to the fact that average global temperature will rise by at least two degrees.

Despite this, Hasselmann claims that “the problem is solvable”. The key is to promote the use of renewable energies “with existing technology”, and for politicians to take decisions that help reorientate the economy. Mitigating climate change “is not expensive, and if we implement the right policies, can be done without major changes in our way of life”.

For the Frontiers laureate, the biggest obstacle is political inaction. Asked to score world leaders out of ten in the wake of Copenhagen, his verdict is an unrelenting: “One”.

Hasselmann is currently Emeritus Director of the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology, in Hamburg (Germany), which he founded in 1975 and led for 25 years. From 1961 to 1972 he carried out research at the University of Hamburg and, in the United States, at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Laboratory. From 1988 to 1999 he was Scientific Director at the German Climate Computer Centre, in Hamburg. He is a founding member of the European Climate Forum, promoting multidisciplinary research on climate change.

International jury

The jury in this second edition was chaired by Edward S. Rubin (Professor of Engineering and Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University, United States) and formed by other international experts in climate change related areas: Hans J. Schellnhuber (Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany), Bjorn Stevens (Director of the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology, Germany), and Spaniards Carlos Duarte (Research Professor at the Mediterranean Institute for Advanced Studies, CSIC-University of the Balearic Islands) and Miquel Canals (Professor of Marine Geology at the University of Barcelona).

Upcoming award announcements

The next award announcement will be on January 19, corresponding to the Information and Communication Technologies category. The calendar of later announcements can be consulted on www.fbbva.es.

The BBVA Foundation supports knowledge generation, scientific research and the promotion of culture, relaying the results of its work to society at large. This effort materializes in research projects; human capital investment; and specialization courses, grants and awards. Among the BBVA Foundation's preferred areas of activity are basic sciences, biomedicine, ecology and conservation biology, the social sciences and literary and musical creation.

Fundación **BBVA**

For more information, contact the BBVA Foundation Communication Department (+34 91 374 5210/+34 94 487 4627 or comunicacion@fbbva.es) or visit www.fbbva.es