

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Ernst Theodor Rietschel

Ernst Theodor Rietschel studied chemistry at the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich and the Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg and received his doctorate in 1971. After a postdoctoral stay at the University of Minnesota in the USA, Ernst Rietschel worked until 1979 at the Max Planck Institute for Immunobiology in Freiburg, leading a research group involved in the elucidation of the chemistry and biology of bacterial endotoxins (lipopolysaccharides, LPS). In 1978 he qualified as a professor for biochemistry (Habilitation). In 1980 he accepted a C4- full professorship at the University of Lübeck and a Directorate at the Leibniz- Center for Medicine and Biosciences at Borstel near Hamburg, where he worked until 2005.

From 1990 to 1994 he has been President of the Lycée Français in Hamburg. In 1994 he declined an offer as President of the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin. As an awardee of the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Sciences he spent in 1985 a sabbatical time at the University Institute of Chemistry in Osaka (Japan) and in 1999 at the Institute Pasteur in Paris (France). In 2000, Ernst Th. Rietschel was elected as a member of the German Academy of Natural Scientists Leopoldina. In 2006 he was acting Chair of the European Medical Research Council (EMRC) of the European Science Foundation (ESF). From 2005 to mid- 2010 Ernst Rietschel served as President of the Leibniz Association presently harbouring 89 Institutes. From 2013 to 2015 he was Chairman and Founding Director of the Berlin Institute of Health and now serves as European Affairs Representative of the German Academy of Science and Engineering (acatech). Presently he is a member of various institutional supervisory boards and international evaluation committees.

Among the prizes Ernst Rietschel was awarded are the “The Main Award of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hygiene und Mikrobiologie”, the Aronson Award (Senate of Berlin) and the Frederik B. Bang Award (USA). He received honorary doctorates for medicine from the University of Lausanne (Switzerland), Lübeck (Germany) and Würzburg (Germany).

For his work he was awarded a number of other honours including the “Ordre pour le Merite” from the Republic of France, the First Class Federal Cross of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Japanese order of the Rising Sun (Golden Rays) with Neck Ribbon.