



# DINI Newsletter

## Dear doctoral researchers,

You might have noticed that this month's newsletter did not come from Theresa. In the coming months we will both be bringing you the latest news and events from the DINI, so go ahead and read on!



## Upcoming Events

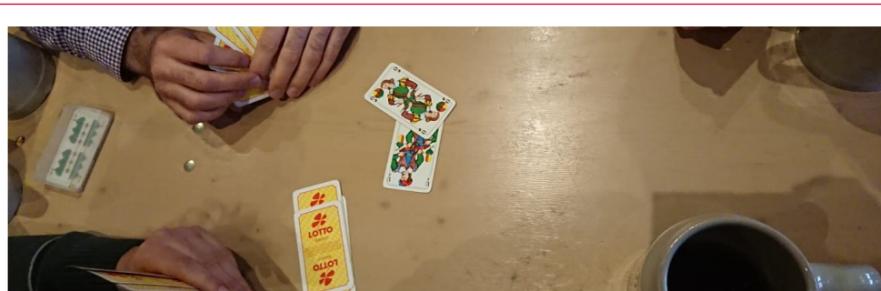
- March 5 - 8** **Snow weekend** — 4 slots left! [Book now!](#)
- March 15** **Local election in Bavaria** (Council and mayor)
- March 31** **Starkbierfest with DINI**

### Snow weekend

**When: 5-8.03.2020**

Your spontaneous long weekend getaway from your problems and up into the mountains. It is not too late to join!

Book [here](#) and now!



### Starkbierfest 2020

**When: 31.03.2020 at 16:00**

As every year, we are going together to Paulaner am Nockherberg to celebrate the "Starkbierfest"!!!

It is similar to Oktoberfest but with stout/strong beer.

You will receive an email from Thyssa with the details and how you can sign up!



## Local Election in Bavaria

**Did you know that not only German citizens but also EU citizens with main residency in Bavaria are entitled to vote for the local council and mayor on March 15<sup>th</sup>?**

To find out more, refer to the letter you received from the authorities in the past weeks or check out how to vote [here](#). You decide about the future of Munich and Bavaria!



## 2020 Sustainability Series

### Chapter 2 Waste Refuse, Reduce, Reuse



Is this about plastics? Do they deserve the bad reputation they have? The first plastic was made in the very early 20<sup>th</sup> century and it became the wonder-material from the 1960s on. Plastics have many advantages compared to other materials — they are light, easily shapeable and (almost) completely inert. Moreover, they are derived from natural and organic ingredients (literally)! So where is the problem?

The problem is not plastic. We live in a linear economy where products are made to be thrown away — even though where is the "away"? They are incinerated and deposited in landfills, or even worse and up in the environment and only a small portion is recycled. But do we want to eliminate plastics? Plastics are essential in all aspects of our lives. We cannot imagine buildings, cars, or any devices without plastic and that is alright. I firmly believe that plastics must be a part of our society if we want to continue living with our current standards. The future will bring plastics that are not made from crude oil and gas but from sustainable resources and they do not leach chemicals upon use. So do we need to change anything? Yes, we do.

The problem lies in single-use products. And it does not matter whether your single-use product is plastic, paper, wood, glass, cotton, etc. There is no real environmental advantage in swaps like these. [Read here why](#). Instead, in your everyday life, stick to the principle: "Refuse, Reduce, Reuse". Okay, I refuse plastic cutlery, but how do I refuse a plastic serological pipette? In the laboratory, we use plastics because they are the easiest to sterilize completely and we reduce the risk of contamination. Unnecessary experiments and contaminated samples are the real waste of material. Of course, glass bottles and glass serological pipettes are considered sterile after autoclaving but some people argue they are never as clean as a fresh piece of plastic. When not working sterile, try to use beakers, measuring cylinders and glass bottles for preparing your solutions. If you use a plastic container to store any of your non-sterile solutions you might consider refilling it but always be mindful about safety rules and do not undertake unnecessary risks. Some of the laboratory plastics are recyclable and if they were not in contact with biological or hazardous material, they can be safely recycled.

Most importantly, do not worry too much. Yes, the crisis is real and we should be doing something but plastic-phobia does not help. Instead, as a scientist, you can explain your friends and family what is the real deal with plastics. Follow science-based websites ([this](#) is my favorite inspiration) on how to eliminate waste in a way that makes a difference. We need a lot of people to go "waste-free" imperfectly and reduce wherever they can. You as an individual have a certain responsibility but we need systemic change in our waste management. So scroll back up to see how to vote for your local council and mayor on March 15<sup>th</sup>!

By Sara Bilekova

## Our representatives in the Helmholtz Association

**In the last newsletter, we introduced the DINI, student representatives, HeJu, and N2 Network. To find out more about you representatives in the Helmholtz Association, follow the HeJu on social media!**

19 research centers form together the Helmholtz Association. Each center has 2 [Helmholtz Juniors \(HeJu\)](#) which represent the DRs of their center on Helmholtz Association level. All HeJus meet at least twice a year to work on improving conditions for DRs in Helmholtz. A big achievement were the 30 days of holidays we have since last year. HeJus are organized in five working groups with different focus.

**HELMHOLTZ Juniors**



## About DINI

We are the doctoral student's initiative at Helmholtz Zentrum München (DINI), a free association of graduate students. We organize social events, welcome new PhDs and support you when you have problems.

**Want to contact us?** doktorandeninitiative@helmholtz-muenchen.de

**Want to join us?** Great, we are always happy to welcome new members.

**New at HMGU?** Welcome Team: dini.welcome.team@helmholtz-muenchen.de

**Like us on Facebook:** www.facebook.com/dinimunich

**Check our Website:** www.helmholtz-helena.de/about-us/graduate-students/dini