

Christian Streffer (born [5 July 1934](#) † [7 May 2026](#)) was a German [professor](#) of radiation biology.

Life

Streffer attended the [Lauenburg Scholars' School](#) in Ratzeburg. After [graduating from high school](#) in 1954, he began to study [chemistry](#) and [biochemistry](#) at the [University of Tübingen and the University of Tübingen](#). He became active in the [Corps Saxonia Jena et Bonn zu Bonn](#) (1954) and in the [Corps Borussia Tübingen](#) (1955).^[1] As [an inactive](#), he moved to the [Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich](#), the [University of Hamburg](#) and the [University of Freiburg](#). A graduate chemist since December 1959, he received his [doctorate](#) in Freiburg in January 1963. [doctorate](#). After a research stay at the Department of Biochemistry at the [University of Oxford](#) with Nobel Prize winner Sir [Hans Adolf Krebs](#), he worked at the Institute of Radiology at the University of Freiburg as a research assistant and senior assistant. In 1967 he [habilitated](#) in molecular radiation biology. He became a scientific advisor and professor of radiation biology at the Institute of Radiology at the University of Freiburg. In 1974, he was appointed to the [Chair](#) of Medical Radiation Biology by the [University of Essen](#). As director, he headed the institute at [Essen University Hospital](#) for over 25 years. He was [Dean](#) of the Faculty of Theoretical Medicine from 1976/77 and from 1981 to 1983 and [Rector](#) of the University of Essen from 1988 to 1992. He became [emeritus in](#) 1999.

From 1996 to 2006, he was also Director of the Department for Ethical Questions of Science and Technology at the *Institute for Science and Ethics*, an [affiliated institute](#) of the Universities of Bonn and Duisburg-Essen. Since 2008, he has been an Emeritus Member of the Main Commission, International Commission for Radiological Protection, ICRP. In addition, he worked as an expert on radiation risk for the federal government, state governments, social courts and professional associations, as well as an "Overseas Expert" for the Japanese government in connection with the reactor accident in Fukushima. Honorary non-scientific activities: Member of the board of the DRK Nurses' Association Essen (1988–2013); Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Evangelical Hospital Essen-Werden (1992–2013).

He was the leader of various interdisciplinary project groups and first author of the publication of these projects; e.g.

- *Environmental Standards: Combined Exposures and their Effects on Human Beings and their Environment* (2003)
- *Low Dose Exposures in the Environment: Dose-Effect Relations and Risk Evaluation* (2004)

- *Ethical Problems of a Long-Term Global Energy Supply* (2005)
- *Radioactive Waste – Technical and Normative Aspects of its Disposal* (2011)

Streffer was a [visiting professor](#) at the [University of Rochester](#) and the [University of Kyoto](#).

Scientific Fields of Work

He investigated the radiation risk for humans, especially during prenatal development; furthermore, investigations of genomic instability, chromosomal changes and biochemical systems after radiation. Other research topics were experimental tumor therapy with ionizing radiation (X-rays, neutrons) as well as questions of radiation protection and the assessment of radiation risk, including ethical questions. Finally, it was a matter of assessing the risk after irradiation and simultaneous exposure to toxic substances.

Commission work

Commission on Radiological Protection of the Federal Government (chaired 1984/85 and 1993–1995), International Commission on Radiation Protection (ICRP, member of the Main Commission and Chairman of Committee 2 until 30 June 2007, previously member of Committee 1, since 2008 Emeritus Member of the ICRPP Main Commission), United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Ionizing Radiation (UNSCEAR), Head of the German Delegation until 2006. In 1994 and 1995 he was President of the European Society for Radiation Biology.

Honors

- Holthusen Ring of the German Radiological Society (1973)
- [X-ray Plaque](#) of the City of Remscheid (1985)
- [Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany](#), Cross of Merit on Ribbon (1985)
- Federal Cross of Merit 1st Class (1994)
- [Dr. med. h. c. Kyoto University](#) (1995)
- Bacq and Alexander Award of the European Society for Radiation Research (1996)^[2]
- Honorary membership of the [Swiss Society for Radiation Biology and Medical Physics](#) (1998)^[3]
- Marie Skłodowska-Curie Medal of the Polish Society for Radiation Research (2001)
- Friedrich-Dessauer Medal of the German Association for Radiological Protection (2002)

- Honorary President of the European Society for Radiation Biology (2002–2008)
- [Hanns Langendorff Medal](#) (2007)^[4]
- Sievert Award of the International Radiological Protection Association (2008)
- Ulrich Hagen Medal of the [Society for Biological Radiation Research](#) (2009)
- Distinguished Service Award of the Radiation Research Society, USA (2009)
- [Crown Cross](#) in Gold of Diakonie Deutschland (2013)
- [Decoration of Honour of the German Red Cross](#) (2014)
- Honorary member of various scientific societies