

Press Release

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15 Million Euros in Funding for German-Arab Science Dialogue: Investing in Our Common Future

The Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) will receive 15 million euros in funding from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) through 2025. AGYA supports excellent early-career scholars from the Arab world and Germany with funding for innovative interdisciplinary research tackling topics of mutual concern. In light of current global challenges, sustainable Arab-German science diplomacy is more important than ever.

In January 2020, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) approved a new round of funding for the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA): The BMBF will financially support AGYA with 15 million euros over the next five years, thus opening a new chapter in Arab-German research cooperation. Thomas Rachel, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research recognizes AGYA as a successful role model for international research funding and a flagship project of the BMBF. He particularly extols “the multilateral strategic science and research dialogue through which AGYA builds sustainable bridges between the various disciplines and countries. In light of societal debates increasingly marked by division, it is essential to strongly promote and publicise successful international projects like AGYA”.

AGYA Principal Investigator Prof. Dr. Verena Lepper, Curator at the Egyptian Museum and Papyri Collection of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, thanks the BMBF for “its continuous support, which is the basis for AGYA’s growth and further development”, emphasizing: “Arab-German scientific dialogue on equal terms is one answer to our current social challenges. The funding is recognition of AGYA’s successful work to date, but also encouragement to expand and continuously develop our interdisciplinary portfolio of research projects within the framework of AGYA’s networking strategy. With the new funding, AGYA can now implement long-term research projects and sustainably strengthen existing North-South-South cooperation”. After completing his 5-year membership, AGYA Alumnus Prof. Dr. Bilal Orfali, Chairperson of the Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Languages at the American University of Beirut, credits the success of AGYA to “the scientific excellence of its members, their interdisciplinary openness and to the strong administrative support of the offices in Berlin and Cairo”.

AGYA is based in Germany at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW). The president of the BBAW Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Martin Grötschel, who is also Co-Chair of the AGYA Advisory Board, sees AGYA “beyond the exciting projects and the scientific dynamics, also as an unusually important science policy instrument, which can open up new communication channels that are otherwise rarely accessible. Thanks to its successful networking, AGYA has even managed to set up offices in Arab countries”. According to Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Sakr, President of the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT) in Egypt and member of the AGYA Advisory Board, this success is mainly because “AGYA is seen as an integral player in the Arab scientific landscape. The opening of the AGYA office at the Egyptian Academy was thus a logical step. For me, AGYA is unmatched when it comes to promoting future Egyptian and Arab leaders in the field of science in an international and interdisciplinary context”. Both BBAW President Grötschel and ASRT President Sakr expressly welcome the renewed support of the BMBF, as it ensures AGYA will continue to play a major role in internationalization and bridge-building processes at the interface of science, society and politics.

Since 2013, AGYA has been giving excellent early-career scholars (3-10 years after PhD completion) from the Arab world and Germany a voice and access to new interdisciplinary and socially relevant settings for scientific advancement. By facilitating vibrant exchange between researchers, international experts and policymakers in fields like alternative energies, sustainable agriculture, environmental protection, health, protection of cultural heritage assets and migration, AGYA serves as an innovative think tank for developing evidence-based policy strategies. Within the framework of the funding renewal, AGYA members will now be able to implement multi-year research projects for the first time. Longer-term Arab-German research on cross-cutting topics will offer the opportunity for more interdisciplinarity and innovation, raising the research achievements of the Academy to a new level. In addition, AGYA will significantly strengthen the mobility of its members through funding for cross-border research visits of up to three months at Arab and German scientific institutions.

The Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA)

The Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) and at the Academy of Scientific Research & Technology (ASRT) in Egypt was founded in 2013 as the first bilateral young academy worldwide. AGYA members are outstanding early-career scholars (3-10 years after PhD completion) from various academic disciplines. AGYA provides its members with the necessary instruments and administrative resources needed for international research projects and thus strengthens and solidifies the scientific cooperation between Germany and the Arab world on a long-term basis.

It currently offers 50 members – in equal number Arab and German scholars – the unique opportunity to develop and implement interdisciplinary research projects within the framework of Arab-German scientific cooperation. AGYA members and alumni are affiliated with scientific institutions in 18 countries: Algeria, Egypt, Germany, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

AGYA is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and various Arab cooperation partners.

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