With funding from the:
Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space
agya ARAB-GERMAN YOUNG ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Call for Papers
International Conference

'Traditional Architecture and Local Materials for Sustainable Housing in the Middle East and North Africa: Between Energy Efficiency Opportunities and Socio-Economic Challenges'

27 – 28 October 2026 (tbc)
Muscat, Oman (Hybrid Conference)

The objective of this international conference is to explore the potential of traditional architecture and local materials for sustainable housing in the Middle East and North Africa, using Algeria, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as comparative case studies. Indeed, vernacular architecture in Arab countries, shaped by centuries of adaptation to coastal and desert climates, offers valuable bioclimatic strategies – such as passive cooling, natural ventilation, and thermal massing – that contribute to energy efficiency and climate-responsive design. These principles resonate with contemporary approaches in other contexts, such as Germany's passive house concept, a building concept that is energy efficient, comfortable and affordable at the same time.

The conference aims to combine architectural design analysis with an assessment of energy efficiency to evaluate the sustainability potential of traditional building forms and materials. Rather than treating these practices as purely historical, the conference underscores their relevance for contemporary construction in climate-adapted, resource-efficient housing. Through a review of architectural characteristics, combined with targeted interviews with local inhabitants and decision-makers in Arab countries, the contributors should investigate both energy efficiency benefits and socio-economic challenges.

The conference concludes with a comparative perspective emphasising the local specificities of traditional housing, as well as the role of civil society and public and private stakeholders in the conservation process. A policy forum as part of the conference, will involve international experts, including Arab and German researchers, as well as local stakeholders with the aim of jointly identifying socially viable pathways for embedding traditional, climate-adapted architecture into urban development and regulatory frameworks.

Contributors may focus on one or several of the following themes (non-exclusive list):

1. Traditional Housing, Climate Adaptation and Energy Efficiency
   - Architectural design analysis
   - Assessment of energy efficiency
   - Climate-adapted, resource-efficient housing
2. Socio-spatial Analysis of Traditional Residential Spaces
   - Assessment of community acceptance or rejection of traditional architecture
   - Sustainability potential of traditional building forms and materials
   - Design quality and processes of development for future generations
3. Old Residential Design and Contemporary Urban Governance
   - Vernacular architecture and its relevance for contemporary construction structures
   - Traditional and energy-efficient building approaches in current governance systems
   - Housing practice policies, formal building codes and urban development strategies

Abstracts are welcome from any academic discipline and shall not comprise more than 250 words. Interested contributors should send their proposal in English together with their contact details and a short bio of not more than 100 words to the organisers **Prof. Lilia Makhloufi**, Ecole Polytechnique d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme (EPAU) in Algiers, and **Dr. Dawud Al Ansari**, Shaheen Institute for Strategy and Development in Muscat, Oman; Berlin Institute of Technology, Germany, at l.makhloufi@epau-alger.edu.dz **until 14 August 2026**.

Important Dates:
14 August 2026: Submission of abstracts (max. 250 words)
21 August 2026: Notification of accepted abstracts
20 September 2026: Submission of articles (max. 6000 words)
30 September 2026: Notification of accepted participants
27-28 October 2026 (tbc): International conference in Muscat, Oman

This project is funded by the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA). There will be no conference charges for accepted authors.

The scientific committee will evaluate all incoming proposals based on criteria of academic rigorousness, innovation of research and overall suitability within the conference scope. Notifications of acceptance and rejection will be sent out by 30 September 2026.

Co-chairs of the Scientific Committee

Prof. Lilia Makhloufi, Ecole Polytechnique d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme (EPAU), Algiers, Algeria (AGYA Alumna)

Dr. Dawud Al Ansari, Shaheen Institute for Strategy and Development, Muscat, Oman; Berlin Institute of Technology, Germany (AGYA Member)

Members of the Scientific Committee

Prof. Daniela Esposito, Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy

Prof. Assia Lamzah, Ecole Nationale d'Architecture (ENA), Rabat, Morocco

Prof. Manuel Moritz, AGYA Member, Hochschule Flensburg, Germany

Prof. Ahmad Sakhrieh, AGYA Alumnus, American University of Ras Al Khaimah, UAE

Dr. Raed Salim Ahmed Al-Numman, University of Mosul, Iraq

Dr. Carmen Antuña Rozado, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, Helsinki, Finland

Dr. Ferdaws Belcadhi, Ecole Nationale d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme (ENAU), Tunis, Tunisia

Dr. Hassan El Mouelhi, Habitat Unit, Technical University of Berlin, Germany

Dr. Nesma Fadda, German International University, Cairo, Egypt

Dr. Anke Hagemann, Habitat Unit, Technical University of Berlin, Germany

Dr. Husam R. Husain, German University in Cairo, Egypt

Dr. Zakaria Qudah, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Muscat, Oman

Dr. Maiss Razem, Al Hussein Technical University in Amman, Jordan

About AGYA

The Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) is based at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) and at the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT) in Egypt. It was established in 2013 as the first bilateral young academy worldwide. AGYA promotes sustainable research cooperation between outstanding Arab and German scholars (3-10 years post-PhD) from all disciplines.

The academy offers its members the unique opportunity to develop and implement their ideas and visions through research projects and joint initiatives at the interface of science and society. AGYA members share an inter- and transdisciplinary approach to scientific enquiry, with the intention of seeking solutions to societal challenges. Together, they realise innovative research on topics such as Arab and German Education; Common Heritage and Common Challenges; Dynamics of Transformation; Energy, Water and Environment; Health and Society; and Innovation.

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