

Tackling crucial issues of the Arab World and Germany: Annual conference of the Arab-German Young Academy (AGYA) in Munich 2015

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What courses of action must be developed to save the highly endangered Syrian antiquities? Which factors can help to ensure food security in arid regions where water resources are scarce? How are controversial technologies of processing biomass fuel, wastewater treatment or solar radiation management perceived in German and Arab societies? How to reassess the cultural and political impact of refugees and to take on the current refugee crises as an opportunity rather than a liability? How to build bridges between Arab and German youth science and technology competitions to nurture the development of a new generation of scientists with a broad and international experience?

These are some of the topics that were addressed by the members of the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) when they assembled for the Working Group meetings during the Annual Conference of AGYA in Germany. The five Working Groups on Arab and German Education, Common Heritage and Common Challenges, Energy, Water and Environment, Innovation and Transformation are the driving forces and the scientific agenda setters of the bilateral academy.

The second Annual Conference in Germany was held in Munich from 26-28 May. The AGYA members were welcomed in Bavaria by Johannes Ebert, Secretary General of the Goethe Institute and representative of the AGYA Advisory Board. The conference aimed at providing a platform for all 25 Arab and 25 German members to exchange face-to-face on their common interdisciplinary research projects and to decide on matters of self-organization such as the election of a new Steering Committee and the AGYA Constitution. The new Steering Committee consists of six AGYA members and reflects the equal participation of Arab and German scholars in the academy. However gender wise, it was two female members who took the lead: Dr Maha Al-Hendawi (Doha) and Prof Verena Lepper (Berlin) are the new AGYA Co-Presidents. The wide range of research areas of the Steering Committee represents the typical variety of disciplines in AGYA extending from Education and Egyptology to Biotechnology and Computer Science. The four other members of the new Steering Committee are Prof Bilal Orfali (Beirut), Dr Ahmed Debez (Tunis), Dr Jenny Oesterle (Heidelberg) and Prof Kalman Graffi (Düsseldorf).

More information about all AGYA members and their research projects are available on the new AGYA website www.agya.info.

Maha Al-Hendawi (Arab Co-President)

Verena Lepper (German Co-President)

Sabine Dorpmüller (German Managing Director)

The Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) aims to establish a community of distinguished Arab and German researchers who are at an early stage in their academic careers (3-10 years after PhD). The AGYA effectively supports their innovative

collaborative projects and cooperative initiatives from different areas of scientific research, science policy and education.

For further information please contact:

The Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA)
at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW)

Jägerstr. 22-23

10117 Berlin/Germany

+49 (0)30 20370 669

agya[at]bbaw.de