

**PRESS RELEASE****GERMAN U15 E. V. | 17 April 2023****German U15 and the German Israeli Foundation (GIF) sign MoU to expand and formalise their cooperation**

German U15 and the German Israeli Foundation (GIF) have agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further expand their cooperation in the future. The MoU was signed in Jerusalem on 27 February 2023 by the Vice Chair of German U15 and Rector of the University of Bonn, Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Michael Hoch, and the Director of GIF, Eric Zimmermann, during a delegation trip of German U15 to Israel.

In their MoU GIF and German U15 have agreed to seek to collaborate to strengthen German - Israeli cooperation in scientific research, with a special focus on fostering new collaborations between U15 and Israeli higher education institutions and research institutes and their respective researchers. The main instrument for this collaboration will be the organisation of joint U15 - GIF scientific meetings in Israel and in Germany that will focus on forging connections between early-career researchers from both countries.

The signing of the MoU took place during the first workshop jointly supported by GIF and German U15. From 27 February to 1 March, young scholars from both countries gathered at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for a Winter School in the Digital Humanities. The conference was jointly organised by the Ada Lovelace Center for Digital Humanities at Freie Universität and the Center for Digital Humanities at the Hebrew University. The meeting provided a forum for interdisciplinary discussions between researchers from different universities in Israel and Germany who were interested in integrating Digital Humanities into their research.

Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Michael Hoch, Vice Chair of German U15 and Rector of the University of Bonn:

"I am particularly pleased that the cooperation between the universities of German U15 and the German Israeli Foundation has been strengthened and put on an official footing with the signing of the MoU. Israel has an extremely strong and innovative science system and is an indispensable partner for German universities.

Establishing links between young scientists is the nucleus of future scientific cooperation and crucially contributes to cross-border exchange. It was wonderful to see how lively, expert and collaborative the discussions were at the HUJI and FU Berlin Winter School supported by German U15 and GIF.

The visit of the German Ambassador to Israel, Steffen Seibert, who addressed the participants on the second day of the Winter School, was a special tribute to the importance of our joint work. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him

once again for his warm words and important remarks on the historical and future significance of Israeli-German academic relations. We hope that the cooperation between German U15 and GIF, which we sealed with the signing of the MoU, will play a small part in making these relations even more intensive and productive in the future.“

Prof. Dr. Günter M. Ziegler, president of Freie Universität Berlin, added: „The Winter School at the Hebrew University Jerusalem was a complete success and addressed an extremely important topic. By integrating various elements of digitalisation, the Digital Humanities make an important contribution to the expansion of traditional research and the development of new and innovative methods in the humanities.

The Winter School was a perfect occasion to forge important links between young scholars from Israel and Germany and to deepen our shared knowledge of Digital Humanities. Our thanks go to the organising team from HUJI and Freie Universität: Dr. Renana Keydar, Prof. Dr. Eliese-Sophia Lincke, Dr. Barak Sober and Dr. Dennis Mischke. We are already looking forward to a continuation.“

## **About German U15**

German U15 represents 15 leading research-intensive universities that are among the most academically distinguished and internationally renowned institutions of the German science system. They are dedicated to outstanding research and excellent teaching and attract bright students as well as early-career and senior scientists from all over the world. German U15's prime concern is to establish and promote the best conditions for university-based research, teaching, and transfer activities.

## **About GIF**

The German - Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research (GIF) is a foundation which has been established as a legal entity by the Israeli Knesset and the German Bundestag. GIF's main objective is to promote and fund basic and applied scientific research projects for peaceful purposes in Israel and in Germany conducted jointly by binational teams of scientists, as well as to encourage early-career scientists from both countries, and help them, to establish initial research contacts with potential collaborators in the other country.

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