



Alexander von Humboldt  
Stiftung/Foundation

# Humboldt **kosmos**

No. 106/2016

Research – Diplomacy – Internationality

## THREATENED

How researchers become refugees

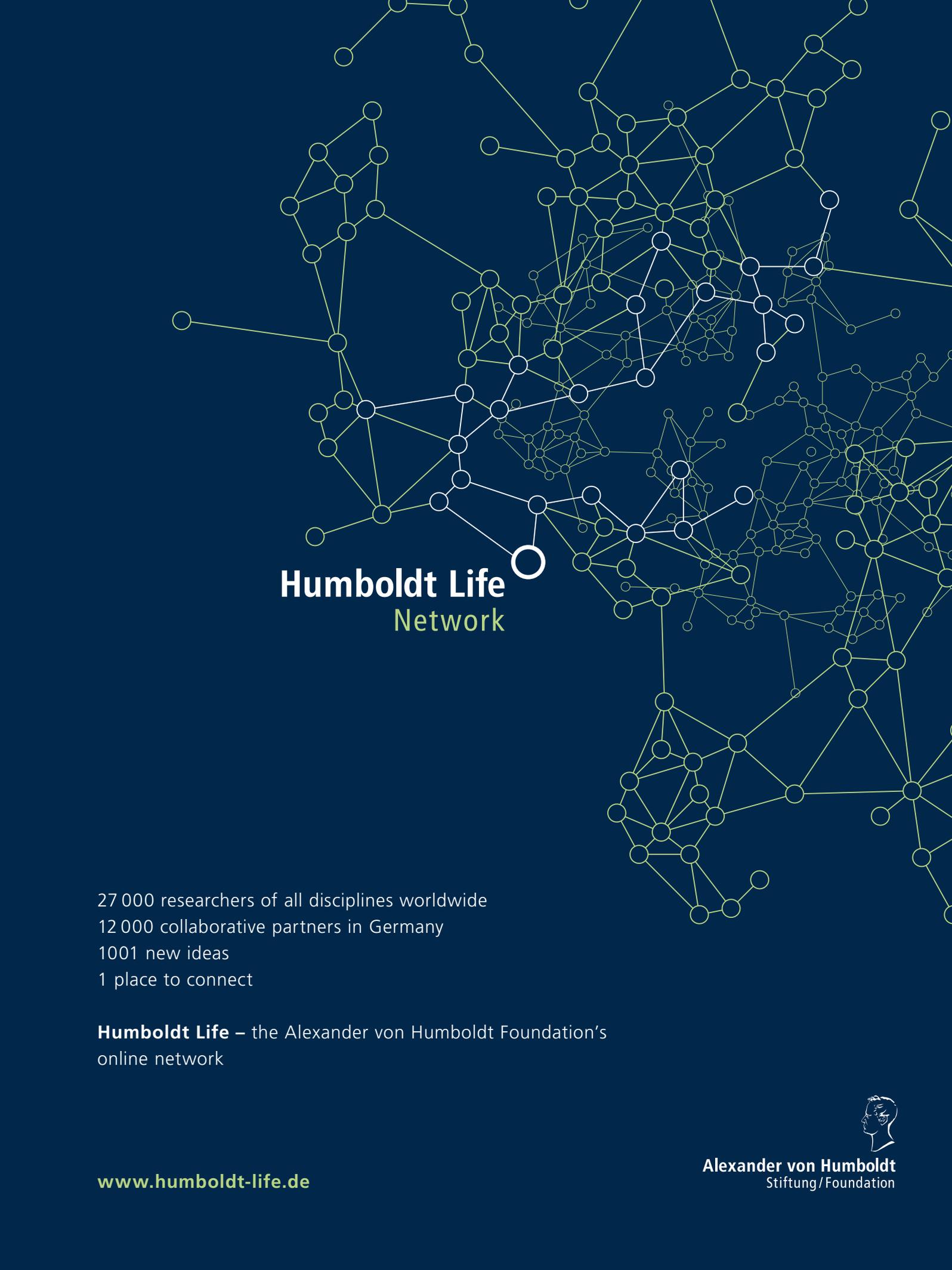
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**TAX HAVEN  
SECRETS**

A journey into the  
realm of wealth managers

**GOOD FRIENDS  
DESPITE BREXIT**

Why Germany is now becoming  
more important for the British



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# BROTHERS IN SPIRIT



Photo: private

Winter 1983 in Natters – this village in Austria’s Stubai Valley is where we grew up. Altogether there were four of us children, but after Philipp was born, he and I soon became an inseparable team – and have remained so to this day.

The photo shows two proud snow-house builders. Block by block we pressed the snow together in a square bucket, stood the blocks one on top of the other and finally fused them together – what fun we had! Our father taught me how to do it and I showed Philipp (on the right). Then, as now, we pursued joint projects and goals. As children we built a house of snow blocks, today we do scientific experiments which we construct and discuss.

Was it chance or intention that made us choose the same path? I have no idea, it just happened that way. Our father was a scientist and took us to his lab when we were still small. I later studied medicine, so did Philipp. I chose immunology, so did Philipp. And we even have the same specialisation: liver research. So it is hardly surprising that our CVs and projects are similar. The fact that we are brothers is beside the point. When you are a researcher, you need a buddy, and we found each other – ages ago.

Being so similar makes us strong. We both tackle problems analytically. When we discuss things we immediately know what the other

one is thinking. Some people have their lightbulb moments in the shower, we have them when we are talking to one another.

At the moment, we are working together on a collaborative research project at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf where Philipp is head of a department. The university hospital there was one of our most seminal stages in our lives. Supported by the Humboldt Foundation, we spent five years working on our research and made one of our most important discoveries to date: enforced viral replication – an immunological process which is incredibly important for enabling the body’s immune system to fight viruses.

There is really nothing that divides us. We even share a dislike of fried liver. Although I can think of one thing we don’t both enjoy: jam dumplings with vanilla sauce – even he can’t get me to like them.

*By* **KARL SEBASTIAN LANG**, *recorded by* **KRISTIN HÜTTMANN**

The brothers **PROFESSOR DR KARL SEBASTIAN LANG** and **PROFESSOR DR PHILIPP LANG** were both granted the Sofja Kovalevskaja Award. Karl Sebastian Lang is the Director of the Institute of Immunology at Essen University Hospital; Philipp Lang heads the Department of Molecular Medicine II at University Hospital Düsseldorf.

Photo: Humboldt Foundation / David Ausserhofer



*Dear readers,*

At the entrance to Istanbul University there is a plaque with the inscription: With gratitude to the Turkish people who, between 1933 and 1945 under the leadership of President Atatürk, gave refuge to German university teachers in their academic institutions. In the name of the German people, Richard von Weizsäcker, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, 29 May 1986.

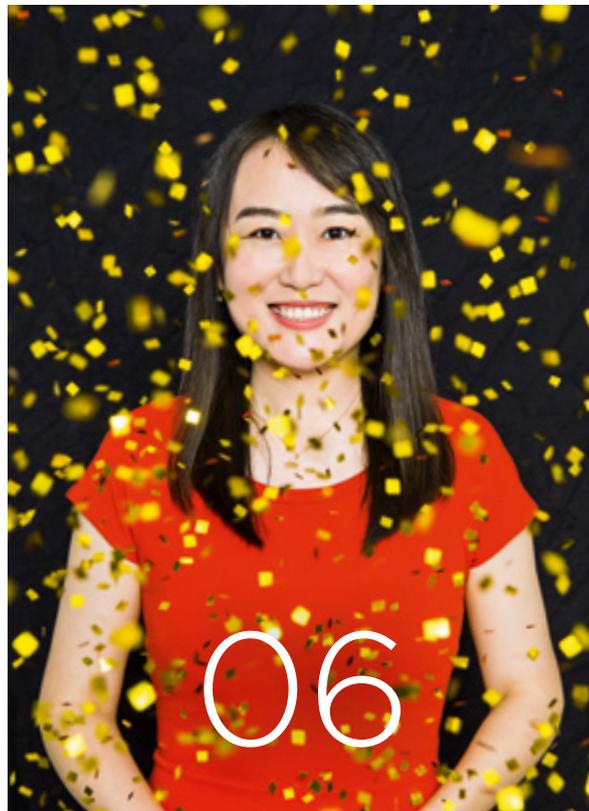
One of the 300 or so researchers, artists, architects and politicians who had fled from Nazi Germany and are remembered on this plaque was the pathologist Philipp Schwartz. He founded the Notgemeinschaft deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland (Emergency Society of German Scholars Abroad) and helped many persecuted researchers to find sanctuary.

It is after him that the Humboldt Foundation has named the new initiative it has launched together with the Federal Foreign Office to offer refuge to threatened and persecuted researchers at German universities. Today, Turkey, along with Syria, is one of the main countries of origin of Philipp Schwartz Fellows. Irrespective of the country they hail from, the fates and stories behind their flight illustrate the importance of such help and how sadly relevant the notion of an emergency society for researchers is today.

In this edition, we tell some of these stories of threat and displacement, but also of hope and solidarity amongst researchers who help their colleagues in need – just as Philipp Schwartz once did.

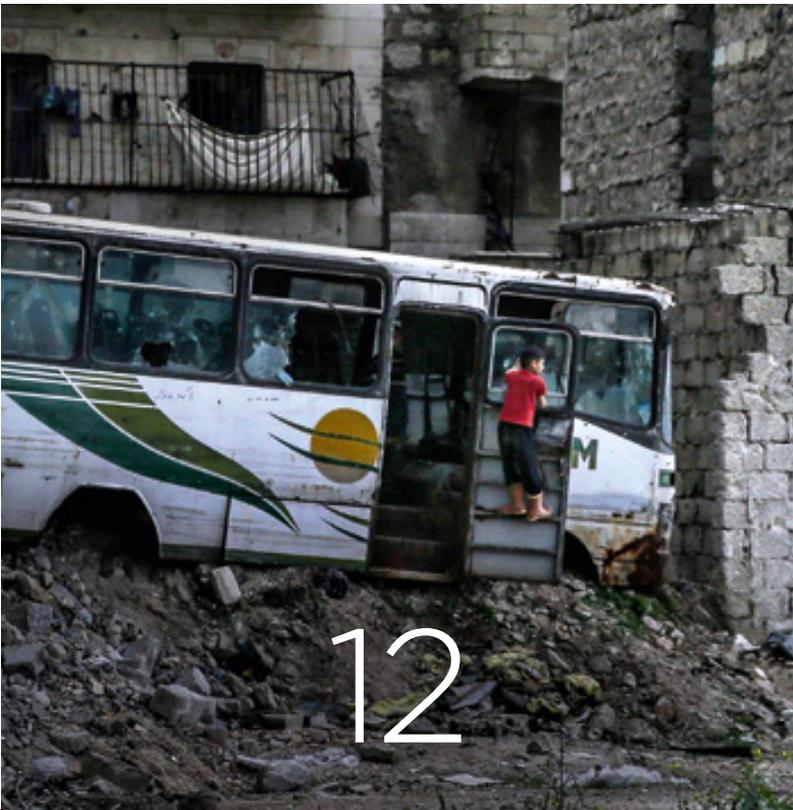
**GEORG SCHOLL**

*Editor in Chief*



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Brothers in spirit

06 BRIEF ENQUIRIES  
What drives researchers and what they are currently doing



Photos: Humboldt Foundation / David Matthiesen, imago/ITAR-TASS, Fotolia/Neiron Photo

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Photo: Humboldt Foundation / Nikolaus Brade



## MR ADUM, HOW DO YOU SAVE FROGS?

**Gilbert Adum is Ghana's frogman. Crawling through the undergrowth, diving into ponds, wading through rivers – this is his job. As one of the founders and head of the SAVE THE FROGS! Ghana organisation, he passionately campaigns for the survival of the amphibians in his native country. His aim is to save frogs from extinction and conserve their environment. To this end, he uses all his powers of persuasion to engage miners and loggers as well as villagers in nature conservation.**

And who better than Gilbert Adum? His family descends from the Chiana-Gwenia, a tribe of hunters in northern Ghana. As a child, he catches frogs and eats them. The amphibians are part of the villagers' staple diet. The frog hunter, however, turns brilliant schoolboy, quite capable of studying medicine. "But I could never imagine working as a doctor," he says. "My love of nature was much greater." So he studies natural resources management and soon discovers what an important role frogs play in the ecosystem. "Frogs are indispensable for the food chain in the forest and thus for us humans, too. On top of this, they eat disease-carrying mosquitoes."

Today, Adum is one of the leading amphibian conservationists on the African continent. He has received numerous awards for his work, including the prestigious Whitley Award, the Green Oscar. One particular frog has a special place in his heart: the Giant Squeaker Frog. He has never met anyone, he likes to report, who was not captivated by the call of this frog. When he then grins and imitates its squeaky courtship cry, you believe every word he says.

The Giant Squeaker Frog was thought to be extinct – until Adum and his team rediscovered a small population in 2009; they have been fighting for its survival ever since. "We have to protect its habitat by stopping the environmental damage being done by mining and logging and restoring natural plant growth."

**GILBERT ADUM** spent a year at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin on an International Climate Protection Fellowship. He is now back in Ghana working for SAVE THE FROGS! Ghana once more.

*Text* **KRISTIN HÜTTMANN**



Photo: Humboldt Foundation/David Matthiesen

## HOW DO YOU MAKE NANO ROBOTS OUT OF DNA AND GOLD, MS LIU?

**A mini robot that is made of the same material as our DNA, that can be controlled by light and that can move within a cell? This is no longer a future vision – the Chinese physicist Laura Na Liu has built one in nano format.**

In her research, Liu delves into the realms of the tiniest things: on the nanometre scale. The main component of her smallest machine is just a ten-thousandth of a human hair in diameter. It is composed of bundles of coiled DNA which are joined together by a kind of hinge, rather like scissor blades that can be opened and closed.

“It is crucial that the process can be reversed,” says Liu. In order to visualise the opening and closing of the hinge, the physicist turns to nanoplasmonics. She has managed to equip the DNA bundles with tiny gold particles and excite them with UV light. The gold particles then begin to oscillate and emit optical signals which Liu can measure

precisely. “Now the nano machines have to function just as well in living cells as they do in the test tube because, figuratively speaking, a cell is stuffed full of ballast.”

Working at the interface of biology, chemistry and materials science, Laura Na Liu is embarking on unknown territory with this nanoplasmonic system. In future, she may be able to trace processes within cells on the level of individual particles and thus contribute significantly to our understanding of biochemical processes.

The Sofja Kovalevskaja Award Winner **PROFESSOR DR LAURA NA LIU** conducts research at the Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems in Stuttgart and holds a professorship in the Kirchhoff Institute for Physics at Heidelberg University.

*Text* **NADINE QUERFURTH**

# MR MÜLLENSIEFEN, HOW DOES MUSIC MAKE CHILDREN SMARTER?



Photo: Humboldt Foundation/Nikolaus Blade

**In retrospect, Daniel Müllensiefen cannot gauge to what extent his youthful guitar strumming influenced his intellectual development, but one thing he does know: “Music makes me happier and more contented.” He still plays the guitar when he finds time alongside work and three young children. And he certainly cannot complain about a lack of success at his job.**

The music psychologist from the University of London is a sought-after expert when it comes to investigating the impact of music on people. He invented a test for measuring musicality: the Goldsmiths Musical Sophistication Index (Gold-MSI), which has become a standard tool in musical research.

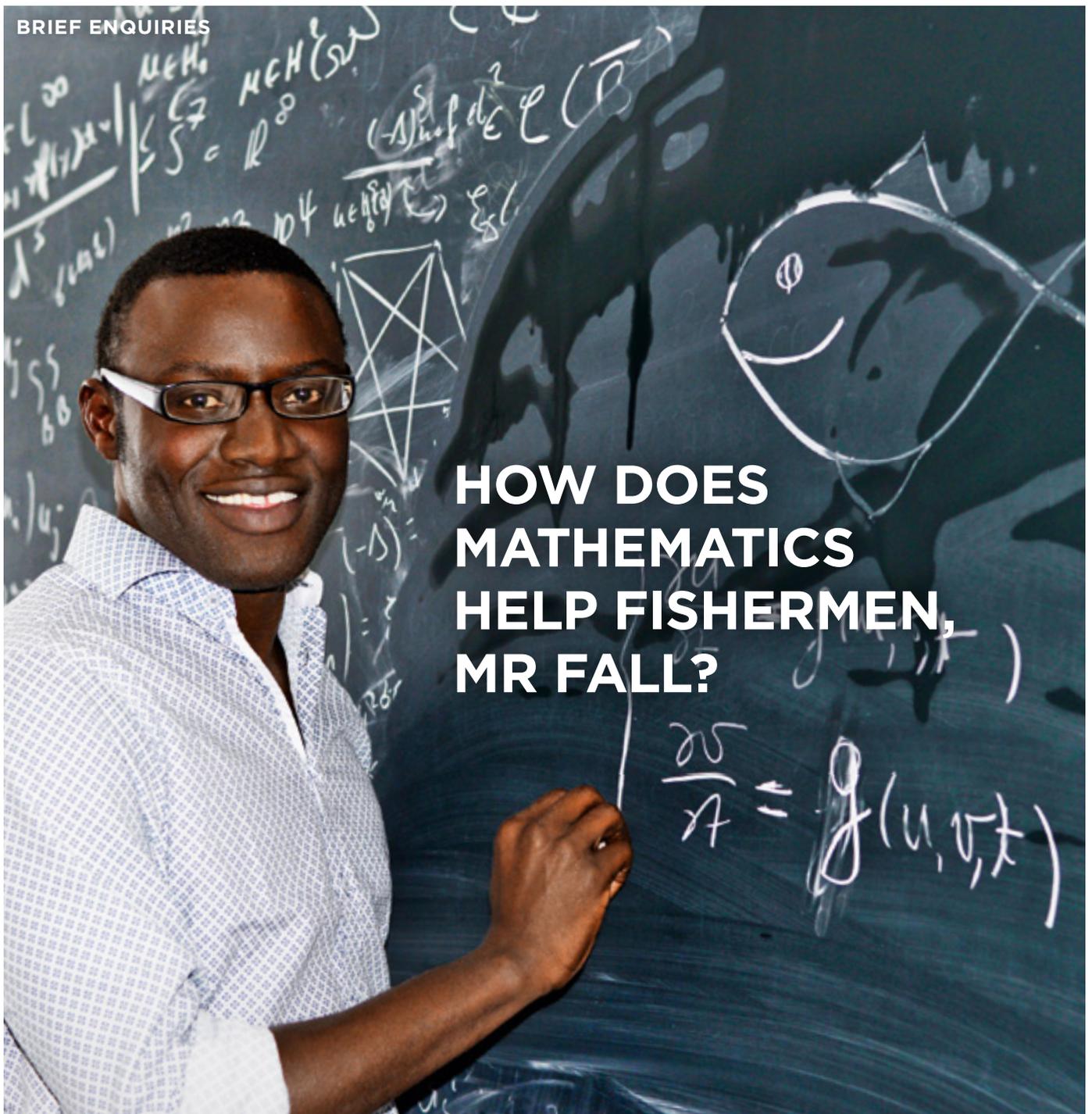
He also made a name for himself with computer analysis for detecting plagiarism and earworms, tunes you get on the brain. Together with his colleagues in Hanover, Müllensiefen now wants to discover

how engagement with music shapes children and teenagers – their personalities, intelligence and social skills. “We intend to spend at least five years observing natural development from Year 5 onwards.” A kind of musical PISA survey.

“Making music trains the memory, concentration and perception. This helps children’s entire development,” says the music researcher. Above all, music is supposed to be fun and should be pursued for its own sake – because, according to Müllensiefen, “Music is not a competitive sport”.

**DR DANIEL MÜLLENSIEFEN** from Goldsmiths College, University of London, United Kingdom, is an Anneliese Maier Research Award Winner cooperating with the Hanover University of Music, Drama and the Media.

*Text* **KRISTIN HÜTTMANN**



## HOW DOES MATHEMATICS HELP FISHERMEN, MR FALL?

**It all started with a simple observation: it cannot be a coincidence that the fishermen in M'Bour sometimes catch a lot of fish and sometimes only a few – and they have no idea why. If it is not coincidence, however, but sheer logic, then it must be a job for a mathematician: one like Mouhamed Moustapha Fall who conducts his research near M'Bour in the west of Senegal.**

So Fall and some researchers from the Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Ecology in Bremen, plus a student from Ghana, set about investigating the fishermen's behaviour. They observed when the fishermen went to sea and enquired where they made their hauls and how many fish they netted. Fall plans to compare these results with information on the size of fish stocks in the area.

His goal is to develop a mathematically precise model based on the data relating to the catch and the fish stocks. This will allow him

to calculate how much fish the fishermen can catch without endangering stocks.

One day, it might even be possible to develop an app which the fishermen could use to decide where would be the best place to fish plentifully as well as sustainably. Fall's mathematical model would therefore help the fishermen to catch more fish – and stabilise fish stocks at the same time. Because if the fish do well, the fishermen do well, too.

The former Humboldt Research Fellow, **DR MOUHAMED MOUSTA-PHA FALL**, holds the German Research Chair at the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) in Senegal, which is sponsored by the Humboldt Foundation and funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

*Text* **ANDREAS UNGER**



Photo: Humboldt Foundation/Martin Steffen

## CAN ALOE VERA HELP TO CULTIVATE BONE CELLS, MS GOONOO?

**Every day, when Nowsheen Goonoo enters her lab in Siegen, she brings a little bit of home with her. The scientist from Mauritius experiments with substances taken from indigenous plants.**

“My grandfather knew all about the effects of Aloe vera and healed my childhood scratches with it,” she remembers. The parts of the plant the chemist wants to utilise resemble a bloated gummi bear: the gel in the water-storing tissue in the leaves. It has long been an important ingredient in cosmetics. Goonoo now wants to use elements of the gel and other synthetic polymers to produce fibres, which can then be a support for cell growth.

“Mauritius still has many untapped raw materials,” says Goonoo. Currently, she is also experimenting with Fucoïdan, an ingredient which occurs in the brown seaweed found in the coastal waters off Mauritius. “I can combine its positive properties with those of synthetic

polymers.” By subjecting the polymer solution to an electrospinning process she can produce novel blend fibres that form a supporting structure on which bone cells can grow and mature, eventually generating new bone. “If the cells are happy on the surface of the supporting template, then they grow well,” Goonoo notes.

She intends to continue investigating the correlation between blend miscibility, mechanical properties and biodegradability more precisely. In the more distant future, tissue cultivated by Goonoo could then potentially be used in transplants.

**DR NOWSHEEN GOONOO** from the Centre for Biomedical and Biomaterials Research, Mauritius, is a Georg Forster Research Fellow at the University of Siegen.

*Text* **NADINE QUERFURTH**

# ON DANGEROUS PATHS

They flee from violence and destruction just like other people, but because they are independent thinkers, researchers are often subject to greater threat. Their stories tell of persecution and hardship, but also of new prospects thanks to the solidarity of their colleagues abroad.

Text LILO BERG

Photo: imago/TAR-TASS

When Nedal Said talks about the last months in his home city of Aleppo, he lowers his eyes. The Syrian microbiologist tells of a devastating civil war, of the long prison sentence meted out to his dissident brother and of the secret service that started appearing ever more often at his university and spreading terror. Back then, in 2013, he spent part of his time working at the university and part at the Department of Laboratories for Monitoring Drinking Water. "One day, a friend who had good contacts in the secret service rang me and said I was in great danger because of my opposition to Assad and should leave the country immediately," Said reports. He quickly packed suitcases, and he and his wife and their three small children went to Turkey. When their savings ran out, the family spent a year in a Turkish refugee camp.

Then, in summer 2015, Nedal Said got on a small boat – without his family – and survived the dangerous journey to his destination of choice, Germany.

## "I AM A WHOLE PERSON AGAIN"

Today, the Syrian scientist spends his time at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ in Leipzig and studies miniscule organisms under state-of-the-art microscopes. He speaks German – not perfectly, but amazingly well for someone who only started learning the language a year ago. "I work in science. Colleagues support me, and my family is with me at last – I am a whole person again," says the 43-year-old, beaming.

Nedal Said is one of the first fellows of the Philipp Schwartz Initiative, a funding programme run by the Humboldt Foundation with the support of the Federal For-

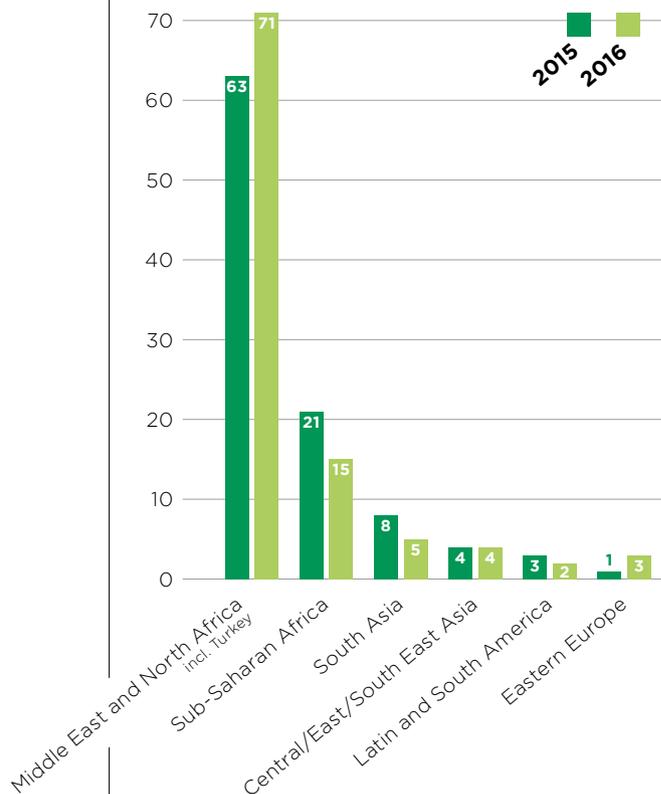


### PLAYING IN THE RUBBLE

A child in a largely decimated residential area of Aleppo in March 2016

### AREAS OF ORIGIN

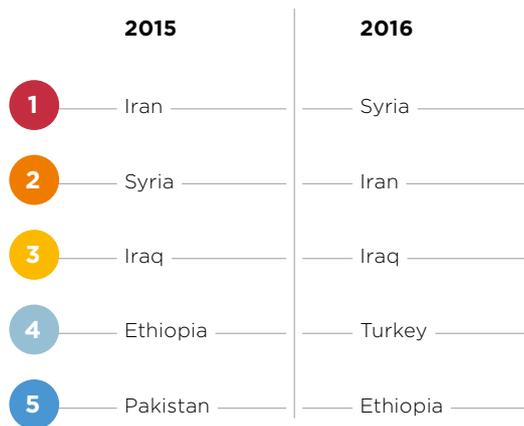
of displaced researchers (in per cent)



2015: n = 146, 1.9.2014-31.08.2015  
 2016: n = 192, 1.9.2015-31.08.2016  
 Number of individuals supported by the largest aid organisation for threatened researchers, the Scholars at Risk Network

### TOP 5

refugee countries of origin



2015: n = 146, 1.9.2014-31.08.2015  
 2016: n = 192, 1.9.2015-31.08.2016  
 Number of individuals supported by the Scholars at Risk Network

Source: Scholars at Risk

eign Office. It is designed to enable German universities and research institutions to employ endangered foreign researchers for a period of two years. In summer 2016, Said and 22 other selected researchers from Syria, Turkey, Libya, Pakistan and Uzbekistan had their fellowships confirmed; over 40 more fellows are due to follow at the beginning of 2017. They can all bank on an adequate salary and access to language courses and other educational opportunities.

In the contest for this coveted fellowship, dedicated mentors are important. One such is Hans-Hermann Richnow, the head of the Department Isotope Biogeochemistry at UFZ. Even before the fellowship started, he organised work experience for Nedal Said in his institute, helped with the application and made sure he had a place to work. "We were actually already looking for a microbiologist," Richnow reports. "We found Mr Said by >

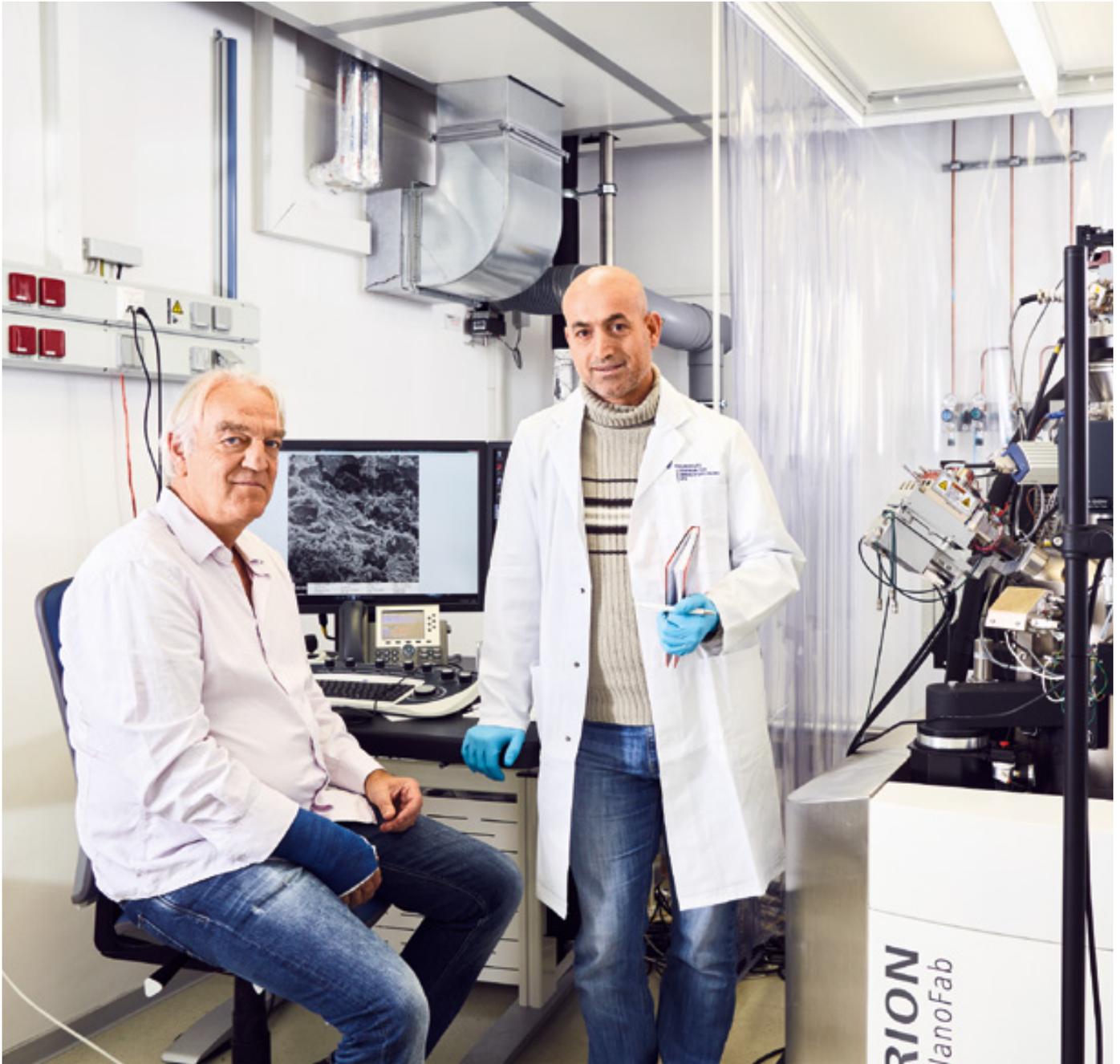


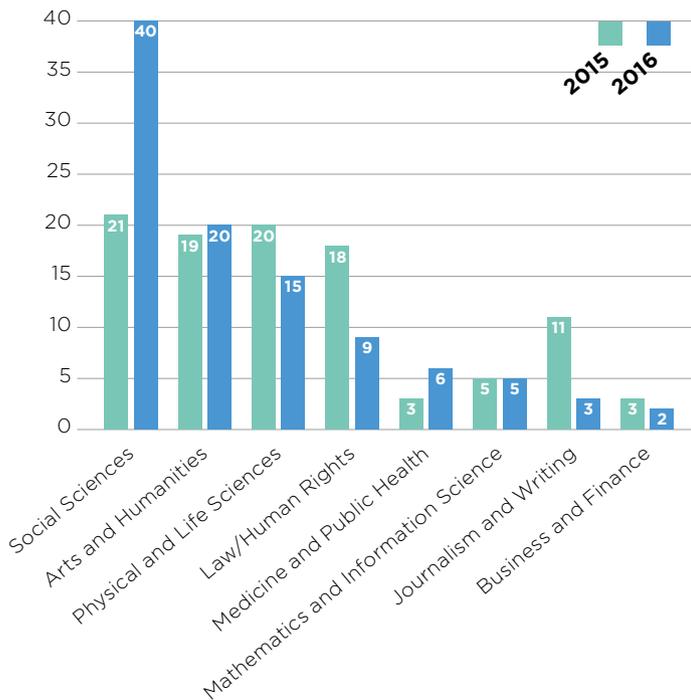
Photo: Humboldt Foundation/Nikolaus Braade

**“A FRIEND WHO HAD GOOD CONTACTS IN THE SECRET SERVICE RANG ME AND SAID I SHOULD LEAVE SYRIA IMMEDIATELY.”**

Philipp Schwartz Fellow  
**NEDAL SAID** (rt)  
from Syria and his host  
**HANS-HERMANN RICHNOW** at the  
Helmholtz Centre for  
Environmental Research  
- UFZ in Leipzig

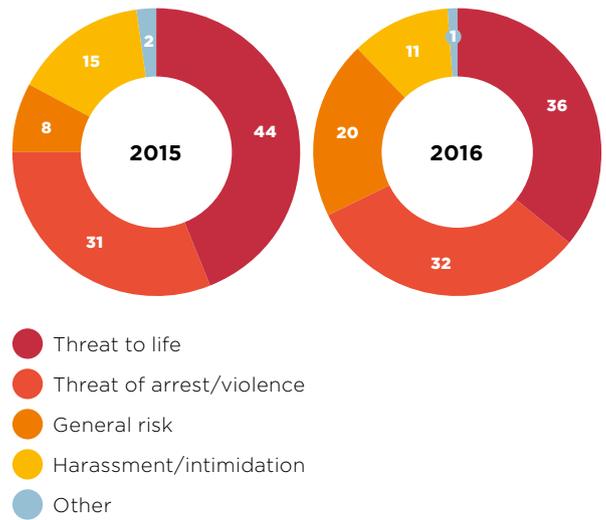
## DISCIPLINES

of displaced researchers (in per cent)



## MOST FREQUENTLY-CITED CAUSES

of flight (in per cent)



2015: n = 146, 1.9.2014–31.08.2015  
 2016: n = 192, 1.9.2015–31.08.2016  
 Number of individuals supported by  
 the Scholars at Risk Network

Source: Scholars at Risk

chance, and it had a lot to do with the fact that he himself went looking for work from the very beginning.”

In Leipzig, it was the refugee’s own initiative that did the trick; in Berlin, an established relationship paid dividends: the geographer Mohamed Ali Mohamed, who also comes from Aleppo, was a doctoral student at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin from 2004 to 2010. After completing his doctorate, he returned to his native city and became a professor at the university there. “The bombardments began in 2012,” says the scientist in fluent German, “and our house with all our worldly goods was destroyed in the first attacks.” The family of five was then homeless. On top of this came the permanent fear of being conscripted, a realistic prospect even though Mohamed was then already 40. Finally, he decided to leave his wife and their three children behind and to flee across the “green border” to Turkey. From there, he made contact with his supervisor, Hilmar Schröder, who arranged for his former student to leave the country on a work visa at the end of 2015.

“When he arrived in Berlin, Mohamed was timid and anxious – we’d never seen him like that before,” says Hilmar Schröder. But his colleague soon became his old self. Today, he holds his own seminars again and is doing a soil research project with funding from the Philipp Schwarz Initiative. Schröder and other members of the faculty are currently trying to bring Mohamed’s wife and children to Germany from a Syrian refugee camp. One

colleague has provided a fridge, another saucepans and when a contract has to be signed, someone from the institute is there to help him. “I am so grateful for the support I am being given in Germany,” says the man from Aleppo who himself helps his refugee compatriots by interpreting for them – pro bono, of course.

## PROTECTED BY UNIVERSITIES

The narratives in the Philipp Schwarz Initiative tell of great danger and successful rescue. More than 60 researchers are being sponsored by the initiative and they are all part of the global stream of refugees displaced by war and persecution. Exactly how many researchers there are, where they come from, what disciplines they represent and where they find refuge is not precisely known. Some light is thrown on the matter by the statistics of the largest aid organisation for threatened researchers, the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR). More than 400 universities and research institutions around the world belong to this network; in the last two years, they have provided a safe haven for some 340 researchers. Now, 20 members of the newly founded German section with headquarters at the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation belong to the SAR Network, as well.

According to Scholars at Risk data, European universities accept the largest percentage of threatened researchers (see graph on page 18). Following major growth in Germany’s admission figures in 2016, the country now >



Photo: Humboldt Foundation / Nikolaus Bräde

**“I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT I AM BEING GIVEN IN GERMANY.”**

The Syrian geographer **MOHAMED ALI MOHAMED** (rt) with his host Hilmar Schröder at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

The Turkish translation scholar  
**MERAL CAMCI** (It)  
and her host  
**DILEK DIZDAR** at  
Johannes Gutenberg  
University Mainz

**“SHE CAMPAIGNS FOR  
HER CONVICTIONS -  
THIS HAS BECOME QUITE  
UNUSUAL.”**



Photo: Humboldt Foundation / Alexander Paul Englert

heads the European statistics together with the Netherlands. A look at the SAR statistics with reference to academic disciplines reveals that there is an increasing number of social scientists and humanities scholars amongst the persecuted (see graph on page 15). In terms of countries of origin, Syria took over the lead from Iran in 2016 and now clearly heads the sad statistics for threatened researchers. The data also reveal that ever more Turkish academics are under threat at home (see graph on page 13).

Meral Camcı is one of these. In January 2016, the translation scholar signed an appeal for peace against the bombardment of Kurdish territory by the Turkish government. From then on, she and some 2,000 other signatories have been subject to massive pressure. By the end of February 2016, she was given her notice as a professor; later she was arrested and released again after three weeks in custody. With the help of her mentor, the German scholar Dilek Dizdar from the University of Mainz, Meral Camcı received a Philipp Schwartz Fellowship. Since then, she

has been able to stay in Germany and conduct her project on the development of feminist discourse in Turkey from a safe distance. Despite all, Camcı still travels home to do research on the spot and to support the peace movement. Dilek Dizdar is full of admiration for her intrepid colleague. “She campaigns courageously and selflessly for her convictions – this has become quite unusual in the academic world.”

**THE DREAM OF PEACE**

Most of all, Meral Camcı would like to return home to live and work. The Syrian geographer, Mohamed Ali Mohamed, also basically wants to go back, “but only if there is really peace in my country.” Nedal Said in Leipzig dreams of a peaceful future, too. Then he could work for an international company and sell scientific microscopes in the Middle East – but from a base in Europe.

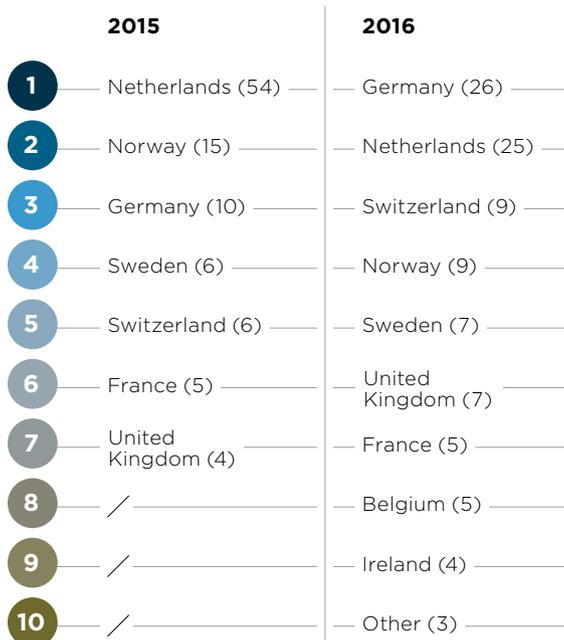
Whichever way the decision turns out, “refugee researchers can be our best ambassadors,” says Said’s mentor, Hans-Hermann Richnow. He argues in favour of a special database bundling the institutes that are willing to host threatened researchers, especially as soon after their arrival as possible. “At the moment, highly-qualified specialists still lose far too much time,” the Leipzig research manager complains. He is just in the process of establishing another position for a refugee researcher in his department – this time in bioinformatics.

**TARGET COUNTRIES**

*of displaced researchers (in per cent)*

In 2015 and 2016, figures remained almost constant:

**6 out of 10** researchers fled to Europe, **4 out of 10** to America. What did change, however, was the percentage distribution within Europe.



2015: n = 84, 1.9.2014–31.08.2015  
 2016: n = 98, 1.9.2015–31.08.2016  
 Number of individuals supported by the Scholars at Risk Network

Source: Scholars at Risk

**SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK**

More than 400 universities and research institutions in 39 countries cooperate in this network. The objectives are to protect threatened researchers and promote academic freedom. Every year, Scholars at Risk supports hundreds of researchers by providing fixed-term positions at member institutions. The network also advises host institutions and offers on-the-spot assistance for researchers and their families.

**PHILIPP SCHWARTZ INITIATIVE**

The initiative grants funding to universities and research institutions in Germany which host researchers at risk on a fellowship for a period of 24 months. It was established in 2015 by the Humboldt Foundation with the support of the Federal Foreign Office and is co-financed by the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Foundation, the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, the Gerda Henkel Foundation, the Klaus Tschira Foundation, the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the Stiftung Mercator. Universities applying for funding are required, amongst other things, to submit a strategy for assisting threatened researchers.

# KEEPING PROSPECTS ALIVE

Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier  
on the Philipp Schwartz Initiative

Whether we think of the civil war in Syria, which has now entered its sixth year, or IS terror, which has spread as far as Europe, or the continuing destabilisation of the Eastern Ukraine – the many crises and conflicts in a world bereft of an over-arching order are occurring thick and fast.

Around the world, more than 60 million people are currently fleeing their countries, more than at any time since the end of the Second World War. They are seeking sanctuary from war and violence, many of them from personal threat and persecution, as well. This is particularly true of scientists and scholars, students and intellectuals who are often courageous enough to use their academic work to condemn abuses in their own countries and are therefore a particular target for state violence and oppression. It is thus all the more important to offer these people prospects outside their own countries.

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*“Desperate need prompted us to form a community.”* PHILIPP SCHWARTZ

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Through the Philipp Schwartz Initiative, we enable persecuted researchers to continue their work free of threat in order to be able to assume responsibility for a better future in their own countries at a later time. Together with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, we are sending a clear message that protecting persecuted researchers in a conflict-ridden world is a long-term task that we are specifically addressing with the tools of foreign cultural and educational policy.

Against the backdrop of our own history, Germany has a special responsibility which we are gladly assuming. The man after whom this initiative is named, the Jewish pathologist Philipp Schwartz, had to flee himself in the 1930s: from the National Socialists, from Germany – because he was a Jew. In exile, he founded the *Notgemeinschaft deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland* (Emergency Society of German Scholars Abroad). Thanks to his activities, hundreds of researchers managed to find positions abroad. Thus it is only right and fitting that we should be the ones to help persecuted researchers today.



Breakfast with refugees  
from Syria: Foreign  
Minister Steinmeier in  
Berlin in summer 2014

Photo: AFP/Getty Images

Just how important this initiative is, becomes even clearer when one hears the moving accounts of the fellows' personal fates, especially of those like the Syrian professor of geography, Hussein Almohamad from Aleppo, who had to conduct their research under the most extreme conditions and who barely managed to escape with their lives.

I am, therefore, very pleased that, in July 2016, the first 23 fellows received fellowships to start working at German universities and that at the beginning of 2017, over 40 more endangered researchers are due to come to Germany to continue their research here.

The potential this holds for both sides, fellows and universities, is enormous. When an archaeologist from Damascus or a social scientist from Düzce conduct research and teach at their host institutions, their own personal experiences help to broaden our horizons and to engender a consciousness for the situation of displaced and threatened researchers.

At the same time, the Philipp Schwartz Initiative offers fellows the opportunity to network, both with one another and internationally, in order to be able to take on responsibility once again when they return home. Hussein Almohamad is a good example: in spring 2016, his host university in Giessen organised a conference on Syria – he himself has become a central point of contact for the network of Syrian geographers it generated. These geographers are engaged in making plans for the reconstruction of Syria when the war comes to an end. Professor Abdulrahman, former Director of the Department of Archaeology at Damascus University, who will spend two years working on research and teaching at the University of Tübingen, also hopes that, one day, he will be able to help rebuild his country's cultural artefacts destroyed by the IS militias.

The Philipp Schwartz Initiative is just one of several building blocks in our work in cultural and educational crisis situations. Nevertheless, it stands for the freedom of science, the protection of cultural identity, scientific networking and, last but not least, humanity in action. For these reasons, the Philipp Schwartz Initiative makes an indispensable contribution to offering endangered researchers prospects for the future – and as such for their own countries, as well.

# SAFE HAVEN: UNIVERSITY

When threatened researchers have fled abroad they need support to find their feet at university once again. Many institutions run special programmes in order to help, but if they are going to be successful, good will alone is not sufficient.

*Text* **BARBARA SHELDON**



How does the asylum process work? What sort of help do people who have fled from persecution really need? For years, questions like this did not regularly crop up at German universities or research institutions. The disintegration of the Syrian education and science system has changed all that. Students and researchers are having to flee the country and are seeking a safe haven where they can continue to study and work – not least in Germany. These people bring along valuable skills and knowledge with them. But research institutions and universities also have to cope with their special experiences and problems.

In the last few years, international aid organisations, foundations and funding institutions have launched a raft of initiatives to help threatened researchers from Syria and other countries. You meet representatives of these organisations at conferences and strategy meetings. They are all absolutely determined to do something, even if it can only be a drop in the ocean. Many are totally dedicated, working hours that drive them to the very limits of their own capacity. And they are all also plagued by doubt: are we really helping? How can we reach the people who are supposed to benefit from our efforts? Who can we >



## EVERYONE IS DETERMINED TO DO SOMETHING, EVEN IF IT CAN ONLY BE A DROP IN THE OCEAN.



### EXAMPLES OF GERMAN AND EUROPEAN INITIATIVES

To harbour and support students and researchers from crisis areas is the objective of various university programmes which are designed to create better structures such as additional language courses and integration measures.

- With its **Integra Programme**, the German Academic Exchange Service prepares academically-qualified refugees at universities and Studienkollegs (preparatory colleges) to embark on degree courses. Its **Welcome Programme** supports projects run by students who actively engage with refugees. Both programmes are financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.
- With the support of the Federal Foreign Office, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation has created the **Philipp Schwartz Initiative** for endangered researchers (see also box on page 18).
- The European Union's **HOPES Programme** supports Syrian refugees searching for a place at university in Turkey or the Middle East by providing advisory services and scholarships.



**EXAMPLES OF GLOBAL INITIATIVES**

For decades, globally-active organisations have been campaigning for endangered researchers from all over the world – irrespective of whether they have fled from war or been persecuted in their own countries.

- The **Scholar Rescue Fund** grants fellowships to established researchers whose lives and work are threatened in their own countries; it also helps universities to host them.
- The **Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara)** has a long tradition reaching back to the 1930s and 1940s when it cooperated with Philipp Schwartz’s Notgemeinschaft deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland (Emergency Society of German Scholars Abroad). Cara mostly finds positions for at-risk academics in the United Kingdom but is increasingly working together with universities in other countries, as well.
- **Scholars at Risk** is a global network of universities that are willing to accept endangered researchers. The organisation also seeks to draw attention to threats to academic freedom (see also box on page 18).

# RESEARCHERS CAN EASLIY FIND THEIR FEET ABROAD – IN THEORY.

cooperate with, who will give us advice, whom can we trust? How can we avoid making mistakes in what is potentially a political minefield?

**THE UNIVERSITIES TOOK THE INITIATIVE**

In Germany, too, many activities have been started for refugees in the education and research arena. According to statistics published by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, amongst the refugees who applied for asylum in Germany in 2015, 55 per cent were under 25 and about 80 per cent were under 35. One thing soon became clear: the education sector, in particular, needed to work on solutions. Suddenly, the refugees were there, in some cases on campus or living nearby. And the universities took the initiative: guest student status was quickly introduced, libraries were opened up and mentoring schemes were created – and one university even ended a long-lasting debate on whether lectures in economics should be held in German or English by simply swapping to English so that refugees could participate.

The science organisations had to take special account of the situation of fully-educated researchers in order to develop suitable support mechanisms for them. Whilst students have often not made an irreversible decision about their careers, refugee researchers have already chosen academia and spent years preparing for it. So for them the markets for scientific and science-related jobs are particularly relevant. This has its advantages: international activities are part of every scientist’s life; many academic disciplines can be practised anywhere and the language of science is often English in the first place. Therefore, in theory, researchers can find their feet abroad much faster than

other occupational groups. In most countries, however, the academic job market is restricted.

Against this backdrop, opening up existing positions for endangered researchers would not seem to be the way forward – at least not at present. Take the experience of the European Commission: on their job portal for researchers with job offers from all

over Europe, flags with the caption science4refugees were attached to hundreds of job offers. During the first nine months of operation, however, not a single refugee responded to the announcements on this portal. And the word from the major German science organisations which have opened up their programmes and job offers is that there certainly has not been a run on opportunities for refugees. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation’s

Philipp Schwartz Initiative with its tailor-made fellowships for threatened researchers, on the other hand, is in great demand.

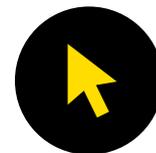
### FROM REFUGEE TO JOB-SEEKER

The inference that might be drawn is that endangered researchers need more active support and guidance in mastering the transition from being a refugee to participating in the normal employment market. Perhaps we also have to realise that, depending on the country of origin, the general conditions for research may be so different that even highly gifted Syrian researchers, for example, may not have had the opportunity to publish at a level that would make them internationally competitive.

The scientists sponsored under the Philipp Schwartz Initiative are not competing with their German colleagues; their special situation is taken into account. The fellowship allows them to work in Germany and get their bearings for a period of two years. They may then be lucky enough to find a position within the German science system. Science-related sectors, such as industrial research, also offer them opportunities. Maybe the next step will take them to a university in another country via the Scholars at Risk Network, or perhaps they will be able to return to their own countries at a later stage.

One thing is, however, clear: during the time they spend in Germany, these researchers with their knowledge and experience will certainly benefit their host institutions in no small measure. Meeting them in seminars and lectures will open the eyes of many German students to the fact that academic freedom and freedom of expression are not a matter of course.

**DR BARBARA SHELDON** heads the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's Strategic Planning Division, which developed the Philipp Schwartz Initiative together with the Federal Foreign Office.



### EXAMPLES OF ONLINE OFFERS OF AID

Young refugees who are not lucky enough to gain access to education where they find themselves can turn to the internet for a whole range of virtual courses. There are also online jobs forums designed to help refugee researchers find work at universities and research institutions.

- **jamiya.org** offers online teaching opportunities in Arabic to academics who have fled from Syria and connects them with European universities and NGOs.
- In cooperation with partner universities, **kiron.ngo** offers the option of learning via a digital platform. The courses are tailored to prepare for university entrance and facilitate a smooth transition.
- **chance-for-science.de** is a platform operated by the University of Leipzig which connects displaced academics and students with German universities and research institutions.
- The European Union's online portal **science4refugees** finds job offers for endangered researchers across Europe.

# GOOD FRIENDS DESPITE BREXIT

The British are leaving the EU, which could mean that relations with Germany become more important. What could help is that people on the island have a more positive image of the Germans than they used to.

Text **LILO BERG**



A slim majority for Brexit: Germany held its breath when this news was announced on the morning of 24 June 2016. Right up to the end, people had believed the predictions that promised a sizeable majority for the pro-Europeans in the EU referendum. But then almost 52 per cent of Britons opted to leave – for days, this shocking news dominated the headlines. Europe has still not digested it even now.

Take Rüdiger Görner: he still wakes up some days and simply cannot believe it. The distinguished German literary scholar has lived in England since 1981. He arrived as a student, worked as a researcher, writer, translator and critic, and became a professor of German with Comparative Literature. In 2005, he founded the Centre for Anglo-

German Cultural Relations at Queen Mary University of London, which he still heads. And in 2015, his scholarly achievements and services to cultural exchange between the United Kingdom and Germany earned him the Reimar Lüst Award, which is granted jointly by the Humboldt Foundation and the Fritz Thyssen Foundation.

## **A STRIKING LACK OF EDUCATION**

To this day, Rüdiger Görner is fascinated by cosmopolitan, liberal Britain with its democratic and cultural tradition. And yet, for years, he has seen cracks appearing in the noble facade. “Above all, there is a striking lack of political education in the population; people are turning their backs on the European idea and foster the danger-



ous dream of reviving the Empire.” But, in the last resort, it was an irresponsible government that was to blame for Brexit, a government that had wilfully called a referendum the consequences of which it was completely unable to handle. “It’s a political shambles,” says Görner whose expertise is in great demand across Europe these days.

Even though millions of Britons are now calling for another referendum, Rüdiger Görner is convinced that Brexit cannot be reversed. He expects the British government to declare that they are leaving the European Union in the next few months and that negotiations will then begin in earnest. At the same time, agreements will have to be made with all sorts of different countries in order to replace the Brussels provisions with bilateral agreements.

### **GERMANY, THE HEAVYWEIGHT**

“Germany will play a privileged role in this,” Görner asserts. The strength of economic relations between the two countries, Germany’s political weight, the many cultural ties – all of this will tend to reinforce the relationship. This was already becoming clear in the months before Brexit. “It was evident that the standard prejudices about Germans were not being dragged out very often,” the cultural scholar reports. Spiked helmets and Nazi comparisons hardly cropped up in the media at all and the government itself had also refrained from employing barbed rhetoric against one of its most important partners.

This reflects the change in the emotional state between the two nations. For decades, Britons responded to ›



Germans' unshakeable anglophilia with unflinching Germanophobia. But the 2006 World Cup at the latest marked a departure from rejection mode, according to Rüdiger Görner. "That was when many British fans headed for Germany and discovered a relaxed, cosmopolitan country." And this has been compounded by the Berlin effect that draws thousands of Britons to the hip German capital every year, not to mention the excellent work done by German cultural institutions in the United Kingdom. "What the Goethe Institute, the German Academic Exchange Service and the cultural department of the German Embassy have achieved in the last few decades is unparalleled and even more important now than ever."

**THE CONVERSATION MUST NOT STOP**

Culture is the catalyst for everything the future holds for Great Britain and Germany, says Rüdiger Görner, more significant than politics or business. He therefore argues in favour of promoting relevant activities to an even greater extent. "We absolutely have to make sure that the conversation between the cultural mediators does not break down." In this context, the key platforms are the newly-established German Network on the British side and the Centres for British Studies and courses at German universities as well as the British Council, of course, on the German side (see also box on page 27). Görner thinks that joint projects in fields like comparative media research and migration

research would be particularly meaningful. In his opinion, special funding should be made available for this purpose from the European Regional Development Fund.

But what happens when the existing EU funding runs out? After all, at some British research institutions, it accounts for 15 per cent of the annual budget. Will there be a major exodus of researchers, for example to Germany?

**“SPIKED HELMETS AND NAZI COMPARISONS FEATURE LESS OFTEN IN THE MEDIA. REJECTION MODE IS NO LONGER SO WIDESPREAD.”**

Whilst there is some evidence of British researchers heading for other English-speaking countries and German colleagues returning home, there is no indication of a mass emigration as yet.



The **GERMAN NETWORK** brings together people in different regions of Britain who are interested in the German language as well as the cultures and economies of German-speaking countries. Apart from a comprehensive calendar of events, the Greater London German Network ([www.glgn.org.uk](http://www.glgn.org.uk)), for example, also offers language courses and functions as a jobs board. The German Network is funded by the German Embassy in London.

The **CENTRE FOR BRITISH STUDIES** at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and similar institutions like the one at the University of Bamberg focus on interdisciplinary research and teaching. Many other German universities offer courses in British literature and British Studies.

He himself wants to stay in London as long as possible and keep building the big cultural bridge to Germany. He sees great potential in partnerships between cities and regions in the two countries. "There are close networks of relationships in the field of cultural work, but they urgently need to be rejuvenated." Twinning celebrations such as the 70th anniversaries of prominent city partnerships like Frankfurt-Birmingham in 2016 and Hanover-

Bristol in 2017 are a good opportunity. Part of the idea is to study the history of such alliances at his centre, Rüdiger Görner reports. And some town councils are already considering annual, bi-national conferences on certain major topics. Cementing the friendship between Britons and Germans is apparently a matter of great importance to many – in preparation for the day when Brexit becomes reality.



The Reimar Lüst Award Winner **PROFESSOR DR RÜDIGER GÖRNER** has been living and working in London for more than 35 years. He is the author of numerous books including "Streifzüge durch die englische Literatur" (1998), "Dover im Harz. Studien zu britisch-deutschen Kulturbeziehungen" (Dover in the Harz - Studies in Anglo-German Cultural Relations, 2012) or "London, querstadtein. Vieldeutige Liebeserklärungen" (2014). Furthermore, he is also the editor of "Angermion. The Yearbook for Anglo-German Literary Criticism, Intellectual History and Cultural Transfers", published by de Gruyter. In 2012, Görner was awarded the Deutscher Sprachpreis (German Language Prize) by the Henning Kaufmann Foundation.

# “YOU CAN OPEN A SHELL COMPANY IN FIVE MINUTES”

Brooke Harrington’s research took her into a world few people ever get to see: she studied wealth managers, who help the rich to hide their money. She spoke to people who only seldom give interviews, let alone divulge tax tricks. In order to get to the heart of the matter, the economic sociologist decided to join them.

Interview **KATRIN LANGHANS**

**KOSMOS: You spent eight years investigating the off-shore world. What did you discover?**

**HARRINGTON:** When you have the specific knowledge, you can hide your money nearly everywhere you want. You just need to be able to use the loopholes in the financial systems. That is where wealth managers come into play: it is their business to help the rich to hide their money.

**Why do rich people hide their money?**

The main reason is some combination of tax avoidance, creditor avoidance and the avoidance of legal judgments related to family, like alimony payments or inheritances.

**Are their motives always bad?**

In the case of people who live in unstable countries you can understand that they don’t want themselves or their families to be kidnapped and blackmailed, so it is in their interest to conceal as much as possible to not get targeted.

**In order to study the work of wealth managers, you decided to become one yourself. Why?**

There wasn’t any way to learn enough about the profession without entering the training programme. Their work changes so rapidly because the laws about taxes change very quickly.

**Can anyone do the training programme?**

Yes, if you are willing to invest £25,000 for the two years of training, including the travel costs to visit workshops, in which you learn the laws of trusts, foundations and corporations: where they come from and how you can use them to hide assets.

**How come they were willing to allow a researcher to listen in on their secrets?**

I think because from the beginning they knew who was financing me. I wore a name badge at all times, just like all the other course participants, but mine made clear that I was a member of a research institution. The Max Planck Institute and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation paid me a salary for the first two years of my study; without that support I couldn’t have done this research. In total, I did 65 interviews with wealth managers in 18 countries.

**What is your impression? Do wealth managers have a guilty conscience about helping the rich to avoid taxation?**

Some people believe very strongly in the notion of free markets and they see the freedom to get rich. I asked everyone I interviewed, what is good about your job? And the majority said, I enjoy helping families. >



Tax havens like the Bahamas are the piggy bank of the rich. The real Bahamas swimming pigs were released there 200 years ago - today they entertain tourists.

Photo: Fotolia/Neiron Photo

**Rich families who get richer whilst the poor get poorer.** Only a few have considered that consequence and for them it was a struggle. I interviewed an accountant who worked for Greenpeace before becoming a wealth manager. She said she was troubled by the amount of privileges her clients had.

**What kind of privileges?**

The whole system of western states wasn't relevant to them. They could just buy their way out of the system. These people don't even need a passport to travel internationally.

boutique companies that help wealthy people change citizenship.

**Jonathan Ostry, the Deputy Director of the Research Department at the International Monetary Fund, once said that inequality and growth are linked. A society in which wealth is distributed more equally grows faster because inequality reduces the chances of the poor.**

Wealth managers play into that in the following way: by helping people avoid taxes they are depriving states of their resources to provide things like public education, health care and transportation. And if you are a poor person you need public transportation, you need health care so that you don't use all your savings when you get sick; you need good education to get a good job one day. States have less money to finance all these things under conditions of mass tax avoidance by the rich.

**The rich shift the burden downwards.**

Everyone has to pay more because states need a basic minimum amount to function. So the burden gets shifted to those of us who can't pay wealth managers to avoid taxes. You and me.

**How much extra do we have to pay because of the rich hiding their assets?**

In the US and other places that amount has been estimated to be 15 per cent. That's annoying for a middle-class person like me, but for a poor person that's the difference between being able to save up and start a business or not. The countries that suffer the most under prosperity austerity are the ones that had the highest rates of tax avoidance before the crisis: Greece, Spain, Portugal.

**You conducted more than 60 interviews with people all over the world, on the Cook Islands, in South America, on the Seychelles. What was your impression of these places?**

Many of the offshore tax havens are kind of scary places. Often I felt quite unsafe and that is unusual for me, because I'd travelled a lot by myself before, including the Middle East, and never felt unsafe. There is this idea that when small countries develop things like offshore financial struc-

**“PRIVATE AIR SYSTEM,  
NO PASSPORT CHECK,  
NO LUGGAGE CHECK –  
THEY GO WHEREVER  
THEY WANT.”**

There is this private air system, no passport check, no luggage check, you go where you want, when you want.

**So is there always a way for rich people to avoid the law?**

If you are rich enough, probably. There have been notable cases where people have been convicted of crimes. Allen Stanford, for example, who was a very wealthy hedge fund manager in the Caribbean. He got caught; he went to jail for defrauding his clients. But for every conviction I assume there are many more cases where wealthy people can avoid jail. Although tax avoidance gets all the headlines, it is generally more a question of law avoidance.

**How do rich people actually go about avoiding the law?**

At the extreme, you can just buy a different passport and that happens so often that now there is a market for

# “MANY TAX HAVENS ARE SCARY PLACES.”

tures everything starts to go wrong: the democracy starts to fall apart, crime rates go up, and there is a general kind of moral corruption that goes on.

## What do you mean by moral corruption?

In my first night on the Cook Islands, for example, I was robbed by someone while I was sleeping with my five-year-old son in the hotel. He took my tablet phone, my only way of communicating with the world. And then the people who were in charge of the accommodation said: too bad, you can't have your \$3,000 back you paid in advance to stay here for a week. Too bad, if you can't deal with being robbed; there is something wrong with you.

## What did you do?

I looked for flights but it was too expensive, so I moved to another hotel. The rest of my stay I was looking over my shoulder the whole time. I was very scared. In the course of walking around after the robbery I met a fisherman who said, “Ah, you know, that is why they call us the ‘Crook Islands.’”

## The Cook Islands are also known for shell companies. It's very easy to set up a company online. Why do rich people bother to employ wealth managers?

You can open a shell company in five minutes, but in order to use it to your advantage you have to have some specialised knowledge. If you make a mistake you might go to jail. Rich people pay wealth managers to take those risks

for them. Wealth managers know exactly how to keep you just one centimetre on the right side of the law. They can help you to hide your money, even in countries like the UK or Germany.

## Did you interview a German wealth manager?

Actually, one of the most interesting people I interviewed was German, a man who had a “von” in his last name. During the Second World War his family lost all their land holdings, he had little money. This guy didn't even go to university, but he was still able to make a great thirty years' career for himself managing people's money.

## How did he do it?

He had the right kind of manners and what sociologists call social capital to make wealthy people want to work with him. He would play polo, go skiing, he would go to the opera and drink champagne. He knew how to behave, one of the things he said was, “You never ever approach a client directly about money, you wait for them to raise that topic.”

## Is there anywhere in the world that doesn't have offshore finance?

As far as I learned, Greenland is free from offshore finance. It is sort of a mystery. Why does an island that has nothing except whaling not become an offshore tax haven? No one seems to have a good answer to this question. Maybe it hasn't occurred to them yet.



**PROFESSOR DR BROOKE HARRINGTON** has been an Associate Professor for Sociology at Copenhagen Business School in Denmark since 2010. After studying English Literature at Stanford University, she read Sociology at Harvard. A Humboldt Research Fellowship took her to the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne. Her research into the offshore world informed her book “Capital without Borders: Wealth Managers and the One Percent” which was published by Harvard University Press in 2016.



Anneliese Maier Research Awards in Berlin: Federal Research Minister Johanna Wanka and Helmut Schwarz, President of the Humboldt Foundation, with the award winners 2016

Photo: Humboldt Foundation / David Ausserhofer

GREAT THINKERS FOR GERMAN UNIVERSITIES

## Anneliese Maier Research Awards granted

The economy, financial markets, new media, history, and the effects of music: humanities scholars and social scientists deal with subjects that are on people's minds and are of fundamental importance to society. In order to promote international collaborations in these important research fields, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation grants the Anneliese Maier Research Awards, valued at €250,000 each.

In September, this year's awards were presented by the Federal Minister of Education and Research, Johanna Wanka, and the President of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Helmut Schwarz. "All six researchers receiving this award have one thing in common: they actively seek intellectual exchange," said Johanna Wanka during her official speech in Berlin's Auditorium Friedrichstrasse. "We are not, however, just talking about international exchange," she continued, "but above all about cross-border exchange in their own disciplines."

In his address, Helmut Schwarz emphasised, "This award is designed to recruit leading researchers from abroad to work together with partners in Germany. It also seeks to pave the way for junior researchers to be integrated at an early stage." The researchers honoured will spend five

years collaborating with German colleagues.

Two of this year's award winners address economic issues: Ève Chiapello from France researches, amongst other things, into the consequences of economising social policy whilst Marti G. Subrahmanyam from the United States investigates the regulation of financial markets by the central banks.

Themes such as anger and rage in Homer, and new editions of Greek tragedies are the special focus of the award winner Glenn W. Most, a classicist from Italy, whilst Sumathi Ramaswamy from the USA, who is considered one of the most multifaceted experts in the field of Asian Studies, examines themes in Indian history.

Two further award winners work in the field of psychology: the US-American social psychologist E. Tory Higgins studies how opinions shared, for example, by groups – known as shared realities – are influenced by social media. With his work on the reasons for earworms, tunes you get on the brain, the music psychologist Daniel Müllensiefen caused a furore; he is currently investigating how music shapes the development of children and young people (see also page 9).

## Initiative to inform about experimental animal research

The Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany has launched a new initiative to provide comprehensive and transparent information on research involving experiments on animals. The online platform [www.tierversuche-verstehen.de](http://www.tierversuche-verstehen.de) features news, background information, reports, films, infographics, interviews and photos on the topic (for the time being in German language only). It will also act as a forum for debate and an expert database. The initiative also uses video clips to broadcast its message on YouTube and @TTVde to break news on Twitter.



**Tierversuche verstehen**  
Eine Informationsinitiative der Wissenschaft

The initiative *Tierversuche verstehen* (Understanding Animal Experiments) is the result of close cooperation between scientists and communication experts. It targets the public and the media, and sees its mission in promoting the conversation on the necessity and benefits of animal research as well as relevant alternatives.

The Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany addresses matters relating to research policy and funding and the structural development of the German science system. The members of the Alliance are the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the German Academic Exchange Service, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation), the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres, the German Rectors' Conference, the Leibniz Association, the Max Planck Society, the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and the German Council of Science and Humanities.

### BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE

## Israeli and German researchers build networks

A Humboldt Colloquium entitled "Bridges to the future: German-Israeli scientific relations" brought together some 200 Humboldt Foundation alumni, junior researchers and invited guests in Tel Aviv in September 2016. The researchers presented their own research topics to a broadly-based specialist audience and were thus able to inject new momentum into specialist and interdisciplinary networks. Humboldtians, moreover, told young researchers about their experiences in Germany.

The colloquium also focused on issues surrounding the particular opportunities and challenges inherent in German-Israeli research collaborations: how can science continue to act as a bridge between Germany and Israel in future? What specific role does the Humboldt Network play in German-Israeli cooperation? Since 1958, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation has sponsored about 300 Israeli Humboldtians.



Photo: Humboldt Foundation/Felix Rettberg

Mathematics, health sciences, linguistics and many more: researchers in the most diverse subjects met at the Humboldt Colloquium in Tel Aviv.

Today, there is a tight network of relations between German and Israeli researchers. It will be interesting to see how many of the junior researchers who formed an opinion of the Foundation and Germany whilst in Tel Aviv, will follow the example set by Israeli Humboldt Alumni.

# MRS @NLINE

Who actually does what at Humboldt headquarters? Who are the people behind the scenes making sure that everything runs smoothly? This page is devoted to the colleagues at the Humboldt Foundation, their lives at work and beyond. **TODAY: ULLA HECKEN.**



Photo: Humboldt Foundation/Michael Jordan

If you ever send an email to [webmaster@avh.de](mailto:webmaster@avh.de), then you will probably get an answer from me. I look after the Humboldt Foundation's website and make sure that our online presence is easy for everyone to understand and works well. And if you ever have a problem with the login or completing an online form, I do everything in my power to get it sorted as quickly as possible. At the moment, I am particularly involved in setting things up so that applications, nominations and reviews can be submitted online for all the Foundation's programmes. Watch this space!

I am something of an old stager at the Humboldt Foundation. In fact, I joined the Foundation even before I started studying to become a translator. I have worked in the secretariat for our former Secretary General, Heinrich Pfeiffer, for example, organised the logistics and accompanied some of the study tours around Germany that the

Foundation runs for its fellows, supervised the building of guest houses for foreign researchers at East German universities – never a dull moment.

For some while now, I have been assigned to the Communications Department. What I enjoy most about working here is the particular combination of content work and technical activities. For instance, I am part of the editorial team of Humboldt Kosmos and proofread all the articles for each issue.

Things can get a bit hectic at times as I try to juggle all the different tasks my work involves. This is where long walks with my Australian Shepherd dog Wanja come in. When we are out in the woods around Bonn she makes sure I can switch off and relax – which is often precisely when I get good, new ideas for the website or find just the right solution for a technical problem.

*Text* **ULLA HECKEN**



**THIS IS WHERE  
THE ENGLISH  
VERSION FINISHES.**

BITTE WENDEN SIE DAS HEFT,  
UM DIE DEUTSCHE FASSUNG ZU LESEN.