

News Release

German minister of education and research at opening of new Centre for German Studies at Hebrew University

Jerusalem, March 18, 2008 - Opening the new Centre for German Studies today at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, German Minister of Education and Research Dr. Annette Schavan cited the key role that the Centre will play in furthering the scientific and cultural ties between Israel and Germany.

These ties are "of great importance" not only in scientific terms, she said, but also for "the building of spiritual and cultural understanding between the two countries."

Noting that the inauguration of the new German Studies Centre was occurring in the same week as the historic joint meeting of the governments of Germany and Israel in Jerusalem, Dr Schavan pointed out that the scientific ties between the two countries preceded the formal political ties.

Also speaking at the centre's inauguration, Hebrew University President Prof. Menachem Magidor recalled the key role played by the university's German Jewish founding fathers and early professors and the more recent development of German-funded research centres and research projects at the Hebrew University. Some 350 joint projects exist between German and Hebrew University researchers, he said, adding that the new Centre provides "another very important connection" between the two countries.

The Hebrew University won a tender among Israeli universities to host the new Centre for German Studies following a call by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in 2006. The new graduate research and teaching institution functions under the faculties of humanities, law and social sciences and is affiliated with the Hebrew University's European Forum.

While most German research at the University has in the past focused on German history, the Holocaust and the cultural legacy of German Jewry, Director of the Hebrew University's European Forum Prof. Bianca Kühnel says this new Centre will develop research on contemporary processes within German society, the role of Germany in the EU and in European integration, the role of Germany in global economic, political, scientific and technological transformations, as well as Germany's place in the contemporary cultural and artistic scene.

Offering an instructional, interdisciplinary program at both M.A. and doctoral levels, this will be the only Centre for graduate studies of Germany in Israel. The Centre will host prominent writers, statesmen, artists and curators, creating opportunities for them to address the Israeli public through a range of symposia, conferences, workshops and performances.

For more information, or for press contact with students, faculty or spokespersons from HU, please speak in the first instance to Mikki Saperia, on +44 (0)20 7691 1479 or email mikki.saperia@bfhu.org



About the Hebrew University

With 24,000 full-time students, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem is Israel's pre-eminent institute of higher education. Its faculty members pursue projects that are both essential to Israel's future and the benefit of humanity. It is a centre of international repute, with formal and informal ties extending to and from the worldwide scientific and academic community. Students come from all over Israel and across the Middle East to study in an atmosphere of academic and research excellence.

About the British Friends of the Hebrew University

Established in 1926, The British Friends of the Hebrew University is the oldest established Jewish charity in support of higher education. The charity works to promote and enhance the reputation of the Hebrew University, ensure that underprivileged students are given the opportunity to complete their studies, and help HU to maintain its standard of excellence and worldwide reputation for research.

BFHU acts as the UK's gateway to Hebrew University research, expertise and faculty, and provides financial and pastoral support for prospective and current students at HU, as well as supporting visiting and sabbatical Hebrew University lecturers during their time in the UK.