



Seville, 18th of June, 2018

WOCMES Sevilla 2018 attendance to surpass previous editions of the congress with almost 3,000 participants

Manuel Jiménez Barrios, vice-president of the Junta de Andalucía regional government, has today announced all the new features of this international forum organised by the Fundación Tres Culturas (Three Cultures Foundation) from the 16th to 20th of July

The next edition of the World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES), organised by the Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterraneo (Three Cultures of the Mediterranean Foundation) from the 16th to 20th of July this year in Seville, is set to be a record-breaking edition which will beat its predecessors, Mainz 2002 (Germany), Amman 2006 (Jordan), Barcelona 2010 (Spain) and Ankara 2014 (Turkey). Manuel Jiménez Barrios, vice-president of the Junta de Andalucía regional government and Advisor of the Presidency, Local Administration and Democratic Memory, announced the news today at a press conference, explaining that almost 3,000 participants have already confirmed their presence at this important event.

This congress is considered to be the most important forum for investigators, academics, journalists, diplomats and other experts in the area of the Middle East and Northern Africa. The event is held every four years and provides these specialists with the chance to share the advances in their respective areas of study, encouraging creation of an area of reflection and debate.

The vice-president has therefore stressed, after congratulating the Fundación Tres Culturas team for having been chosen to take care of this edition over other prestigious institutions like British Kings College of London, that hosting



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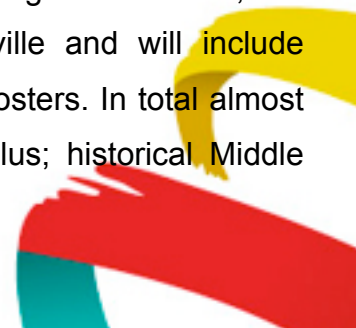
such a useful, fitting and necessary academic event at this point in time is a great opportunity for Andalusia “because it’s going to bring us a lot of attention, it’s going to clear paths for us and it’s going to answer questions.”

“We need to understand and we need to understand each other. I think Andalusia has many things in its favour to host the sort of academic dialogue that we require at the moment. From Andalusia, and through the Fundación Tres Culturas, we have an obligation to open our doors to experience to find common ground on which to meet. This is an opportunity we cannot miss,” Jiménez Barrios explained.

The vice-president has stressed the Andalusian character of this edition, very much apparent in many aspects, from the 25 topic areas of the academic sessions (where Al-Andalus has been incorporated as a sign of identity of this event) to the accompanying programme that has been prepared to allow those who travel to Seville with the participants to get to know the most emblematic areas of the region. This clearly Andalusian dimension (also apparent in the support from different institutions such as the Culture, Tourism and Sports and Knowledge and Universities Boards) is complemented by another important national dimension (with the backing of the Casa Árabe and the Elcano Royal Institute) as well as an international one, with more than 3,000 participants of 86 nationalities, from the US to Japan as well as India, various Gulf countries and even Australia, among others.

“And all this without losing sight of the great implication of local organisms such as the Provincial Council of Seville (through Prodetur) and the regional capital city’s Council, which are very much aware of the huge tourism projection that WOCMES implies both for the city and for the province,” Tres Culturas director José Manuel Cervera added.

Under the slogan ‘Your roots. Your heritage. Knowledge that unites’, the academic sessions will be held at the University of Seville and will include individual lectures, panels, symposiums, round tables and posters. In total almost 2,300 proposals revolving around 25 topic areas: Al-Ándalus; historical Middle





East; Christian studies; Conflict analysis and resolution; contemporary Middle East; Cultural studies; Economy; Gender studies; International relations and International law; Islamic studies; Jewish studies; Linguistics and literature; Media studies; Medieval studies; Mediterranean studies; Nationality/Identities and ethnic origins; Migration studies; Regulatory phenomena and Law; Northern Africa; Politics; Sepharad and the Sephardic Diaspora; Scientific culture; Translation studies; Urban and regional studies; Water, agriculture and environment.

A strict selection for a prestigious forum

Much of the prestige of this forum is sustained by the selection process those who wish to attend must pass, as not all the proposals sent in end up forming part of the final programme of WOCMES (which is more than 350 pages long and is now available to view or download through this link: <http://wocmes2018seville.org/web/images/doc/programme/booklet-completo--V4-WEb.pdf>) and only those that meet the quality expectations of a congress of these characteristics are included.

There two committees appointed for this edition overseeing this process: the executive scientific committee, chaired by Lola Ferre Cano (professor of Hebrew at the Semitic Studies Department of the University of Granada and general director of Universities of the Junta de Andalucía regional government) and coordinated by Emilio González Ferrín (professor of Islamic Thought at the University of Seville and director of the Al-Ándalus professorship at Fundación Tres Culturas), and the international advisory committee, made up of 64 reputable experts from Universities and investigation centres all over the world. Thus, only those who pass this selection process will be able to be present at WOCMES Sevilla 2018, a congress, moreover, they must pay to take part in.

Participants of the highest level

Another of the pillars that upholds the prestige of this event is that of the relevant investigation groups, associations, universities and institutions that have



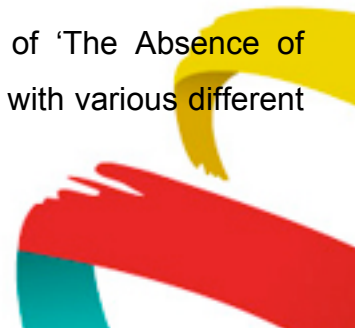
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already confirmed their presence. They include Casa Árabe, the Real Instituto Elcano, IEMED, CIDOB, Unión por el Mediterráneo, CCME (Council of the Moroccan Community Living Abroad), the Board of Governors of Scientific Investigations, El Legado Andalusí Andalusian Public Foundation, the Euro-Arabic Foundation for Higher Studies, the Sepharad-Israel Centre, Arab Reform Initiative, IAMES (International Association for Middle Eastern Studies) and also IACIS (International Association for Contemporary Iraqi Studies).

Likewise, there will be representatives present from the University of Cambridge, Catholic University of Louvain, American University of El Cairo, University of Oxford, University of Qatar, University of Shanghai (Global Studies Centre and Turkish Studies Centre), University of Lund, University of Calgary, University of Freie, University of Mainz, University of Salamanca, Autonomous University of Madrid, University of Barcelona, Columbia, University of Leiden, University of California Berkeley, Humbolt University of Berlin, Sapienza University of Rome, L'Orientale University of Naples, University of Paris 1 Sorbonne, University of London, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Birzeit University, University of Princeton, University of Georgetown, Iremam-CNRS, Inalco Paris, SOAS, Chatham House, London School of Economics and Political Science- (LSE), Emirates Diplomatic Academy, German Development Institute, Max Planck Institute Mmg and the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology).

Cultural activities

The academic sessions will be complemented by a parallel cultural agenda, which will develop in three main areas: Avenida de la Constitución, the Rectorate of the University of Seville and the headquarters of the Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo. The activities on the agenda include a Mediterranean Film Festival, three exhibitions (at the University itself, on Avenida de la Constitución and at the Tres Culturas headquarters), the performance of 'The Absence of Paths' and concerts in the gardens of the Moroccan Pavilion with various different





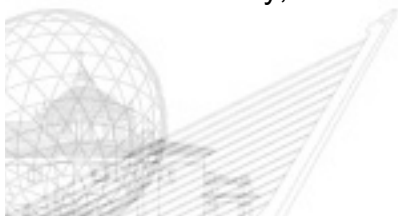
bands offering the most up-to-date sounds of the Moroccan musical panorama (from the 19th to the 21st of July).

On top of all that, on the 18th, at the Teatro de la Maestranza theatre, the Royal Symphonic Orchestra of Seville, directed by the maestro John Axelrod, will perform Rimsky-Kórsakov's Scheherezade Suite in a concert to mark the awarding of the WOCMES Prize. On this occasion the award has fallen to Rashid Khalidi, one of the principle academics in the study of the national Palestinian movement of the 20th century. Khalidi is the leading authority in interpretation of the conflicts between Arabs and Jews and between Israelis and Palestinians, and the author of one of the most influential studies on the topic.

Book exhibition

The book exhibition deserves a separate paragraph as, like other sections of this WOCMES 2018, it has also reached record figures. So far, more than thirty exhibitors have been confirmed, which will set up in the Patio de la Cristalera in the Rectorate of the University of Seville. The patio will become a meeting point for professionals of the sector related to the topics of the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean.

Exhibitors are to include Peter Lang Publishind, The American University in Cairo Press (AUC Press), Rasanah: International Institute for Iranian Studies (IIS), Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC), Cengage Learning EMEA Ltd, Edinburgh University Press, De Gruyter, Hurst Publishers, I.B. Tauris Publishers, Edwin Mellen Press Ltd, Combined Academic Publishers, Peeters Publishers, Yamaat Admadia of Islam, Library of Arabic Literature, Council for British Research in the Levant, Diwan Mayrit Editorial, Emirates Diplomatic Academy, Almuzara Editorial, Jordan Language Academy, Cambridge University Press, Casa Árabe, Routledge, Palgrave



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Mcmillan (Part of Springer Nature), Brill, Cooperative Book Display, Carl Max Kortepeter and Harvard University Press.

Sponsors and collaborators

Lastly, the magnitude of this congress is also apparent in the high number of institutions (both public and private) and companies that have committed themselves to WOCMES Sevilla 2018. The congress has the collaboration of the Council of Seville; the Provincial Council (Prodetur); the University and Knowledge and Culture Boards; and the University of Seville. It has special sponsorship from Turismo Andalucía, the Tourism and Sports Board as well as Casa Árabe, the Moroccan Ministry of Culture and Communication, the Delegate Ministry of Moroccans Living Abroad and the La Caixa Foundation.

Companies of note include Alsa as a Golden Sponsor and Viajes El Corte Inglés as the forum's official travel agent.

