

NEWSLETTER

Issue #2

June 2019

Dear friends,

We are delighted to present to you the recent activities of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

Over the past several months the Academy has enjoyed a full and varied program of activity, including the signing of an historic scientific agreement with the National Academy of Sciences of the United States, bilateral conferences, visits from foreign delegations, from foreign delegations, lecture series, exhibitions, awards, and participation in international scientific organizations.

We thank you for your continued partnership and friendship, and look forward to continuing to advance science and to further cultivate scientific relationships with international partners over the next year.

Nili Cohen
Sincerely,
Nili

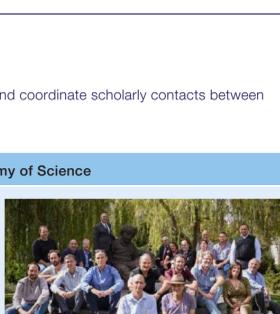
RECENT NEWS

New Division Chairpersons Elected

Academy member Prof. Sergiu Hart of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem has been elected Chairperson of the Academy's Humanities Division and Academy member Prof. Yadin Dudai of the Weizmann Institute of Science has been elected Chairperson of the Academy's Sciences Division. They will take office on September 30, 2019, replacing Prof. Yosef Kaplan and Prof. Itamar Willner, who have served as chairpersons since 2013.

Historic Agreement with the National Academy of Sciences

In April, a groundbreaking scientific cooperation agreement was signed by the President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Prof. Nili Cohen, and her counterpart at the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), Dr. Marcia McNutt, at the residence of the President of the State of Israel, Mr. Reuven (Ruviv) Rivlin in Jerusalem. The purpose of the agreement is to facilitate scientific interaction among outstanding scientists in both countries and to formalize cooperative relations between their scientific communities. Under the terms of the agreement, annual national scientific conferences, alternating between the two countries, will be convened with the participation of dozens of leading American and Israeli scientists. An additional feature of the program is scientific visits of eminent scholars, who will hold meetings and conduct seminars at local academic institutions and deliver public lectures. The initial agreement will run for a five-year period, to the end of 2023, and is supported by the Blavatnik Family Foundation.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A major role of the Israel Academy is to promote and coordinate scholarly contacts between Israel and the international community.

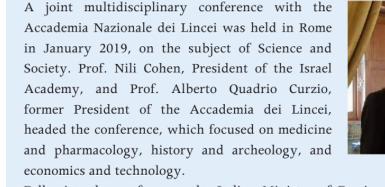
AZERBAIJAN – The Azerbaijan National Academy of Science

The two academies held a binational workshop on Earthquake Seismology and Geodynamics in Israel in October 2018, with the participation of leading researchers and Academy members from both countries. Academy member Prof. Zvi Ben-Avraham organized the workshop and Head of the Dept. of Earth Sciences of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, Prof. Fakhraddin Kadirov, headed the visiting delegation. In January 2019, an additional delegation from Azerbaijan visited the Israel Academy, including Prof. Ibrahim Guliyev, Vice-President of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.



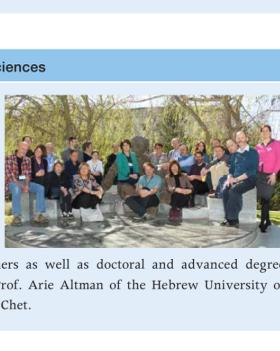
FRANCE – French Academy of Sciences

In November 2018, the Israel Academy, together with the French Academy of Sciences, hosted "Science without Borders," a conference marking the 70th anniversary of the State of Israel. The conference was headed by Prof. Nili Cohen, President of the Israel Academy, and Prof. Catherine Bréchignac, Secrétaire Perpetuel of the French Academy. It was held in the presence of the President of Israel, Reuven (Ruviv) Rivlin, and the French Ambassador to Israel, H.E.M. Hélène Le Gal, with the participation of Nobel laureates and Academy members from both countries.



ITALY – Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei

A joint multidisciplinary conference with the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei was held in Rome in January 2019, on the subject of Science and Society. Prof. Nili Cohen, President of the Israel Academy, and Prof. Alberto Quadrio Curzio, former President of the Accademia dei Lincei, headed the conference, which focused on medicine and pharmacology, history and archeology, and economics and technology. Following the conference, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prof. Enzo Moavero Milanesi, visited the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities as part of an official state visit to Israel. Accompanying him were the Italian Ambassador to Israel, H.E. Gianluigi Benedetti, the Israeli Ambassador to Italy, H.E. Ofer Sachs, and a number of Italian officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Embassy.



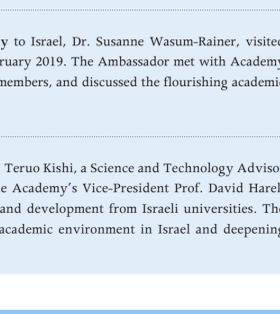
CZECH REPUBLIC – The Czech Academy of Sciences

A bilateral workshop on "Plant Genomics" was held by the Israel Academy and the Czech Academy of Sciences in Jerusalem, in March 2019, with the participation of leading scholars from both countries, including the President of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prof. Eva Zažímalová, and President for International Affairs of the Czech Academy, Prof. Hana Sychrová. The two-day conference was attended by researchers as well as doctoral and advanced degree students. The Steering Committee was chaired by Prof. Arie Altman of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and included Academy member Prof. Ilan Chet.

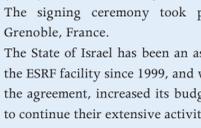


UNITED KINGDOM – The Royal Society

A bilateral workshop with the British Royal Society on "Ensuring Water Safety in a Changing Climate by Enhanced Water and Wastewater Treatment" was held at Chicheley Hall, England, in March 2019. Thirty scientists from Israel and Great Britain participated in the event and eight posters by young researchers were also exhibited. Academy member Prof. Gedeon Dagan organized the meeting, together with Prof. David Graham of Newcastle University, UK, and Prof. Avner Adin of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The workshop was part of a series of binational meetings held by both academies and supported by the Kohn Foundation.



Visits at the Academy



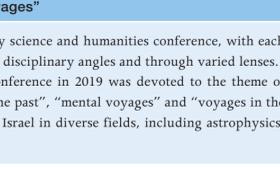
In the last few months the Academy has hosted several delegations. In October 2018, a delegation from the Chinese Academy of Sciences led by Academy Vice President Prof. Zhang Yaping, met with Israel Academy council members. The two academies, having enjoyed good relations for the last thirty years, used the meeting to explore fields of mutual interest ranging from nanoscience to neuroscience, and to discuss potential future collaborations and joint endeavors.

The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Israel, Dr. Susanne Wasum-Rainer, visited the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities in February 2019. The Ambassador met with Academy President Prof. Nili Cohen and a number of Academy members, and discussed the flourishing academic and scientific relations between Germany and Israel.

In May 2019, a delegation from Japan headed by Prof. Teruo Kishi, a Science and Technology Advisor to Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs, met with the Academy's Vice-President Prof. David Harel, Academy members, and Vice-Presidents of research and development from Israeli universities. The visit was aimed at increasing understanding of the academic environment in Israel and deepening scientific cooperation between Japan and Israel.

European Synchrotron Radiation Facility Agreement Renewed

In November 2018, Israel renewed its agreement with the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF) for another five years, from 2019 to 2023. The signing ceremony took place at ESRF in Grenoble, France.



The State of Israel has been an associate member of the ESRF facility since 1999, and with the renewal of the agreement, increased its budgetary commitment from 1.5% to 1.75%, allowing Israeli researchers to continue their extensive activity there.

EVENTS AT THE ACADEMY

As part of its mandate to promote science awareness and make science more accessible to the general public, the Academy arranges more than 30 lectures and events every year, among them the prestigious lectures in memory of Albert Einstein and Martin Buber. This year's initiatives included:

"Opening the Gates of the Academy" - Lecture Series on "Borders"

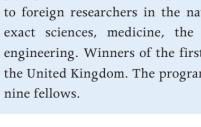
"Opening the Gates of the Academy" is an annual lecture series that highlights topics at the interface of life sciences, social sciences and the humanities. The 2018-19 series is entitled, "Borders", and addresses borders in faith, law, knowledge, art, normality and the universe. There is a great interest in the lecture series among high school students and the public at large.



The Annual Multidisciplinary Conference - "Voyages"

The Academy established an annual multidisciplinary science and humanities conference, with each gathering exploring a particular subject from various disciplinary angles and through varied lenses. The Academy's Fourth Annual Multidisciplinary Conference in 2019 was devoted to the theme of "Voyages." The sessions focused on "voyages from the past", "mental voyages" and "voyages in the universe". Participants were senior researchers from Israel in diverse fields, including astrophysics, earth sciences, archaeology, history, and literature.

The 2019 Albert Einstein Memorial Lecture



In March 2019, Prof. Peter Sarnak of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University delivered the annual Albert Einstein Lecture on the topic, "Randomness in Number Theory".

Prior to Prof. Sarnak's lecture the Academy held a workshop designed for professional mathematicians in a relatively wide range of disciplines with the participation of Prof. Sarnak. The organizing committee was comprised of Academy members Prof. Joseph Bernstein, Prof. Elon Lindenstrauss and Prof. Alex Lubotzky.

Academy Sciences International Darwin Day with Exhibition: "The Fossil Trail: Evidence for Human Evolution"

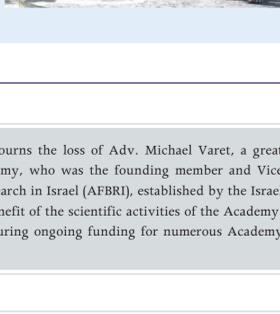


The Israel Academy celebrated International Darwin Day in February 2019 with two special events: the launch of an exhibition documenting the evolution of humankind, and a conference devoted to the human species (Homo sapiens) and its Neanderthal relatives. The exhibition entitled, "The Fossil Trail: Evidence for Human Evolution" uses precise replicas of fossils to document the evolution of humankind since the hominid branch split from that of the chimpanzees. The exhibition was initiated by Academy member Prof. Yoel Rak, featuring items from his private collection.

PRIZES AND FELLOWSHIPS

Israel Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships for Foreign Researchers in Israel – Inaugural Event

The Israel Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships program, launched in 2018, aims to attract young, excellent researchers from around the world to join Israel's research laboratories. Up to ten two-year postdoctoral fellowships are awarded annually to foreign researchers in the natural sciences, the exact sciences, medicine, the life sciences and engineering. Winners of the first round of fellowships come from China, Italy, France, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. The program held its inaugural event in November 2018 with the first cohort of nine fellows.



2019 Blavatnik Awards for Young Scientists in Israel



The Blavatnik Awards for Young Scientists recognize outstanding, innovative early-career scientists for both their extraordinary achievements and promise for future discoveries in the disciplines of Life Sciences, Chemistry, and Physical Sciences and Engineering.

In April, the 2019 Blavatnik Laureates: Dr. Michal Rivlin, Weizmann Institute of Science; Prof. Moran Bercovi, Technion - Israel Institute of Technology; and Prof. Erez Berg, Weizmann Institute of Science, were honored at a special Awards Ceremony. Hosted by the Blavatnik Family Foundation, the New York Academy of Sciences, and the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, the ceremony took place at the Israel Museum. (Photos by Eran Be'eri)

The Adams Fellowships and Annual Adams Conference

The Adams Fellowships for doctoral students in the natural sciences has been awarded since 2005. Mr. Marcel Adams, founder and Chairman of Irberville Developments, Ltd. (Canada), established the Adams Fellows Program to nurture the highest echelon of next generation researchers in Israel. In May 2019, Adams Fellowships were granted to eight outstanding doctoral students at a festive annual ceremony held at the Academy.

The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities mourns the loss of Adv. Michael Varet, a great friend and an ardent supporter of the Israel Academy, who was the founding member and Vice President of The American Foundation for Basic Research in Israel (AFBRI), established by the Israel Academy in New York in the early 1990s, for the benefit of the scientific activities of the Academy. Until the end of his life he was instrumental in securing ongoing funding for numerous Academy initiatives and projects.

The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities mourns the passing of two world-renowned Academy Members and dear friends: Prof. Yaron Silberberg, leading physics researcher, laureate of the Max Born Prize, the Landau Prize and the Rothschild Prize; and Prof. Aharon Razin, leading Biochemistry researcher, Israel Prize Laureate, and recipient of Emet Prize and other awards.