

The Science Academy – Bilim Akademisi – Istanbul, Turkey:

After the First Year

Introduction

The Science Academy, Turkey aims to promote scientific and scholarly merit, freedom and integrity.

The Science Academy was founded in November 25, 2011 by 17 former (resigned) members of the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA) after the government issued a decree that foresaw the appointment of two thirds of the membership of TÜBA by government agencies external to TÜBA. All members and former members of TÜBA elected by the membership prior to the decree of August 27, 2011 were invited to become members of the Science Academy.

The Science Academy is an independent, non-governmental body. The scholarly achievements and prestige of its membership is an important benchmark, bestowing on the Science Academy an unofficial status and the valuable function of setting standards of scientific merit and integrity in Turkey.

Members are Turkish citizens who are elected on the basis of academic excellence. The single tier membership aims to reach the younger generation of scientists and scholars as full members of the Science Academy. Honorary Members, currently including 8 Foreign Honorary Members, are elected on the basis of support and services rendered to the Science Academy or to its aims of promoting science and scholarship.

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Update on Membership

With 47 new members elected on Nov. 24, 2012, the current membership total is 103. From 17 founding members (2 women) on Nov. 25, 2011, the Science Academy has grown to a total of 103 members as of February 4, 2013, including 18 women. We have 57 members in the Natural Sciences, 3 members in Mathematics, 4 members in Engineering, 29 members in the Social Sciences and Humanities and 10 members in Medicine.

We have already elected as foreign honorary members eight prominent international scholars who gave active personal support during the chain of events starting with government interference in TÜBA and leading to the foundation of the Science Academy. Lists of Members and Honorary Members can be found on the Science Academy web site.

Foreign Honorary Members of the Science Academy:

Edouard Brezin	Académie des Sciences Française
Dagfinn Føllesdal	Norwegian Academy of Language and Literature, Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters
Joel Lebowitz	National Academy of Sciences, USA
David Pines	National Academy of Sciences, USA
Atta-ur Rahman	Pakistan Academy of Sciences , Network of Academies of Sciences of Islamic Countries, Academy of Sciences of the Developing World
Lord Martin Rees	The Royal Society of London
Sir Adam Roberts	The British Academy
Dame Helen Wallace	The British Academy

Basic Documents

The Charter of the Science Academy and the Science Academy Declaration of Academic Merit, Freedom and Integrity, which all our members sign, are available on our web site in English and Turkish.

www.bilimakademisi.org

The Young Academics Prize Scholarship Program

An important goal of the Science Academy is to recognize and encourage the best scientific and scholarly achievements and talent in Turkey. To this end the Science Academy has launched the Young Academics Prize Scholarship (YAPS) to identify the best young talent in science and scholarship in Turkey, to honor them and support their research, and to establish and maintain a community of academic excellence in the young generation.

The Young Academics Scholarship Prize consists of a total award of approximately

US \$ 12,000 research support for two years, paid to the awardee in two annual installments. With an annual overhead of \$1500 for the Science Academy, the budget for one YAPS is approximately US \$ 15 000 over two years.

Young scientists and scholars under the age of 40 can apply for the prize themselves.

The first call for applications was made at the end of January 2013. The results will be announced at the end of March 2013. The first year's installment of the awards will be paid in April 2013. New calls will be made every year.

The number of YAPS to be awarded in 2013 will be at least 19 which is the initial number of pledges received in Turkey. The goal is to build up to a minimum of 35 awards each year.

Education, Outreach and Publications

Science Academy Conference Series

The Science Academy Conference series which started with 5 public talks by our members during Spring 2012 has continued with monthly conferences throughout Fall 2012, and now the Spring 2013 Series has started. The conferences take place at two venues in central Istanbul, the auditoria of the Pera Museum and the Anatolian Civilizations Research Centre of Koç University and are well attended. Conference slides and video recordings are being made available on the web and may lead to published texts after transcription and editing.

Workshops, Outreach and Support for Education

The Science Academy started using the classrooms at our Beşiktaş office for workshops and scientific meetings. During the Summer of 2012 two colloquia that were part of an international conference in mathematical physics at the Feza Gürsey Institute, and a one week school for university students on Physics for Astronomers were held at the Science Academy.

The Science Academy is involved in several outreach projects aiming to have impact on primary and secondary school education through training of teachers and volunteers.

1) The Galileo Teachers Training Program (GTTP) – The Science Academy is a partner with the Turkish Astronomical Society in the Turkish branch of the international Galileo Teachers Training Program which builds networks of volunteer teachers for using naked eye observations and simple telescopes to let children discover the nightly and seasonal changes in the skies for themselves. In 2012, the Science Academy hosted a meeting of GTTP volunteers.

2) Universal Active Math (<http://www.navnirmiti.org/activities/uam/index.html>) is an object based approach to school mathematics which has been very successful in India. The Science Academy launched this project in Turkey with a Workshop on Mathematics Education for school teachers, conducted by two colleagues invited from the Navnirmiti network in India.

3) Institute for Complex Adaptive Matter (<http://icam-i2cam.org>) - Science Education and Engagement (SEE) Initiative Grant : Together with a group at Sabanci University, The Science Academy has received a \$10 000 ICAM-SEE Grant for science education and outreach activities.

The Science Academy Book Series

A prominent Turkish publishing house has proposed to launch a Science Academy book series. Published under the Science Academy logo, the series will contain titles of interest to the general public chosen or commissioned by an editorial group from the Science Academy.

International Recognition

The Science Academy has been in contact with many international academies and bodies of academies like the Inter Academy Panel, ALLEA - the federation of All European Academies, FASAS and AASA for Asian academies, and ICSU. We participate in the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRNASS). The Science Academy was invited to, and represented, at the May 2012 meeting of IHRNASS in Taiwan where a special session addressed the situation of academics and academia in Turkey.

The Science Academy has applied for membership in ALLEA and in the Inter-Academy Panel. These applications for membership are in the process of evaluation.

ALLEA Presidency has shared with the Science Academy a letter they have written to the President of the Republic of Turkey, registering their concern that TÜBA can no longer be viewed as an Academy as a result of the government intervention. ALLEA has stated that this letter can be made public (www.bilimakademisi.org).

Tax exempt status for donations in the USA- Turkish Philanthropy Funds

Turkish Philanthropy Funds (TPF – www.tpfund.org) is a philanthropic foundation based in New York City, working for social and economic development, education, arts and culture and gender equality, with a particular focus on Turkey. The Science Academy has been accredited as a partner NGO of TPF. Donations to Science Academy projects, made through the TPF web site are tax deductible in the USA. The Young Academics Prize Scholarships is the main project for donations through TPF.