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CROSSING THE BRIDGE –January 2014

By Nilay Papila, PhD

THE SCIENCE ACADEMY

The Science Academy -Bilim Akademisi (www.bilimakademisi.org) was founded on November 25, 2011 in Istanbul, as an independent non-governmental entity with a mission to sustain the highest standards of academic excellence, academic freedom and integrity in Turkey. The Science Academy was set up as a Society-Dernek under Turkish Law. Its charter calls for membership by invitation after careful evaluation of academic excellence and vote by the general assembly of the Science Academy. Members sign the Declaration of Academic Merit, Freedom and Integrity (<http://bilimakademisi.org/bilim-akademisi/akademik-liyakat-ozgurluk-ve-durustluk-belgesi/>)

The Science Academy gathers the best minds of the scientific community of Turkey with a view to promote and protect excellence, method, tradition and practices, freedom, and honesty in science. As with any respectable academy, it operates for the promotion and cultivation of the principles and the spirit of science. The priority of the Science Academy is to promote expertise and professionalism. It advocates the long-term benefits of scientific and academic research as well as the values that research brings to culture and civilization.

The Science Academy has 134 ordinary members: 83 in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering, 33 in Social Sciences and Humanities and 18 in Medicine. Ordinary members are Turkish citizens. So far, 13 of the ordinary members are scientists and scholars resident in the USA and Canada, and 4 are based in Europe.

The Science Academy also has 22 honorary members, among them the Nobel laureates Philip W. Anderson (Physics, 1977), Peter Diamond (Economics, 2010). Honorary members can be Turkish citizens or foreigners, elected for their contributions to science, scholarship and education, and to the development of The Science Academy and its ideals.

To attract young talent to careers in science and scholarship is a fundamental priority. As its most important project, the Science Academy has started a research award program for young scientists and scholars, BAGEP (<http://bilimakademisi.org/bagep/>). In its first year, 2013, the program received 348 applications from young scientist and scholars, from 101 institutions all over Turkey. After a highly competitive evaluation process the Science Academy made 20 awards of two-year research support based on donations from business and individuals. This program is also a first in Turkey as a program of research awards funded entirely by non-governmental organizations and private philanthropy. The second call for BAGEP applications, due to end on Jan. 20, 2014, has also received a large number of applications. BAGEP, like the Science Academy itself and all of its projects, is financed entirely by members' dues and donations so as to be independent of any state support. In the U.S. tax deductible donations to BAGEP and other projects of the Science Academy can be made through the Turkish Philanthropy Funds (<http://www.tpfund.org/my-tpf/scienceacademy/profile>).

The Science Academy is already a member of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies, IHRNASS, an international network of academies hosted by the US National Academy of Sciences.

By securing the support of society and the Turkish diaspora from all over the world, the Science Academy advocates the long-term benefits of scientific and academic

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Comments or Suggestions?

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