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AUSTRIAN
ACADEMY OF
SCIENCES



THE YOUNG ACADEMY

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In addition to the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Division of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, the Young Academy forms the third pillar of the Academy's learned society. Comprised of excellent up-and-coming scientists from all disciplines, it actively contributes to the strengthening of innovative research and the promotion of young researchers.

HISTORY AND ROLE WITHIN THE AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Established in 2008 as "Junge Kurie", the Young Academy received its current name – "Junge Akademie" – in 2016.

The Young Academy has comprehensive participation rights within the Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW). It sends 16 delegates into the General Assembly of the OeAW, among them the 5 members of its board of directors. Additionally, 8 deputies are elected to fill in for absent delegates. The board of directors acts

as the executive committee of the Young Academy. Like all delegates, directors are elected annually.

"Outstanding young scientists from all disciplines – that's the Young Academy in a nutshell."

Julia Budka

Members take on an active role within the two Divisions of the OeAW. The Young Academy also sends one delegate into the OeAW's Academy Council, which supervises the management of the Academy. Furthermore, several members participate in commissions, panels and committees of the Academy.

The Young Academy champions the introduction of new, interdisciplinary approaches at the OeAW. Its regular programme of activities such as workshops and lectures provides a forum for all members of the OeAW and brings young and more established members together.

MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERS

The Young Academy consists of up to seventy junior scholars who have already made an impact in their field. Every year an election committee of the Young Academy selects new candidates from all disciplines. The number of candidates can vary depending on the current total number of members and corresponding vacancies. On average, 8–12 members are elected annually.

“Our common theme is the pursuit of excellence, passion, and a desire to change the world.”

David Keays

Selection is primarily based on scientific excellence in the respective field, but the committee aims for a balance with regard to gender and academic discipline. Each candidate is asked for a motivation letter to briefly outline what a membership would mean to them and how they could contribute to the Young Academy’s work. These letters play a salient role in the

selection of viable candidates for the short list. Based on the short list, each new member is then selected by online election by all current Young Academy members. The elected candidates are subsequently confirmed by the whole Academy and welcomed as members of the OeAW. As of October 2017, the Young Academy has 37 male and 20 female members; 46% associate themselves with natural sciences, 46% with life sciences and 18% with the humanities and social sciences (multiple associations possible). Membership lasts for eight years. This restriction secures a dynamic range of competencies within the Young Academy and also reflects an ideal career development from up-and-coming researcher at the moment of election to established scholar towards the end of their membership in the Young Academy.

The Young Academy is represented by a board of directors, consisting of five annually elected members. The board of directors coordinates the Young Academy’s events and is responsible for finances. Board members are

automatically delegates. Together with 11 other delegates and 8 deputy delegates, they have an active right to vote in the Academy’s General Assembly, to which they also report about the Young Academy’s activities.



GOALS AND PERSPECTIVES



The Young Academy is committed to create work and research conditions that make career paths possible at a very high international level. Moreover, it supports the advancement of women, gender main-streaming and diversity management. The strategic goals of the Young Academy are the promotion of interdisciplinary research and the identification of innovative research fields. Its activities, such as thematic workshops and interdisciplinary events, are coordinated in regular four fixes.

The general mission of the Young Academy is to contribute to the OeAW's activities in all its fields, e.g. through the scholarly exchange with all members of the OeAW, within and across research units. The promotion of interdisciplinary research and the identification of innovative research topics are specific goals of the Young Academy. In this respect, excellence and internationalization are regarded as foundational principles that are already well established in the Austrian research landscape and at the OeAW, but need to be strengthened further.

The Young Academy adheres to the principle of equal opportunity, which includes gender mainstreaming – particularly the advancement of

women in academia – and diversity management as well as the creation of work and research conditions that also allow for “non-linear career paths” at a high international level. The compatibility of career and family responsibilities are seen as a central issue for both men and women.

The Young Academy is especially concerned with sustainably improving the promotion of young scientists in Austria: It advocates for working conditions and funding programmes that enable young scholars to conduct independent, autonomous research as early in their careers as possible.

The Young Academy sees itself as a think tank and idea supplier for political decision-makers and the general public in regard to scientific and socially relevant debates (climate change, stem cell research, etc.). Its members are the voice of up-and-coming scientists in regard to science policy and general social policy. The Young Academy strongly supports recent advances which are stressing the importance of scientific communication and engagement with the public. In October 2017, the Young Academy started a user blog at DerStandard.at in cooperation with a major national newspaper. This blog – a suitably “young” medium –

presents current projects and ideas of members on a regular basis and aims to communicate their research to a broader, more general audience. Since 2016, the Young Academy has also been active on Twitter.

“We promote young scientists and advocate for better research conditions in Austria.”

Marie-Therese Wolfram

Through participation in the General Assembly and other boards and committees of the academy, members actively contribute to the ongoing process of modernization and internationalization of the OeAW. Members promote dynamic research units and transparently controlled governing bodies elected on the basis of objective criteria and independent international evaluations.

In the implementation of these goals, the Young Academy profits from the dynamic structure of its membership which is based on continuous renewal and a broad range of represented scientific disciplines. The structure of the Young Academy clearly fosters the dialogue between disciplines and is crucial for its mission.

THE SCIENCE DAYS



Electing new members every year, the Young Academy has a very dynamic structure and represents a broad spectrum of research fields and disciplines. Regular meetings create opportunities to keep up-to-date with each other's work and current projects. New members are invited to play an active part in the Young Academy from the very beginning.

"To me, the Science Days are the heart and soul of what the Young Academy is all about."

Sophie Loidolt

To further promote a regular exchange of ideas, the Young Academy organises Science Days. These are workshops lasting one or two days, where new members are given a chance to introduce themselves and present their research in an informal setting to the entire Young Academy. The aim is to be informed about, and discuss, each other's work so as to find a "common language", irrespective of our different disciplinary affiliations, and to allow

for identifying common interests and possible future projects.

So far, Science Days were held in Vienna in 2012 and 2014 and in Innsbruck in 2017. Based on the extremely positive feedback from all members, the plan now is to organize Science Days on an annual basis. Each Science Day is coordinated by a different team, who decide on the individual programme, time schedule and format. Ideally, Science Days will travel between Vienna and other locations in Austria where members are active.

As some events are open to the public, Science Days are both an opportunity for internal networking and an advertisement of Young Academy's work. Not only do they promote the wide range of excellent research conducted by its members, but they also illustrate the mission of the Young Academy: a common dedication to high-level science, to the advancement of interdisciplinary research and the identification of innovative research fields, and the promotion of young scientists in Austria.



ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS



All Young Academy members are invited to participate in activities of the Academy and the Young Academy specifically. The Young Academy is an integral part of the Academy and hence, members are entitled to participate and vote in the General Assembly as well as other boards and committees. Jour fixes are held before the General Assembly meetings to discuss the agenda, operational internal matters as well as current political issues.

These regular get-togethers also provide opportunities for thematic discussions or short presentations by invited speakers. The Young Academy has its own annual budget, which allows to organize and support a wide range of public and scientific events. These events and activities are organized throughout the year by members, with a wide scope reflecting individual scientific interests but also concerns of young researchers with regard to Science policy. Examples include the annual Science Days, which were held in Vienna and Innsbruck in previous years. In addition the Young Academy meets for a half-day

workshop each fall to develop an annual plan of events and activities for the forthcoming year.

“All our activities share one goal: The joy of learning from each other”

Christian Hellmich

The Young Academy also supports various thematic workshops and events organized by individual members. In the past, examples have included a workshop on “Film Meets the Austrian Scientists” at the European Film Festival and an event series, which hosted a scientific workshop, an exhibition as well as public lectures on gravitation theory. Public discussion panels organized by the Young Academy, such as the “Science Talk” on “Science & Society – What are our future challenges?” with Helga Nowotny and Steven Chu, initiated a series of panel discussions with politicians, established researchers and members of the Academy on current political issues, Austria’s research environment

and the situation of young researchers in general. Since the Young Academy considers itself an advocate for young researchers in Austria, its members actively try to promote their interests on a national as well as international level and enhance public awareness of respective challenges in Austria. Especially the recent panel discussions on scientific excellence and gender-based “brain drain” were met with great interest from the Academy and the media.

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