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Press Release

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MECAM Welcomes New Fellows and Expands Academic Exchange in the Maghreb

The Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM) begins the 2025–2026 academic year by welcoming seven new Fellows to Tunis, further consolidating its role as a regional and global hub for free academic exchange and interdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences.

Since its establishment in 2020, MECAM has brought together scholars from the Maghreb, Europe, and beyond to reflect on pressing questions under its guiding theme *Imagining Futures – Dealing with Disparity*. Over the past five years, the Centre has become a vibrant platform for intellectual encounters, fostering dialogue across borders, disciplines, and generations. Through its programs, MECAM has built lasting bridges between Tunisian universities and international research networks, contributing to the internationalization of the social sciences and humanities.

The new Fellows— coming from Tunisia, Germany, Italy, Nigeria, and the United Kingdom—are affiliated with institutions such as the Université de Tunis, Université de Manouba, Leuphana University, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Philipps-Universität Marburg, the University of Exeter, Sapienza University of Rome, and the Federal University Wukari, among others. Their projects explore a wide range of questions, including the role of cultural practices such as music, oral traditions, and public arts in shaping collective imaginaries; the politics of migration and mobility; genealogies of memory, justice, and postcolonial thought; and the historical formation of borders, passports, and visa regimes in the Maghreb. Together, their research reflects the richness of MECAM’s five Interdisciplinary Research Fields and underlines the Centre’s commitment to fostering innovative and engaged scholarship in and on the Maghreb.

MECAM’s fellowship program lies at the heart of this mission. Over 8 months, fellows pursue their individual research while also contributing to collective formats such as the Spectrum event week, interdisciplinary colloquia, and the ongoing public lecture series *Rencontres Ibn Khaldun*. These encounters create opportunities for exchange between international scholars, Tunisian researchers, and the wider public, generating insights that resonate far beyond academia.

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Looking ahead, MECAM will broaden its scope through a dynamic program of activities. The academic year opens with an Introduction Week for Fellows on 9–10 September in Tunis, followed by an introductory visit to the Université de Sfax on 25–26 September to strengthen collaboration with local research institutions. In October, MECAM will host and co-organize two major international events at the Université de Tunis: the concluding conference of the Postcolonial Hierarchies in Peace and Conflict network, *“Re-thinking Peace and Conflict Studies in a Postcolonial World”* (10–11 October), and the Merian Family Meeting, *“Knowledge Diplomacy and South-South-North Cooperation: Revitalizing Bandung for the 21st Century”* (12–13 October). These back-to-back events will bring together scholars and members of all five Merian Centres from across the globe to discuss postcolonial dynamics of violence and justice, decolonizing knowledge, and the future of South-South-North cooperation. In February 2026, MECAM will organize a Traveling Academy at the Université Hassan II in Casablanca (Morocco) on the theme of *Mysticism and Cities*, and later in the year it will host a Transregional Workshop at the Orient-Institut Beirut (Lebanon), further expanding the Centre’s network of exchanges across the Maghreb, Europe, and the Middle East.

MECAM will also contribute to major international conferences abroad. At the Deutsche Orientalistentag (DOT) 2025 in Erlangen, its panel *“The State and Its Antagonisms: Contingency and Fragmentation of Political Order in the MENA Region”* will feature current and former Fellows. At the MESA Annual Meeting (22–25 November), MECAM will present the panel *“Transregional Entanglements in Mediterranean Migration Governance,”* further strengthening its role as a platform for transregional dialogue.

MECAM is supported by a consortium of six Tunisian and German institutions: Université de Tunis, Université de Sfax, Philipps-Universität Marburg, Universität Leipzig, the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) in Hamburg, and the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin, with additional network sites in Casablanca and Beirut. Funded by the Federal Ministry Research, Technology and Space of Germany, MECAM is part of the global network of Maria Sibylla Merian Centres for Advanced Studies, which foster international cooperation in the humanities and social sciences worldwide.

More information: www.mecam.tn

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