

## Supporting early-career researchers and fostering German-Ukrainian scientific cooperation

The German-Ukrainian Forum of Young Researchers took place in December 2017 in Ukraine and in February 2018 in Germany.

*Press-release of the German-Ukrainian Academic Society, 16 February 2018*



Forum participants in Berlin, 10 February 2018. © Dmytro Puchkov & Oleh Lushchak

On February 8, 2018, the second part of the German-Ukrainian Forum for Young Researchers started at the Embassy of Ukraine in the Federal Republic of Germany. This event was organized by the Eberhard Karls University Tübingen in cooperation with the German-Ukrainian Academic Society. From December 7- 12, 2017, a group of researchers from Germany and from different cities in Ukraine took part in an exploratory and networking tour "Research in Ukraine" and visited Kyiv, Lviv and Kharkiv. Then, in February 2018, selected participants with joint ideas for collaborative projects came to Berlin for an intensive workshop on "Grant Writing Skills". During the kick-off event of the second part of the Forum and the subsequent reception, Prof. Olga Garaschuk, neurophysiologist of the Eberhard Karls University Tübingen and the President of the German-Ukrainian Academic Society/ The

UKRAINE Network, gave a lecture "Brain aging and new insights into Alzheimer's disease" within the lecture series "Science first hand", organized by the regional group of the Society. This Forum was funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) from the funds of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).



Participants of the second part of the forum at the kick-off event at the Embassy of Ukraine in the Federal Republic of Germany in Berlin, 8 February 2018. © *The German-Ukrainian Academic Society*.

The main goal of the Forum was to familiarize young researchers from Germany with the scientific landscape and current research in Ukraine and to enable researchers from both countries to get to know each other, exchange ideas and discuss concepts for possible joint research projects. 45 participants from different areas of research: natural and engineering sciences, life sciences and biomedicine, as well as social sciences and humanities took part in the first part of the Forum. Young researchers (postdoctoral fellows and research group leaders/ junior professors) came from Cherkasy, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Mariupol and Slovjansk in the Ukraine, as well as from Berlin, Dresden, Hannover, Munich, Stuttgart, Potsdam, Tübingen and Wildau in Germany.

Forum participants were offered the opportunity to visit the leading Ukrainian universities and scientific institutes of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Lviv and present their own research projects. During the dedicated event "Financing opportunities for German-Ukrainian and international cooperation", participants and other interested researchers from the Ukrainian academic community learned more about research funding programs dedicated to collaborative research projects and supporting scientific mobility. In addition, the "Best Practice" examples of successful long-term German-Ukrainian collaborative projects were presented by the experienced researchers from Ukraine and Germany.



At the first part of the Forum in Ukraine, December 2017. Photos 1-2: Forum participants; Photo 3: Lecture by Professor Jörn Kalinowski, University of Bielefeld. © *Olga Tucha/ The German-Ukrainian Academic Society*

In the second part of the Forum, 10 German-Ukrainian tandems were selected by an expert commission based upon their outlines for joint research projects. The participants had an opportunity to further elaborate on their ideas for joint research projects and to learn at first-hand from experienced researchers with significant reviewing experience of grant applications and from experts in research funding. Moreover, research partners from Ukraine were offered an opportunity to visit the laboratory/ research institute of their prospective or existing cooperation partner in Germany in order to learn more about their current research and to discuss possible future joint projects.

The Forum was characterized by a particularly positive atmosphere and a lively scientific and cultural exchange. "I consider the Forum the most remarkable recent event on the Ukrainian scientific landscape in terms of geography, logistics and number of the involved people and institutions", said Dr Svitlana Potapenko, historian from Kyiv. Dr Maksym Tsizh, a cosmologist from Lviv, added: "All parts of the Forum were important – interaction with my partner, tips about writing proposals and the expert advice. I now have all contacts I need, and a solid plan for my next steps – all thanks to the Forum and the German-Ukrainian Academic Society". Both the participating young researchers and the experienced scientists who participated in the Forum have made new contacts and exchanged ideas. The talented young researchers with promising research ideas are now better equipped to advance their research careers and, in doing so, contribute to fostering German-Ukrainian scientific cooperation.

**Further information:**

The German-Ukrainian Academic Society (Die Deutsch-Ukrainische Akademische Gesellschaft e.V.) has been founded in Berlin, Germany in July 2016 as a non-profit organisation. One of the central tasks of the Society is the establishment of a dialogue and a cooperation platform for the closer networking and mutual support of German and Ukrainian scientists, who are interested in bi- and multilateral cooperation in higher education, science and research. The Society supports the UKRAINE Network in and from Germany.

The UKRAINIAN Academic International NETwork (The UKRAINE Network) is an informal professional community, open to researchers from any field—irrespective of nationality and country of residence—interested in fostering international academic cooperation with Ukraine. It was launched in Berlin, Germany in January 2016. The key goals of the UKRAINE Network are:

- Fostering academic cooperation with Ukraine
- Supporting reforms in Ukrainian science
- Improving knowledge about Ukraine abroad

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