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## KAS setzt Akzente zur WOCMES-2 in Amman

Presseschau zusammengestellt von Gerrit F. Schlomach, Scientific Assistant

# THE JORDAN TIMES

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## HOME NEWS

### Scholars debate contemporary issues affecting Middle East



*Former prime minister Adnan Badran, HRH Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad and HRH Prince Hassan at the opening of the Second World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies on Monday (Petra photo)*

By Mahmoud Habboush

AMMAN — Deputising for His Majesty King Abdullah, HRH Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad on Monday opened the Second World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES-2).

“It is the first time that we in Jordan, and for that matter, that any Arab country hosts this meeting. We are especially proud that it is the largest gathering of its kind ever held in the

Middle East,” the Monarch said in a speech delivered on his behalf by Prince Ghazi.

“Your conclusions and recommendations will undoubtedly provide important advice and information for those in this region who are determined to pursue peace, tolerance and development in this region. We in Jordan are, by the Grace of God, leading this constituency of peace,” the King said in his address to the gathering of more than 1,300 scholars, researchers and academics.

He reiterated that expert knowledge helps our societies make informed, successful decisions about policy and resources.

“Such knowledge is empowering — and essential. This is one reason why, for Jordan and other Middle Eastern countries, education and research must be a strategic priority,” the King said in his speech.

“Indeed, here in Jordan, building knowledge is a core part of our national reform agenda. Our initiatives include support for educational excellence... academic networking... and public-private partnerships to increase access to technology and other resources,” he added.

“We have looked to the Jordanian academic community itself for leadership. We have also opened Jordan’s doors to the global intellectual community,” the King went on to say.

He added that building informed, empowered societies is only one way in which the academic community impacts the future of this region.

The King reaffirmed that Jordan has sought to promote true knowledge of Islam, and knowledge of true Islam, adding that this was the object of the Amman Message of November 2004, and of the International Islamic Conference held in Amman in July 2005.

The Amman Message called for the specific recognition of all eight Mathhabs (schools) of Islam, and the definition of who is a Muslim, an effective moratorium on takfir between Muslims and the specification of subjective and objective conditions for the issuing of fatwas.

In his address at the opening, HRH Prince Hassan said: “This is the first time that such a major congress has been held in the Middle East itself, and I believe that Jordan’s openness, tolerance and pivotal regional role make it an excellent choice to host such a prestigious event.”

The Prince, who chairs the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, the local organiser of the event, called on media representatives and academics to coordinate to tackle the contemporary conflicts plaguing the region.

“The purpose of WOCMES-2 is to draw on and extend that invaluable historical process of exchange within and between overlapping civilisations,” he added.

WOCMES-2, the first major congress of Middle Eastern studies ever to take place in the region, provides Middle Eastern specialists from all branches of the humanities and social sciences with the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas.

The conference, which runs until Friday, will include panel discussions as well as several

keynote speeches by prominent scholars.

The event will also feature two book fairs, exhibitions of modern Arab art by Jordan's national and local galleries, a film festival with panel discussions and a musical programme.

WOCMES -1 took place in September 2002 with more than 2,000 participants from 52 countries. It was initiated by the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) and organised by the University of Mainz in Germany. Tuesday, June 13, 2006

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## HOME NEWS

### **EU official highlights importance of developing security relations**

By Mahmoud Habboush

AMMAN — An EU official on Wednesday said he was impressed by the Jordanian authorities' measures to protect the country's borders.

Karl Von Wogau, a member of the European Parliament, met with officials from the ministries of interior and defence to discuss European security policy towards the Middle East and border surveillance issues this week.

The European official told The Jordan Times that talks covered exchanging experience and building cooperation between the EU and Jordan with regard to several issues of common interest.

Wogau, who is taking part in the Second World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES-2), said it was "important to develop security relations between the EU and Jordan because we face the same problems: Terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and protection of water and energy resources."

Wogau, who took part in a panel entitled: "European Foreign Policy towards the Middle East," at the congress yesterday, presented a paper on the development of the European security and defence policy.

"The EU will continue to strengthen its capabilities in the field of security and defence to protect its citizens from dangers, defend the justified interests of the Union and promote the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations," Wogau said in his paper.

He said EU countries were currently involved in 23 national armoured fighting vehicle programmes, and witnessed three parallel developments in combat aircraft, in addition to 89 weapons programmes in comparison to 27 in the US.

Addressing the same panel, Jordan Institute of Diplomacy President Muhyieddeen Touq said Jordan has had a positive view regarding security cooperation with the EU and was always ready to engage in constructive dialogue.

“Jordan can offer a number of forces well-trained for peace keeping and disaster relief, an area where Jordan may specialise,” Touq said in his paper on Middle Eastern perceptions of the European Security and Defence Policy.

Jordan’s participation in UN peacekeeping missions began in 1989 in Angola. To date, the country has dispatched around 35,500 peacekeeping personnel to more than 18 countries.

Currently, the country’s peacekeeping forces are serving in Afghanistan, Eritrea, Haiti and Sierra Leone.

The WOCMES-2 panel was organised by the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, the **Konrad Adenauer Foundation** [bold by Gerrit Schломach, KAS Amman] and Deutsche Orient Institute.

WOCMES-2, the first major congress of Middle Eastern studies ever to take place in the region, provides more than 1,300 Middle Eastern specialists from all branches of the humanities and social sciences with the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas.

The conference, which began on Monday and ends Friday, includes numerous panel discussions as well as several keynote speeches by prominent scholars.

Thursday, June 15, 2006