

Press Release

Sonja Gräber-Magocsi takes over as Acting Secretary General of HIAS

The previous Deputy Secretary General will focus on further expanding the networks of the Hamburg Institute for Advanced Study (HIAS) – locally, nationally and internationally.

Hamburg, 26 September 2024: In her new role, Sonja Gräber-Magocsi, PhD, has already welcomed the fellows of the fifth cohort at HIAS. In the presence of the Second Mayor of Hamburg and Senator for Science, Research, Equality and Districts, Katharina Fegebank, the fellows who have already arrived got to know each other over dinner.

Sonja Gräber-Magocsi plans to focus on the further expansion of supra-regional and international networks, as well as even stronger collaborations between the fellows and Hamburg institutions that deal with common issues and problems. The first results will be on show at *Hamburger Horizonte* in November, when Massimo Leone, Professor of Philosophy of Communication and Visual Semiotics at the University of Turin, explains the interactions between humans and AI in urban spaces, or when Marc-Thorsten Hütt, Professor of Computational Systems Biology at Constructor University in Bremen, hosts a panel discussion entitled "AI in science: method or colleague?" and discusses with researchers from various disciplines how AI is changing scientific work.

Sonja Gräber-Magocsi: "Institutions like the Hamburg Institute for Advanced Study are more important today than ever. A place where one can think, discuss and disagree freely and without restrictions. We are delighted to be able to offer this protected space to scholars and artists during their stay here in Hamburg. The fellows contribute their experience and expertise as well as their international perspectives to the local academic community and urban society in a variety of ways."

The contacts that the fellows establish during their stay in the city often also promote links between the institutions within Hamburg. The Hamburg institutions also strengthen their international networks through the fellows, which is becoming increasingly important in times of disinformation and growing polarization. Building solid, sustainable networks takes time – and it is precisely this time and space that HIAS offers its fellows. They then return to Hamburg as 'alumni' to continue their projects or to participate as sought-after experts in conferences such as *Hamburger Horizonte*. This is precisely what Sonja Gräber-Magocsi wants to continue to promote.

Sonja Gräber-Magocsi has been involved with HIAS from the very beginning. The Hamburg native holds a master's degree in German studies, Comparative Literature and Psychology from the FU Berlin and a PhD in German Literature from Harvard University. She lived in the USA for nine years, studying and teaching at Harvard University.

From 2014 to 2019, she worked as an advisor to the President of the University of Hamburg, during which time she developed a strong network in the Hamburg university landscape. In 2019, the University of Hamburg entrusted her with the establishment of HIAS, for which she became Deputy Secretary General a few years later. She will take over the General Secretariat on an interim basis until the new Director takes office on 1 January 2025.

Together with Ulrike Beisiegel, a biochemist and former President of the Georg-August University in Göttingen, and Dorothea Rüländ, the long-standing Secretary General of the DAAD and HIAS Secretary General from 2021–2024, she founded the network *Women in Responsibility* in Hamburg: “Our goal is to increase the visibility of women in positions of responsibility in order to provide younger women with more role models for their career decisions.”

Prof Dr Andreas Timm-Giel, President of the Hamburg University of Technology and Chairman of the HIAS Executive Board: "We are delighted that Sonja Gräber-Magocsi takes over as Acting Secretary General of HIAS until the position is filled next year. All partners, the team and the scholarship holders can only benefit from her experience and warmth."

About HIAS

The Hamburg Institute for Advanced Study e.V. (HIAS) is a publicly funded, non-profit organisation jointly supported by a total of nine Hamburg research institutions. As a research institute, HIAS offers scholars of all disciplines and career levels as well as artists ("Fellows") a space for research and exchange to carry out projects of their own choice. The fellowships are funded by public academic institutions and private foundations; basic funding is provided by the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg.

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