

Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO
Government of India
Ministry of Education
Department of Higher Education

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris has Nominations for the 18th edition of the UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture

The Relevant details are attached. Nominations should be forwarded to the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (INCCU) latest by 15th July, 2021 at the following address for further consideration and onward transmission to UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France.

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Ref.: CL/4351

Subject: **Nominations for the 18th edition of the UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture**

Sir/Madam,

I have the pleasure to invite your government to submit nominations for the **UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture**. This prize, which has been awarded since 2001, was created in 1998 in collaboration with the Government of the Emirate of Sharjah (United Arab Emirates) and is now in its 18th edition.

The UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture rewards the work of two individuals, two groups of individuals, or two institutions, who have made significant contributions to developing, promoting and disseminating Arab culture.

In conferring this award upon deserving individuals and institutions, the Prize aims to improve understanding of various aspects of Arab culture and support the Organization's fundamental mission to promote dialogue among cultures.

UNESCO and the Government of the Emirate of Sharjah encourage you to nominate candidates whose literary, scientific or artistic works, as well as their efforts to promote Arab culture and its dissemination, deserve to be recognized.

The Prize is endowed with USD 60,000, divided equally between the two winners selected on the recommendation of an international jury. I would particularly like to draw your attention to our interest in nominating women and young people for this award to reflect our commitment to gender equality and youth.

To nominate candidates, I invite you to send an e-mail to the Secretariat of the Prize (e-mail: prix.sharjah@unesco.org; tel.: +33 1 45 68 09 66), with the name and e-mail address of the person you would like to nominate. The Secretariat of the Prize will then send all the necessary information to the person concerned, including how to apply, which can only be done online.

The deadline for the submission of candidatures is **30 July 2021**. For additional information, the Secretariat of the Prize remains at your disposal.

Please accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Audrey Azoulay
Director-General

cc: National Commissions for UNESCO
Permanent Delegations to UNESCO

STATUTES OF THE UNESCO SHARJAH PRIZE FOR ARAB CULTURE

Article 1 – Purpose

The purpose of the UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture is to reward the efforts of a national of an Arab country and a national of any other country who have contributed through their artistic, intellectual or promotional work, to the development and diffusion of Arab Culture in the world. The objective of the Prize is in conformity with the second and sixth preambular paragraphs and with Article I paragraph 2 (c) of the Constitution of UNESCO according to which the Organization is assigned the task of promoting the mutual understanding of peoples through activities that encourage greater knowledge of the cultures of different peoples and international exchange between the different peoples and between the different cultures. The objectives of the Prize are in conformity with UNESCO's policies/priorities related to the Major Programme IV, Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue and Major Programme III as regards Intercultural dialogue and the Rapprochement of Cultures.

Article 2 – Designation, Amount and Periodicity of the Prize

2.1 The Prize shall be entitled "The UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture".

2.2 (b) The Prize shall be funded by the Government of Sharjah (United Arab Emirates) and shall consist of a recurrent payment of US \$268,426 annually. The amount of the recurrent payment will be reviewed every two years. The contribution from the donor shall be received at the beginning of each year, no later than 15 January, in order to ensure that funds are available well in time before incurring expenditure for the administration of the Prize and for the Prize itself. The amount of the Prize is US \$60,000, which will be divided into equal parts between two prize-winners (US \$30,000 each).

2.3 All funds received and the interest accrued thereon shall be kept in a special interest bearing account for the Prize. (See Financial Regulations in Annex II).

2.4 The full staff support and operating/management costs of the Prize, including all costs related to the award ceremony and public information activities, estimated at US \$ 208,426 shall be fully covered by the Government of Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). To this end, the Director-General will determine a mandatory overhead cost amount to be applied and charged against the funds in the special account, which is to be established under the financial regulations for the prize.

2.5 The Prize shall be awarded once a year, on an initial basis of US \$60,000 per year, and shall be shared between two prize-winners in equal parts, (US \$30,000 each).

Article 3 – Conditions/Qualifications of candidates

Candidates shall be individual, institutions, other entities or non-governmental organizations that have made a significant contribution to the development, the diffusion and the promotion of Arab culture throughout the world. They should have acquired an international reputation in this field and distinguished themselves by meritorious actions extending over several years. Also, they should have contributed to promoting cultural dialogue and revitalization of the Arab culture.

Article 4 – Designation/Selection of the prize-winners

The prize-winners shall be selected by the Director-General of UNESCO on the basis of the assessments and recommendations made to him/her by a jury.

Article 5 – Jury

5.1 The Jury shall consist of a number of five independent members, being personalities with a recognized reputation in the field covered while also taking into consideration the need for equitable geographical distribution, gender equality and the principle of non-payment of honoraria. They shall be appointed by the Director-General for two year periods for a maximum period of six years. Representatives and alternatives of Members of the Executive Board cannot be appointed as jurors. Jurors involved in a real or potential conflict of interest shall recuse themselves from further deliberations or be asked by the Director-General to do so. The Director-General may replace members of the jury for reason.

5.2 The Jury shall elect its own chair and deputy chair. Members shall receive no remuneration for their work, but will receive allowances for travel and accommodation, where required. A quorum of three jurors present will be required for jury deliberations to proceed. The working languages for deliberations by a jury shall be English, French and Arabic.

5.3 The Jury shall conduct its business and deliberations in conformity with these Statutes and shall be assisted in the performance of its task by a member of the UNESCO Secretariat designated by the Director-General. Decisions shall be taken by consensus to the extent possible, and otherwise by secret ballot until a simple majority is obtained. A member shall not take part in a vote concerning a nomination from his or her country.

5.4 The Jury shall meet once a year.

5.5 The Jury shall send an assessment on nominations and accompanying recommendations to the Director-General of UNESCO no later than one week after the annual Jury meeting.

Article 6 – Nomination of candidates

6.1 When UNESCO has received the funding of the Prize as indicated in Article 2 above, the Director-General of UNESCO shall officially invite the submission of nominations to the Secretariat of the Prize, by March of the following year, from the governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, as well as from non-governmental organizations maintaining official partnerships with the Organization and active in relevant fields covered by the prize.

6.2 Nominations shall be submitted to the Director-General by the governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, and by non-governmental organizations and foundations maintaining official partnerships with UNESCO and active in a field covered by the Prize; as well as former laureates of the Prize; eminent personalities qualified in the opinion of the Director-General, and by any person or civil society organization working in the field of Arab Culture and for the advancement of peace and intercultural dialogue. A self-nomination cannot be considered.

6.3 Each nomination shall be accompanied by a written recommendation, which shall include, in English or French, *inter alia*:

- (a) a description of the candidate's background and achievements;
- (b) a summary of the work or the results of the work, publications and other supporting documents of major importance, submitted for consideration;
- (c) a definition of the candidate's contribution to the Prize's objectives.

Article 7 – Procedure for the awarding of the Prize

7.1 The Prize shall be awarded by the Director-General at an official ceremony held for that purpose at UNESCO Headquarters at a date fixed by the Director-General. UNESCO shall present

to the prize-winners a check the amount of the prize as well as a diploma. UNESCO shall officially announce the names of the prize-winners.

7.2 If a work being rewarded has been produced by two or three persons, the prize shall be awarded to them jointly.

7.3 The prize- winners, if possible, shall give a brief speech on a subject relevant to the work for which the Prize has been awarded. Such a lecture shall be organized during or in connection with the Prize ceremony.

7. 4 The work produced by a person since deceased shall not be considered for a prize. If, however, a prize-winner dies before he has received the prize, then the prize may be presented posthumously (*awarded to relatives or institution*).

7.5 Should a prize-winner decline the Prize, the jury shall submit a new proposal to the Director-General.

Article 8 – Sunset clause – mandatory renewal of the Prize

8.1 Six months prior to the agreed period of six year of the Prize, the Director-General of UNESCO together with the donor will undertake a review of all aspects of the Prize and decide about its continuation or termination. The Director-General will inform the Executive Board of UNESCO about the results of this review.

8.2 In case of termination of a Prize, any unspent balance shall be returned to the donor(s) unless otherwise agreed, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Special Account for the Prize.

Article 9 – Appeals

No appeals shall be allowed against the decision of UNESCO with regard to the award for the Prize. Proposals received for the award of a Prize may not be divulged.

Article 10 – Amendments to the Statutes of the Prize

Any amendment to the present Statutes shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval

UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture

Laureates

2019 :

- **Suleiman Mansour** (Palestine) is among the most influential artists working in Palestine today. Over 50 years his paintings' expression of Palestinian identity have won him international recognition. He has contributed extensively to the development of infrastructure for the fine arts locally and is a founding member of the League of Palestinian Artists. In 1994, Mansour co-founded the Al-Wasiti Art Center in East Jerusalem and served as its director from 1996 until 2003. One of the founding directors on the Board of the International Academy of Art in Palestine, he has also taught at numerous cultural institutions and universities and participated in several local and international exhibitions, and received several awards. The international jury recommended Suleiman Mansour not only in recognition of his prolific career but also for his commitment to art and art education and for the creation of platforms for younger generations of artists.
- **Silvia Alice Antibas** (Brazil) Over the past thirty years renowned historian Silvia Alice Antibas dedicated her career to promoting a deeper understanding of Arab culture in Latin America, focusing on the Arab migration to Brazil. She has also promoted Brazilian writers of Arab origin through the translation of their work into Arabic. Ms Antibas has painstakingly researched and preserved archival material mapping the influence of Arabic music on Brazilian music. She has also curated numerous events around the world promoting Arab culture. As an authority on Arab migration to Latin America, she has participated in many conferences and summits in the Americas and around the world. The international jury recommended Silvia Alice Antibas for her lifelong contribution to the promotion of Arab culture, identity and memory in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America.

2018 :

- **Samandal Association** (Lebanon) is a volunteer-based NGO dedicated to the advancement of the art of comics for audiences of all ages. Founded in 2007, Samandal has published a large variety of books and magazines, as well as hosting workshops and exhibitions at home and abroad. The association has won several awards, among them: Best Comics Magazine (FiBDA 2009, algiers); Best Arab graphic novel for Yogurt and Jam (FiBDA 2013), Best Arab graphic novel for Utopia (FiBDA 2013) and Audience Award for Topia at the East London Comics and Arts Festival (2018). Samandal's work in promoting the comic strip, often a vehicle for resistance and social expression, is a valuable contribution to Arab culture, its development, protection and dissemination. Samandal's work has been published in Arabic, English and French.
- **Shubbak: A window on Contemporary Arab Culture** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) is Europe's largest festival of contemporary Arab culture. Founded in 2011, the Shubbak festival takes place every two years connecting London and the United Kingdom to the best of contemporary Arab culture through ambitious programmes that span the visual arts, film, music, theatre, dance, literature, installations and debates. Working with practitioners and arts institutions in London and abroad, the festival celebrates Arab artists on the international scene. By focusing on personal expressions of artists, the Shubbak festival champions a multiplicity of voices and a diversity of nuanced viewpoints, which stand in contrast to the dominant media's conflict-focused narrative on the Arab world. It promotes the innovation and creativity of Arab artists to inform and inspire the widest possible audiences in the UK and around the world.

2017 :

- **Christine Tohme** (Lebanon) is a cultural organizer; she founded Ashkal Alwan, a Lebanese Association for the Plastic Arts in 1993. It is a non-profit organization that supports contemporary artistic practice and promotes free thought and critical discourse. Christine Tohme's commitment to writing, publishing, documentation, and archive development is important for developing research, generating debate, and stimulating partnerships. She has also introduced various initiatives such as Home Works: a Forum of Cultural Practices in 2001; and Home Workspace Program, a tuition-free study program initiated in 2011. An important aspect of her achievement is establishing links regionally and internationally. By creating links for the artists with the rest of the world, she is a regionally and internationally recognized curator. She also curated Sharjah Biennial 13. Titled Tamawuj in 2016-2017. Tohme is the recipient of Prince Claus Award in 2006 and the 2015 CCS Bard Audrey Irmes Award for Curatorial Excellence. She is on the boards of Marsa (Beirut), a health centre providing specialised medical services for at-risk youth and marginalized communities; and SAHA (Istanbul), an association supporting contemporary art from Turkey.
- **Asociación del Creciente Cine Fértil para la Promoción de la Diversidad Cultural** (Argentina) is a non-governmental organization. It promotes Arab culture in Latin America through activities such as Arab film festivals and cultural co-productions. It creates a space for people in the region to get to know the social and cultural context of the Arab region. The NGO has become a reference in the region for its initiatives in creating consistent and lasting cultural relations between South America and the Arab region.

2016 :

- **Bahia Shehab** (Egypt) is an artist, designer and art historian studying Arabic script and visual heritage. She is associate professor of professional practice of design and founder of the graphic design program at The American University in Cairo where she has developed a full design curriculum mainly focused on visual culture of the Arab world. Her artwork has been on display in exhibitions, galleries and streets in Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Morocco, United Arab Emirates and the United States of America. The documentary Nefertiti's Daughters features her street artwork. Her book "A Thousand Times NO: The Visual History of Lam-Alif" was published in 2010 and its artwork was shortlisted for the V & A's Jameel Prize in 2016. She is a 2012 TED Fellow and a 2016 TED Senior Fellow. Bahia was selected as one of the BBC's 100 Women for two consecutive years, in 2013 and 2014. The American University in Beirut honored her as a distinguished alumna in 2015. Bahia Shehab will be the first woman ever from the Arab region to receive the UNESCO Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture since its creation in 2001.
- **eL Seed** (France) of Tunisian origin, was born and raised in Paris; he learned to read and write Arabic only towards the end of his adolescence, but when he did, his renewed interest in his inheritance had a profound effect on his unique style of "calligraffiti". His method is a mixture of calligraphy and graffiti, where he translates and writes verses -inspired by and/or extrapolated from people's stories, poetry and popular culture- to communities all over the world. Disseminating messages of peace and beauty is the basis of his works, yet spectators of all cultures are not obliged to decipher the subtleties of the letters weaving these images. The beauty of "calligraffiti" is like music: it travels the world and penetrates through the walls without the imperative use of the

rational mind. Nevertheless, when the desired message is deciphered, viewers know another level of connection to universal meaning. eL Seed has succeeded, through his creations and use of public space, to create a dialogue with the spectators and to challenge the stereotypes on Arab culture. In recognition of his artistic work and his desire to change the world, he was elected Ted Fellow in 2015.

2015 :

- **Elias Sanbar** (Lebanon) is one of the most distinguished Arab intellectuals today, whose activities encompass literature, law, history, translation, journalism and diplomacy. Over four decades, he has brought a significant contribution to an improved understanding of Arab culture. In 1981, he co-founded one of the most respected publications about Palestine anywhere, *La Revue d'études palestiniennes*, of which he was the editor-in-chief for 25 years. His translations into French of the work of Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish is a major contribution to the dissemination of Arab culture. He also co-authored *Le rescapé et l'exilé* (The Survivor and the Exiled) with Holocaust survivor Stéphane Hessel, a book that has had considerable international impact. Since 2012, Elias Sanbar has also been Palestine's Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO.
- **The Biblioteca Islámica** (Spain) since its establishment in 1954, the *Biblioteca Islámica* (Islamic Library) of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) based in Madrid, is the centre where researchers, teachers, historians, theologians and students in Europe working in the field of Arab and Arab-Andalusian studies, may delve into some 100,000 works. For more than 60 years, the Islamic Library has provided researchers and served the knowledge of civilizations with a diverse bibliography of high quality on Arab, Islamic and Arab-Andalusian cultures. It collaborates with several prestigious Spanish universities and cultural institutes such as the Casa Árabe and the Escuela de Estudios Árabes and cooperates with a large network of Arabic-language universities worldwide. Nationally and internationally, Spain's Biblioteca Islámica works to promote these cultural treasures by offering courses and actively participating in international conferences and symposia organized by the European Association of Middle East Libraries (MELCom International).

2013 :

- **The Arab Image Foundation** (Lebanon) is a non-profit organization, which collects preserves and studies photographs from the Arab world and its diaspora. Created in 1997, the Foundation organizes exhibitions, international collaboration projects and exchanges. It also supports artists' projects and is part of an extensive regional network. In view of the upheavals taking place in the Arab world, the work of the Foundation is essential to the preservation and promotion of the social, political, economic, cultural and artistic history of the region.
- **Farouk Mardam-Bey** (France) has been the leading publisher of translated Arab literature in France. All along his career, he has introduced the French and European publics to Arab literature classics, as well as leading contemporary writers who bear witness to the effervescence of Arab culture, such as H. al-Shaykh, H. Barakat, M. Darwich, Abdul-Rahman Mounif, S. Ibrahim, E. Khoury, and H. Selmi. Mardam-Bey has supported intercultural understanding and cooperation in all his endeavours, whether as a translator, cultural consultant, head of prestigious libraries—notably that of the Arab World Institute in Paris—and editor. These concerns also inform his own work as an author and thinker.

2012 :

- **Mustapha Cherif** (Algeria) is an internationally renowned specialist in Arab-Muslim culture who teaches intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Philosopher, researcher in human and social sciences; he is also an expert in education, communication and comparative studies of religions and civilizations. He has a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Toulouse (France) and a PhD in Sociology from the Sorbonne University (France). He is professor at the University of Algiers and Scientific Director of the International Master in Muslim Civilization at the Open University of Catalonia.
- **The Arab British Centre** (UK) is an independent non-political non-religious charitable organization, which works to improve the British public's understanding of the Arab world. It organizes and promotes cultural and artistic events relating to the Arab world, and hosts a regular programme of activities including Arabic calligraphy classes and Arabic language classes. It also houses permanent and temporary collections of contemporary art, has a specialized library open to the public, holds talks on a variety of topics, and recognizes individuals working in similar fields through our bi-annual Award for Culture.

2011 :

- **Elias Khoury** (Lebanon). He was born in Beirut in 1948. He is a novelist, playwright and academic critic, and is considered one of today's leading Arab intellectuals. Author of 11 novels translated into more than 13 languages, including Hebrew, his literary works draw on history and deal with basic questions of human existence. In his novels, literary and dialectal Arabic intertwine to deliver a testimony of the pride and injuries of the countries of the Arab world. His most celebrated novels are *Gate of the Sun* (1998), *Yalo* (2002) and *As Though She Were Sleeping* (2007).
- **João Baptista de Medeiros Vargens** (Brazil). He is a publisher, author, translator, lexicologist and professor of Arabic language and civilization. Primarily interested in the influence of Arabic on Portuguese, J. B. de Medeiros has devoted himself to highlighting the presence of the Arab-Muslim civilization in Brazil and in Portuguese-speaking countries at large.

2010 :

- **Ali Mahdi Nouri** (Sudan), **actor and stage director**. He founded in 2004 the theatre company Al bugaa, which travels to conflict zones of Sudan and puts up plays that are enacted by child soldiers or orphans of wars. His uses various techniques of narration such as folklore and pantomime that find their inspiration in the cultural heritage of Sudan. The International Jury found that he had understood how to use the Arabic language and culture (songs and specially tales) as a point of resilience, from which, young actors could find ways to reconstruct themselves. The active role played by Ali Mahdi Nouri in the International Institute of Theatre has brought him world renown.
- **Chérif Khaznadar** (France). He is a stage director, writer and poet whose invaluable contribution to promoting dialogue, in particular between Arab culture and other cultures, for nearly 50 years has been internationally acknowledged. Named the "culture smuggler", he set out to promote Arab theatre then music, building a full-fledged cultural bridge between Arab countries and France, in particular. As President of the *Maison des cultures du monde*, he gave Arab cultural events pride of place. His commitment to boost

exchanges led to the creation, some 15 years ago, of the *Festival de l'imaginaire*, an interdisciplinary cultural event entirely dedicated to intercultural dialogue.

2009 :

- **Ghani Alani** (Iraq) is a poet and calligrapher. Heir of the Baghdad calligraphy school, he is one of the greatest contemporary calligraphers and an internationally acclaimed artist whose works were exhibited in every major capital city around the world. Through his work, Ghani Alani perpetuates the tradition of Arab-Muslim art of calligraphy, which represents the highest expression of knowledge in the Arab culture, the art that brings together its various facets. This prize is awarded to Ghani Alani for making the Western world aware of calligraphy, one of the richest forms of art in the Arab culture.
- **Anna Parzymies** (Poland) Professor of Arabic linguistics at the Department of Arab and Islamic Studies, in 1998 she set up the Department of Islam in Europe at the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University of Warsaw – one of the leading academic institutions in Western Europe dedicated to the religious and cultural life and legal situation of the Arab-Muslim population of the region. As director of a publishing house dedicated to Arab culture, Anna Parzymies has undertaken the publication of more than 80 books.

2008 :

- **Dr Gaber Asfour** (Egypt) Academician and professor at several Arab, European and American universities. Also literary critic and former Secretary General of Egypt's Supreme Council of Culture, he is currently Director of the National Centre for Translation in Cairo. Dr Asfour has played an immense role in expanding the influence of Arab culture. Through his various professional contacts, he has succeeded in creating links and building bridges among specialists in Arab culture, both in the Arab world and beyond. The achievements of this open-minded intellectual have significantly increased the knowledge and visibility of Arab culture. Dr. Asfour's highly original literary criticism, has gained worldwide recognition. As a prominent advocate of cultural dialogue, he has promoted values such as the advancement of women, respect for others, creative diversity and tolerance. A prolific writer and researcher, Dr Asfour has published numerous works, notably on the Enlightenment, women, and Arab literature and traditions. He has been actively involved in the translation of books into Arabic, and routinely writes columns for leading Arab newspapers.
- **Dr José Adalberto Coelho Alves** (Portugal) Writer, poet, legal specialist and Portuguese Orientalist, he is currently President of the Centre for Arab and Portuguese Studies at Silves. He chaired the committee responsible for the creation of the Foundation for Arab Memory, served as Vice-President of the Luso-Arab Institute for Cooperation, and was a member of the Administrative Council of the Portuguese Foundation of Arab and Islamic Heritage. Throughout his career, he has built bridges of friendship between the Arab world, the West and particularly Portugal. In his capacity as a specialist of Arab culture and writer, Mr Coelho Alves has inspired many Portuguese and Spanish authors in diverse fields including film, television, all performing arts, novel-writing and poetry. He has also made major contributions to the understanding of Arab culture in the Iberian Peninsula. Dr Coelho Alves is the author of many publications on Arab culture in Portuguese, as well as in other languages. He is actively dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge about Arab history and culture during the Muslim occupation of Portugal (*Al-Gharb el Andalus*). His work in the area of translation has been recognized by the Portuguese Language Society, which awarded him the Arab translation prize.

2007 :

- **Aladine Lolah** (Syria) is a professor at Aleppo University and an architect. Through his work at the university, he has helped to spread knowledge about the history of science in Arab countries. Director of the Institute for the History of Arabic Science at Aleppo University, he is also a member of the Conseil de Perfectionnement of the Institut français du Proche Orient (IFPO), thus contributing to dialogue between civilizations and mutual understanding.
- **Shah Abdus Salam** (India) is a professor at the University of New Delhi where he directs research on literature and Arab culture. His numerous publications are centered on the topics of Islamic culture and inter-faith dialogue. His work is already well-known in India, the United States, Canada, England, France and Saudi Arabia.

2006 :

- **Jamal Al- Shalabi** (Jordan). He holds a PhD in Political Science from the Faculty of Law at the Panthéon-Assas University (Paris II), France 1995, as well as Professor in comparative political analysis from the University of Bordeaux. Professor at the Hashemite University in Jordan he is recognized for his longstanding commitment to intercultural dialogue. In his numerous books and articles, he has explored and compared the evolution of the politics of Arab and European countries. In this respect, his book entitled *Mohamed H. Haikal* between the socialist politics of Nasser and the *Infitah* politics of Sadat, 1952-1981, along with his book on the shared vision of Europeans and Arabs, constitute the major points of reference in the evolution of his political philosophy. In addition Professor Al-Shalabi stressed the importance of women's rights by highlighting the example of his native country, Jordan.
- **Yordan Peev** (Bulgaria). Professor at University of Sofia, he is emeritus Bulgarian scientific and is recognized for his important contribution to promoting and dissemination of Arab-Muslim civilization in Bulgaria and worldwide. He is known for his publications on Arab Culture. Professor Peev has devoted his life to achieving a better understanding of the contemporary Muslim world, through his teachings and lectures, not only in Bulgaria, and other European countries but in many Arab countries. He has contributed to increasing our understanding of Arab thought and culture in today's world.

2005 :

- **Tahar Ouettar** (Algeria) is journalist and writer. He is one of the leading figures of Arabic-language letters in Algeria. He has published novels such as *The Ace*, *The Donkey's Wedding*, *The Candle and Dark Tunnels*. As a journalist, Mr Ouettar took part in the creation of two magazines *Al-Jamahir* and *Al Ahar*. He edits the cultural supplement of the daily *Al-Chaab* and, since 1989, has been the president of the cultural association *Aljahidhiya*. Tahar Ouettar died in 2010.
- **Michel Lagarde** (France). He belongs to the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), and teaches in Rome at the Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies (PISAI). He has been a life-long student of the Arabic language and Islam. He has translated into French the *Kitab al-Mawaqif (Livre des Haltes)* by Abd Al Qadir al-Djazairi, one of the leading figures of Sufism in the 19th century. Mr Lagarde also translated the Great Commentary of Fahr al-Dîn al-Râzî.

2004 :

- **Abdelwahab Bouhdiba** (Tunisia), sociology professor at the University of Tunis who holds degrees in philosophy and literature, was born in 1932 in the Tunisian city of Kairouan. Since 1995, he has presided over the "Beit Al Hikma" Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Literature and Arts in Carthage. His best-known work is *La Sexualité en Islam* (Sexuality in Islam), which has been translated in English, Arabic, Bosnian, Spanish and Japanese, and will soon be available in Portuguese.
- **Juan Vernet Ginés** (Spain). Born in 1923 in Barcelona, Juan Vernet Ginés is a renowned specialist in Arab science and the evolution of science – especially astronomy and map-making – during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Among his nearly 40 books and more than 300 articles are: *Literatura árabe* (1966) ; *Astrología y astronomía en el Renacimiento : la revolución copernicana* (1974) ; *Historia de la ciencia española* (1976) ; *La Cultura hispano árabe en Oriente y Occidente* (1978) ; *Mahoma* (1987) and his versions of the Koran and 1001 Arabian Nights. Juan Vernet Ginés died in 2011.

2003 :

- **Bensalem Hemmich** (Morocco). Former Minister of Culture, philosopher, novelist and scriptwriter, he is the author of numerous books (in Arabic and French). Five of his novels have been translated into several languages. His bilingual work has made a powerful contribution to the dissemination and influence of contemporary Arab literature.
- **Esad Durakovic** (Bosnia Herzegovina) is Professor at the University of Sarajevo and Member Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Department of Humanities. He is an outstanding Bosnian scholar of Arabic literature and translator of the Koran and The Thousand and One Nights.

2001 :

- **Abdulaziz el Makalah** (Yemen). Professor of Arab literature, he is one of Arab world's leading poets and is deeply committed to promoting and developing Yemen's culture.
- **Professor Na Zhong** (China). Born in 1910 into a Muslim family of the Hui community in Yunnan Province. He worked for over 60 years to promote a better understanding of Arab culture in China and was the first to teach Arabic in a Chinese University (Central University, now Nanjing University). Professor Na is the author of over 20 books on Islamic history and religion.