Welcome address: Achim Rohde

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1 We are proud to present in this special issue of the *Dossiers de l'IFEA* the proceedings of the international conference “Guests and Aliens. Re-configuring new mobilities in the eastern Mediterranean after 2011.” The conference was held on 9-10 December 2014 at the French Institute for Anatolian Studies – IFEA – in Istanbul. It was jointly organized by the IFEA and Marburg University’s research network “Re-Configurations. History, Remembrance and Transformation Processes in the Middle East and North Africa,” with the support of CERAO (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

2 The conference focused on the altering dynamics and results of mobilities within and beyond the MENA region since 2011. Given the background of the Syrian civil war and its ramifications, the conference specifically focussed on Syrian refugees. Moreover, several contributions discussed the broader Mediterranean refugee crisis and its handling by the European Union.

3 This timely conference was possible thanks to a spontaneous and successful cooperation between Re-Configurations and IFEA. It brought together scholars and activists working in Europe, the US, and the MENA region to shed new light on one of the most depressing developments since the start of the uprisings against ancien régimes known as the ‘Arab Spring.’ I would like to express our gratitude and utmost respect to all partners and colleagues who helped make this memorable event possible! Specifically, I would like to thank Elif Aksaz of IFEA whose dedication and organizational abilities were crucial throughout the whole process, and Natalia Ribas-Mateos who initiated and co-organized this conference as a visiting fellow at Re-Configurations. Furthermore, the conference would not have been possible without the untiring help of Chiara Denaro, Anja Schmidt, and Zuher Jazmati, and, on the IFEA side, Nassima Chariet, Öykü Aytaçğolu, Büşra Demirkol, Nilda Taşkörprü, Martin Godon and Pascal Lebouteiller.

4 “Re-Configurations” was founded by the Philipps-Universität Marburg in 2013 with funding from the Federal Ministry for Education and Research. The network provides an institutional framework for an innovative, interdisciplinary, comparative,
empirically based, and theory-led investigation of the transformation processes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA region). The research program consolidates the regional competencies at Philipps-Universität Marburg by forming stronger links between the disciplines represented in the research network (including religious studies, history, political science, sociology, media studies, literary studies, law, peace and conflict research) and those located in the Centre for Near and Middle East Studies.

International cooperations constitute a crucial component of our program. The joint conference which formed the basis of this issue of the *Dossiers de l'IFEA* is ample evidence of the productive energy that can be unleashed in such a cross-regional cooperative framework. We hope to continue and build on this very positive experience in the future.

NOTES


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