

***Director Hourani Returns from Fieldwork in Germany***  
**February 2011**

Director Guita Hourani, who is working on the migration trajectory, citizenship, and political participation of the Lebanese Kurds, traveled to Essen in Germany to conduct fieldwork on members of the community who have immigrated during the Civil War in Lebanon.

Ms. Hourani was invited as a Fellow to the Institute for Islamic Studies (Orientalisches Seminar) of the University of Cologne; this invitation was facilitated by Dr. Wolf-Hagen von Angern who was affiliated with LERC while conducting research for his Ph.D. thesis three years ago. Contact with the community in Essen was facilitated by Mr. Issam Omayrat, the owner of *Al Mughtarib* Magazine.

The Lebanese Kurdish community in Essen is the second largest, coming after that of Berlin. The majority of its members immigrated in the 1980s via East Berlin. Chain migration and family reunification increased the number of this community to an estimated 7,000 persons.

While in Essen, Ms. Hourani was introduced to the community by Mr. Nour Omayrat, Sheikh Salah Omayrat, Mr. Khaled Saado, Mr. Rabi Bader, Mr. Elie Abou Malhab, and Mr. Ahmad Omayrat who is the representative of the community at the immigrants' Integration Council established by the government of Essen. The community members were very cooperative and forthcoming, replying positively to Mr. Saado, who was a superb asset with his well established network. Ms. Hourani was also assisted by Ms. Fatima El Sleiman, a Lebanese-German Social Assistant, who interpreted for her from/to German and Arabic and Ms. Mara Albrecht, Research Associate with the Department of History of West Asia at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Erfurt, who provided Ms. Hourani with important references on the citizenship laws and integration policies of Germany. Ms. Hourani was hosted by the gracious Dr. von Angern and his lovely wife Dina.

In addition to members of the community, Ms. Hourani met with government officials, social assistants, community representatives, and university professors. She also established contact with scholars and institutions working on the immigrants' rights and integration.