

October 15, 2013

## The Leo Baeck Foundation, together with American Jewish University in Los Angeles, establishes Europe's first Conservative/Masorti Rabbinical Seminary



On November 17, 2013, the Zacharias Frankel College will open in Berlin's "Centrum Judaicum". The joint venture of the Leo Baeck Foundation and American Jewish University (AJU) in Los Angeles, California will educate and ordain future conservative rabbis. The program will form close ties with the University of Potsdam as an adjunct institute responsible for academic standards and accreditation, while spiritual supervision and ordination will be granted by AJU Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies. Its ordinands will become members of the Rabbinical Assembly.

Regarding the foundation of the new seminary, the Dean of the Ziegler School and Vice President of AJU, Professor Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson comments :

*"The Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies is dedicated to training a new cadre of Masorti/Conservative rabbis who are deeply versed in Jewish texts, committed to a life of mitzvot and the love of the Jewish tradition. Now, we make a further step with our transatlantic School: the Zacharias Frankel College. Our graduates will leave the campus in Potsdam as passionate, dynamic and creative thinkers, who can bring a sense of energy and holiness to the communities they will serve."*

At its opening ceremony Rabbi Artson will bestow the title of *Doctor of Humane Letters honoris causa* on Brandenburg's Minister of Science, Prof. Sabine Kunst. The Ziegler School recognizes especially Minister Kunst's leadership in creating the first university department of Jewish Theology in German history. Professor Oliver Günther, the president of University of Potsdam, will be recognized with an honorary doctorate at AJU's 2014 graduation in Los Angeles.

The Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies was founded more than 30 years ago as the first Conservative/Masorti rabbinical seminary on the Western US Coast. It enjoys a reputation for academic rigor, emotional richness, and superb practical professional training. The new European educational institution is named after Rabbi Zacharias Frankel (1801-1875), who opened the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau (today Wroclaw, Poland) in 1854.



## OUR PARTNERS SPEAK:

### **Rabbi Prof. Walter Homolka, Leo Baeck Foundation:**

“After opening the liberal Abraham Geiger Collage at the University of Potsdam thirteen years ago, an educational institution is now being established for conservative Judaism. Through this cooperation Potsdam will become a worldwide unique place of education for non-orthodox Judaism.”

### **Chief State Rabbi Dr. h.c. Henry G. Brandt, Chairman of the General Rabbinical Conference of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.**

“Germany’s General Rabbinical Conference is pleased that plurality in the Judaism of this country is acquiring a further important institution. With the Zacharias Frankel College, an internationally recognised conservative rabbinical seminary is being established in Germany. This means important impetus for Jewish communities throughout Europe. We warmly welcome our new conservative colleagues, whether they are teachers or learners! We will cheerfully admit those who become active in Germany into our ranks.”

### **Rabbi Gesa S. Ederberg, Rabbi of the Jewish Community in Berlin and Executive Vice President of Masorti Europe.**

“Masorti e.V. welcomes the foundation of a Masorti rabbinical seminary for Europe in the University of Potsdam in cooperation with the Leo Baeck Foundation. With the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles an excellent partner has been found to train Masorti rabbis for the 21st century for Europe.

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The Leo Baeck Foundation was set up in 2001 in memory of the 50th anniversary of the death of Rabbi Leo Baeck (1873-1956). Its purpose is to consolidate and develop Judaism in Europe by promoting rabbinic studies and to create a perspective of inter-religious dialogue. The Leo Baeck Foundation continues the agenda of the “Natalie und Leo Baeck-Stiftung”, which was set up in 1937 by the Jewish community in Berlin to mark the 25th year in office of Rabbi Dr. Baeck and with the purpose of supporting Jewish theology students.

[www.leo-baeck-foundation.de](http://www.leo-baeck-foundation.de)

[www.frankel-edu.de](http://www.frankel-edu.de)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rj2MOC4jOm0&feature=em-share\\_video\\_user](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rj2MOC4jOm0&feature=em-share_video_user)