



## 5<sup>th</sup> Arab German Implantology Meeting DGZI in Damascus

The Arab German Implantology Meeting DGZI was held this year from April 8–10. The fifth meeting was organized together with the Dental Association in Damascus and in cooperation with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Syrian Annual Implantology Meeting

Because the first four Arab-German meetings in Dubai had been perceived as very successful, the neighbouring countries voiced the desire to now hold this meeting of highly qualified implantologists.

Thus, an agreement was reached with the Syrian Dental Association, with the result that the congress could be held in Damascus. Due to the interest of the Syrian Dental Association, DGZI decided to organize this year's meeting, together with the local Dental Association, in the megacity of Damascus. It was the aim of the organizers to offer a qualified congress close to other home countries, e.g. for colleagues from Iraq. The success of the meeting confirms that this was the right decision. The Syrian Dental Association counts 16,000 members. At the moment there are 2,200 colleagues, who are working as dental specialists in different fields. Many of them obtained their dental education in Germany or in other European countries. Dr Safoh Al Buni is their acting President. As in former years, he invited the presidents of the dental associa-

tions of all Arab countries to this congress, in order to talk about future plans, and the foundation of an Arab Implantology Association. DGZI can attest to setting standards in this region.

The following colleagues flew in from Germany: The DGZI members of the board Dr Rolf Vollmer, Dr Rainer Valentin, and Dr Roland Hille. They were accompanied by the speakers Prof Dr Werner Götz, Dr Martina Vollmer, Dr Dr Werner Stermann, Prof Dr Maik Vesper, Dr Peuthen, Dr Manfred Schreiber, Dr Gerd Rosenkranz, and Dr Robert Laux. Well-known speakers from Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia completed the program.

A complete dental implantology spectrum was covered, ranging from sinuslift to immediate loading, complications, smoking, bone substitute materials, and aesthetics. The conference room was fully occupied from morning until night with over 450 participants. There was enough time for discussions, and the speakers gave answers to all kinds of interesting questions even during the breaks. The joint evening events took place in typical Syrian style, and atmosphere. A dental fair completed the event, and everyone involved agreed that the success of the event will continue in the region into 2010.





We thank also especially Dr Iyad Ghoneim for his excellent support of the organisation committee.

### Information about Syria

The Syrian Arab Republic is a state in the Middle East, which was of major importance in the ancient world that was especially characterized thanks to an early advanced civilization. Due to its location on the Mediterranean Sea, and the plateaus with its adjacent deserts inside the country, Syria covers a wide range of different terrains. One can walk on the old paths of the ancient world, and have a look at the history of civilized mankind on-site. The country's surface extends over 185,000 km<sup>2</sup>, there are 19 million inhabitants, and the majority of them speak Arabic. Since the seventies, Syria has to cope with rapid population growth, which causes many health and social problems. The relations with its direct neighbour Israel, and also with the United States of America are still very tense. Thanks to its oil resources, Syria is in a quite good situation, because the shortage of oil will lead to an enormous increase in value of "black gold" in the coming decades. Syria is certainly a country one should get to know.

### Damascus

Damascus is often praised as the "lively", "the mysterious", "the pearl of the Middle East", and sometimes even "the mother of all cities". Damascus is the largest city and the capital of the Syrian Arab Republic. It is

the oldest human settlement. Visitors will find it one of the most fascinating cities on earth, with 4,000 years of history, and populated 12,000 years ago. The old Aramaic name of the city was "Darmeseq", which means "place with abundant water". This allusion sounds a bit strange for a place that is situated in direct vicinity to the Arabian desert, but it refers to the fact that Damascus is located in one of the most fertile oases in the Middle East called the Oasis Ghouta region, a vital line, which is watered by the Barada river. One can visit the Damascus citadel, the former Roman main street Via Recto, the Christian Quarter with the famous House of Saint Ananias, the Chapel of Saint Paul, and of course the magnificent Umayyad Mosque, which once was planned to be the most wonderful and greatest Islamic mosque. In Damascus you can also observe something that has become very rare lately. Here, especially in the old part of the city, Muslims, Christians and Jews live together in peace. Churches and mosques stand side by side, and one is warmly welcomed by friendly, hospitable, and interested people. The city's atmosphere cannot be more oriental than it is already.

In the endless souqs of the old town one feels like being back in the times of the tales from 1001 Arabian Nights. One can admire the impressive caravanserais, visit the Hamams, pass by the madrasas, and then reach the city palaces. Lush gardens, luxury hotels, vivid coffee houses, and charming old houses make a visit to this city become a feast for the senses.

Our conclusion: A safe country, Arabic lifestyle, kind and helpful citizens and colleagues. \_

