

Building bridges  
between the U.S.  
and Germany:  
City planner  
Wendy Tao.



# On the right track

Getting to know and understand Germany: The foundation has invited **500 Bosch fellows** such as Wendy Tao from the United States

**W**hen Wendy Tao is traveling through Munich, Germany, she sees the city in rather a different light than either tourists or locals. She sees where cars are stuck at traffic lights, discovers widened bike lanes, and studies the subway system. Wendy Tao is a city planner who is currently working for Siemens in the infrastructure department. She develops traffic technology for overcrowded cities, one example being a guidance system for cars that helps to reduce traffic jams. Tao finds the German transportation systems both fascinating and challenging in comparison to urban centers in the United States. "The cities here are older and have less space to expand. This means you have to make the most of existing roads and optimize routes using clever traffic management systems."

### Learning about the country

The 34-year-old American has been in Germany for almost nine months as part of the Bosch Fellowship Program. She has gotten to know the German approach to working and living extremely well. She started out in Berlin at Civity Management Consultants, a traffic consultancy, and is now at Siemens in Munich. In the beginning, the different approaches to work took some getting used to. It meant less flexibility and fewer individual decisions. But, together with the other 19 American fellows in Germany, she came to understand more about the country. In the fall, the American fellows met for a seminar to follow the parliamentary elections, and the group's current topic of discussion is the European elections.

The Robert Bosch Stiftung has been bringing talented young Americans such as Tao to Germany for 30 years. They spend a year in the country working for ministries and institutions, in commercial or media enterprises, and attend several weeks of seminars, where they learn about German and European history, economics, and politics.

### American authorities on Germany

The idea for the program dates back to 1984, when anti-American sentiment was rife in Germany following the NATO Double-Track Decision. That was when the foundation decided to bolster cultural exchange between the two nations with the aim of repairing transatlantic relations. Since then, 500 American young executives have visited Germany, where they became authorities on and friends of the country. Many went onto successful careers and now occupy key posts. Prominent figures such as Denis McDonough, White House Chief of Staff, and other top executives, lawyers, and journalists ensure that America's relations with Germany are shaped by people who know the country first-hand. "A strong network has developed as a result of so many people participating in the program. Politics and business are already well connected," says Tao. "Now it is my job to also build transatlantic bridges in the field of infrastructure, where I work."

She would like to stay in touch with her colleagues in Germany when she goes back to California this summer. "Germans are constantly working to develop long-term solutions. The country is a byword for quality," says Tao. "I want to bring these technologies to the U.S." *lr*

## Women for top committees

It's an all-time record: The number of profiles of female European academics on the AcademiaNet Web portal has passed the 1,500 mark. AcademiaNet is a database for leading scientists who are eligible for leadership roles in the field of science and research. The service makes it easier for decision-makers to find highly qualified women who are suitable to fill certain posts or to serve on committees. The top scientists are nominated by well-known scientific organizations from across Europe. The AcademiaNet project was launched in order to address the fact that women are seriously underrepresented in executive positions. Only 18 percent of the top professorships with the highest endowments throughout the European Union are held by women.

## Awards for international film projects

The Robert Bosch Stiftung awarded €210,000 to projects by young filmmakers from Germany and Eastern Europe at the goEast Festival in Wiesbaden. Three projects in the animation, documentary, and short film categories have now been given the green light. Among them is the German-Bulgarian short film *The Volkswagen of Zeus*, in which a pair of Roma brothers, Zeus and Ali, have to rebuild their relationship following the death of their father in an old VW Golf.

Thirty international film teams have won the award, which the foundation has presented since 2005. The prize-winning production *Milan* was even nominated for the Student Oscar in 2006. Since 2013, the Robert Bosch Stiftung has also been supporting German-Arab projects in collaboration with Berlinale Talents. This gives young filmmakers the opportunity to learn about new styles and techniques in other countries. *ng*



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**Knut Jäger, German producer of the *Volkswagen of Zeus* project.**