**Press Release**

Leipzig, 18 December 2023

*The Department of Culture and the Office of the Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding announce:*

**The Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding 2024 goes to Omri Boehm**

The Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding 2024 goes to the German-Israeli philosopher Omri Boehm for his book *Radikaler Universalismus. Jenseits von Identität* (Radical Universalism. Beyond Identity). The book was published by Propyläen Verlag in September 2022 in a translation from the American by Michael Adrian.

The jury’s verdict states: “The Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding 2024 goes to the Israeli-German philosopher Omri Boehm for the tenacity with which he defends the essence of humanist universalism, the obligation to recognise the equality of all people as well as to speak out against any relativisation. In his most recent book, *Radical Universalism. Beyond Identity* (2022), Boehm resolutely opposes ideological calcification encountered in the present day, adopting a literal understanding of Immanuel Kant’s definition of enlightenment as an ‘emergence from self-incurred immaturity’ and subjecting Western liberalism – particularly any perceptions of identities in absolute terms – to critical review.”

The jury continues: “Boehm proposes that ultimate truths are indispensable even in modern societies, as they make human equality and dignity inalienable. He is not shy to demand metaphysical justifications for universalism, which he finds by building bridges between Kant’s philosophy and the legacy of the Biblical prophets. In his striking interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, he discovers a figure of disobedience in Abraham, who sacrifices the ram instead of his son. By insisting on the notion of justice over God, Abraham becomes the archetype of ethical monotheism translated by Kant into the language of modern philosophy. Omri Boehm’s grounding of universal humanism is politically relevant. His books, including the 2021 volume *Israel – eine Utopie* (Israel – A Utopia), write in defence of, and challenge, liberal democracies and their claim to the binding nature of universalism.”

The jury of the Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding 2024 is composed of Dr Maike Albath (literary critic and author), Dr Skadi Jennicke (Mayor of Culture of the City of Leipzig),

Michael Lemling (Managing Director of Buchhandlung Lehmkuhl), Dr Lothar Müller (literary critic and journalist) and Dr Daniela Strigl (literary critic and essayist).

Omri Boehm will receive the award in the *Gewandhaus zu Leipzig* during the opening of the Leipzig Book Fair on 20 March 2024. The French-Israeli sociologist Eva Illouz will hold the laudatory speech.

The Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding, conferred annually since 1994 and endowed with €20,000 euros, is one of the most prestigious literary awards in Germany. The Award Committee is made up of the Free State of Saxony, the City of Leipzig, the German Publishers and Booksellers Association and the Leipzig Trade Fair. The Federal Agency for Civic Education is a cooperation partner.

For more detailed information about the Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding, previous award-winners, the Board of Trustees and the Jury, please visit <http://www.leipzig.de/buchpreis>.

*Media contact: for review copies and appointments with the award-winner before the start of the Leipzig Book Fair, please contact: Christine Heinrich, Ullstein Buchverlage GmbH, phone: +49 30 23456 433, e-mail:* [*christine.heinrich@ullstein.de*](mailto:christine.heinrich@ullstein.de)

*For appointments with the award-winner on the day of the award ceremony and during the Leipzig Book Fair, please contact: Karin Rolle-Bechler, City of Leipzig, Office of the Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding, phone: +49 341 123-4207, e-mail:* [*buchpreis@leipzig.de*](mailto:buchpreis@leipzig.de)

*Notes on the photos:*

*For all publications of the photo of* ***Omri Boehm,*** *please add the**photo credit © Marzena Skubatz.*