

Rede von Außenminister Westerwelle zur Eröffnung des Deutschen Wissenschaftszentrums in Kairo

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Außenminister Guido Westerwelle hat am 13. November 2012 in Kairo das Deutsche Wissenschaftszentrum eröffnet. Es soll eine Brückenfunktion für den arabischen Raum übernehmen - mit interdisziplinären Workshops und Tagungen und der Beratung von deutschen und ägyptischen Forschungsinstitutionen sowie Unternehmen. Es gilt das gesprochene Wort
Professor Mosaad, Professor Nadia Zakhary, Professor Wintermantel, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
We are witnessing a time of historic changes in the Arab world. The movement, which started in Tunisia and then spread into Egypt, is driven by the demand for freedom and dignity, self-determination, respect and hope of a better life. The situation in each of the transition countries is very different. The process of change makes heavy demands of the Arab peoples and governments. The success of the transition in Egypt is of key importance for the whole region. Germany has made it clear from the outset that it will stand at Egypt's side. The transition involves uncertainty and risk. But I am convinced that above all else it presents a historic opportunity. Together we will need patience, determination and persistence. Europe stands ready to provide substantial support. We want to make the Mediterranean a common area of peace, freedom and prosperity. We are in favour of a deeper, comprehensive free trade area. We want to help to bring Egypt closer to European market standards. Relations between Germany and Egypt are special. Our partnership has a long tradition. There have been German schools in Egypt for 150 years. The friendship between Egyptologists in our two countries stretches back more than a century. And our relations are based on a strong foundation. They are based on joint values: the freedom and dignity of the individual, democracy, the rule of law and the market economy. We are both convinced of the need for multilateral solutions and the strength of international law. As an old and new centre of power, Egypt is a key partner in the resolution of both regional and global issues. As stated in the Berlin Declaration of 12 August 2011, we will establish a strategic political dialogue to find joint solutions. Together with the people in Egypt, we are pursuing many different projects in our transformation partnership. In opening the German Science Centre here today, we are adding another important milestone. Cooperation in science and research always reflects the desire to shape the future together. We show that we have joint plans for the future. Egypt is the focal point of our scientific and technological cooperation in Africa and the Arab world. In recent years we have considerably expanded our bilateral cooperation in higher education: from the establishment of the German University of Cairo (GUC) with over 8000 students, and numerous joint scholarships and research programmes to the recent opening of a campus of the Technische Universität Berlin in El Gouna. Egypt's young people have started the revolution. They are rightly demanding a say in their country's development. They want to create prospects for themselves and their country. Germany wants to support them. Therefore, education and science play a central role within the transformation partnership. Intensive research and development leads to innovations. Innovations stimulate tomorrow's growth and jobs. They determine a country's ability to succeed in the markets of the future. That applies to Germany just as much as it does to Egypt. Education, science and research are the most important resources in the age of globalization. The promotion of science and research has become an essential element of our foreign policy. We actively promote scientific exchange and the work of German scientific and research institutions abroad. The German Science Centre Cairo will become one of the beacons of this policy. It has been set up by the Federal Government with the German Academic Exchange Service, eight other academic organizations and in cooperation with German businesses. The Science Centre Cairo wants to be a showcase of Germany as a location for research and innovation. Even more importantly, it wants to stimulate scientific exchange. We want to arouse Egyptian scientists' interest in working with Germany. It stands for the modern nexus between research, science and business. The Centre is intended to focus particularly on applied research and turning research into real products and services. I am convinced it will make a real contribution to the economic growth in Egypt. Since the revolution, Egypt has gone a remarkable way towards becoming a true democracy and a vibrant economy. Europe and Germany are ready and willing to continue to support your country along this road. I would like to thank all those involved, for the intensive cooperation that went into the foundation of this German Science Centre. And I wish all the supporting organizations, research institutions and universities every success and good luck with their important work.
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