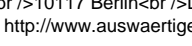




Rede von Außenminister Guido Westerwelle anlässlich des 10-jährigen Jubiläums und der Graduiertenfeier des Touro College Berlin

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--check against delivery --
Rector, State Secretary Schmitz, Ambassador Karslioglu, Ms Knobloch, Excellencies, Students and graduates, Ladies and gentlemen, Today we have two things to celebrate: the 10th anniversary of the founding of Touro College Berlin and the graduation of the 2012/2013 class. To all the new graduates I offer heartfelt congratulations on receiving your degrees. You have studied at a unique university in a city that is a magnet for people from all over the world. Your graduation is a great personal success for each and every one of you. But it also sends an important message to all of us. Your graduation bears witness to the revival of Jewish life in Germany. We are delighted to observe this development, but we are by no means taking it for granted. The Shoah, the greatest crime against humanity Germans have ever perpetrated, is something we shall never forget, something we must not ever forget. Only if you remember, will you be able to take responsibility for the future. We are grateful that after the Shoah Jewish people chose to remain in Germany or to come here to found new Jewish communities, synagogues and education establishments. We want Germany to be a home for Jews. The German state has a responsibility to ensure that our Jewish citizens feel safe and at home here. Just a few days ago in Offenbach a rabbi was attacked and insulted by a crowd of youths. Such acts are intolerable and have no justification whatsoever. There can be no place for anti-Semitism either here in Germany or anywhere else. Anti-Semitism is a threat to all of us, not only our Jewish fellow citizens. It undermines our most deeply cherished values. Tolerance, cultural diversity and religious pluralism are not a generous gift to others, but the greatest present to ourselves. For ten years now Touro College has been part of the fine mosaic of academic relations between Germany and the United States. The transatlantic partnership is the most important non-European pillar of German foreign policy. It is firmly anchored in NATO, our security alliance. And it is the core dimension of the political culture of the West. This transatlantic friendship is based not just on excellent government-to-government contacts. It is based on countless personal friendships, the friendship between our two nations. Germany is greatly looking forward to President Barack Obamas visit next week. At this point I'd like to say a special word to our new graduates. Touro College Berlin is a place where people come to study from all over the world. It offers not only an ideal study environment, its also a place where you can feel and understand what an international outlook, a culture of diversity and mutual respect mean in real life. Touro College is a huge gain for Berlins higher education landscape. And its accreditation last year by the German Council of Science and Humanities has further enhanced its standing. In Berlin you can also trace how Germany has developed into a vibrant and multi-faceted democracy that confronts its past honestly and lives up to its responsibilities. Berlin is a fascinating, tolerant and open-minded capital that attracts people from all over the world. And I'm sure that you, too, have had an enjoyable and enriching stay in Berlin. People like you, who have studied abroad and enjoyed a multilingual education, have the skills and expertise needed to tackle the pressing issues of our time. You can act as bridge builders and networkers. You have everything it takes to help shape the worlds future. What counts here is not just technical know-how but also openness, intercultural understanding and respect for different perceptions and ways of life. These are skills you have also refined in the course of your studies. I wish you all the best for the future.
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