



## EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

“Revolution is not democracy,” Tunisian Interim Prime Minister Béji Caid Essebsi said in a recent interview with the weekly magazine *Jeune Afrique*. What appeared to many people to be a somewhat trivial statement was in fact a reflection of his experiences over recent days and weeks. The pictures from Tahrir Square in Cairo and Avenue Bourguiba in Tunis which heralded the start of a new political and social era may have been stirring and euphoric, but it is clear that there is now a long journey ahead. Hopefully it will be a successful one. For sure it will be a hard journey and there are could be setbacks along the way.

The referendum on Egypt’s constitution which took place in March was a clear sign of a new beginning. Parliamentary elections will take place in September and presidential elections by the end of the year. The course of the political process has therefore been set, even if there are mutterings of discontent about the early election dates amongst the ranks of newly-formed political parties. The same is true of Tunisia. Here it has been decided that a national assembly will be elected in July which will then work on creating a new constitution for the Second Republic, a process that will no doubt take many months.

So far, discussions in both countries about the new political systems to be created have been committed, controversial and dynamic. Despite many frustrations along the way this process is not only very promising but also very necessary if people are to start believing in state and democratic structures. Germany and Europe as a whole have every reason and also a duty to accompany and support both countries along this path.

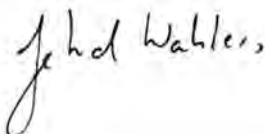
At the same time other developments in the Middle East and North Africa region should also give us pause for thought. The protests in Yemen, Syria, Bahrain and the

ongoing conflict in Libya in particular are likely to have as yet unforeseen consequences. The events in the region have shown us that autocratic systems can no longer rely on repression and intimidation for their survival, especially when they also impact economic performance.

However, it is still not clear whether the situation in these countries can be changed in a sustainable way by western military intervention. The German Federal Government decided weeks ago to make considerable sums of money available to political foundations, and in so doing it recognised the special role that established political foundations have in helping with democratic transformation processes. In this I do not only see a recognition of our work but also a duty and a responsibility.

“Shaping Change in the Middle East” – this is the title of a paper which outlines the principles of our work in the region, published in February 2011 at a time when the situation in North Africa and the Middle East was constantly changing.<sup>1</sup> We will be providing support during all these upheavals and will bring all our experience in the region to bear.

At the moment thousands of refugees are risking their lives to try to cross the Mediterranean. While Europe is struggling to adopt a common position on refugees, once again seeing migration as more of a threat than an opportunity, these determined, mostly younger and more highly-educated refugees are being sorely missed in their own countries. This is where they are needed to help create change – not only in the political arena. Only bold free enterprise can lead to economic revival and consolidation, the cornerstones of a functioning democracy.



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1 | Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (ed.), “Shaping Change in the Middle East. A position paper on political cooperation with the countries of the Middle East/North Africa,” in: <http://kas.de/wf/en/33.21938> (accessed May 4, 2011).