

**REGIONALPROGRAMM**

**GOLF-STAATEN**

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**Oktober 2011**

## Konrad Adenauer meets Sheikh Zayed

PRESENTATION FROM THE REGIONAL PROGRAM GULF-STATES DURING THE FIRST "GERMAN DAY" OF THE UAE UNIVERSITY IN AL AIN

**On October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011, the first "German Day" took place on the female campus of the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU). In cooperation with the DAAD, the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft and the Goethe-Institut, the KAS Regional Program Gulf-States had the opportunity to present its work in the Gulf region to the students of the UAEU. The highlight of the day was a presentation about Konrad Adenauer and Sheikh Zayed that attracted the German and the Emirati audience in the same way. In addition to that, KAS together with other German institutions represented its program during information fair.**

The auditorium of the UAEU was packed on Monday morning during the opening speech of the German Ambassador Nikolai von Schoepff and UAEU General Secretary Dr. Fatima Al Shamsi. Due to their high interest, the students followed attentively the presentations of KAS, the Goethe-Institut, DAAD and the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft, that gave an insight in the variety of German cultural organizations afterwards.

The Regional Program Gulf States had prepared something very special for the Emirati audience. In a joint German-Emirati presentation, Dr. Holger Löttel from the foundation "Bundeskanzler-Adenauer-Haus" and Dr. Fatima Al Sayegh from UAEU gave a talk about Konrad Adenauer Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. The Regional Program Gulf States aimed to introduce the influential experiences, political aims and guiding principles of these two statesmen to the students in order to contribute to the political discourse among them.

After the welcoming speech by Thomas Birringer, head of the KAS Regional Program Gulf-States, Dr. Holger Löttel from the foundation "Bundeskanzler-Adenauer-Haus" gave a detailed lecture about both Adenauer's political achievements and his personal experiences that influenced his work later on. An important aspect in Dr. Löttel's presentation was not only Adenauer's role as the first chancellor after the Second World War, but also his particular role as an architect of the German west integration. His seniority, experience and authority earned him a lot of respect. One example to illustrate that is when Adenauer was summoned to appear before the High Commission of the Western Allies on the Petersberg in 1949. In order to underline the superiority of the Commissioners, they received the newly elected chancellor standing on a carpet while he was not allowed to do so. Yet, Adenauer transgressed this deliberately and clarified with a symbolic step forward the demand for more sovereignty.

Furthermore, Adenauer's professional career was appreciated. Despite his working class background, he managed to advance socially out of his own strength. Shortly after the completion of his studies in economics and law, he put himself into politics and became City Councilor of his hometown Cologne in 1906. Ten years later, he was elected Lord Mayor.

In the 1920s, Adenauer contributed significantly to the urban planning and development of Cologne. Dr. Löttel emphasized the parallels to Sheikh Zayed who had been the catalyst of Abu Dhabi's fast development as well.

**Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.**

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Inspired by their founding fathers, Germany and the UAE share the conviction that a society is only prepared for the future, if it is aware of its past and its roots in history. This becomes prevalent in the foundation "Bundeskanzler-Adenauer-Haus" in Rhöndorf as well as the future "Sheikh Zayed National Museum" on Saadiyat Island.

In the following presentation, Dr. Fatima Al Sayegh from the UAEU described the life and the political achievements of Sheikh Zayed, the founding father and first president of the UAE. She emphasized his role during the consultations between the different emirates, the then called "Trucial States" between 1968 and 1971 that ultimately led to the declaration of independence of the UAE. Due to his role, there was no question that Sheikh Zayed was elected president of the newly founded federation in late 1971 by the rulers of the other emirates. His political action that was guided by his main aim of social stability led the UAE to the successful situation of the combination of economic development and traditional values.

The following discussion enabled the audience to compare the characteristics, political aims and idols of the two leading politicians. The most important similarity was found in Adenauer's and Sheikh Zayed's passion for their country and their concern for their people. Both politicians had a strong charisma and outstanding leadership skills. Furthermore, both guided their countries in an era of economic prosperity, social stability and reliability in foreign relations.

In the course of the day, the students could experience Germany through numerous events: Apart from German language taster sessions, music workshops and lectures about German poetry and film, Chef Martin Vanicek introduced how to make "Spätzle", a typical German form of pasta. The "German Day" was completed by an evening concert of the Youth-Jazz-Orchestra of North-Rhine Westphalia, which currently tours through the Gulf region.

The day-long information fair enabled the German cultural institutions and additional

organizations to introduce their work in the Arab Gulf region. Lively and surprisingly open conversations developed between the students and the KAS staff. The scholarship offers were hereby of particular interest, but the Arabic and English publications attracted the students' attention as well. The "German Day" gave the KAS Regional Program Gulf States an excellent platform to present itself to the students of the UAEU and to enhance the interest for the values, aims and programs of KAS in the region. The immediate success became prevalent on the following Thursday: Due to the information received during the "German Day", 15 students of the UAEU visited spontaneously the KAS workshop "Females as Entrepreneurs – Overcoming the Obstacles" in Abu Dhabi.