

Conference

POLARIZED EGYPT – CAN MODERATE POLITICAL ISLAM BRIDGE THE GAP?

26th March 2013, 12h15 – 15h00

Venue: Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union,
Rue Montoyer 47, 1000 Brussels

Two years after the Revolution in Egypt not much of the initial euphoria is left. In terms of politics and economy, the country seems to have reached a dead end. The only way out is a serious political compromise between the ruling Islamists and the opposition, in the aim to break through the continued political and economic downward trend, which has driven Egypt to the verge of collapse.

The current political polarization puts President Muhammad Mursi, the Muslim Brothers and most other Islamist leading parties on one side and virtually every non Islamist on the other, thereby lumping together a very diverse set of actors and ideas. The beginning of this socio-political divide can be traced back to the very start of the transition process, when the overarching unity of the revolution faded by reaching its goal of toppling Mubarak. Various events, most prominently the parliamentary and the presidential elections, which brought the Islamists to power, have contributed to steadily diminish the trust between both sides. The final weeks of the drafting process of the new constitution followed by an overhasty referendum in December 2012 seem to have cut last remaining hopes for a political consensus. Each side now routinely blames the other.

What Egypt needs most at this moment are capable politicians who are willing and able to reach out to both sides to rekindle a constructive dialogue on the constitution, the upcoming parliamentary elections, the economic situation and many other issues. One group tirelessly working to break the deadlock and to reopen channels of communication is the moderate Islamist Wasat Party (Centre Party). With their long history of opposition under the old regime and the current Muslim Brotherhood government, they can act as credible mediators as they are also closely involved in the current political developments of Egypt.

This conference is meant to analyse the current political crisis in Egypt and discuss chances of a consensus on the recently implemented constitution. It will also raise the question of Europe's role in the country's transformation process. **Abou Elela Mady**, Chairman of Wasat Party, and **Essam Sultan**, Vice-Chairman, will give insight on their views and discuss with EU representatives and Brussels public.

Conference languages: English, Arabic

Programme

- 12:15 Registration and Light Lunch
- 13:00 Welcome and Introduction
Markus Ferber, MEP
Chairman, CSU Group, European Parliament
Board Member of Hanns Seidel Foundation
- 13:10 “Political Clash in Egypt – A View from Moderate Political Islam”
Abou Elela Mady
Chairman of Wasat Party, former Vice-Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, Egypt
- 13:30 Panel Discussion – “Challenges and Solutions for Polarized Egypt: What Assistance can/should Europe give?”
Abou Elela Mady
Essam Sultan
Vice-Chairman of Wasat Party, former Member of the now dissolved Parliament, Egypt
Prof. Dr. Michael Köhler
Director for Neighbourhood, Directorate General Development Cooperation, European Commission
Moderation: **Nina Prasch**, Resident Representative, Hanns Seidel Foundation, Egypt
- 14:30 Small Reception

Registration until 25 March 2013: registration@hss.de