

EuroArab Forum

PROMOTING INNOVATIVE AND INVENTIVE IDEAS

“A New European Parliament: New Euro-Arab Relations? A conservative and a progressive perspective in debate”

Welcome note, Olaf DEUSSEN, European Parliament, Brussels,

17.03.2009

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends of our EuroArab Forum,

I am very pleased to welcome you today to our event on the topic: “A new European Parliament: New Euro-Arab relations?”

Before I give the floor to our distinguished key note speakers, Mr McMillan-Scott and Mr Swoboda and to our moderator Mr Fridhi I would like to mention two points:

- One on our EuroArab Forum and who we are.
- And one on the idea behind tonight’s topic.

To be honest, when I read in our programme “Welcome by Olaf Deussen, Founder of the EuroArab Forum”, for the first time in my life I

really felt old! Founder. So what did I actually found? Basically, our EuroArab Forum is an idea. The idea of an open space, a forum for innovative and inventive ideas on EuroArab relations. Who can get involved? Everyone who has ideas. Age for once does not matter as one can have great ideas at the age of 20 or 80. On a regular basis we organise discussions that we condense into new ideas; be it in written or in our internal exchanges. So who are we? The EuroArab Forum core team consists of Rouba Al-Fattal, Mona Shair, Francesco Cerasani, Alexander Geiger, Johan Vrints and I. So if you want to know more or get involved let us know.

My second remark is on today's topic. Imagine: June 2009 in Europe: A large group of European voters would base their vote only on the fact what political parties do towards the Arab World. Do I vote for the conservative or the progressive group? What did these groups do in the past towards the Arab World? What can I, as a European voter, expect from them in the future?

Therefore, I am looking forward to your questions & ideas and what our keynote speakers wish to say on the topic: "A new European Parliament: New Euro-Arab relations?"

Thank you very much.