

Kindly accepting a joint invitation by the GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) in Ramallah and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in East-Jerusalem, Bonn's mayor, Bärbel Dieckmann, paid a visit to the region between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of April, 2009.

Highlight of her trip was the opening of the first German-Palestinian municipal forum.

The forum marks a preliminary end to a successful cooperation between the GTZ, FES and four other German foundations. Issues discussed were among others, the expansion of local democratic structures, improved communications between citizens and community representatives, as well as the role of civil society and professional communal planning in the occupied Palestinian territories.



Bärbel Dieckmann, Mayor of Bonn, with Dr. Michael Bröning, Director of the FES Jerusalem, and Program Manager Henrik Meyer.  
Foto: FES Jerusalem



At the first German-Palestinian municipal forum Bärbel Dieckmann spoke about the important role of the municipalities for democratic structures.  
Foto: GTZ Ramallah

In her opening speech, Mrs Dieckmann emphasised the political significance of the communal structure – in particular with regards to a lacking political solution on a national level. On a communal level, democracy can be experienced in its most immediate and direct way, as every one knows his or her mayor. It is on this level that democracy has to yield success, if it also wants to prove itself positively on a regional and national level.