



Matthias Platzeck mit Shahd Waari

April 26th, 2007. East Jerusalem. Matthias Platzeck, Governor of the Federal State of Brandenburg visited the Palestinian Territories on April 25th and 26th. In East Jerusalem he met with numerous interlocutors and partners of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung to discuss various aspects of political and societal development in the Middle East. The cultural studies expert and former Minister of Planning Ghassan Khatib from the Jerusalem Media & Communication Centre emphasized the importance of an enhanced role for the European Union in the Middle East in order to put the peace process back on the right track. Furthermore, the international community must finally return to a sustainable development policy. Palestinians do not wish to continue living hand to mouth from humanitarian assistance, which not only costs the Europeans a significant sum, but also

makes a limited contribution to relieving the suffering of Palestinians in the West Bank and especially in the Gaza Strip. He furthermore underscored his understanding for the difficult situation. For progress it is necessary that all of those in positions of political responsibility in the Palestinian Territories bring armed forces under control and re-orient the conflict toward a non violent course. The view of the Palestinian Territories in Germany is largely influenced by the image of armed militias. The Palestinians must attempt to create a more accurate picture including daily life as well as the challenges of the nation.

The Filmmaker and participant in the Berlin Film Festival, Najwa Najjar, introduced her new project "Myrrh and Pomegranate", which seeks to accomplish exactly this. The film shows a young Palestinian woman making her living as an artist and struggling with the concepts of honor and self determination during the second Intifada in Ramallah. The protagonist views her own existence as threatened by the Israeli occupation as well as the conventions of her own society. The FES supports the making of film on location. Matthias Platzeck expressed his hope to see the film at the Berlin Film Festival in 2008. Shahd Waari, an Architect from the International Peace & Cooperation Center, introduced her project the "Social City", which, with the help of the German concept of "Quatiersmanagements" works against societal and social decay in the Palestinian parts of Jerusalem. In this manner, new prospects for disadvantaged Palestinian Jerusalemites can be created and the potential for further conflict mediated. This exchange shall continue into the future.

On the last day of his visit Matthias Platzeck met with the deputy Prime Minister of the National Unity Government Azzam Al-Ahmad. Al-Ahmed challenged the international community to measure the Palestinian Territories and Israel by the same standard. Moreover, the creation of the unity government could open the chance for renewal of the Middle East peace process.