



EUROPEAN UNION
Delegation to Egypt

Cairo, 8 July 2015

Speech by Ambassador James Moran, Head of the European Union Delegation to Egypt
At the closing ceremony of the project
"Space for Arts and Crafts in Sultan's Monument"
Hawd of Sultan Qaitbay, City of the Dead, Cairo

Your Excellency Prof. Dr. Mamdouh Mamdouh Eldamaty, Minister of Antiquities and Heritage,
Dear Colleagues and Friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank Agnieszka Dobrowolska, Director of ARCHiNOS, for gathering us all here tonight. I would also like to thank Raphael Varga, Chargé d'Affaires of the Dutch Embassy to Egypt, for being here with us.

While this project is primarily funded by the EU through a grant of about EUR 50,000, it would not have been possible without the contribution from the Dutch Embassy and the invaluable support of the Ministry of Antiquities and Heritage. This is yet another token of the successes we can achieve through Egypt – Europe cooperation.

It is a great honour as well as a great pleasure for me to be here with you all tonight.

It is an honour to have contributed to the renovation of the Hawd of Sultan Qaitbay, a reference of Mamluk architecture as well as a symbol of charity. And what better moment than the Holy month of Ramadan to officially open the Hawd? It is also an honour to have contributed to preserving Egypt's intangible cultural heritage in the form of a support to the local arts- and crafts-men (and women) in the so lively 'City of the Dead', a neighbourhood too often forgotten by visitors, local and international.

It is also a pleasure to be here tonight to announce that, thanks to the close collaboration with the Ministry of Antiquities and Heritage, and the tireless efforts of ARCHiNOS, the local community will be able to re-use the Hawd in the future. This is a breakthrough of particular importance to us. We hope it will be used as a model to open up access to renovated cultural

heritage sites across the country. My Dutch colleague will talk more about the importance of adaptive re-use.

More generally, our financing of this project is one of many initiatives of the European Union to strengthen the cultural sector in Egypt. Indeed, contemporary artists and craftsmen are invaluable resources for Egypt, for its culture, and for its economy.

Let me use this opportunity to underline that artists and craftsmen also deserve to have the space to be able to create freely to maximise cultural expression. Such diversity is the lifeblood of all successful societies.

With the efforts and willingness of the extraordinary Egyptian cultural scene and operators such as ARCHiNOS, we hope that we will all be able to promote the continuous development of Egypt's cultural expression, to promote intercultural dialogue, and to learn to do better together. In today's perilous environment, it is more important than ever to step up our efforts to improve mutual understanding and bring the two sides of the Mediterranean closer.

Let me close by assuring you that many other projects will come in the near future. To give but one example, the building located opposite to me on this very square – the Maqad, former reception hall, and only remaining part, of the Sultan's palace – will be transformed into a place for cultural and artistic activities with EU funding by ARCHiNOS and their partner, the Friends of the Manial Palace Museum. In other words, we will continue supporting initiatives for the benefit of the local community of Cairo's 'City of the Dead'.

Thank you very much for your attention, I wish us all a great evening.

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