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## First Arab League-EU summit paves the way for continued and enhanced cooperation

by Helene Rang



Leaders from the European Union and the League of Arab States (LAS) assembled in Egypt on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019 for the first ever summit between the two entities under the theme 'Investing in Stability'. The two-day summit at the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh aimed to boost cooperation on a number of shared challenges, including migration, security, trade and investment.

Representatives from nearly 40 countries took part in the summit. From Europe, the heads of state and government of more than 20 EU states travelled to Sharm el-Sheikh. In addition to H.E. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, British Prime Minister H.E. Theresa May, Italy's Prime Minister H.E. Giuseppe Conte and French Foreign Minister H.E. Jean-Yves Le Drian were also present. The EU was represented, among others, by President of the EU Commission H.E. Jean-Claude Juncker and President of the EU Council H.E. Donald Tusk. Among the 22 member countries of the Arab League, which is

based in Cairo, key figures such as Egyptian President H.E. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Lebanese Prime Minister H.E. Saad Hariri and King of Saudi Arabia H.M. Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud took part in the summit.

The two-day summit was chaired by H.E. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and H.E. Donald Tusk in the presence of the Secretary General of the LAS, H.E. Ahmed Aboul Gheit. H.E. Donald Tusk said in his welcoming address that the two entities need to work together, to create the right conditions for long-term stability. This stability can be achieved in many areas, such as funding education, reducing unemployment, encouraging investment and helping to boost trade. Furthermore, he emphasised the importance of putting young people at the centre of policy efforts and noted that countries of origin, transit and destination must work closely together to take action against smugglers. In his welcome address, the host H.E. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi underlined the need for cooperation in the fight

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