

Entrepreneurial commitment in Africa honored – Memorandum of Understanding signed for new jobs in Tunisia

Development Minister Gerd Müller visits Marquardt in Tunisia

Rietheim-Weilheim/Tunis, October 11, 2018 – Collaborating to create more jobs in Africa – Gerd Müller, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, visited the Marquardt plant in Tunisia yesterday as part of his trip to Africa, where the mechatronics-specialist employs 1,800 people. Following a plant tour, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding took place. The Memorandum is about a job partnership in the automotive sector, of which Marquardt is one of the initiators. The global family-owned company is currently planning to build another plant in Tunis and will create up to 600 additional jobs over the next five years.

"Africa does not need charity, but a new partnership at eye level. Africa needs education and training, private investment for new jobs and more added value locally. Companies like Marquardt are not only economically successful in Africa, they also create jobs and thus give the rapidly growing young population a perspective. With our Marshall Plan with Africa and a Special Initiative for Training and Employment, we want to work shoulder to shoulder with the private sector to provide further impetus and promote sustainable investment in Africa," said Development Minister Gerd Müller.

Harald Marquardt, Chief Executive Officer of the Marquardt Group, said, "Much of what we are doing in North Africa has developed very positively in recent years. Our employees in Tunisia usually have a good to very good level of education, often speak up to four or even five languages and have proven to be effective in providing our international customers with the high quality our customers expect from us. At the same time, Tunisia and whole Africa in general still have great potential for the future. We are therefore very pleased with the initiative of Development Minister Gerd Müller. In cooperation with the private sector, further growth will be promoted and local

Press Release

people will thus be able to participate in prosperity. We at Marquardt will continue to make a contribution to this in the future."

Marquardt – 27 years in Tunisia

Marquardt has been operating in Tunisia for 27 years with a production facility and its own comprehensive testing and laboratory equipment department, and has created over 1,000 jobs there in the last ten years. Shortly after the beginning of Arab Spring and in the midst of political unrest, the family-owned company invested in its own, larger plant, which was inaugurated in 2014, and hired additional staff. In 2016, Marquardt opened a new training center in Tunis, where young people are trained according to the "dual model," which is well-known and proven in Germany. Among other things, it produces operating components for vehicles of leading automobile manufacturers, electric power tool switches and displays for e-bikes.

New BMZ special initiative on training and employment

Tunisia is a partner country of the "G20 Compact with Africa" and a reform partner country of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In this context, Tunisia has committed itself to improving the economic framework conditions for investments and enterprises in order to promote more economic growth and thus the creation of more and better jobs. With the new Special Initiative on Training and Employment, the BMZ is taking up the Tunisian government's reform commitments and wants to make a contribution to companies and investors becoming even more involved in Tunisia.

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Photo: Ute Grabowsky / photothek

Development Minister Gerd Müller, seen here conversing with General Manager Nouredine Yakoubi, visits Marquardt production in Tunisia. The mechatronics specialist is planning the addition of 600 jobs in the North African country over the next few years.

About Marquardt

Marquardt, a family-run company founded in 1925 and based in Rietheim-Weilheim, Germany, is one of the world's leading manufacturers of electromechanical and electronic switches and switching systems. The products of the mechatronics expert are used by many well-known customers in the automotive industry and include operating components, vehicle access, drive authorization and battery management systems. The company's systems are also used in household appliances, industrial applications, power tools, and e-bikes. Marquardt Group employs more than 10,000 members of staff worldwide at its 19 locations in four continents. The company generated over €1.2 billion sales revenue in the fiscal year 2017. Each year, Marquardt invests around 10% of its revenues in research & development.

Press Release

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