

President El Sisi Meets the President of Portugal

Today, President Abdel Fattah El Sisi met with President of Portugal Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, who is on a three day visit to Egypt.

After the official reception ceremony, the two presidents held a bilateral meeting, followed by an expanded session of talks attended by the two countries' delegations. President El Sisi confirmed that the visit demonstrates the two countries' commitment to continue to work on strengthening their close relations, particularly in light of the momentum generated following President El Sisi's visit to Portugal in November 2016, which was the first by an Egyptian president to Portugal in 24 years. President El Sisi underscored Egypt's keenness on enhancing the close coordination between the two countries and on further advancing aspects of bilateral cooperation, notably in the economic and trade fields, for the benefit of the two countries and their peoples.

President Rebelo de Sousa expressed pleasure for visiting Egypt and appreciation for the warm welcome he received. The President of Portugal emphasized the profound friendship and historic bonds the two countries share and asserted that Portugal seeks to promote cooperation with Egypt across all areas, given its key role in reinforcing security and stability in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean. President Rebelo de Sousa congratulated President El Sisi on his re-election to a second term and noted that this reflects the Egyptian people's confidence in his leadership in the coming period.

The talks between the two presidents touched on ways to bolster bilateral relations, notably after the convening of the first meeting of the Egyptian-Portuguese Joint Committee in Cairo in October 2017, with the participation of businessmen from the two countries, and the signing of agreements and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) in a range of areas. The two presidents stressed the need to effectuate these agreements promptly so as to continue to reinforce bilateral relations and aspects of cooperation between Egypt and Portugal. President El Sisi reviewed the latest developments in the economic reform process and efforts to push forward development in Egypt. He asserted that Portuguese companies can capitalize on the promising investment opportunities offered by national mega projects currently being implemented to increase trade and investment between the two countries.

The meeting also addressed the latest developments in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean. President El Sisi expressed appreciation for Portugal's understanding of the true situation in Egypt. He noted that terrorism is a major challenge facing the aspirations of the region's peoples for comprehensive

development. President Rebelo de Sousa valued Egypt's successes in the war on terrorism and stressed his country's support for Egypt's efforts in this regard.

The two presidents also discussed the consequences of illegal immigration and the influx of refugees. They agreed on the importance of addressing these issues from a comprehensive perspective that tackles the political, economic and social conditions that led to their increase over the past period. This shall include concerted efforts by the international community to reach settlements to the ongoing crises in the region. President El Sisi and President Rebelo de Sousa also asserted that Egyptian-European cooperation is of common interest that adds to the outstanding relations between the two sides, particularly in light of Egypt's hosting of millions of refugees as well as its efforts to control its coasts, which prevented any cases of illegal immigration since September 2016.

The Egyptian-Portuguese talks also focused on the latest regional developments and on international issues of mutual interest, in light of the exacerbating crises in some countries in the region. There was an alignment in views regarding the need to adhere to political solutions and peaceful settlements to the ongoing crises, to give priority to ending the humanitarian suffering of peoples in crisis-hit countries and to reinforce efforts to restore stability in these countries.

Following their talks, President El Sisi and President Rebelo de Sousa held a joint press conference and witnessed the signing of an MOU in the area of enhancing investment and developing the Suez Canal Economic Zone, in addition to a protocol for cooperation in the field of education and culture.