

**Ansprache des jordanischen Königs Abdullah II. vor  
dem Europäischen Parlament  
Strassburg, 18. April 2012**

*Der König betont, dass die Reformen in der arabischen Welt nicht von einem auf den anderen Tag durchzusetzen seien und dass jeder Staat seinen eigenen Weg einschlagen müsse. Doch die Richtung sei klar: Die erwachte arabische Welt bewege sich von Protesten zu Programmen. Allein die Probleme der jungen „Generation im Wartestand“ mit hundert Millionen Arbeitslosen verlangten den grundsätzlichen Wandel. In Jordanien sei der Prozess im vollen Gange und laufe auf Verfassungsänderungen zugunsten des Schutzes von Rechten und Freiheiten der Bürger zu, auf die Stärkung der politischen Parteien mittels Wahlrechtsreformen und auf die Unabhängigkeit des Verfassungsgerichts. Abdullah II. wiederholt abschließend die politische Gültigkeit der Arabischen Friedensinitiative vom März 2002. Für die Zwei-Staaten-Lösung gebe es keine Zeit mehr zu verlieren. Dabei sei auch die europäische Diplomatie um Handeln gefordert.*

Mr President,

Distinguished members of the European Parliament:

Thank you, and thank you all for your warm welcome. The ties between Jordan and Europe are anchored in rock. It is more than our mutual interest in the prosperity and security of our multi-region neighbourhood. It is our shared belief in the kind of neighbourhood it should be — the kind of neighbourhood our people deserve: rich in human dignity and freedom... powered by opportunity and progress... and secured by peace.

It is to talk about our neighbourhood and future that I join you today.

My friends,

A long Spring is unfolding in the Arab world. It will not be over in a season; not even in a year. Our societies are facing the challenge of moving from protests to programmes, from criticism to national

strategies. Different countries will take different paths. In some countries, debate and consensus are in the air. Elsewhere, we are seeing the winds of division and reaction, bringing instability, violence and a region-wide cost. There are outside actors that seek to take advantage of discord. The risks and uncertainties are real.

But I speak for millions when I say: The Arab world is awake. And positive change is on the move.

The signs were already there for those who wanted to see them. For a decade or more, people across the region had been raising questions... nurturing aspirations... seeking meaningful reform... and empowering civil society, especially women and our digitally connected, globally aware youth.

Events added to the urgency. Global crises in finance, food and energy seriously hurt our economies. Arab families who sacrificed to educate their children have seen their sons and daughters leave school, prepared for jobs that simply are not there. Today my region faces the highest youth unemployment of any region. Some have called it a “generation in waiting”. It is 100 million strong; the largest youth cohort in our history.

I know that youth concerns are important here in Europe as well. Our regions have different demographics, but in one statistic they are the same: Today's young people are 100 per cent of our future. We cannot afford to let a single young citizen wait in vain.

This reality drives Jordan's approach to the Arab Spring. We have embraced it as an opportunity to push past roadblocks that have slowed reform in the past. Last year, we took immediate steps to engage in a national dialogue to build consensus on concrete actions. An early focus has been the Constitution — the foundation of our political system. Last September, after recommendations by a national committee, one-third of the entire document was amended.

New constitutional provisions widen representation, strengthen political parties, protect civil rights and freedoms, and enhance separation of powers. Other milestones include new laws on political parties and municipal and national elections; as well as legislation for the new constitutional court and independent elections commission. Our next tests will be municipal and parliamentary elections. As guarantor of the political reform process, I have urged both government and Parliament to keep to the agreed timeline, and finalise the remaining legislation as quickly as possible, without sacrificing the inclusive nature of our process.

Only we, all Jordanians, can build Jordan's future. And we must do so in such a way that our country remains a secure, safe haven — in spite of a region getting more turbulent around us; in spite of economic threats; in spite of neighbouring crises. This path demands consensus-based reform, based on structural, comprehensive change — political, legal, economic, and social — respecting the rights and freedoms of all our citizens. In the process, Jordan can set a regional model of peaceful political evolution and democratisation.

I am confident that 2012 will be a year of key political reform in Jordan. Among the most important steps is building the robust political party life that parliamentary government requires. We know that it is not one election, but the next and the next and all those that follow, which show that a system is working.

We greatly value the EU's recognition of our reform path. Just two months ago, the new EU-Jordan Task Force met in Amman to discuss key programmes that will support our reform priorities — democratic institutions, civil society, job creation, local economic development, humanitarian assistance, and more. Next month marks 10 years since our Association Agreement went into force, opening markets and job opportunities on both sides. I hope these opportunities, now strengthened by our “advanced status” partnership, will further blossom in the years ahead.

Jordan has pursued its domestic goals despite regional conflict. But my friends — peace must come if our region is to thrive and be secure. We cannot afford one more “generation in waiting” for a Palestinian state.

Ten years ago, the Arab states spoke with a united voice on behalf of a just peace. We made the decision to look forward, not back; to seek agreement; and to offer acceptance. The Arab Peace Initiative has been recognised by every major friend of peace in the world, including the EU and other members of the Quartet. We need Israel to engage.

The Arab Peace Initiative is based on the only possible solution: two states, side by side, in dignity and self-determination — a sovereign, viable and independent Palestine, on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital — collective peace and security guarantees for Israel — and a final settlement, in accordance with UN resolutions, and the agreed resolution of all final status issues. This initiative went even beyond offering Israel peace and normal relations with all its Arab neighbours. The entire Muslim world endorsed it. What has been on the table for the past 10 years is a 57-state solution.

Some political elements point to the changes in the Arab world, and tell the Israeli people that negotiations can wait. There is no time to wait. The Arab Spring is rooted in a profound call for human respect. No affront is felt more deeply than the Israeli occupation. The longer Palestinian suffering endures, the longer settlement building continues, the greater the frustrations, dangers, and unknowns. If we cross the line where the two-state solution is no longer possible, Israel will be further than ever from real security. It would take decades, even generations, for peace to regain the initiative.

Jordan sees an effective peace process as a moral duty and a strategic interest, and we continue to pursue results. This year, in Amman, we succeeded in getting negotiators back to the table several times. We would not have been able to do so, without the magnificent work of European diplomacy... energising contacts, mobilising support, keeping up the pressure for peace... and, most important, keeping hope alive. Indeed, over the past two years, the European Union has been an invaluable friend to those, on both sides, working for peace in the Middle East.

The exploratory talks in Amman were baby steps, giving the parties an opportunity to resume bilateral contacts. Now the process needs a quantum leap forward — and EU partnership is vital. The EU has taken a principled stand for a just, two-state solution and against the illegal settlement building that is obstructing progress. You understand the global risks of continued conflict and the global benefits of peace. And you hold tremendous credibility for your experience in building democratic institutions, security and trust. I hope you can bring all this to bear in the days ahead.

My friends,

Many peoples, one neighbourhood... and one future. This is the challenge for Europe and the Middle East... and it is our strength.

Together, we face immense issues — economic, political, peace. The solutions are complex and the path forward difficult.

But together, we have the will and wisdom to reach the goals we seek. And together, we can succeed.

-----