



SESAME

Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East

Opening of SESAME 16 May 2017

Statement by Commissioner Carlos Moedas Research, Science and Innovation, European Commission



Your Royal Highness Princess Sumaya,
President and Director of SESAME,
Ministers,
My Dear Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova,
Ambassadors,

I am very honoured to be here with you today, and I am very honoured to be here for three very simple reasons.

SESAME marks the beginning of my tenure as a European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation.

I took office on a grey Brussels day in November 2014 and on that day I received a call from a former professor and former Minister of Science of Portugal, Mariano Gago, who called me and said *I have to ask you just two things. The first is that you visit CERN, and the second is that you visit Jordan and SESAME because you will see there the best project ever of science diplomacy*, and the reality is that I will never forget the trip I made here in 2015. It was an unforgettable one.

As a politician one spends a great deal of time talking about science diplomacy and one then writes articles about science diplomacy, but to see science diplomacy, to see it with one's own eyes, to see science diplomacy in the making is very rare, and that is what you do at SESAME, and that is why you are so unique.

Second, I had the opportunity to meet extraordinary people, the kind of scientists who use the word peace as often as they use the word science. I am referring to Sir Chris Llewellyn Smith, Dr Khaled Toukan, and of course my dear friend Rolf Heuer who I met for the first time at CERN and who told me about SESAME. Apart from being a brilliant man, he knows better than so many how to talk to politicians, and how to explain science to politicians, and I want to thank him for the job he is doing for Europe and to wish him the very best for what he will do here for SESAME.

Third, Jordan. Jordan is for me an amazing example of a country that understands the power of science diplomacy like no other. When we were in Manchester last July, HRH Princess Sumaya said something that will always stick in my mind. She said *borders matter little in the innovative history of mankind. When great powers*

fall, which they inevitably do, it is ideas and knowledge that remain. Your country understands this. Your region has lived through this, and now, more than ever, we need your example, we need your leadership, we need your country, and we need you. You can always count on us. SESAME can count on us.

Thank you so much for the invitation.