New Centre for Applied Turkey Studies in Berlin

Berlin, 18.09.2019. The new Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) in Berlin was inaugurated yesterday. It operates as part of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), and is funded by Stiftung Mercator and the German Federal Foreign Office.

“There are few countries with which Germany has closer people-to-people relations than it does with Turkey”, said German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas at an exhibition opening in Istanbul in November 2018. Stepping up research is a precondition for gaining a better understanding of Turkey. CATS will bring together evidence-based research, European networking of expertise on Turkey, and policy consultation. Dissecting the diversity of Germany’s and Europe’s relations with Turkey forms a significant interest, along with laying out options and recommendations. The objective is to contribute to formulating coherent European policies towards Turkey.

The Centre for Applied Turkey Studies will analyse political and social developments in Turkey and relations between Turkey and Europe. It will also create space for informal exchange between important actors, and supply information to political decision-makers and the broader public. CATS intends to become a leading source and contact for German and European media.

The Head of CATS is Dr. Günter Seufert, previously Senior Fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP). Deputy Head is Dr. Hürcan Aslı Aksoy, who previously worked at the Chair of Middle East Politics and Society at the Friedrich Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg. At any one time up to ten German, European and Turkish researchers will be working at CATS. The Centre sees itself as the hub and curator of an international network of think tanks. CATS will collaborate with European and Turkish think tanks and distribute project funding and scholarships.

CATS is an initiative of Stiftung Mercator and the German Federal Foreign Office. Funding has been secured until 2022: Stiftung Mercator has pledged about €3.2 million, the German Federal Foreign Office about €1.5 million.