

Preface / Vorwort

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Dear readers,

We are delighted to present you with this year's April issue, our sixth special edition. The feature articles in this special issue address a steadily emerging important sector within Muslim civil society in Germany: Islamic welfare. The articles provide valuable impetus and food for thought, and report on state-funded projects in this field. In the Articles section, Hans-Georg Ebert broaches the issues and challenges facing Muslims in the area of marriage, family and childhood related to legal, religious and ethical factors. In his article, Ebert shows how independent Islamic welfare can perform important work in this area by supplementing and expanding the services offered by the state through aspects such as counselling, psychological and religious support, legal assistance and material support. Anke Strube presents the practical experience and key development processes of the "Empowerment for Muslim welfare with the associations of the German Islam Conference" project. In this context, she discusses the preliminary results of the project, establishing different references and contextualisations in the process. Her article is based on the various evaluations – i.e. the observations and assessments of the expert accompaniment of the *Institut für Sozialarbeit und Sozialpädagogik e.V.* (Institute for Social Work and Social Pedagogy) in Frankfurt am Main and the assessments made by representatives of the associations involved, which were surveyed in the context of several interim evaluations – as well as documentations and publications produced as part of the empowerment project.

In the Miscellanea section, Elif Yakac's short essay highlights the potential and opportunities that she believes are associated with the establishment of an independent Muslim welfare association in the existing welfare structures in Germany. This essay is followed by two further contributions in the Miscellanea section covering important issues beyond the topic of Islamic welfare. In his article, Armin Muftić discusses three studies that call for the notion of Islamophobia to be removed and replaced by the terms "anti-Muslimism", "Muslimophobia" and "anti-Muslim hostility". The background to this call is the argument that criticism of Islam need not necessarily result in hostility towards its followers and that the ultimate goal must be to reject racism against Muslims. In his article, Muftić explains in detail why, in his opinion, these studies are not tenable from a scientific/empirical per-

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spective. In his article, Johannes Twardella explores the question of whether there have been approaches in the Islamic tradition of pedagogical thought that focus on the pedagogical action of teachers – also referred to as professionalism. To this end, he takes a closer look at the relevant ideas of Muslim historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), who addresses various aspects of the professionalism of teachers in his introduction to world history (“*al-Muqaddima*”). As such, Twardella’s article seeks to make a scientific contribution to Islamic religious education in Germany. The Translations section presents the short script by the traditional Turkish scholar Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī (d. 1952) entitled “*al-Lāmaḍḥabiyya qanṭarat al-lādīniyya*”, which has been translated into German by Taha Tarek Yavuz. In this work, al-Kawtharī criticises the rejection of Sunni schools of law and the associated scripturalist approach to the interpretation of religious texts, which he believes is still relevant today among both modern and Salafist groups. Al-Kawtharī’s work has a significance in the history of ideas. Besides being a source of inspiration for subsequent Muslim scholars, it also reflects the main argumentation of contemporary Sunni traditionalism with regard to the postulated importance of following schools of law. Finally, after several interesting conference reports and reviews, the reader can look forward to an interview related to the main topic of this edition. In this interview, Samy Charchira talks not only to Matthias von Schwanenflügel – Directorate-General of the Department for Demographic Change, Senior Citizens and Non-Statutory Welfare Services at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) – but also to representatives of the Islamic Competence Centre for Welfare (IKW) in Cologne about all kinds of issues related to developments in the area of Muslim welfare in Germany.