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**Speech by Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier
at a dinner hosted by President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa
in Lisbon, Portugal,
on 1 March 2018**

I have scarcely been in Portugal for a day, and I already feel practically at home. The fact that you invited me here shortly after I was elected to the office of Federal President last year ... the fact that you welcomed me so warmly and graciously this morning ... the fact that you took me on a tram trip through your wonderful capital on the legendary line 28 ... and, last but not least, the fact that we will see each other again tomorrow and visit Porto together – I believe all of these things to be very special gestures of friendship between our countries. I would like to offer you, Mr President, my most sincere and personal thanks for this.

I am by no means the only German to appreciate Portugal's hospitality. We Germans like to come here – I am thinking of my many fellow compatriots who settle here, of the large and growing number of tourists and students, and of the companies from Germany that continue to invest heavily in Portugal as a business location. I myself came under your country's spell already during my time as Foreign Minister – and so I am all the more delighted to be back here again today!

I have learned a thing or two about your country and people over the years, including your hopes and concerns. I have been most impressed by the economic recovery that Portugal has undergone in recent years. During the crisis and its aftermath, many sceptics in your country not only situated your country at the bottom left of the map of Europe, but also at the bottom left of growth forecasts and political estimations. You have defied these sceptics – and have displayed a will to reform and a pragmatic spirit that is truly exemplary. And now you

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are rightfully reaping the rewards of your efforts – efforts that were sometimes very painful.

One thing impressed me in particular in all of this, namely your unwavering commitment to Europe. It seems to me that the Portuguese and Germans are very much alike in this respect – we are Europeans united by a common project based on values. We continue to work, to fight and to show solidarity for Europe. From taking in refugees to protecting our external borders to stabilising our currency – and now also with your Minister of Finance Mário Centeno as the new President of the Eurogroup. Both of our countries are pulling in the same direction in Europe.

Like Portugal, Germany is passionately committed to the project that is European integration. We are united by this firm belief. We hope that we will soon be able to seize on the momentum currently coming from Paris also in Berlin. The coalition agreement now under negotiation, at any rate, expressly states that only a strong European Union can guarantee a future in peace, security and prosperity. The Portuguese themselves achieved democracy, freedom and cosmopolitanism not so long ago. You therefore know, perhaps better than others, how important these values are – and you also stand up for these values in a united Europe. We Germans are at your side in this respect.

I am fascinated by the extent to which your country breathes European history while at the same time daring to strike out for new shores. Over 500 years ago, German knights and seafarers joined the daring Portuguese on their voyages of discovery. I also sense a productive disquiet – as Fernando Pessoa might have put it – here in Lisbon today. It is the many young people, the innovative start-ups, the digital pioneers, culture professionals and technological innovators, in a nutshell, the discoverers of today who open up new horizons for Europe here in Lisbon and who give us all cause to update the already very positive image of the Portuguese Republic once again.

We Germans admire Portugal as a country of discoverers and bridge-builders on both a small and a large scale. António Guterres' election as Secretary-General of the United Nations, for example, reflects international recognition of Portugal's capacity to constantly establish new connections – with America, Africa and Asia. I am also thinking of the many Portuguese who took their destiny into their own hands in the past and who are now seeking their fortune in other parts of the world – including, not least, our many Portuguese guests and fellow citizens back in Germany. They also stand for the excellent relations between our two countries.

To celebrate this special connection, I now invite you to raise your glasses and join me in a toast to our host, President Marcelo

Rebelo de Sousa, to the Portuguese Republic, the German-Portuguese
friendship, and to our common future in Europe! Saude!