



**AACC**

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**4 April 2011:**

## **ROUND TABLE TUNISIA: Future Perspectives.**

### **Chaabani: An International Conference to Present the Situation in Tunisia**

The **Charge d’Affaires at the Embassy of the Republic of Tunisia in Vienna, Counselor Mr. Sabri Chaabani**, revealed that there is an intention on holding an international conference in Tunisia aimed at discussing means and ways to support the country after the success of the revolution.



l-t-r: Mr. Mouddar KHOUJA – Mr. Youssef CHEBBI – Mr. Sabri CHAABANI –  
Ms. Silvia MACA – Mr. Riyadh DKHILI

During the round-table discussion regarding the future perspectives of Tunisia organized by the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Tunisia in Vienna on April 4, 2011 at the premises of the AACC, **Mr. Chaabani** said that “the initiative of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce in organizing this event adds to the positive outlook on Tunisia, and the process of democratization that led to the revolution of ‘freedom and dignity’.” He further pointed out that the process of rebuilding security and trust in Tunisia is advancing and on the right track; he also mentioned that the current interim government has taken several measures to respond to the aspirations of the Tunisian people. The government is also making efforts to maintain security and stability in the country and to ensure the continuity of the State and its institutions, which are basic conditions for the gradual restoration of a dynamic Tunisian economy.

On another note, the **Secretary General of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce, Eng. Mouddar Khouja** spoke about the deep-rooted Tunisian civilization, and the role played by Tunisia over the centuries as an important commercial passageway. Mr. Khouja went on by mentioning some facts about Tunisia and its people, pointing to the late Mohammed Bouazizi, who burned himself in protest after maltreatment by a municipal police officer in Sidi Bouzid, thus igniting the fuses of revolution in Tunisia and in a number of Arab countries.

Among the speakers at the round table were also the **Director of the Export Financing and Promotion Division at the Austrian Ministry of Finance Ms. Silvia Maca**, the **Director of the Tunisian Tourist Board in Austria, Mr. Riadh Dkhili**, and **Mr. Youssef Chebbi, Financial Director of Tunisair Austria** (by proxy of the General Director Mr. Mohamed Mzah); among the attendees were Austrian businessmen and people involved in trade and investment in and with Tunisia.

**Ms. Maca** spoke about the cooperation between Tunisia and Austria on the financial level, mentioning the agreements that had been signed between the two countries in the past and expressing her hopes that the new Tunisian government will continue on this level of cooperation with Austria, especially in the area of soft loans that enables investment in infrastructure – something that Tunisia can benefit from and that also is to the benefit of Austrian companies.



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Mr. Riyadh DKHILI

Regarding the tourism sector, **Mr. Dkhili** stressed the great importance attached by Tunisia to this vital sector; he referred to the special position occupied by Tunisia from among its neighbors; and to the diversity of its tourist destinations providing the infrastructure necessary to attract the largest amount of tourists, especially from European countries. He

mentioned that the number of tourists who visited Tunisia in the 2010 amounted to seven million, a number that has been decreasing since the beginning of this year as a result of the changes that faced the country. Yet, he is confident that Tunisia will soon recuperate in this field specifically because some countries have started lifting the travel ban to Tunisia for their nationals. This will revive the tourism sector, and thus he predicts a better future.

The Financial Director of Tunisair Austria, **Mr. Chebbi**, mentioned that there were 3 weekly flights between Vienna and Tunisia and that Austrian nationals used to fly frequently on Tunisair. This had receded recently and it was mainly Tunisian citizens who were using this airline. Chebbi expressed his hope and desire that Austrian tourists return to traveling on Tunisair to Tunisia as they used to, especially now that the peak tourist season is approaching.



Media and participants at the Round Table

The event was covered by different media. **“MonitorTV”, the IT- and Business-TV-Channel** and esteemed AACC cooperation partner featured not only the whole event, but seized to opportunity for personal interviews and statements by some of the experts present at the event (to be watched at the following link: <http://www.monitortv.at/monitortv/website/egovernment.asp> ). The event was also covered by the **Tunisian National TV** that reported on the event on Tuesday, 5 April 2011 in their News Program.