

**Official visit of
H.E. Dr. Abdulkerim Yaseen AL-SAMMERAI,
Minister of Science and Technology of the Republic of Iraq, in Vienna,
30 April – 4 May 2012**



Meeting at the Austrian Federal Chancellery

From the 30th April to the 4th May 2012, H.E. Dr. Abdulkerim Yaseen AL-SAMMERAI, the Minister of Science and Technology in the Republic of Iraq, and his esteemed delegation came to Vienna, Austria, on an official visit. The delegation consisted of Mr. Emad R. FAHMY, Director General of the Department for Research and Technical Development, Mr. Ali HASAN TARESH, Director General and Member of the National Council for Public Governance Government and Representative of the Ministry of Defence, Mr. Majeed Sadoon JASIM, Director General and Member of the National Council for Public Governance, Mr. Hasan Abdulkareem SHAKIR, Director of the Data Processing Centre, Mr. Yahya Ghazi ABED, Chief of Cabinet of the Minister of Science and Technology, and further members.

H.E. AL-SAMMERAI and his delegation arrived at the airport Vienna-Schwechat on Monday, the 30th April 2012 at 13:40, where they were warmly welcomed by Dipl. Ing. Mouddar KHOUJA, the Secretary General of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC). In the very same afternoon the Minister of Science and Technology and his team met with the AACC at its headquarters where they received a presentation of the planned programme.



Briefing at the AACC Headquarters

On Wednesday, the 2nd May 2012, H.E. AL-SAMMERAI and the Iraqi delegation first had a meeting at the Austrian Parliament, where they were welcomed by Mr. Herbert SCHEIBNER, Former Minister of Defence and Member of the Austrian Parliament, who mentioned the historical cooperation between the Republic of Austria and the Republic of Iraq in different fields on parliamentary level.



Meeting at the Austrian Parliament

Afterwards the AACC led the delegation to the Austrian Federal Chancellery where they were welcomed by Dr. Manfred MATZKA, Director General of Division I (Protocol) at the Federal Chancellery, and Mr. Christian RUPP, the spokesperson of the Federal Platform Digital Austria. Mr. RUPP gave a fascinating presentation about the Digital Austria Platform and pointed out to the fact that it ranks among the best practices in Europe. In his presentation he told the present guests about the organisation, implementation, cooperation and coordination within the scope of Austria's e-government. Moreover he explained the e-government's structure and its cooperation with the Austrian Federal Chancellery, other Ministries, the Provinces, Municipalities and Regions and also with the Chambers of Austria. Mr. RUPP also illustrated the reference model of the unified access for administration and multiple e-ID-citizen-cards as one of the most advanced systems in the whole world. One of the model's overall goals is creating "one-stop-shop" portals; another one is the creation of the ELAK-back office in order to archive records digitally. The third important goal is to enable electronically delivered services concerning official documents. For this reason Digital Austria has created an application store in order to go along with new social media as for example Facebook, Twitter & others.



Presentations at the Austrian Federal Chancellery

After Mr. RUPP's presentation, Mag. Günther SIMONITSCH, Deputy Director General for Information and Communications Technology at the Ministry of the Interior, and Mag. Mike FANDLER, Head of the IT department at the Ministry of the Interior, gave an interesting and comprehensive presentation about central registers and their solutions. They mentioned the central register of residence which is also available as an application of the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the population census by means of e-register. Their main goal is to create one concept of signature for authorities & economy (e-government, e-banking, etc.) and thereby guarantee high warranties of security.

After a lunch invitation by the Federal Chancellery, H.E. AL-SAMMERAI and his team set out for a meeting at the Federation of Austrian Industries where they were welcomed by Dr. Veit SORGER, President of the Federation. On this occasion the Iraqi Minister of Science and Technology presented facts about the natural resources and economic development of the Iraq. H.E. AL-SAMMERAI, quote, explained that currently the oil production amounted to 2.6 million barrels oil per day (500.000 barrels oil for the country's own needs and the rest for export). However it is planned to increase this rate to six million barrels oil per day in 2016 which will contribute to the country's wealth and prosperity thus making Iraq to the country with the greatest oil reserves in the world. These oil reserves will provide the Iraq with a stable basis for a booming economy and investment possibilities in different fields for the next 30 years. And the Iraq needs investors or technical partnership programmes, above all in the field of the industrialisation process. The President of the Federation, Dr. SORGER, quote, recalled the cooperation between Austria and the Iraq and noted that the trade volume of the two countries seemed worth to be increased. He explained that the Federation of Austrian Industries was interested in cooperation with the Iraq and ready to support the process of industrialisation in a partnership. Senator Dr. Richard SCHENZ, President of the AACC and Member of Board of the Federation of Austrian Industries, mentioned in this context the visit of H.E. Dr. Michael SPINDELEGGGER, the Austrian Federal Foreign Minister, to Iraq in November of the previous year, where he was present too. He spoke of the very good cooperation atmosphere in the field of economy, but pointed out to some risks, especially in the field of security, hindering further international cooperation.



Meeting at the Federation of Austrian Industries (from right): President Dr. Veit SORGER (sixth from right) meets with H.E. Minister Abdulkerim SAMMERAI, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Surood NAJIB, AACC President Dr. Richard SCHENZ & delegation

In the afternoon the Iraqi delegation met with Dr. Gerald MURAUER, Managing Director of the Institute of Science and Technology Austria at the AACC's headquarters. Dr. MURAUER gave an appealing introduction about his Institute with the possibility for the Heads of the different departments of the Ministry of Science and Technology in Iraq of getting more information about foundation, structure and possible cooperation in the field of science with the Iraq. The delegation members carefully listened to his presentation and explained that there was a possibility of cooperation after checking the relevant documents.

In the evening a Panel Meeting with H.E. Dr. Abdulkerim Yaseen AL-SAMMERAI took place at the ceremonial hall of the Austrian Association of Engineers and Architects (ÖIAV) at the Palais Eschenbach, which was intended primarily for interested members and partners of the AACC, as well as of the Austrian Association of Engineers and Architects and the Austrian Electrotechnical Association (OVE). Dr. Heinz BRANDL, President of the Austrian Association of Engineers and Architects and AACC President Dr. Richard SCHENZ welcomed the esteemed guests and opened the Meeting with introductory words. H.E. Dr. Surood R. NAJIB, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Vienna, quote, explained the great cooperation between Austria and the Iraq in the field of technology. When the Iraq decided to create a Ministry of Science and Technology, the country tried to attract all know-how experts to work for the Ministry. These scientists, engineers and further experts all received a fantastic education and now try to contribute as much as possible to promote research. The Iraq needs support in the field of structuring research works. As an example he mentions the Mosul dam located on top of gypsum, a soft mineral which dissolves in contact with water, which is why the Mosul dam is unstable and in danger of breaking down. Dr. BRANDL acknowledged the existing problem and offered to make suggestions for the solution of this problem. H.E. AL-SAMMERAI promised to stay in contact in order to enable an Austrian commitment in solving the Mosul dam problem.



Panel Meeting (above from right): Speeches and presentations by AACC President Dr. Richard SCHENZ, Prof. Dr. Heinz BRANDL, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Surood NAJIB and H.E. Minister Abdulkerim AL-SAMMERAI with Secretary General DI Mouddar KHOUJA

Following the Panel Meeting, H.E. Dr. Surood R. NAJIB, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Vienna, had the honour and pleasure to invite the Iraqi delegation and representatives of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce and the Austrian Association of Engineers and Architects to a dinner.

On Thursday the 3rd May 2012, H.E. AL-SAMMERAI and his team went to a meeting to the headquarters of the OeSD Group (Austrian State Printing House) where they were welcomed by Prof. Reinhart GAUSTERER, Director General of the OeSD, and received a tour through the Printing House. In the course of this visit the OeSD Group presented its institution and its new innovations in the field of security, above all security documents as for example passports, ID cards, RFID applications etc. The Austrian State Printing House ranks among the five best printing houses in the world and offered its support for the ID-card-project in Iraq. The delegation members got an exclusive insight into the different process steps when creating security documents and also visited the laboratory of the OeSD Group.



Meeting at the Austrian State Printing House (OeSD): Welcome by Prof. Reinhart GAUSTERER (left photo / left)

In the late afternoon the AACC organised a meeting at Siemens AG Austria where the Iraqi delegation was welcomed by Dkfm. Reinhard PINZER, Chief Financial Officer of Siemens CEE and Member of Board of Siemens Austria AG. The Iraqi delegation had the chance to talk about possible cooperation between Siemens and Iraq in the fields of energy and engineering solutions (3D GIS systems, video wall control, RFID systems) and in the laboratory sector.



Small forum at AACC headquarters

In the evening the AACC invited to a festive dinner in honour of H.E. Dr. Abdulkerim Yaseen AL-SAMMERAI, the Minister of Science and Technology in the Republic of Iraq, and his delegation to Vienna's most prestigious Hotel Imperial. Dipl. Ing. KHOUJA, the Secretary General of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce, representing the President and Vice-President of the AACC at this dinner, thanked in his dinner speech H.E. Dr. Suhood R. NAJIB, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Vienna, for his great support in the course of preparing this delegation. The Secretary General said that, quote, the AACC had received guests from the Iraq three days ago and would see off friends and partners the following day. He talked about Iraq's history which was characterised by its important role as the centre of science and technology for more than 400 years during the reign of the Abbasids, while the Umayyads transferred much of the technology from Andalusia to Europe. These scientists founded the basis of the European Renaissance Period.

H.E. AL-SAMMERAI thanked Dipl. Ing. KHOUJA and the AACC, quote, for the organisation of the very comprehensive, but good visit programme. He also gave thanks to all the other participants including the Iraqi Embassy, the Austrian Federal Chancellery, OeSD Group, Siemens Austria AG etc and to Mrs. Dr. Maha Sami JASSIM for coordinating this visit.





AACC Dinner invitation at Hotel Imperial Vienna: Dinner speech by the H.E. the Minister / Group photo

On Friday, the 4th May 2012, H.E. NAJIB and Dipl. Ing. KHOUJA saw the Iraqi delegation off at the VIP Lounge at the airport Vienna-Schwechat.

This official visit of H.E. Dr. Abdulkerim Yaseen AL-SAMMERAI, the Minister of Science and Technology in the Republic of Iraq, and his esteemed delegation to Vienna was made possible through sponsorship by the OeSD Group. The Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce would very much like to thank Prof. GAUSTERER, Director General of the OeSD, who thereby enabled economic and technical cooperation between the Republic of Austria and the Republic of Iraq.

During their stay, the Minister and his delegation were exquisitely accommodated at the Hotel BRISTOL Vienna, a member of the AACC.