

**Report:**  
**9<sup>th</sup> Arab-Austrian Economic Forum & Exhibition**



On Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 the **Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC)** successfully organised the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of its periodic “**Arab-Austrian Economic Forum & Exhibition**”. This year, the AACC was pleased to welcome the **Vienna Business Agency** as its official partner for the events that were held at the prestigious **Festival Hall of the Vienna City Hall**, the headquarters of the Municipality of Vienna.

The Forum & Exhibition was honoured by the participation of a high number of prominent officials, personalities, representatives, speakers and delegates from both, Austria and the Arab countries. At the Opening Ceremony and during the day, the event hosted in total almost **500 interested visitors** from Austria and the Arab countries.



At the **Opening Ceremony**, the president of the AACC **H.E. Dr. Richard SCHENZ** festively opened the Forum in the presence of **H.E. Dr. Heinz FISCHER**, former Federal President of the Republic of Austria and the founding father of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce, **H.E. Kommerzialrat Nabil R. KUZBARI**.



This year's Opening Ceremony was moderated by **Ms. Sabine OHLER**, Head of International Business at Vienna Business Agency, and witnessed again the participation of the following high-ranking personalities and official from both, Austria and the Arab region: **H.E. Dr. Ahmad MAITEEQ**, Vice-President of the Government of National Accordance, Libya; and **H.E. Minister Prof. Dr. Wolfgang BRANDSTETTER**, Vice-Chancellor & Minister of Justice of the Republic of Austria. As a special privilege, **H.E. Senator Nael AL KABARITI**, the President of the Union of Arab Chambers was personally participating in this year's Forum. The Opening Ceremony was also honoured by welcome speeches from **H.E. Dr. Auday KHAIRALLA**, President of the Arab Ambassadors' Council, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Austria; and **H.E. Eng. Omar AL-RAWI**, Member of the Viennese Parliament & Representative of City of Vienna. The Secretary General of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce, **Eng. Mouddar KHOUJA**, also gave a short welcome note to the distinguished guests.



After the Opening Ceremony, a **Memorandum of Understanding** was signed by the President of the AACC Senator **H.E. Dr. Richard SCHENZ** and **H.E. Mohammed RAIED**, the President of the General Libyan Union of Chambers, to establish an "**Austrian-Libyan Businessmen Forum**" in order to strengthen the relations and to provide the framework for future cooperation in the fields of mutual interest.



Among the other high-level guests and VIP attendees at the Forum were **H.E. Dr. Mohammed AL-MAITAMI**, Minister for Industry and Trade of the Republic of Yemen; the chairmen and senior representatives from chambers of commerce from Libya, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Syria, together with official delegates from Iraq, and businessmen from Libya and Saudi-Arabia. Present were also Their Excellences ambassadors and representatives from Arab embassies, from the mission of the League of Arab States, the mission of the GCC to Austria and the international diplomatic corps.

At **Session I** of the Forum, the expert speakers presented their inputs on topics of “**Energy and Financing**”. The Session was chaired by **H.E. Herbert SCHEIBNER**, Former Minister of Defense of the Republic of Austria, who introduced the following panelists: **Dr. Emhamed DARWISH**, Advisor to H.E. Maiteeq for Economic Affairs, Libya; **H.E. Mohamed Abdulkarim RAIED**, President General Union of Libyan Chambers; **Ms. Maria MITTERMAIR**, Senior Vice-President International & Governmental Relations, OMV; **Mr. Tariq ALNASSAR**, Acting Assistant Director General, Private Sector and Trade Finance Operations Department, OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID); and **H.E. Dhia Jaafar HUJAAM**, Advisor to the Minister of Oil, Iraq.





**“Infrastructure – Food & Agriculture – Water”** were the main topics of **Session II** of the Forum. As a very special VIP guest, the Minister for Industry of the Republic of the Sudan **H.E. Dr. Musa Mohamed Krama HAMID** honoured the session with a special appearance and speech coming straight after a meeting from UNIDO to the Forum. The session was chaired by **Mr. Mohamed BEN YOUSIF**, Managing Director, Euro-Arab Business Council for SME, who gave also a short introduction to his project. The other high-level speakers of this session were **Dr. Mustafa AL-HITI**, Head of the Reconstruction Fund for Areas Affected by Terroristic Operations; **Dr. Zuhair Ali MAHMOUD**, Advisor to H.E. Maiteeq for Development, Libya; **Em.O.Univ.-Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr.techn. Dr.h.c.mult. Dr. Heinz BRANDL**, President Austrian Society of Engineers and Architects and **Mr. Mahmut GEDEK**, CEO VATECH Wabag.



**Session III**, chaired by **Mr. Sabine OHLER**, focused on topics of **“New Technologies”**. This session also had the privilege to introduce a minister, **H.E. Mr. Hussein Al Haj HASSAN**, Minister of Industry, Lebanon, among its high-level speakers. The other panelists were **Dr. Walter TESCH**, Head of International Downstream Business, ILF Consulting Engineers Austria GmbH; **Ms. Sally MAHFOUZ**, Planning & Development Manager, Global Entrepreneurs, Saudi Arabia; **Mr. Julian EL- JAAFARI**, EPLAN Software & Service GmbH; **Mr. Nandor RAJŠLI**, Leda doo Korcula.



The **Exhibition Area** parallel to the Forum was very well visited and introduced the **Arab embassies** of Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Sudan and Yemen. It also presented displays from the following **companies**: Borealis; Börseplatz; Domisol; EPLAN Software & Service GmbH; Herdin Media Design & Marketing; ILF Consulting Engineers Austria GmbH; Intrenex (International Renewable Energy Exchange); Leda Shipyard; N.A.B. Fellingner AG; Noble Soap Co.; OMV; Royal Jordanian; TU Wien (Vienna University of Technology); VATECH WABAG GmbH; Vienna Business Agency; and WKO Aussenwirtschaft Austria. Among the esteemed **sponsors** without special display were VimpeX HandelsgmbH; Rauch; and Red Bull.



Right after the Closing of the Forum & Exhibition, the AACC invited interested Austrian companies for a special **B2B-Meeting** with business delegates from **Saudi Arabia** and **Libya**. This initiative was very well received by company representatives, and offered personal introduction and networking with potential future business partners.





As a special media feature, the 9<sup>th</sup> Arab-Austrian Economic Forum & Exhibition was recorded live and published on air with a **live-streaming video link** on the **AACC's facebook sites**, offering all interested audience a participation in the event even while not being present in person.