



AACC

خرفة التجارة العربية النمساوية
austro-arab chamber of commerce
österreichisch-arabische handelskammer

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AACC Events & Activities

January – December 2016

01 December 2016: Signing of MoU with Iraqi- Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Mr. Firas Al-HAMADANI, Chairman of the Iraqi-Turkish Chamber of Commerce, headed a delegation to Austria and paid a visit to the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC). During this visit a Memorandum of Understanding in order to strengthen the collaboration and to provide the framework for future cooperation of the two institutions was signed. The Iraqi-Turkish Chamber of Commerce and the AACC decided to work together on mutual interesting projects. Throughout this meeting honorable memberships to the President of the AACC Dr. Richard SCHENZ and the Arab-President of the AACC Mr. Nabil KUZBAI were presented to them.

**29 November 2016: Participation at the 5th Arab-Hellenic Forum**

SG Khouja actively participated in the 5th Arab-Hellenic Forum in Athens on 29 and 30 November 2016 with the title: "Unelashing the Arab-Hellenic Potential". The Secretary General, of the Arab-Hellenic Chamber, Mr. Rashad Mabger, along with the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Harris Geronikolas, warmly welcomed the attendees and guests. H.E. the Ambassador of Libya, Mr. Ahmed Yagob Gzlall, delivered a speech on behalf of the Council of Arab Ambassadors, elaborating on the existing friendly relations between Greece and the Arab world, followed by H.E. Mr. Al Kabariti who, in his turn, commented on the role of the Arab-foreign joint chambers in enhancing Arab relations with their hosting countries and praised the instrumental role of the Arab-Hellenic Chamber for its work on the Arab-Greek relations.



During his speech in the 2nd panel on the topics of construction, building materials and energy, the AACC Secretary General Mr. Khouja focused on the development of oil price, explained the oil supply of OPEC and non-OPEC states and the significance of shale oil production. As an outlook to future developments he presented the topic of renewable energies and their raising importance.

24 November 2016: 25th General Assembly & 26th Board of Directors Meeting of the AACC



On 24 November 2016, the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce invited Their Excellencies the Arab Ambassadors and Arab Diplomatic Corps, together with the AACC's board of directors and members to attend the chamber's 25th General Assembly, together with the 26th Meeting of the Board of Directors at the prestigious City Hall in Vienna.

The President of the AACC Dr. Richard SCHENZ opened the meeting by welcoming all participants and sharing an expert's view over the current economic situation and developments in Europe, the Arab countries and in the global context. The agenda of the meeting was presented and the quota for the following election fulfilled.

The Secretary General Eng. KHOUJA informed the board and members about the position, activities and membership issues of the AACC as of December 2015 until November 2016. In the statement of the auditors, Mr. Albert KRONBERGER and Member of the Viennese Parliament Dipl.-Ing. Omar AL-RAWI certified the bookkeeping performance, whereas Treasurer Mr. Wolfgang KABUREK presented the financial report for 2016.

During the election a new Vice-President Eng. Karl-Heinz Strauss, CEO of the Porr AG in Austria, was elected. Mr. Strauss studied at Harvard University, at the Management Business School in St. Gallen and received his MBA from the IMADEC University in Vienna. Until 2000, he held various positions at Raiffeisen Zentralbank – including in the construction and real-estate divisions. He then founded Strauss & Partner Immobilien GmbH, whose best-known projects include the EURO PLAZA office park in Vienna. He took over as Chief Executive Officer of PORR AG in September 2010. Prof. Reinhart Gausterer, stepped back from his position as Vice-President, however he will continue his active role and supportive position in the Board of Directors. The AACC sincerely expressed acknowledgments of the support of Prof Gausterer, presenting a honouring during the Galadinner at the City Hall.

During the Session, the General Assembly elected some high-profile new members of the Board of Directors: Mr. Andreas LIEBSCH, Head of Exports, Lights of Vienna, Ms. Sabine OHLER, Head of International Business, Vienna Business Agency, and Mr. Herbert SCHEIBNER, CEO Scheibner Business Development GmbH. The AACC also welcomed Mr. Andreas RAMHARTER, Executive Vice President, ILF Group Holding GmbH, to the Board of Directors, who took over the position from Eng. Klaus LÄSSER.

In the Arab Board of Directors also new members were elected: Mr. Emad A.K. AL-MUHAIIDIB, Vice Chairman Al Muhaidib Group, Saudi Arabia, Mr. Leon ZAKI, CEO Lezako and Dr. Kamal Hassan Ali, successor of Dr. Mohamed ALTOWAIGRI, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs - League of Arab States.

In addition to a large number of AACC member companies and representatives from the Arab Diplomatic Corps - including Ambassadors that were present, this year's General Assembly was particularly honoured by the participation of Arab board representatives who were especially coming from abroad to attend this meeting: Mr. Nafez ALAYYAN, Member of the Board of Directors, Jordan Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Ahmed AL-CHIHABI, Chairman & CEO from Aleppo Pharmaceutical Industries LLC.

These successful meeting of the General Assembly and the Board of Directors Meeting with the elections of the new members and presentation of the annual report were followed by an exclusive gala-dinner that was organised in the historic and very prestigious festival hall of the Vienna City Hall.

22 November 2016: GMIS Summit, Vienna

The AACC Secretary General Mr. Mouddar Khouja held an opening speech for the GMIS (Global Manufacturing and Industrialisation Summit) which was organised by the UNIDO in Vienna. In his address in front of high ranking representatives from international organizations and diplomats he elaborated on the linking of the private sector and the process of technological innovations and industrial development. He presented private initiatives that focus on these issues. Furthermore, he showed positive changes in the region, mainly in the field of female participation in economy. The feedback for all events was very positive and the organisers were very pleased with the outcome. Representing the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Mouddar Khouja, said that rapid technological innovation would help to boost the world economy in both the mid and long-terms. He cited some challenges facing developing countries, noting the salience of the technological revolution for environmental protection, and the role of SDG-9 in that regard.



Mr. Khouja stated that the economic participation of the private sector would create an enabling environment (and in particular stability). He further noted the role of public-private partnerships, citing the Austrian model of dual educational partnership, which would be important for industrial development. Turning to social inclusion, he stressed that Arab countries were not only cradles of civilization, or oil and gas reserves. He had witnessed a strong and major role for women entrepreneurs in Gulf countries in particular, in several fields including medical care and human resources development. Mr. Khouja concluded that the Chamber of Commerce supported GMIS and will permanently support the work of UNIDO.

24 October 2016: Visit to HE Al-Husseini, Chairman of the Arab Ambassadors' Council in Austria, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan



On October 24 H.E. Hussam Al-Husseini, Chairman of the Arab Ambassadors' Council in Austria, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan received Secretary General Mr. Khouja in order to discuss the upcoming events of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC).

Secretary General Mr. Khouja invited H.E. in his capacity of the Chairman of the Arab Ambassadors' Council in Austria, to the General Assembly with this year's election and the Gala Dinner on 24 November 2016. An invitation was also expressed for the attendance of the 8th Arab-Austro Economic Forum on Oil and Gas "The Future of Fossil Energy: and the rising renewable alternatives" on November 25. H.E. was invited to address the guests during the General Assembly, as well as during the Opening of the Forum. Furthermore, Secretary General Mr. Khouja and H.E. discussed the procedures of receiving the Delegation from Amman during this time.

Moreover, the relation between the Arab Embassies in Austria and the AACC as an official institution, founded by the Arab League and the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries (GUCCIAAC) was discussed.

24 October 2016: Visit at HE Marafi, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait



On October 24, H.E. Marafi, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait received Secretary General Mr. Khouja in order to discuss the economic cooperation between Austria and the State of Kuwait. H.E. presented the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and their Publication. Secretary General Mr. Khouja asserted the readiness of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce to welcome H.H. the Director General of the KDIPA in order to strengthen the economic ties between Austria and Kuwait. The Secretary General of the AACC invited H.E. to the events in November: the General Assembly, the Gala Dinner and the Forum. Furthermore, the invitation was extended to H.E. the Minister of Oil of Kuwait, State Minister for National Assembly Affairs Dr. Ali Al-Omair, and interested companies.

14 October 2016: Visit UAE Ambassador

SG Khouja , together with Senator Walter J. Gerbautz, Secretary General of the Austrian-VAE Society and Ms. Gabriele Stowasser and Mr. Martin Gross, Country Manager of the Emirates Airline paid a visit to H.E. Hamad Alkaabi, newly appointed ambassador of the UAE in Vienna. During the meeting the economic cooperation between Austria and the UAE was discussed.

12 – 13 October 2016: Visit of Business Delegation from Egypt

On Wednesday October 12, a business delegation from Egypt visited the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce. Exclusive b2b meetings were arranged with representatives of required economic sectors (Vegetables & Fruits Imports, Mobile Labs) with the Egyptian businessmen. Eng. KHOUJA, Secretary General of the AACC, presented facts and figures and provided the businessmen with crucial information on the Austrian economy. The atmosphere was highly productive and new networks tied. The Egyptian Delegation was highly satisfied about the new contacts to Austrian companies.



On Thursday 13 October 2016 the Egyptian Delegation and Austrian companies were invited for a Forum organised by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber in cooperation with the AACC, moderated by Mr. Pierre PRUNIS. Senator Dr. SCHENZ welcomed the participants warmly and presented the facts and figures of mutual business. Mr. KHOUJA described the high position of the Arab Republic of Egypt within the countries of the Arab League and their commitment to support Egypt during the sensitive times of economy. He further emphasized the importance of the economic ties between Austrian and Egypt. The art of conduct of Austrian companies was defined by Mr KHOUJA as honest and direct. Mr. Emad El Din Elwy TAYMOUR, President of the Egyptian – Austrian Business Council, highlighted the long lasting history of Austrian and Egyptian cooperation. The input of Mr. Ibrahim EL MOSLEMANY, from African Arabian Bestfood, on the planned new capital city of Egypt gave a deep insight to the future projects and possibilities of cooperation. Mr. Martin WOLLER, Austrian Commercial Counsellor in Egypt, stated: “It is the right and best time for business with Egypt”. Because of the secure situation in Egypt. Mr. Markus HOSKOVEC, OeKB - Oesterreichische Kontrollbank AG, explained the various types of funding mechanisms of the OeKB and its benefits for both sides: companies from Austria, and abroad. Mr. Patrick VIERLINGER, Plasser & Theurer Export, presented an insight in making business in Egypt with its pros and cons. In terms of business it is very important and easy to build up personal ties. The highly interesting and informative presentations offered a broad picture of doing business with Egypt and its possibilities. Afterwards personal meetings between the representatives of Austrian and Egyptian companies were planned.

4 October 2016: Forum on information for the integration of Syrian engineers to the Austrian labor market

The AACC invited together with the Gesellschaft Österreichisch – Syrischer Ingenieure und Architekten on October 4, 2016 to a Forum, that provided information especially for Arab engineers that are new in Austria and ready to enter the Austrian labour market. The aims of this event were first to introduce Austrian institutions and second to allow for networking with important Austrian companies in the fields of engineering.



The highly interesting talks by representatives of Austrian institutions, such as the AMS (Public Employment Service Austria); the Ministry of Science and the TU Wien were important to get information on chances, requirements and recent developments. Mr. Eng. Mouddar Khouja, Secretary General of the AACC, welcomed the Syrian engineers and Mr. Em.O.Univ.-Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr.techn. Dr.h.c.mult. Brandl explained the importance of the Austrian Society of Engineers and Architects (ÖIAV) and historical facts of the representative premises.

Ms. Amira Pfeisinger represented the Ministry of Science informed the audience about the processes of nostrification and authentication of educations. Mr. Harald Karl presented the AMS and its regulations for entering the labour market in Austria. Mr. Koller from the TU Wien explained the system at the university and guidelines for enrolling at lectures. Mrs. Petra Aigner described the work of the Continuing Education Centre of the TU Wien and its possible lectures.

Former Minister of Defence Mr. Herbert Scheibner presented the initiative EARD (European-Arab Reconstruction and Development). Initiated was this project by KR Nabil Kuzbari, Arab-President of the AACC, and supported by well-known former Austrian politicians as well as Austrian and German companies. The aim of the initiative is to create environmentally friendly housing, made of so called mud-bricks. Besides the benefit of the local material, the low transportation costs are an advantage. Training-sessions for engineers are already taking place in Lebanon, and as soon as the situation in Syria & Iraq is calming down, the project can kick off.



During the second part of the Forum representatives of Austrian companies presented themselves in order to allow for personal networking afterwards. Some companies wished to hire foreign personal in order to reach up to 1% with a migration background. The companies stressed the importance to integrate people from Syria to their structures, as they take up an important part in the companies.

Around 80 persons participated in this event. Participants uttered their interest for a repetition of this event on a regular basis. A young Syrian engineer stated: "This event provided us with a new perspective on our integration in the Austrian society, and our participation in the Austrian economy."

30 September 2016: Birthday Celebrations honouring Arab President KR Mr. Nabil Kuzbari



On September 30th President Dr. Richard Schenz and General Secretary Eng. Moudda Khouja organized a dinner for KR Nabil Kuzbari, the Arab President of the AACC, due to his birthday.

Among the high-ranking guests was former President Dr. Heinz Fischer who came straight from an official visit abroad in order not to miss the occasion.

Besides the chair members of AACC, Mr. Henry Hafez and Dr. Reinhard Gausterer, former Ministers Dr. Werner Fasslabend and Mag. Herbert Scheibner, as well as Mr. Kuzbari's sons, Prof. Dr. Rafic Kuzbari, Mag. Oussama Kuzbari and Mag. Louai Kuzbari attended the dinner on this special day as well.

26 – 28 September 2016: SG Khouja meets with H.E. Dr. Dr. Abdul Rahman Abdullah Al Zamil

During his visit to Oman to attend the forum "Invest in Oman" organized by the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry which took place in Muscat from September 26th – 28th, 2016 the Secretary General of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce Eng. Mouddar Khouja met with His Excellency Dr. Abdul Rahman Abdullah Al Zamil, former President of the Council of Saudis Chambers and Chairman of Al Zamil Group.



They discussed the possibilities of deepening the business relations between Austria and Saudi Arabia. Secretary General Khouja took the opportunity and invited H.E. Dr. Al Zamil to participate in the 8th Arab-Austrian Economic Forum on Oil and Gas on November on 25th, 2016.

20 September 2016: Luxury Reception at Domisol



On Tuesday 20 September 2016 the AACC in cooperation with its member Domisol GmbH invited to a luxury reception at the stylish premises of the shop. The company Domisol stands for high-quality products in the fields of accessories, cosmetics and bags. high-class contact with customers. Its multilingual staff offers best services to customers.

On this special occasion new brands such as *Maurice Lacroix*, *Mont Blanc*, *La Prairie* and *APM Monaco* were presented to an exclusive audience from the Arab Diplomatic corps. The atmosphere was relaxed and the guests highly interested in the luxury products. A non-alcoholic sparkling wine from N.A.B. Fellingner AG and Oriental food was served.

1 September 2016: Visit of H.E. Mr. Faisal Bin Muammar, Secretary General of KAICCID

Newly appointed Secretary General of KAICCID Centre in Vienna, Mr. MUAMMAR paid a visit to Secretary General Mr. KHOUJA on September 1. H.E. was presented an exclusive Hijri clock, that is an exact replica of the Royal Clock Tower in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The Hotel Tower is topped by the largest clock in the world. Dials are mounted on all four sides and each has a diameter of 43 meters. They are illuminated by two million LED lights. The Golden Model was completed in collaboration with the architect Dr. Rasch. The creator of the original clock in Mecca, Mauthe, succeeded to capture the fascination that represents this landmark in the Arab World. The talks were fruitful and will build a basis for future cooperation.

**10 August 2016: Visit HE Khairalla Brodosplit Company, Croatia**

On Wednesday, **10 August 2016**, H.E. Aday AL KHAIRALLA, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Vienna, together with Secretary General Mr. Khouja payed a visit to the new AACC member BRODOSPLIT in Split, Croatia.



The representatives of BRODOSPLIT presented the shipyard and the company to the visitors and explained the procedures and innovations. BRODOSPLIT covers an area of 600,000 square meters and can build ships up to 300 meters. From design to delivery, the yard provides the whole shipbuilding package. Over the last 90 years it has delivered more than 450 ships comprising mainly of chemical and oil tankers and bulk carriers. Currently are Largest cruiser five mast sailing ship ever built, coast guard vessel, cruise sailing ship, dual Fuelled Container vessel, hulls and superstructures for cruises on Adriatic sea, river cruise vessel under construction. In addition to shipbuilding activities, BRODOSPLIT is also involved in civil engineering works: they build floodgates that will protect the city of Venice from rising sea levels.

H.E. AL KHAIRALLA was highly interested in the work of the shipyard and appreciated the welcoming atmosphere.

01 July 2016: SG Khouja held a Lecture on the relation Europe and the Middle East

On 1 July 2016, SG Khouja participated in the Crans Montana Forum in Vienna with the title: "THE FUTURE OF THE SILK ROAD COUNTRIES : Heading to the South! The Development of Central to far Eastern Europe requires a global international economic cooperation and more natural resources". The speech of Mr. Khouja elaborated on the role of Africa and the Middle East and their connections with Central to Far-Eastern Europe countries.



28 June 2016: Invitation at the Iftar of Minister Sebastian Kurz

Secretary general Mr. KHOUJA met H.E. Sebastian Kurz, Austrian Minister of Exterior, at the Iftar on 28 June 2016. The meeting was accompanied by addresses on the topics of migration, the most recent developments for asylum seekers and the foreign economics.

**22 June 2016: Presentation Messe Frankfurt**

On Wednesday, **22 June 2016**, the **Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC)** made a presentation on economic facts and figures on the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at an event of the Messe Frankfurt for an exclusive audience. Ms. Mona Attar, expert on the United Arab Emirates, informed about the economic situation and gave useful information for trading with the GCC region. First she presented facts and figures about the UAE and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, then focusing on the legal side of Austrian exports, such as labelling and other aspects. Afterwards, Mr. Dehn from Messe Frankfurt informed about the various trade shows in the region.

Around twenty representatives of Austrian companies participated in this event and the discussion afterwards. The AACC Member company N.A.B Fellingner GmbH sponsored sparkling wine without alcohol.

21 June 2016: AACC at WKO Exportday

On Tuesday, **21 June 2016**, the **Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC)** participated in the **14th Austrian Exporter's Day** of the **Aussenwirtschaft Österreich (AWO)** at the **Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)** in Vienna.

With some 3000 visitors, 35 exhibitors and all Austrian economic delegates present, this year's Exporttag was an important expert platform for informational exchange, presentation and consultation with companies, enterprises and the public.

Like the years before, the AACC's participation as an exhibitor attracted a high number of interested companies and visitors, who approached the AACC's stand for consultations, cooperation inquiries, information, network service and many other matters.

9 May 2016: Forum Oil Price & Currency

The Austro-Arab Chamber with the Economic Chamber of Vienna and in cooperation with Western Union, organised a Panel Discussion on the Impact of currency rates and oil price fluctuation on economic relations on Monday, 09 May 2016.



The whole-day event was attended by some ambassadors of Arab, European and Asian countries, representatives of various embassies, members of the diplomatic corps accredited in Austria and prominent representatives of Austrian ministries and institutions as well as a number of Austrian and Arab businessmen.

The Secretary General of the AACC Eng. Khouja opened the conference with a speech, in which he stressed on the great impact of changes in global oil and gas prices and currencies on the global economy and trade. He noted that the sharp decline in oil prices had a great impact on the economies of states dependent on oil production. This led these countries to change the priorities of their project schedule and to reconsider the implementation of other projects, and to take measures to adjust their budgets. SG Khouja also pointed out that some countries have resorted to their sovereign funds to save their budgets.



In his speech Dr. Herbert Stepic, Honorary President of the AACC, talked about the risks of linking local currencies to foreign currencies leading the global market. In this context Stepic gave examples of both Russia and Saudi Arabia in their capacity as the world's largest oil producers, pointing out that the Russian ruble was linked to the US dollar which caused many economic problems in 1998. While Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states also pegged their currencies to the dollar.

21-22 April 2016: “Annual Iraqi-European Business & Investment Forum”, Athens

On April 21-22, 2016, the Arab-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and Development organized the 1st edition of the “Annual Iraqi-European Business & Investment Forum”, under the theme “Iraq and Europe: Cooperation & Growth”. The Forum was held under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic of Iraq, the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Hellenic Ministry of Economy, Development & Tourism, as well as the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries.

This Forum was a result of the close relations and coordination between the Arab-Hellenic Chamber and its partners and main sponsors of this event, the Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce and Baghdad Chamber of Commerce.



Special mention and thanks went to the member of the AACC Board of Directors, Mr. Jaafar Rasool Al-Hamadani, Chairman of the Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce, Chairman of Baghdad Chamber of Commerce and Vice-Chairman of the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture for Arab Countries, who is behind the initial idea of holding this event in Athens, Greece.

19 April 2016: Signing of MoU with Crans Montana Forum



Mr. Quirin, Executive President of the Crans Montana Forum, visited Vienna in April and paid a visit to the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC). During this visit a Memorandum of Understanding in order to strengthen the collaboration and to provide the framework for future cooperation of the two institutions. The Crans Montana Forum and the AACC decided to work together on mutual interesting projects. Such an event is the Crans Montana Forum, planned in Vienna on 29th June 2016.

07 April 2016: Visit of Mr. Kempel

Mr. Willy Kempel, minister plenipotentiary and designated ambassador of Austria in Qatar, paid a visit to the AACC Secretary General Mr. Mouddar Khouja. They exchanged information on the country, and contact points in order to facilitate the support and exchange between the two countries. Mr. Khouja presented the potential of Qatar and elaborated on the possibility of an intense bilateral relation in terms of economic cooperation.

04 April 2016: Moroccan delegation visit

A Moroccan delegation, led by the Governor of South Morocco, visited the Austro-Arab Chamber in order to discuss future collaboration and to get information on Austria. Secretary General Mr. Mouddar Khouja gave a short presentation on the history, economy and the bilateral relations between Morocco and Austria, pointing out facts and figures. The meeting was highly productive and the atmosphere welcoming.

30 March 2016: SG Participates in OFID Seminar

Photocredits: OFID/Abdullah Alipour Jeddi

The Secretary General of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce Mr. Mouddar Khouja was invited to participate in a high-level seminar on long-term challenges of food security, organized by the OFID in Vienna. Mr. Suleiman AL-HERBISH, Director General of the OFID, opened the seminar by emphasizing the importance of energy, water and food for humans. Mr. Li YON G, Director General of the UNIDO, suggested a stronger collaboration between agriculture and industrialization in order to improve global food security. Still one in nine people in the world was suffering from undernourishment, therefore food security is essential for a large number of countries worldwide.



Ambassadors of the OFID Member Countries, Arab States as well as high-ranking representatives of international organizations participated in the seminar. The main speaker Mahmoud SOLH, from ICARDA (Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas) explained that the growth in world population, coupled with climate change and water scarcity had posed significant challenges to achieving global food security. As discussant, Dr Elouafi of ICBA (International Center for Biosaline Agriculture) stressed the need for innovation that should also look into non-conventional ways of food production, such as the use of non-traditional sources of water.

Diplomats stressed the necessity of the involvement of the private economy in order to establish food security. Secretary General Mr. KHOUJA evolved on this issue, explaining the fact that the private sector, although it possesses the technology, innovation and project related know-how, hesitates to invest in this sector. The mentioned countries are instable in terms of politics due to four main reasons: first the marginalization of the people and preventing them from a share in national resources; second the lack of infrastructure; third the lack of investment friendly jurisprudence and lastly the corruption.

Mr. Khouja suggested that countries with high demands in resources are required to encourage politics to allow the participation of the people, sharing wealth, resources and projects. He further proposed that national governments are required firstly to manage the basic needs of its people, second to launch programs that mitigate and manage the before mentioned risks. With regards to the private sector it should support the local societies and cooperate with humanitarian organizations. As an example served the OMV company in Austria, which supports the societies of the countries they are working in, such as Tunisia or Libya. The seminar was attended by approximately 80 participants.

16 March 2016: Visit of high-level Sudanese delegation



During the visit of Germany and Russia H.E. Mr. Ali Ahmed HAMID, Governor of the Red Sea State, Republic of the Sudan, also visited Austria and the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce. H.E. was accompanied by H.E.. Mr. Kamal Bashir Ahmed Mohamed Khair, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Embassy of the Republic of Sudan. Various investment possibilities in Sudan were presented, stressing the tourism sector in the Red Sea State of Sudan: the virgin coral reefs and the underwater world were explained and the historical sites were showed. These are the reason for extending the flights to Port Sudan by various airlines in the region.

Regarding the agricultural sector, the Austrian former Minister Mr. Herbert SCHEIBNER, and former member of the parliament, Mr. Gerhard HUBER, presented options of cooperation. Mr. Damir ZIBRAT gave an introduction of the company SCAN, which focuses on oil engineering. Eng. Ali HAMEED, CEO of Sky Danubia Expressed the openness of the tourism sector for cooperation. Secretary General Mr. KHOUJA explained the role of the AACC and introduced the facts of the bilateral relations between Austria and Sudan and the figures of the trade volumes. In the end H.E. Mr. Hamid invited the chamber with a delegation to the Red Sea State in Sudan.

14 March 2016: Meeting with Secretary General of OPEC

Secretary General Mr. KHOUJA paid a visit to **Secretary General of OPEC H.E. EL-BADRI** in order to discuss the current situation and global developments. Topics were the fluctuation of the oil price and its impact on the economies of the oil exporting countries, which has a core influence on the industry's structure and thus affects international trade substantially.

Mr. KHOUJA presented to H.E. the concept of a planned event in September 2016 and suggested a possible cooperation between the two institutions. The aim of this forum is to outline challenges, developments and forecast of the future of the fossil energy and to present innovative methods and technologies for boosting the related production profitability.

04 March 2016: Visit of Algerian Agency for the Promotion of Foreign Trade

The Algerian Agency for the Promotion of Foreign Trade send a delegation to Austria in order to discuss possible cooperation and future projects in Austria.

Secretary General of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC) Mr. KHOUJA gave a presentation on the history and economy of Austria, the bilateral relations of Austria and Algeria, and showed the figures of the trade volume and outlined possible sectors of cooperation. It was suggested to sign a common mutual Memorandum of Understanding aiming at the strengthening of a future cooperation, exchange for potential projects of the public sector and a dedicated partnership. The meeting was in a friendly atmosphere and highly productive.

26 February 2016: UAE – Austrian relations

H.E. Ms. Badreyya Al-Shehhi, Chargé d’Affaires of the United Arab Emirates Embassy to Austria, paid a visit to the AACC to coordinate the visit of a Delegation headed by H.E. Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansoori, Minister of Economy of the United Arab Emirates to Austria in 2016.



30 January – 2 February 2016: AACC participates in Arab Youth Forum



Secretary General Mr. KHOUJA was invited to present on the occasion of the **Arab Youth Forum** organized by the UNIDO under the patronage of **H.E. Dr. Nabil ElAraby**, Secretary General of the League of Arab States, in Alexandria, Egypt. Among the approximately 600 participants, high ranking political personalities were present: H.E. Mr. Sherif Ismail, Prime Minister of Egypt, Mr. Taizo Nishikawa, Deputy of the Director General of the UNIDO and other international representatives.

Mr. Mouddar KHOUJA presented the **Austrian Dual Apprenticeship System** in the first session which dealt with the question of conditions for creating jobs for the youth. The presentation explained the **collaboration of the private with the public sector** aiming at an education of the youth as highly professionals. His talk further elaborated on necessary steps to implement this system. He proposed access to a functional education and training, stressing the importance of the collaboration between the government, the private sector and the chambers of commerce.

28 January 2016: Secretary General visits GCC Permanent Mission to the UN in Vienna

During his first visit to the Permanent Mission of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to the United Nations in Vienna, Secretary General Mr. Mouddar KHOUJA sought the opportunity to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Dr. AL GHEILANI on his new appointment. H.E. AL GHEILANI elaborated with the Secretary General the objectives of the Mission and highlighted its activities with the UN Office and the European Union. Furthermore, they discussed potential ways of strengthening the cooperation between Austria and the GCC states.

21 January 2016: AACC Secretary General presents economic key figures about the Austrian Federal States to the Council of Arab Ambassadors to Austria

On 21 January 2016 the Secretary General of the Austro-Arab Chamber of Commerce **Eng. Mouddar KHOUJA** was invited to present an overview of the Austrian economy and the economic key figures of the 9 Austrian federal states to the Council of Arab Ambassadors to Austria. President of the Council of Arab Ambassadors, H.E. Mr. ALBESBAS, Ambassador of Libya to Austria, opened the meeting and welcomed Mr. Khouja.



Mr. Khouja presented the following economic data: the economic situation of Austria and outlooks for 2016 and 2017. He elaborated on the trade volume between Austria and the Arab world, pointing out the most important export and import products for 2014, and highlighted the influence of the oil price on the trade volume itself. Furthermore, Mr. Khouja examined the trade volume of the nine Austrian provinces and the member countries of the Arab League respectively, through a data comparison of the years 2013, 2014 and the first half of 2015. The report has drawn a brief overview of the political, social and economic factors of each of the nine Austrian provinces and their most important companies.

In addition to the economic report Mr. Khouja presented a draft of planned activities in 2016. Last but not least, Mr. Khouja insisted on including the speech he held during the Cairo Meeting in June 2013 in the report mentioned above, to highlight again the imperative role of the AACC network in Austria and its productive relation with the other Arab Joint Chambers in the private and political field.

The report of Secretary General Mr. Khouja created lively interest among the Ambassadors, followed by a vivid discussion. The economic report was handed over to the Ambassadors.

