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EU-Arab trade relations after the Arab Spring: The EU wants stability

Arab revolutions won't revolutionize Arab-EU trade relations but EU wants stability .

By Lena Odgaard, Journalist

The EU witnessed drastic changes in its own relations with the MENA-region as sweeping revolutionary winds changed the Mediterranean political landscape. Looking forward, the most important factor for the financial crisis-plagued EU is whether the new Arab leaders can provide the necessary political stability to foster increased trade and inclusive growth.

Geographical proximity and shared history keep the EU- and MENA-countries closely connected. In spite of – or because of - a history of European colonialism, Europe has served as a leading trade partner for North African and Middle East countries. The Barcelona Conference (1995) solidified trade relations through the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (FTA). The deadline for this FTA collided with the initial Arab uprisings in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt changing the Arab political scene dramatically. As such, due to the uncertain political climate, future trade relations remain uncertain.

Revolutions mean risks as much as opportunities

As the Arab Spring took down decade long dictatorships, the EU was criticized

for its tepid and reluctant response. But according to [Rym Ayadi from the Centre for European Policy Studies](#) in Brussels and Director of MEDPRO, a EU-funded research centre on 'Mediterranean Prospects', the idea that the revolutions will revolutionize the Arab-EU economic relations is misunderstood: "The Arab uprisings were simply an event that happened internally in the South-Mediterranean region. It creates more uncertainty and more uncertainty means both more opportunities and risks for the region, but also for its relationship with the EU."

Explaining that although Europe is without a doubt sympathetic to the Arab Spring call for Western democratic values, the 27 member state entity cannot go beyond sympathy as it does not have homogeneous interests and is currently deeply preoccupied in dealing with its worst financial crisis since the launch of the euro.

As such, Ayadi is pragmatic in her approach. From an economic and trade perspective, Ayadi hypothesizes the revolutions have led to a situation with as big of a probability for failure as it does for success:

(see next page)

BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CONVENTION

IN TUNIS ON NOVEMBER 28-30, 2012

The fair will have participation by 300 Tunisian industrial and service companies integrated in the innovation process. The fair provides national as well as international companies with an opportunity of finding partners, resources and support.

For more information visit:

<http://www.cat2012.tn>



“These events can build reforms – before you had an autocratic, centralized regime now you have the *possibility* to anchor a democracy,” says Ayadi. “Possibility, because it can also move towards a new form of autocratic regime.”

Based on the present situation in South Mediterranean, [Ayadi sees three possible developments for the Euro-Arab relationship](#); worst case is a widening gap and increase in tension between the two shores of the Mediterranean. Other scenarios relate to a Euro-Mediterranean *union* of a larger integrated region and common market, or a Euro-Mediterranean *alliance* where regional separation works in close association.

EU main beneficiary of trade agreements

Over the past 15 years, the EU has come close to realizing its objective of a free trade area in the Mediterranean (notably in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia). This has led to a significant increase in commerce between the Euro-Mediterranean countries. Still, [economists who have analysed the impact of the EU-Arab trade liberalization](#) have concluded that it did not contribute to the expansion of the MENA-countries’ exports to the EU markets (to a large extent because the highly restricted export of agricultural products - a main produce in the South-Mediterranean region).

[The EU maintains that trade relations are growing and expanding](#). It has specified a future strategy of opening up to further trade in agriculture and service and investment. In contrary to earlier, where Arab-EU trade agreements have primarily been on a bilateral basis, the EU is encouraging greater South-South trade integration and supported the creation of the 'Union for the Mediterranean' in 2008.

“If a small country such as Tunisia wishes to negotiate with the EU - a huge region – it is bound to loose,” Ayadi says and sees the changes in the southern region as a leeway for building stronger regional ties and thereby strengthen their negotiating position.

Above all, Ayadi concludes that the main challenge for the newly established Arab regimes is to create a credible socioeconomic model for growth. However, she fears the political elite within post-revolutionary countries won’t allow this to happen as they are characterized by inexperience and driven by what she describes as “negative factors” such as religion, which may incite further unrest

“In the case of political failure in anchoring a democratic transition it will have serious negative impact on growth and then negative impact on job creation. This will mean millions of unemployed which will lead to social tensions,” says Ayadi.

Though revolutionary winds are settling in some South Mediterranean countries, they seem to be catching on in others. In a Europe struggling to kick-start its economy, political stability among its southern neighbours remains a main concern. The EU will therefore look closely to the development in Arab uprisings and new leaders’ ability to foster growth when setting their future strategy for Arab-EU trade relations.

Background Information

Rym Ayadi

Rym Ayadi is Senior Research Fellow and Head of Research of the Financial Institutions, Prudential Policy and Tax Unit at the Centre for European Policy Studies. She is Coordinator of [MEDPRO](#), an FP7 funded consortium for prospective analysis in the Mediterranean.



EDITORIAL

**BY JORDAN
CHAMBER OF
INDUSTRY**

This issue’s editorial is presented by H.E. Dr. Hatem Halawani, head of Jordan Chamber of Industry (photo on the left).

Editorial

It is a great pleasure to have the Jordan Chamber of Industry as part of the Arab-EU Business Facilitation Network, which aims at promoting business relations and facilitating trade exchange among the member countries, providing grounds to further boost business and investment cooperation.

Seeking to enhance economic cooperation with our friendly European neighbours, the Jordanian private sector is looking to capitalize on the available opportunities, and to establish more contacts and joint ventures with counterparts in Europe. I am hopeful that during the meetings of the Arab-EU Business Facilitation Network, the representatives of the business organizations will explore means to diversify business cooperation and to discuss solutions to overcome the obstacles that hinder investment and trade exchange activities.

Jordan has a big advantage with a number of free trade agreements, the most important of which is the Association Agreement with the European Union. This is in addition

to the Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement and bilateral Free Trade Agreements with the United States, Canada, Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA countries). Apart from that, Jordan and the European Union launched negotiations toward a “Deep and comprehensive Free Trade Agreement” in 2012.

In spite of the excellent relations between Jordan and the EU, the Jordanian industrial sector faces many challenges in exporting to the European countries due to difficulties in realizing the requirements of the “rules of origin” as stated in the Association Agreement. This has been the biggest obstacle with our bilateral trade with the European Union. Therefore, we are committed to enhancing cooperation with our friendly European neighbours, as well as other Arab countries, who are members of the network, in order to explore means to further develop trade and investment relations and to maximize growth in our economic relations in the areas of

investment and industrial and technical cooperation.

One of the best practices of the network was to bring into focus the particular economic needs of the Arab countries, such as the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME’s), and the issues of supporting innovation, upgrading of skills, access to finance and marketing. The discussions culminated in a compilation of a “position paper” which comprises the member countries’ vision towards a more business friendly environment.

As a private sector representative we seek to maintain cooperation with our counterpart chambers and business associations in the EU and MENA countries. I am hopeful that the Arab – EU Business Facilitation Network will provide grounds to improve the business environment, and to promote economic and trade policies for the benefit of Arab and European companies alike.

I wish you a continuous success.

The new democracies in the North Africa and the Middle East? New challenges for the EU

By Peter Seeberg, Professor

The main novelty of the Arab revolts in 2011-12 is that following the disappearance of Ben Ali and Mubarak, the Tunisian and Egyptian people for the first time have taken part in free and fair elections. And regardless of whom have been elected the consequence is that state actors on the regional and international political scene will have to deal with new North African political leaders, who represent the will of the electorate. In recent elections large Islamist parties (Ennahda in Tunisia, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the PJD in Morocco) have won landslide victories, partly by capitalizing on moral and religious issues, but also simply because they represent the only well-organized alternative to the former authoritarian regimes.

From the North, first of all the EU and its member states, the outcome of the elections has been viewed with some skepticism. But being democratically elected the new parliaments and leaders represent political conditions, which the northern side of the Mediterranean has to recognize and develop strategies to deal with.

The fact that we for the first time have seen Islamists come to power in several Arab states through democratic elections does not indicate that we are witnessing completely unexpected and novel political developments. Within the last decades several researchers have envisaged possible new developments regarding the political role of Islamist parties, not the least in the light of the obvious success since 2002 for the AKP in Turkey. The Middle Eastern regimes have, through different strategies based on repression or inclusion, prevented that Islamist parties have been able to play any significant role in national politics – apart from Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Palestinian territories.

Partly as a result of the repressive regime policies we have seen tendencies at fragmentation within

and among Islamist political parties. However, it is obvious that the recent developments in North Africa contradict that Islamism should be on its way to ignorance. After decades of political apathy as a result of undemocratic political structures the Middle East – and North Africa in particular – is witnessing a repoliticization of its political culture and it seems that in this process Islamists are playing an important role.

The old regimes are still there, more or less apparent and more or less powerful. The old guard in the armies, the economic elites and the former political leaders present new (coalition-)governments with a necessity of tactical maneuvering, because they will use any internal split as a means of regaining power. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has in 2011 and 2012 had severe internal strife which partly is a result of different perceptions of the relation between religion and politics between factions of the party.

The fact that segments of the party want a clear-cut Islamist platform can easily lead to confrontations with the representatives of the old regime, as it could be seen in connection with the presidential elections. But on the other hand a “modernization” of the party in the form of tendencies at secularism might drive parts of the Egyptian electorate back in the arms of the old establishment – or into the hands of radical parties.

At the October 2011 elections in Tunisia Ennahda gained 37,04% of the votes, resulting in 89 seats in the Constituent Assembly. Even though the election results and the formation of government have left Ennahda in a dominant position regarding the shaping of Tunisia’s future, the new government will not change everything. The exiled long-time leader Rachid Ghannouchi represents a modern, reform-oriented tendency within Islamism.

But certainly the process has revealed internal disagreements within the party and radical Islamist groups outside the party, who supported Ghannouchi before the elections, are now dissociating themselves from the dominant Ennahda party. And developing Tunisia is not only a question of drafting a new constitution. The Tunisian public has

begun to lose interest in constitutional reform and insists instead on progress in the national economy, the creation of jobs and the fight against an enormous unemployment.

Apparently this new movement cuts across religious contradictions and represents a demographically complex mix of different groups of the Tunisian population, similar to that of the protests of late 2010 and early 2011. The protests should be taken seriously by the new Tunisian leaders, because inability in dealing with these challenges might lead to radicalization of the unemployed youth.

Challenges for the EU

Summing up, large Islamist parties have dominated the elections after the Arab revolts. And apparently the reaction in the North is ambivalent. The strong and well-organized Islamist parties and movements in North Africa have for years to some degree been marginalized as cooperation partners from the northern side of the Mediterranean. The EU has in its approach towards the MENA-region avoided touching on politically sensitive issues and for pragmatic reasons supported the incumbent authoritarian Middle Eastern regimes.

With the new political realities in North Africa this view from the North is no longer feasible. The EU will have to get accustomed to more binding forms of political cooperation with the Islamist parties and movements, which now dominate the political scene in North Africa. For the North this might be the most important lesson from the election successes of the Islamist parties in North Africa following the Arab revolts.

About the author

Dr. Peter Seeberg is Associate Professor and Director of Studies at Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark. He is also Director of the DJUCO-project, an academic cooperation project in Amman, Jordan. Peter Seeberg has published on EU and the Middle East, Arab nationalism, migration and security issues in a Mediterranean perspective.

EVENTS IN THE AE-NETWORK

Jordan Chamber of Industry

Launching of SME Technical Support Unit within Jordan Chamber of Industry

Under the patronage of HE the Minister of Industry and Trade, Jordan chamber of industry launched the SME Technical Support unit. The unit was established under the umbrella of the “**industrial and economic studies center**” within JCI and with the support of the ILO. The unit will provide all kinds of technical support required by SMEs.

During the launching ceremony Jordan chamber of industry also released the joint ILO / JCI report titled: obstacles of “**SMEs growth and the role of chambers of industry**” the report discusses measures to streamline the business environment in order to develop the SME sector and increase its contribution to production, employment, and export.

Training Seminar: Creating an Enabling Environment for Youth Entrepreneurship in Jordan; Supporting the Development of Young Jordanian Employers

This two-day training program has been organized by Jordan Chamber of Industry in conjunction with the ILO. The training program focuses on how to create the enabling conditions for increasing levels of youth entrepreneurship in Jordan. It also showcases a report prepared by the ILO upon JCI's request providing a general assessment of the conditions affecting youth entrepreneurship in Jordan, which has been used as the basis for the development of a training program.

Market Driven Innovation Management training program

The international SEPT-Program of the University of Leipzig together with the European Jordanian Academy Advanced Business Institute (EJABI) at the Amman Chamber of Industry and the German Jordanian University (GJU) offer the industrial companies in Jordan a unique opportunity to improve their innovation management on firm-level through this training program.

The objective of this program is to transfer the best practices of innovation management from German companies to the Jordanian private sector in order to assist them increase their level of innovation effectiveness.

Association of Lebanese Industrialists

Successful Initiation of the Training Program by CEP at ALI

Training workshops, provided by the Continuing Education Program (CEP) at the Lebanese American University (LAU), were initiated in April 2012 at the Association of Lebanese Industrialists premises.

Three very profitable workshops, “Succession Planning for Family Businesses”, “Private Labels Opportunities and Threats” and “Blue Ocean Methodology” have been successfully conducted, with remarkable participation attendance.

The training programs have contributed to the professional development of entrepreneurs by attaining the necessary skills for excellence in the work-place.

Partakers had the opportunity to be acquainted with each other on a deep and friendly level. They were also able to communicate their comments and questions generously to the lecturer. The overall atmosphere of the workshops was harmonious, well-balanced and fruitful.

Upcoming workshops designed to help the Industrialist develop skills and knowledge will be planned and presented within the next three months: “Leading Dynamic Teams”, “Aligning Supply Chain Strategies” and “Supply Chain Efficiency and Cost Savings”. For additional information regarding these training programs, please visit our website at www.ali.org.lb

Report: Reforms have facilitated trade

Annual report recognizes reforms within the Arab region to facilitate trade and points to a number of initiatives that can further boost the development.

Arab governments have had trade facilitation as an important point on their agendas during the past few years. According to this year's issue of the annual report 'Doing Business in the Arab World', which was recently published by The World Bank Group, Arab economies are world leaders when it comes to cutting the time and documents required for trade. The report states that there have been 28 reforms within the Arab countries between 2006 and 2012 aiming at making it easier to trade across borders.

Because of these reforms, the Arab region has made bigger reductions in the time and documentation required to import and export than any other region. According to the report, most economies that improved trading facilitation focused on introducing new electronic systems.

Electronic systems equal flexibility

The report clearly states that new electronic data interchange systems that allow traders to submit their documents from anywhere are making the customs procedures much more flexible, thereby reducing the time and costs to import or export goods. Half of the economies in the Arab World have these data interchange systems and Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan are among the countries that have recently implemented new or improved versions of their electronic systems to facilitate trade.

How to reduce waiting time

The report also emphasizes the importance of introducing risk-based inspections of imports and exports in order to make trade efficient and reduce clearance time at customs. Another way to benefit trade is through the increasing of border cooperation agreements. Such

agreements can greatly reduce waiting time at border crossings.

Transparency is the key

The report also recommends that governments promote competition among trade service providers in order to create lower fees and a higher quality of service. In addition to this, it is important that the countries improve the transparency in trade by providing easy access to documentation requirements in order to reduce transaction costs for exporting and importing. According to the report, only Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates publish documentation requirements online. The lack of access to documentation requirements contributes to delays for traders.

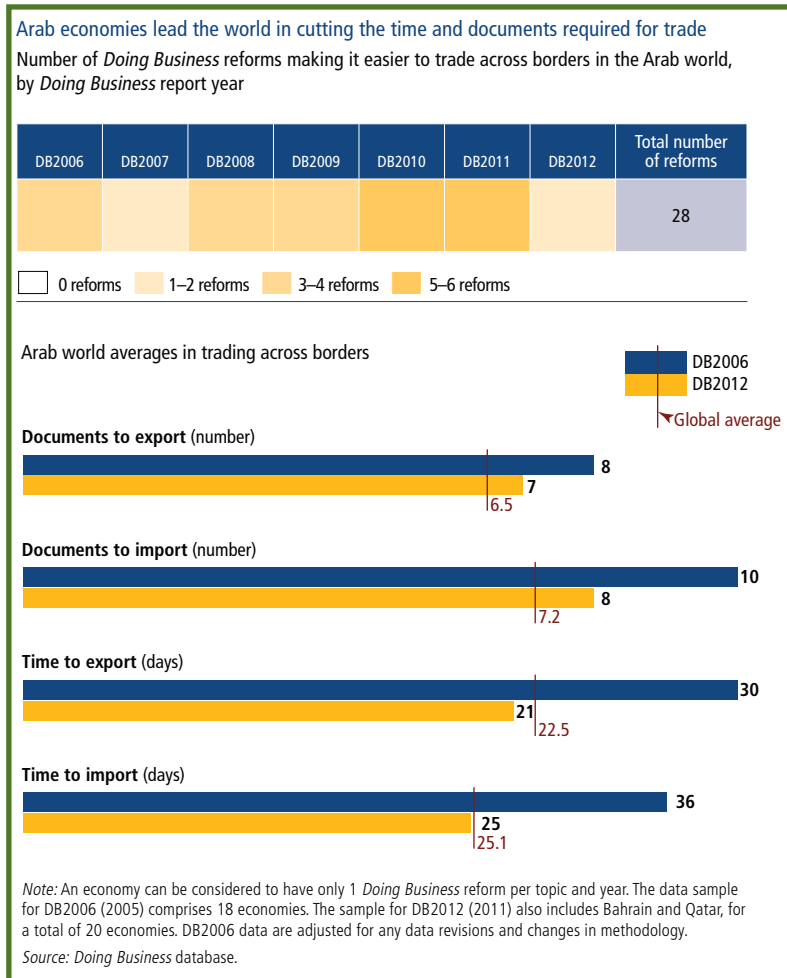
Not all initiatives are expensive

To sum up, the report 'Doing Business in the Arab World 2012' suggests a number of initiatives to

facilitate trade within the Arab region. Reforms during recent years have already reduced the amount of time and paperwork needed to import and export. But measures such as implementation of electronic data interchange systems, border cooperation agreements, risk-based inspections of cargo and improved access to documentation requirements can further facilitate trade in the region. And not all of the initiatives are expensive to launch. In 2010 the Palestinian Authority was able to reduce document preparation time for exports by 2 days through clarification of documentation requirements.

Source: *Doing Business in the Arab World 2012*:

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/reports/regional-reports/arab-world/>



Making the best of GCC-EU trade

Despite the financial downturn that has affected even the strongest of economies; bilateral trade is thriving between the European Union (EU) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), driven by preferential market access, cooperation agreements and the GCC's free zones.

By Heba Hashem, Journalist

The EU currently enjoys a remarkable trade surplus with the GCC, even despite the significant import of petroleum products. Part of the reason simply lies in statistics, with the EU and GCC comprising 27 and six members, respectively. However, there is another reason for the trade gap, namely that of GCC economies being exceptionally receptive to international trade. Unobstructed trade between the two regions allows for proper use of scarce resources, which is reflected in the choices available for consumers, and more so in the competitive prices of goods.

Energy-related trade flourishing

Recently released statistics put bilateral trade between the EU and the GCC at around €131 billion, with GCC nations exporting €56.8 billion worth of goods, and importing €72.8 billion. The bulk of GCC exports comprises petroleum products, mainly crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG), which doesn't come as a surprise considering that Saudi Arabia and Qatar are the world's largest exporters of crude oil and LNG, respectively.

"GCC countries are of major importance to the EU as reliable and secure sources of energy supply. A significant part of the EU's import of particularly oil and gas comes from GCC countries", Denmark's Foreign Minister, Villy Sovndal, stated in a recent interview with the Kuwait News Agency.

"We hope that soon it will also be possible to import large quantities of electricity from renewable energy

sources from this region", Sovndal added, highlighting that in Denmark, Kuwait Petroleum has an important role as a supplier of oil derivatives with a market share of around 15-20 percent of downstream oil products.

Identifying new areas

Meanwhile, the UAE was found to be the largest GCC importer from the EU, with imports amounting to €25.2 billion, predominantly comprising gold and diamond, machinery, planes, vehicles, power generation plants, transport materials, chemicals, and perfumes.



Doha by day; photo: Haydan Bryant

All six GCC countries benefit from preferential access to the EU market under the latter's Generalised System of Preference. The scheme, which allows exporters from the GCC to pay lower duties on some or all of what they sell to the EU, will continue until 2013 before undergoing revision.

Business between the EU and the GCC region is presently pursued under the 1989 EU-GCC cooperation agreement, and the recently established Joint Action Programme for 2010-2013, which comprises fourteen identified priority areas, including cooperation on trade, energy and the environment, transport, industry, telecommunications and information technology, education and scientific research, and culture.

The EU-GCC Energy Experts' Group has also agreed to strengthen cooperation in the fields of energy, including nuclear safety and security, natural gas and energy efficiency. All of this movement has occurred

despite the fact that an EU-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is still under discussion, which proves that the two regions have been willing to move beyond the past and introduce a more constructive element to their relationship.

Qatar's infatuation with Europe

Having gained a reputation for its spending sprees, Qatar has been acquiring significant stakes in European corporations. Over the past twelve months, Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), the country's sovereign wealth fund, was said to be the top buyer of European property, snapping up €3.2bn worth of real estate in 12 deals, according to a study by Real Capital Analytics. These deals ranged from bailing out The Shard, Europe's tallest building, to buying the London's Olympic Village and Harrods, as well as a shopping mall on the Champs Elysees in Paris.

Qatari funds have also contributed to the development of One Hyde Park and Chelsea Barracks property complexes in London, and in France, Qatar recently announced it will be



Qatar Holdings bought Harrods; photo: Wikimediacommons

investing €50 million in redeveloping and improving suburbs outside Paris. Beyond properties, the gas-rich GCC member owns 20% of the London Stock Exchange, 70% of the Paris-Saint Germain soccer club, and a newly acquired 20% stake in British Airports Authority, the Spanish-owned operator of five British airports, including Heathrow Airport.



Photo; www.colourbox.com

In one of its latest investments, Qatar Holding, an investment arm of the QIA, bought a 3% stake in Siemens, Germany's largest company by market capitalisation. This is besides the stakes it has in Royal Dutch Shell, the 17% stake in German carmaker Volkswagen, the 6.1% stake in Spanish utility Iberdrola, and the 11.5% stake in Anglo-Swiss mining giant Xstrata.

Other new European acquisitions by Qatar include Valentino Fashion Group and the Franco-Belgian bank Dexia's Luxembourg unit, making it the first euro-zone bank to receive support. Qatar is now in talks to buy a stake in the German department store chain Karstadt and shares in Morgan Stanley's commodities' trading unit.

Customs Union pending

Europe will continue attracting Arab investors to its profit-generating brands and high-quality commodities, while the GCC will continue to be a reliable source of hydrocarbons to the EU and a crucial re-export platform connecting Europe to the Far East and North Africa.

A few more steps, however, could boost trade even further, such as the full implementation of the Customs Union among the six GCC members, which has been under discussion for nearly eight years. Although this hasn't affected the overall trade environment between the two regions, economic integration would certainly provide importers and exporters a more stable ground for doing business.

There is also a need to unify the currency, eliminate customs barriers among the six nations, and build a railway network – all of which the GCC is seriously considering. According to the GCC plan, a rail network connecting the

GCC nations is underway and expected to be completed by 2017.

Lastly, free zones in the GCC are drawing some of the world's largest commercial and industrial organizations, as well as numerous small and medium enterprises, due to the incentives that are linked to such zones. Any goods entering these areas are considered to be outside the customs zone and therefore exempted from the usual customs control and procedures, leading to considerable savings. In addition, most free zones in the region are strategically located near major seaports and airports.

As the UAE Minister of Foreign Trade Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi stated last month during a World Trade Organisation event in Geneva: "What we need to see, not just in the Arab world but the whole world, is abiding by free-market policies, showing economic and trade openness".



Photo; www.colourbox.com

NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The ICC has published a new tool to fight corruption

A new anti-corruption clause is designed to be included in any contract as part of ICC's commitment to supporting the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). The clause can be downloaded free of charge from the ICC website, and it can support both small- and medium-sized enterprises and multinational companies in their efforts to prevent contractual relationships being affected by corruption.

"Corruption impedes economic growth, threatens the integrity of markets, distorts resource allocation, destroys public trust and undermines the rule of law," said G20 leaders at the Los Cabos Summit in Mexico earlier this year.

The anti-corruption clause is available as part of a suite of pragmatic ICC tools to help business drive integrity in business transactions. ICC continues to develop such tools that provide guidance on a range of related issues including gifts and hospitality, and solicitation.

They include:

- ICC Rules on Combating Corruption
- ICC Fighting Corruption Handbook
- RESIST (Resisting Extortion and Solicitation in International Transactions)
- ICC Guide to Responsible Sourcing
- ICC Whistleblowing Guidelines
- ICC Guidelines on Agents, Intermediaries and Third Parties
- Business Case against Corruption

Download the [ICC Anti-corruption Clause](http://www.iccwbo.org/Advocacy-Codes-and-Rules/Document-centre/2012/ICC-Anti-corruption-Clause/) (<http://www.iccwbo.org/Advocacy-Codes-and-Rules/Document-centre/2012/ICC-Anti-corruption-Clause/>)

Seminar on procurement and trade

ICC will be hosting a half-day seminar to evaluate the potential consequences a regulation on the access of third country goods and services to internal procurement markets, proposed earlier this year by the European Commission.

The seminar will take place at ICC headquarters in Paris on November 7 and bring together different perspectives on the impact of reciprocal access legislation in public utility procurement markets on global trade. It will focus in particular on ICC's response to the proposal.

Five panels of experts will discuss the proposed regulation's anticipated internal and external effects.

For further information visit: <http://www.iccwbo.org/News/Articles/2012/ICC-seminar-on-procurement-and-trade/>

Conference and training on the 2012 ICC Rules of Arbitration

On 21-22 October 2012, the ICC International Court of Arbitration and ICC Bahrain will be co-organizing the conference and training, which will be the first opportunity for all practitioners to acquire a comprehensive overview of the 2012 Rules.

ICC WCF 8th World Chambers Congress

The 8th World Chambers Congress will reinforce the global network of chambers of commerce, providing "opportunities for all". The 8th World Chambers Congress will be held in Doha, State of Qatar from 22-25 April 2013. Participants that register already now will receive a 20-40 % discount on their registration fees.



The Green Production Help Desk - ALI & ESCWA Partnership

On April 25, 2012, the Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) to implement a fully operational “Green Help Desk” in Lebanon (GHD) which aims to provide information and technical advice to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that want to develop their products and/or their means of production to fit with the principles and objectives of sustainable development, and enable them to engage in the emerging green economy.

Main services of the Green Help Desk (GHD):

- ⇒ Collection and Dissemination of Information
 - Green business opportunities;
 - National policies, programs, institutions and laws related to green economy;
 - Green funding opportunities;
 - Regional and international support programs and best practices in green production.
- ⇒ Training
 - Organize national workshops and training courses for trainers on topics related to green production sectors.
- ⇒ Networking
 - Act as a network of experts and national authorities specialized in the development of green production sectors.

The Productive Sectors Section (PSS) of the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD) at

ESCWA is implementing this project as part of its work program for 2012-2013 seeking to “Strengthening Regional Capacities in the ESCWA Region on Developing Green Production Sectors” through enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the production sectors, particularly SMEs, by disseminating best practices and building capacities, networking and clustering, and harnessing technology and innovation.

Although the duration of the GHD project is from April 2012 to the end of December 2013, the Association of Lebanese Industrialists will ensure the sustainability of the Green Help Desk beyond the official duration of the project within its premises.

For more information on the GHD services, you can contact Mrs. Rana Tabcharani Saliba, Head & Project Manager of the Environment and Energy Department at ALI.

Project’s Objectives:

- **Develop a better understanding** of policies and programs aimed at the development of green production sectors, and **disseminate best practices** in this area
- **Access to information** for decision-makers on opportunities of green production at the national and local levels
- **Capacity building** for the design of national and local policies and programs for stimulating and developing green production sectors

ARAB-EU Business Case Competition 2013

Guidelines

Who can participate:

Students and young professionals aged 18-30.

Length:

Up to 15 standard A4 pages equivalent to 7.500 words.

Submission Format:

The business case must include the writer's name in the file name and inside the document as well as contact details.

Participants need to explain their business idea and the business case. The judges who consist of CEOs from leading companies in the EU and MENA region, will typically be looking for: **a)** the innovation of your business idea; **b)** the problem it solves; **c)** the business case; and **d)** how you will make it happen in real life.

The business case must be submitted in English and follow the business plan template that can be downloaded at www.ae-network.com

Deadline:

The deadline for submission is 1st of March 2013. All Business cases must be submitted via email to info.aenetwork@di.dk

Winners:

The Quarterly Newsletter of the ARAB-EU Network will publish the winning first, second, and third place essays and the writers will be given diplomas and a 150 USD price money grant.

The first prize winner will also be invited on an all-expense-paid trip to attend the ARAB-EU SME Conference in Qatar, which will take place in September 2013.

NEWS FROM THE ARAB LABOUR ORGANIZATION

Release of a report on 'Employment and unemployment in the Arab countries' in Amman in Jordan

The report which had been issued by the Arab Labour Organization under the title 'The implications of the Arab popular protests on the conditions of employment and unemployment. The present and future' was released during a ceremony in Amman on September 24, 2012.

National Seminar discuss the impact of current changes

A national seminar was held on September 24-25 in cooperation between the Arab Labour

Organization and the Economic Council of the Arab League. The main focus of the seminar was the impact of the current changes in the Arab world on employment issues and to formulate a Arab framework for employment policies to achieve more employment opportunities, and work to decrease unemployment rates in the region. This is due to the fact that the Arab region have maintained the highest rates of unemployment at the level of major regions in the world over the past two decades, especially unemployment among young people and recent graduates.

REFORM GROWTH IN THE ARAB-EU TRADE

Tuesday 4 December 2012

10.00-10.30 Welcome and registration

10.30-12.30 Forging a new EU-ARAB Partnership for growth and stability

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.30-15.30 WORKSHOP 1: Specific instruments under the neighbourhood policy, including the DCFTAs and Rules of Origin

WORKSHOP 2: Specific instruments concerning food safety and veterinary policies in the Arab-EU trade

15.30-16.00 Conclusions and final remarks

16.00- Reception and end of conference

“What is the potential for enhanced cooperation between the European and Arab private sector in promoting jobs and investments? How open is the EU market to manufacturing and agricultural exports from Arab countries? What can be done to improve Arab-EU agricultural trade and discuss compliance with sanitary standards, white-lists of fresh produce exporters and early warning systems? Are European investors ready to increase their stake in Arab economies in order to create jobs and ensure growth in the region?”



Upcoming Business Conferences

World Future Energy Summit

January 15-17, 2013 in Abu Dhabi

“The Summit is staged at Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre and represents a business platform bringing together project owners and solution providers with investors and buyers from both the public and private sectors. The Summit is also an opportunity for everyone with an interest in addressing climate change to come together to share solutions, reach agreements and continue to make progress.

The Summit attracts world leaders, international policy makers, industry leaders, investors, experts, academia, intellectuals and journalists to discuss practical and sustainable solutions to future energy challenges.”

For more info see:

<http://www.worldfutureenergysummit.com/>

Arab Health

January 28-31, 2013 in Dubai

“3,700 exhibiting companies will be showcasing the very latest medical breakthroughs and technological developments in healthcare, as well as announcing ground-breaking new partnerships and collaborations within the Middle East healthcare sector.

At the same time, the multi-track Arab Health Congress will reach new heights with 18 CME accredited conferences featuring more than 500 internationally renowned speakers and over 7,000 delegates. The congress maintains its status as the largest and most important educational event of its kind.

The stimulating business-focused atmosphere is clearly felt by all during the four-day event with multi-million dollar deals and partnerships being signed onsite.”

For more info see:

<http://www.arabhealthonline.com/home/>

Gulfood

February 25-28, 2013 in Dubai

“Established over 25 years, Gulfood has a well deserved reputation amongst exporters for delivering spectacular return on investment. For the exporter seeking new sales from the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, Gulfood provides a trade and sourcing platform without equal, where international flavours find world-class business. Benefit from the region’s premier knowledge exchange from education, training, competitions & live events. Gulfood strives to inspire and inform.”

For more information see:

<http://www.gulfood.com/>

Saudi Health

May 12-14, 2013 in Riyadh

“Informa Life Sciences Exhibitions, organisers of the world’s most important healthcare exhibition ‘Arab Health’, and Riyadh Exhibitions Company (REC), organizers of Saudi Medicare Exhibition for the last 15 years, announce the launch of the new Saudi Health Exhibition and Conference.

This launch is based on the strategic collaboration between Informa Life Sciences Exhibitions and Riyadh Exhibitions Company. The Saudi Health Exhibition will integrate the knowledge and experience from these two events-industry giants to create the largest international healthcare event in KSA and to serve all aspects of this \$20 billion multispectral industry.”

For more information see:

<http://saudihealthexhibition.com/en/Overview/>

The ARAB-EU Business Facilitation Network

About

The ARAB-EU Business Facilitation Network is an alliance of 15 leading Business Membership Organisations (BMOs) from the MENA region (Middle East and Northern Africa).

The BMOs have pledged to work strategically together, promoting relevant policy issues within and between their respective countries.

The Network was launched in 2010 and consists of BMOs from 15 different North African and Middle Eastern countries. The Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) acts as a facilitating organisation.

The purpose of the Network is to create a platform from which business associations from the region can discuss the challenges for businesses and identify shared solutions and policy recommendations. A specific emphasis is on improving access to the EU market for businesses in the region.

The Network will contribute to the creation of a more enabling environment for the private sector in the region for the benefit of growth and development in general.

The participating BMOs have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work strategically together, promoting relevant policy issues within and between their respective countries and internationally.

The 15 BMO's are:

Algeria: [Forum des Chefs des Entreprises \(FCE\)](#)

Bahrain: [Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry \(BCCI\)](#)

Egypt: [Federation of Egyptian Industries \(FEI\)](#)

Jordan: [Jordan Chamber of Industry \(JCI\)](#)

Kuwait: [Kuwait Chamber of Commerce \(KCCI\)](#)

Lebanon: [Association of Lebanese Industrialists \(ALI\)](#)

Libya: [Libyan Businessmen Council \(LBC\)](#)

Morocco: [Confédération Générale des Entreprises du Maroc \(CGEM\)](#)

Oman: [Oman Chambers of Commerce and Industry \(OCCI\)](#)

Saudi Arabia: [Council of Saudi Chambers \(CSC\)](#)

Syria: [Damascus Chamber of Industry \(DCI\)](#)

Tunisia: [Union Tunisienne de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de l'Artisanat \(UTICA\)](#)

United Arab Emirates: [Federation of UAE Chambers of Commerce and Industry](#)

Qatar: [Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)

Denmark: [The Confederation of Danish Industry \(DI\)](#)

Annual meeting and report

Each year the participants meet to discuss the outcomes and prospects of the projects in the AE-Network. Last year during December 7-8th 2011 the AE-Network held a successful annual meeting in Copenhagen. This year the annual meeting will take place in Brussels on December 4-5th.

You can find the annual report of 2011 on the website of the AE-network;

www.ae-network.com:

<http://ae-network.com/ae-network/network-meetings/year-1-2010-2011/copenhagen-annual-meeting.html>

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