

## FIRST CONSULTING SERVICES FOR GOVERNMENT PROJECTS FORUM (ENCON1) KICKS OFF TODAY

**KUWAIT:** The First Consulting Services for Governmental Projects Forum (ENCON1) commences today at 7:00 pm at Al-Baraka Ballroom of Crowne Plaza hotel under the motto of 'Towards Professional and Transparent Consulting Services.'



Engineer Magdy Sabry

Engineer Magdy Sabry, the Executive Manager of the organizing company NoufEXPO, was pleased to note that ENCON1 convenes under the Patronage of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait. He said that His Highness is keen to support the initiatives that contribute

to the welfare and progress of Kuwait. Sabry said that he is delighted since Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and the Acting Minister of Information, will inaugurate the event representing His Highness the Prime Minister. Hind Sabeeh Barrak Al-Sabeeh, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs, will also deliver a keynote speech during the opening ceremony. Many government senior officials and leaders of key engineering and consulting services firms are taking part in this event. This large, prestigious crowd is due to the invaluable efforts of the Federation of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development and the Central Agency for Public Tenders.

### Unprecedented participation

Sabry said that ENCON1 succeeded in bringing a significant number of the most prestigious engineering offices and consulting firms in Kuwait and the region, as well as, all related government and supervisory agencies. He attributed this to three main reasons. First, ENCON1 is the first of its kind that brings together the public sector and the private sector, as well as, the supervisory agencies to discuss how to boost efficiency of consulting services in government projects. Second, ENCON1 discusses the values of professionalism and transparency as the governing methodology that should be adopted in executing government projects where consulting services form its base. Third, the Forum convenes in the wake of launching Kuwait's National Development Plan 2035 to build a New Kuwait. This long awaited plan promises a lot of prosperity to Kuwait and many organizations strive to be part of its success.

Sabry concluded his statement by extending his thanks to all the sponsoring companies, namely, ASTAD International, Gulf Consult, Dar SSH International Consultants (SSHIC), Pan Arab Consulting Engineers (PACE), Osama Bukhamseen Design Engineering and Consultants, KEO International Consultants (KEO), The Associated Engineering Partnership (TAEP), Projacs, Kuwait United Development and Project Management Company (KUD), GEO International Environmental Consultation Company, (GEO), Projects House (PH), and Linkage MENA. He extended his thanks also to all the participants from all government and supervisory agencies, and the organizing teams of the Federation of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses and NoufEXPO for their months' long efforts and hard work. He finally welcomed Kuwait's visitors who came from abroad and wished everybody a nice stay and a successful event full of networking and business development opportunities.



ISTANBUL: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of the Turkish Limak Holding Company Nihat Ozdemir and his accompanying delegation in Istanbul. —KUNA

## PRIME MINISTER HOSTS TURKEY'S LIMAK CHAIRMAN IN ISTANBUL

'KUWAIT EAGER TO ATTRACT MORE INVESTMENT FROM TURKEY'

**ISTANBUL:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Chairman of Turkish Limak Holding company Nihat Ozdemir and his accompanying delegation in Istanbul yesterday. The meeting was attended by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Turkey Ghasan Al-Zawawi. Limak is one of the companies contributing to development schemes in Kuwait, and is currently carrying out the new terminal project at Kuwait International Airport.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Prime Minister received head of the delegation of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Abdullah Al-Homeidhi and delegation members in Istanbul. The meeting discussed the role of Kuwait's private sector in boosting trade with Turkey. The meeting was attended by Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, as well as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, as well as Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan.

### More investment

Roudhan on Friday called on Turkish investors to tap into the promising opportunities in his country's economic development plan. Kuwait's plan to become a regional commercial and financial hub includes ambitious projects that provide ample opportunities for Turkish investors, he said.

Roudhan made the comments in a speech to the Islamic Finance News (IFN) Turkey Forum 2017. The forum, being held at Crowne Plaza Istanbul Oryapark, gathered Kuwait's Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh, Turkish Minister of Economy Nihat Zeybekci and Board Chairman of Borsa Istanbul Himmet Karadag as well as senior economic decision-makers and business leaders from both countries. The Kuwaiti-Turkish relations are poised to open new horizons for the partnership marked with prosperity and mutual benefit thanks to the huge potentials of both economies, Roudhan said.

Turkey enjoys a resilient economy and unique geographical location that



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with head of the delegation of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Abdullah Al-Homeidhi.

provides gateway for Kuwaiti investors to Europe, he noted. The State of Kuwait is proud of open economic policy and deep-rooted relationship with Turkey which was strengthened by numerous pacts in the economic and commercial areas. The bilateral trade volume hit \$1.28 billion last year with the Kuwaiti exports to Turkey amounting to \$846 million and the imports worth \$431 million, the minister said, voicing hope that the trade volume will rise to \$1.5 billion by the end of 2017. Kuwait is Turkey's largest investor from the Gulf region in the real property sector. Kuwaiti investors own more than 6,000 real property, including 1,640 that were bought in 2016.

Turkey is the 14th largest exporter to Kuwait in Q3-2016 with \$120 million-worth exports and the 15th largest importer from Kuwait with nearly \$19 million imports. A total of 280 Kuwaiti investors do business in Turkey in addition to 388 branches of Kuevty-Turk Bank - a private joint venture of where Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has 62.24 percent stake.

The total value of Kuwaiti direct investment in Turkey amounts to \$1.7 billion, the minister went on. On the other hand, Turkish companies invest in 30 projects in Kuwait, including the project to upgrade Kuwait International Airport where Limak Construction was

awarded a \$6.3 billion worth contract.

### Remarkable growth

Turkish minister of economy said the economic partnership with Kuwait grew remarkably in the recent years thanks to the top-level visit exchanges. Zeybekci noted, in his address to the gathering, that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan plans to visit Kuwait soon and His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will visit Turkey in return.

Turkey strives to become the world's second fastest growing economy after its exports hit \$170 billion, he said, voicing hope that the trade exchanges with Kuwait will grow further this year and meet the aspirations of both sides. Turkey and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states are working on a free trade agreement, Zeybekci added. In later statements on the sidelines of the forum, Roudhan praised Turkey as a strategic economic depth for Kuwait. He called on investors from the GCC states to seize the promising chances in the fast-growing economy of Turkey. The Kuwaiti minister lauded the outcomes of the recent visit to Ankara by His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, noting that economic issues featured prominently on the agenda of the visit. —KUNA

### Local Spotlight

## KURDISTAN, THE OPEN FILE



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Iraqi Kurdistan, officially called the Kurdistan Region by the Iraqi constitution, is a proto-state located in the north of Iraq and constitutes the country's only autonomous region, with Irbil as its recognized capital. This week, the subject of Kurdistan took headlines of Arab news outlets. The Ministerial Council of the Arab League issued a resolution rejecting the referendum on the independence of the Kurdistan region from Iraq at a time the Iraqi parliament voted on September 12 to reject the referendum on the secession of the Kurdistan region.

The official spokesman of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry stated that the rejection came because the request is against the Iraqi constitution and to preserve the unity of Iraq, especially that the state's unity is a key factor for the security and stability of the region and the ability of its countries and peoples to confront terrorism.

I think the independence of Kurdistan is not a dream or illusion, but a file that has been open for years, and today, the Iraqi vote came to end all speculations and, probably, hopes.

Massoud Barzani, head of the Kurdistan region of Iraq, said in a previous interview with the Washington Post that establishing an independent state is the goal of the Kurdistan revolution since its launch against former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in the 1990s. The Kurdistan Democratic Party believes it is difficult to coexist between the central governments in Baghdad and the region in Irbil due to the growing problems between the two parties on financial and oil dues, which prompts the Kurds to insist on complete secession from Iraq. But the crisis of the disputed areas in the Nineveh Plain, Sinjar and Kirkuk will stand in the way of the Kurdish dream. Clearly, the region wants to annex these areas to its borders, while Baghdad refuses to give them up, which may prolong the period before the sun rises over the independent Kurdish state.

I think the subject of the independence of Kurdistan has two sides, the first supports independence and the other rejects the independence, and all have logical reasons. Yes, the Kurds have the right to hope to have an independent state, and every people of the world have the right of self-determination because they have suffered greatly from the former regime.

On the other hand, the current Iraqi regime sees that the referendum is unconstitutional. The fact that Iraq is one unit, coupled with the argument that such request threatens civil peace and regional security, besides being rejected by the Iraqi parliament in Baghdad, are justified too. The American, Iranian and Turkish stands were clear. All have different reasons. Everyone fears that the independence of the Kurds may be used against the regime in Baghdad. It was clear that the Arab countries too do not support the division of Iraq and the independence of the Kurds because there are common borders and outstanding issues. The area already is facing many challenges right now. I believe that Iraq is going through difficult circumstances now in many aspects, especially in terms of combating terrorism and preserving of the country's wealth and borders. Therefore, preserving the unity of the country and the constitution are required, appropriate and even wanted in these current situations, and I believe that the timing of the discussion is not proper to give the Kurds what they want or wish.

I think that the international consensus to reject the referendum was correct, and this may not be what the Kurds want to hear now, but I guess consideration of the subject will remain open, talks will not stop and the Kurdish file will not close any sooner, at least from the Kurds' side.

## GERMANY PRAISES KUWAITI INITIATIVE ON GULF CRISIS

### MEPs LAUD KUWAIT'S ROLE AS REGIONAL MEDIATOR

**BERLIN/BRUSSELS:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani lauded the Kuwaiti initiative for resolving the Gulf crisis. The German Government supports His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's efforts for solving the crisis, said Merkel at a joint news conference with the Sheikh Tamim on Friday.

Berlin, she added, would continue to encourage the Kuwaiti leadership to pursue the mediation efforts, also underlining necessity to find a peaceful solution to the crisis, involving Qatar on one side and Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt on the other.

Chancellor Merkel viewed positively Qatar's readiness to sit at the negotiating table to find a settlement to the issue, hoping that a fundamental solution would be reached. The Qatari Emir expressed support for the Kuwaiti efforts and gratitude to the chancellor for her backing at this level, too.

Meanwhile, a number of European lawmakers expressed their great admiration for Kuwait's roles as regional mediator and global humanitarian player during a series of meetings with Kuwait's Ambassador to Belgium, European Union, and Luxembourg, Jaseem Al-Budaiwi.

Ambassador Budaiwi said that he met seven Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)

and discussed with them ways to strengthen ties and cooperation between Kuwait and the European Parliament. "The purpose of my meetings with the MEPs was to find ways to enhance Kuwait's relationship with the European Parliament and discuss issues of common interests and find common grounds on regional and international issues," he said. He met the MEPs from the biggest political groups including the European Peoples Party (EPP), the Socialists and Democrats (S&D), the Liberals (ALDE), the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR).

They were all very aware of Kuwait's role in helping countries like Syria, Yemen, and Iraq and other nations in need, he noted. "They praised Kuwait's democratic process, its human rights record, its constitution, its freedom of speech. It was a very positive meeting which set the ground for developing bilateral relations," stressed Ambassador Budaiwi.

Ambassador Budaiwi and the MEPs also discussed Kuwait's Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement with the European Union and how the EP can play a role in implementing this important agreement and making good use of it. "The common view that I heard from everybody was how to enhance the cooperation between Kuwait and the European Parliament. They also expressed their wish to visit Kuwait as soon as the opportunity was given," he said.

Ambassador Budaiwi briefed the MEPs on Kuwait's good relations in the political, economic, military, energy, and educational fields with all the 28 EU member states. He said over 3,000 Kuwaiti students were studying in European universities. The MEPs also expressed interest in sending delegations from their political groups to visit Kuwait to meet the leadership, government officials and parliamentarians to enhance Kuwait-Europe ties. —KUNA



BRUSSELS: Kuwait's Ambassador to Belgium, European Union, and Luxembourg, Jaseem Al-Budaiwi meets with a Member of the European Parliament. —KUNA



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani shake hands at a joint news conference. —KUNA

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