

غرفة التجارة العربية الايرلندية
Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce



30th
ANNIVERSARY
1987 - 2017

ANNUAL
REPORT
2017



The Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce

The Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce (AICC) was founded in 1987 to promote and support the growth and development of trade and commercial relations between the Republic of Ireland and the Arab countries. The Chamber was established under the auspices of the General Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, with its headquarters in Beirut, and is affiliated with the Arab League and Chambers Ireland.

The AICC offers a range of specialist services to support Irish exporters in doing business with the Arab countries, and to help Arab enterprises to do business in Ireland.

We fulfil our mission through the delivery of a range of unique services to Irish exporting companies and through the provision of information, advice, introductions, connections and business leads to companies in Ireland and in the Arab markets.

Collectively, the Arab markets are the most important trading block for indigenous Irish exporters outside of Europe and North America, and their significance grows year by year. They represent attractive markets for Irish exporters for various reasons: they import many of the products and services which Irish companies can supply competitively; they have considerable resources to fund their imports; their rising population causes demand to grow year after year; and, geographically, they are not far away.

All Irish exporters to the Arab markets are clients of our Chamber, and they rely on our unique services to underpin their business in the region. Key among these services are the provision of our AICC Certificates of Origin as required by the Arab countries; the Certification and Legalisation of all types of commercial documents, regulatory and corporate affairs documentation and personal documentation; and the delivery of a technical translation service (all languages covered).

Our Chamber also organises various events throughout the year to welcome visiting delegations, to deliver important information, to mark special occasions and to facilitate networking and interaction between our members and clients.

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CEO'S REPORT

The Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce is proud to celebrate 30 years in business – an achievement that could not have been possible without a number of variables: the unerring support and commitment of our past and present employees; the work of the founding AICC directors, whose vision from the Chamber's inception has proved to be wonderfully prescient; the current Irish and Arab directors, who have worked together to steer the organisation through a particularly testing economic climate; and, last but by no means least, the Arab Embassy and, of course, the many clients and members of the Chamber for their continued belief in what we, as a Chamber, have to offer in guaranteeing excellence in the service that we have been proud to offer over the past three decades and counting.

While there is much to celebrate, we must look forward as well as back. To this end, all of us in the Chamber will continue to serve to the very best of our abilities all our members and clients, and guarantee the excellent service for which we have become renowned.

Looking towards the short- and longer-term future, Irish-based companies are undoubtedly facing a huge challenge as the UK works on transitioning itself out of the European Union. While Brexit will present opportunities, as UK-based companies look to Ireland to retain a base within the single market, it is also of concern for companies whose main trading partner is the UK.

While Irish exports to 20 Arab countries actually fell from 2015 to 2016, down by 11 per cent to €2.2 billion, hit by falling exports to two of the largest markets, Saudi Arabia (-28%) and the United Arab Emirates (-13%), the region continues to present significant opportunities for increased trade relations.

And, with the UK's departure from the European Union over the next two years, it's likely that Irish exports to the region may even increase further, as Irish companies look to expand their geographical reach and reduce dependence on the UK market.

Looking to capitalise on these opportunities, twenty Irish companies attended the GulFood exhibition held in Dubai in February 2016, while also this year, food buyers from Spinneys, a high-end supermarket chains in United Arab Emirates which already stocks Irish brands such as Clonakilty Pudding and Glenisk Yoghurts, and Fresh Express, a major distributor, are to visit Ireland in order to source additional product.

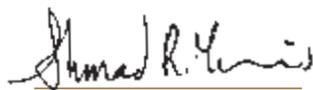
Trade of course, goes both ways. Imports from Arab countries to Ireland fell back somewhat in 2016, declining by 4 per cent to €184 million, also hit by a decline in trade with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, imports from countries like Morocco (+38%) and Tunisia (+79%) continue to grow strongly.

Earlier this year, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine, Michael Creed, visited Riyadh and signed an agreement to enable Saudi Arabia to enjoy enhanced access to Irish beef. While the ramifications have not yet have time to be felt, the deal will add processed, cooked, minced and bone-in-beef to the products that can be exported to Saudi Arabia, and it is widely expected that this serve as a fillip for exports to the country.

Such developments come against a background of a similar decline in trade – albeit a more moderate one – between trade from across the European Union to the Gulf Cooperation Council. Figures from the European Commission indicate that EU-GCC trade grew steadily between 2006 and 2016, with total trade up by 53 per cent over the ten-year period, peaking in 2013 – corresponding to the peak of oil prices. However, during 2016, trade also fell, declining to €100 billion, down from approximately €110 billion in 2015.

Looking into 2017, the Gulf region is expected to benefit from strengthening global demand. However, the price of oil continues to weigh heavy on the region, as cuts in oil production in countries such as Saudi Arabia exerts significant impact. Austerity measures, which have been introduced in countries such as the United Arab Emirates, may also dampen demand. The World Bank, meanwhile, has asserted in its recent Spring outlook on the region that there exist several risks to the growth outlook, including further declines in oil prices.

The AICC would like to thank and acknowledge the assistance and support we received in 2014 from the General Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce, the Arab League, Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia, AICC staff, the Arab Embassies in Dublin and London and from our directors. We would also like to thank all our members and clients for their continued support. ■



AHMAD R. YOUNIS
SECRETARY-GENERAL & CEO

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

30 YEARS: LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD...

This is a milestone year for the Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce – the 30th anniversary of the Chamber's opening for business on Monday, 18 May, 1987 (there is a more detailed account of the Chamber's formation and progress since then later in this report). At that time, I was the Assistant Chief Executive, Marketing Services, at Coras Trachtala/Irish Export Board (CTI) and, in that capacity, had the opportunity to help and support the establishment of the new chamber, especially by the transfer over to it of CTT's certification and legalisation services for the Arab countries, which it had been providing to exporters for many years in the absence of such a chamber in Ireland. I was invited to join the board of the new Chamber, and I attended its first meeting on Tuesday 12 May, 1987 at the Chamber's modest new office in Lower Mount Street, Dublin. I have had the honour to serve on the board since then, and as Chairman for the past four years.

Looking Back

The past 30 years have seen much change in Ireland's trading and commercial links with the Arab world. The value of merchandise exports has risen from €372m in 1978 to €2.25 billion in 2016. When the value of service exports is included, these figures double.

The number of Irish companies doing regular business in the region has grown from around 40 then to approximately 400 today.

The products exported have changed from predominantly meat, live cattle, dairy products and office machines to pharmaceuticals, chemicals, ICT products and services, medical devices, financial services, education, healthcare and many more. Exports from the agrifood sector have continued to grow and the wider range of products now shipped reflects the huge advances made in the industry in Ireland over the past three decades. Imports for the Arab countries over the years have fluctuated and still consist mainly of petroleum products, fruit and vegetables, textiles, plastics and fertilizers.

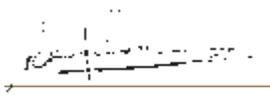
Looking Forward

The Arab markets now represent one of the most important trading blocks for Ireland, after Europe and North America. Looking at the next 30 years, we can expect that their importance will continue to grow, regardless of the concerns currently being expressed about protectionism and its possible impact on international trade. There are some key fundamental economic reasons why the Arab markets will continue to represent significant trade and investment opportunities for Ireland in the decades ahead:

- Population growth: The population of the Arab countries is forecast to grow from 360m at present to 630m by 2050. That represents an additional 270m consumers. The population of the EU will decline to around 450m, or 180m fewer consumers, than the Arab markets by 2050.
- Oil & Gas reserves: Over 50% of the world's oil and gas reserves are located in the Arab countries and, at current production levels, will last well into the next century. While good progress is being made in advancing non-hydrocarbon sources of energy, there will be a continuing global demand for oil and gas for many decades to come. This will continue to provide the financial resources to support the ongoing infrastructural and social development plans of the oil exporting countries with their associated demand for a wide array of goods and services.
- Propensity to import: Due to their geographic, climatic and industrial development conditions, the Arab markets have, and will continue to have, a high propensity to import much of the goods and services they need, and they have the resources to pay for them. With growing affluence and rising disposable income, the range of products and services required, and the opportunities to invest, will expand greatly in the decades ahead.
- Ireland can supply and compete: Many Irish companies are already trading successfully in the region, confirming that we have the products and services which are in demand and which we can supply competitively. Furthermore, there is now an impressive – and rapidly growing – population of skilled professionals in Irish companies who have experience of doing business in the region. There is and strong cultural affinity between the Irish and Arabs, and the development of close personal relationships over the years provides a solid and long-lasting basis on which to grow, deepen and expand our bi-lateral commercial linkages.
- Sectoral opportunities: Some of the main areas in which we can expect continued growth include agrifood, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, medical equipment and medical services, software applications and services, telecommunications, education and training, construction related services and products, tourism, financial services, multi-media technologies and services, and renewable energy technologies. This is likely to be added to by various new specialist products and services that have not yet been imagined or developed, but which certainly will be over the next three decades, and which enterprising Irish companies can be expected to create and supply.

The Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce will adapt, develop and change in response to the needs of its clients as they, in turn, adapt to the changing market requirements ahead, just as we have done over our first 30 years.

I am confident that the Arab markets will continue to offer significant opportunities for new Irish businesses as they internationalise, and will remain one of the key market areas for Ireland over the next 30 years. ■



JOE GEOGHEGAN
CHAIRMAN



Overview of AICC Documentation and Services

The AICC provides a one-stop solution for our clients, specialising in processing export documentation, regulatory affairs and legal affairs documentation. Our expert team works with individuals, SMEs and major corporations in Ireland and internationally.

THE CHAMBER REPRESENTS THE FOLLOWING ARAB COUNTRIES

Algeria
Iraq
Lebanon
Morocco
Saudi Arabia
Syria
Yemen
Bahrain
Jordan
Libya
Oman
Somalia
Tunisia
Djibouti
Kuwait
Mauritania
Qatar
Sudan
UAE

Our expert team works with all of the major companies shipping goods from Ireland to the Arab markets as well as medium and small exporters, to first-time exporters, solicitors and notary publics. As part of the AICC's continued dedication to Irish exporters, we have introduced new services outlined below, due to the demand for our expertise. We have developed a network of international agents dedicated to the processing of all documentation.

THE AICC SERVICES HAVE GROWN TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING SERVICES DELIVERED BY OUR DEDICATED TEAM

- AICC Certification of export, legal, regulatory and personal documents
- In-house printing of Certificates of Origin, Commercial Invoices and Packing Lists
- eCertification/Online document services using Tradecert
- Embassy Legalisation for all Arab and non-Arab countries in Dublin and London
- International legalisation handling services
- Authentication and Apostille at the Department of Foreign Affairs
- FCO Apostille Legalisation in London
- Notary Public In Dublin and London
- Translations of all languages
- Proof-reading English/Arabic and Arabic/English
- Visa services
- Local, national and international courier services

All of the Chamber's certification, legalisation and translation services are tailored to provide the fastest and most efficient service possible to all of our clients to meet their documentation requirements.

The AICC has developed a new automated service to handle the legalisation of personal documents required by individuals moving to work in the Middle East. This innovative portal <https://personal.aicc.ie> saw the Chamber process over 1,500 successful applications in 2016.

Our commitment to excellence makes us the business partner of choice for all your documentation needs.

For further information on any of our services or membership, please do not hesitate to contact the Chamber at info@aicc.ie, or visit our website, aicc.ie ■



RUTH SPAIN, TRADE SERVICES ASSISTANT MANAGER

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN				
Consignor:	المرسل	1	B/97441	
			Consignor's ref.: 4	
Consignee:	المرسل إليه	2	<p>شهادة منشأ</p> <p>CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN</p> <p>تشهد السلطة الموقعة بأن البضائع الوارد بيانها أدناه</p> <p>The undersigned authority certifies that the goods shown below</p> <p>Originated in: منشأها 5</p>	
Method of Transport:				مرسلة بواسطة 3
Marks and Numbers:		Quantity and Kind of Packages:	Description of Goods:	Weight (gross & net):
الأرقام و العلامات		كمية ونوع الطرود	مواصفات البضاعة	الوزن (الصافي والإجمالي)
 <p>غرفة التجارة العربية الايرلندية</p> <p>Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce</p>				
<p>"This Certificate of Origin is not valid unless it bears the signature and Certification Stamp of the Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce, Dublin, Ireland."</p> <p>"شهادة المنشأ لا تكون صالحة إلا ان كانت تحمل ختم توثيق وتوقيع غرفة التجارة العربية الايرلندية، دبلن، أيرلندا."</p>				
مكان و تاريخ الإصدار		إسطة الإصدار		
Place and Date of Issue		Issuing Authority		

OVERVIEW / IRISH - ARAB TRADE 2016

IRISH EXPORTS BY COUNTRY

Irish merchandise exports to the Arab markets in 2016 decreased by **11%** to the total of **€2,243,887bn**

ALGERIA €73,920 -4%	IRAQ €83,614 12%	LIBYA €60,059 17%	Qatar €76,446 4%	SYRIA €6,360 -8%
BAHRAIN €34,209 -11%	JORDAN €78,498 7%	MAURITANIA €959 32%	SAUDI ARABIA €820,496 -18%	TUNISIA €15,533 -20%
DJIBOUTI €49 -6%	KUWAIT €119,180 1%	MOROCCO €82,312 8%	SOMALIA €844 -70%	UAE €384,427 -13%
EGYPT €219,914 -28%	LEBANON €90,925 28%	OMAN €75,450 14%	SUDAN €15,357 40%	YEMEN €5,333 47%

(+19%)

Crude materials, inedible, except fuels **2016; €5,415m**

IRISH EXPORTS BY PRODUCT

Food and live animals 2016; €433,824m	(-2%)
Miscellaneous manufactured articles 2016; €6,191m	(-5%)
Chemicals and related products nes 2016; €1,318,017bn	(-12%)
Manufactured goods 2016; €15,629m	(-12%)
Machinery & transport equipment 2016; €87,461m	(-15%)



OVERVIEW / IRISH - ARAB TRADE 2016

IRISH IMPORTS BY COUNTRY

Arab merchandise imports to Ireland in 2016 decreased by **-4%** to the total of **€184,146m**

ALGERIA €33,840 -17%	IRAQ €16 -49%	LIBYA €876 3,013%	QATAR €8,475 -1%	SYRIA €20 386%
BAHRAIN €1,940 206%	JORDAN €2,778 47%	MAURITANIA €75 514%	SAUDI ARABIA €20,233 -21%	TUNISIA €17,398 79%
DJIBOUTI €270 88%	KUWAIT €117 -35%	MOROCCO €31,218 38%	SOMALIA €26 -12%	UAE €26,472 -23%
EGYPT €30,534 -23%	LEBANON €1,147 56%	OMAN €6,289 5%	SUDAN €2,401 2,025%	YEMEN €23 -67%

(+62%)

Chemicals and related products nes **2016; €61,406m**

(+33%)

Manufactured goods **2016; €13,669m**

(+21%)

Food and live animals **2016; €20,544m**

(+8%)

Machinery & transport equipment **2016; €25,806m**

IRISH IMPORTS BY PRODUCT



OVERVIEW

IRISH EXPORTS TO THE ARAB MARKETS

2016 / 2015

COUNTRY	2016 €'000	2015 €'000	% CHANGE
Algeria	73,920	77,059	-4%
Bahrain	34,209	38,304	-11%
Djibouti	49	53	-6%
Egypt	219,914	305,073	-28%
Iraq	83,614	74,746	12%
Jordan	78,498	73,409	7%
Kuwait	119,180	117,740	1%
Lebanon	90,925	70,787	28%
Libya	60,059	51,540	17%
Mauritania	959	726	32%
Morocco	82,312	75,897	8%
Oman	75,450	66,125	14%
Qatar	76,446	73,559	4%
Saudi Arabia	820,496	998,947	-18%
Somalia	844	2,775	-70%
Sudan	15,357	10,940	40%
Syria	6,360	6,884	-8%
Tunisia	15,533	19,473	-20%
United Arab Emirates	384,427	440,514	-13%
Yemen	5,333	3,634	47%
TOTAL IN EURO '000	2,243,887	2,508,185	-11%

OVERVIEW

IRISH IMPORTS FROM THE ARAB MARKETS

2016 / 2015

COUNTRY	2016 €'000	2015 €'000	% CHANGE
Algeria	33,840	40,998	-17
Bahrain	1,940	635	206
Djibouti	270	144	88
Egypt	30,534	39,850	-23
Iraq	16	31	-49
Jordan	2,778	1,894	47
Kuwait	117	180	-35
Lebanon	1,147	735	56
Libya	876	28	3,013
Mauritania	75	12	514
Morocco	31,218	22,611	38
Oman	6,289	6,001	5
Qatar	8,475	8,535	-1
Saudi Arabia	20,233	25,583	-21
Somalia	26	29	-12
Sudan	2,401	113	2,025
Syria	20	4	386
Tunisia	17,398	9,734	79
United Arab Emirates	26,472	34,335	-23
Yemen	23	70	-67
TOTAL IN EURO '000	184,146	191,521	-4%





The first meeting in Ireland of two top Arab/European business organisations was held in Dublin yesterday, at which details of the new Arab/Irish Chamber of Commerce were discussed. Seen at the meeting were: (left to right) Mr. Rakon Younis, Secretary General, and Mr. Peter McKimm, chairman of the Arab/Irish Chamber of Commerce, with Professor Burhan Dajani, one of the Arab world's top economists.

30 Years of Progress

The AIACC 1987-2017

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

On a snowy day in mid January 1987 the presidents of the Joint Arab-European Chambers of Commerce and the Secretary General of the General Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce, Professor Burhan Dajani, met in Dublin's Westbury Hotel, the first such meeting to be held in Ireland. The "Joint Chambers" in Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece and Switzerland were represented and they had come to support the proposal to establish a new Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce as part of the growing network of such Chambers in countries with

growing commercial relationships with the Arab world.

The visit was facilitated by Peter McKimm who was then Chairman of the Irish Exporters Association and a senior director at Bord Baine/The Irish Dairy Board, an organisation with extensive business connections throughout the Arab markets. Mr. Alan Mc. Carthy, CEO of Coras Trachtala/Irish Export Board (CTT) (now known as Enterprise Ireland) also met the group and offered support and encouragement with the plan to have the new Chamber up and running within three to four months. He also extended a warm welcome to Mr. Rakan Younis

ABOVE: Irish Press 14 Jan 1987



who had been nominated by the General Union of Arab Chambers to set up the new Chamber in Dublin and to become its first Secretary General and CEO.

Shortly afterwards Alan Mc. Carthy and Joe Geoghegan, Assistant Chief Executive at CTT, met Peter McKimm and Rakan Younis to discuss how to address the fact that CTT was already providing the same range of trade support services which the new Chamber planned to offer and on which it would rely to fund its operating costs. These services included the Certification and Legalisation of Commercial Documents, help with Visas to the Arab countries and Arab/English translation services. They were assured that CTT took the view that, as a semi-state body, it should not continue to provide such services if they could be provided effectively by the private sector through the new Chamber. To ensure that it got off to a solid start, it was agreed that CTT would cease offering these services as soon as the Chamber was in a position to provide them. CTT informed all their clients about this new arrangement and referred them to the Chamber when it was fully operational. The transition went very smoothly and the Chamber has provided this one-stop-shop range of services with skill and efficiency continuously since then.

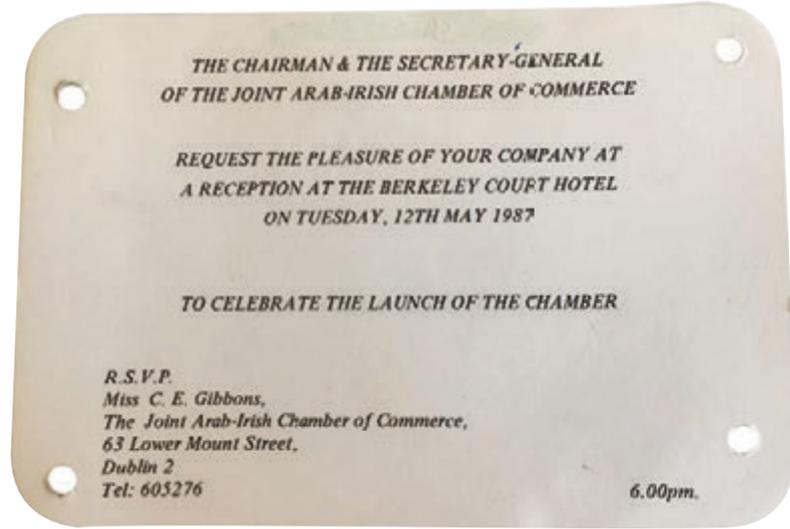
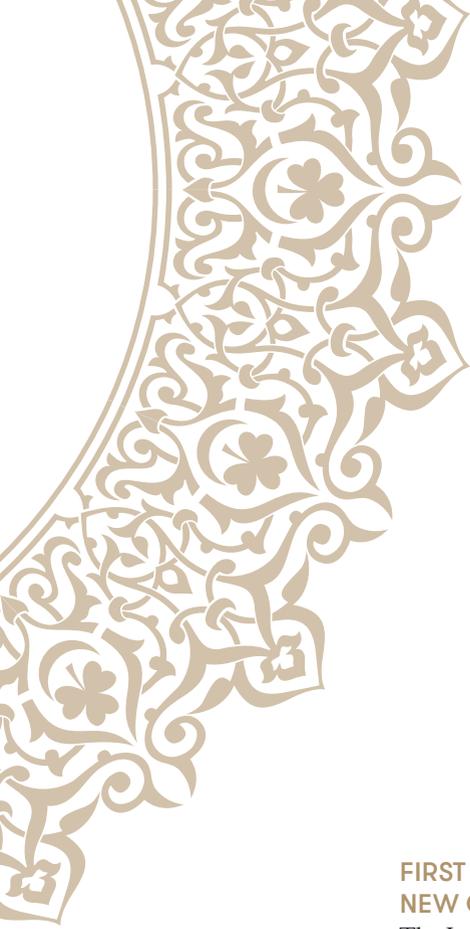


TOP: Irish Press 14 Jan 1987

MIDDLE: Cork Examiner 14 Jan 1987

LEFT: Alastair McGuckian, Rakan Younis and Burhan Dajani met Brian Lenihan TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at Leinster House following the AICC first board meeting





FIRST BOARD MEETING AND LAUNCH OF NEW CHAMBER

The Joint Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce was formally brought into existence through a Special Resolution passed at the first board meeting held on Tuesday 12th May 1987 in the Chamber's new office in 63 Lower Mount Street in Dublin 2. The meeting also formally appointed Mr. Peter Mc Kimm as Chairman and Mr. Rakan Younis as Secretary General and CEO.

That evening the Chamber's formation was announced and celebrated at a reception in the Berkeley Court Hotel which was attended by a broad spectrum of business leaders, politicians, government officials, Arab diplomats and representatives of the media.

The Minister for Health, Dr. Rory O'Hanlon TD, delivered the opening address on behalf of the Irish Government and spoke of the growing connections between Ireland and the Arab countries in recent years, and the great prospects for expanding these in the future.

"I have great pleasure in accepting your invitation to launch here this evening the Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce. I

feel it is timely to establish a group whose broad aim is the encouragement of Arab-Irish trade and co-operation. The range of services supplied by the Chamber will assist and facilitate trade links for those companies operating in the Arab world" the minister said. He continued "This is a very welcome development in relations between Ireland and the Arab States and indeed, I would hope that the Chamber's establishment would encourage other companies to initiate contacts in the Middle east and North Africa".

Minister O'Hanlon went on to refer to Arab-Irish collaboration in the health field citing the involvement of the PARC Group in the Ibn-Al-Bitar hospital in Baghdad, the success of Irish Health Services Development Corporation in

King Khalid Military Hospital, the role of the Irish Nursing Board in nurse training, and the extensive roles of the Royal College of Surgeons and the Royal College of Physicians in the provision of education services throughout the region.

He also referred to the Ireland Saudi Joint Commission for Economic and Technical Co-operation which had had its first meeting in Riyadh in April 1986. "This was a particularly successful meeting at which representatives from both the public and private sectors of both countries met to discuss such areas as telecommunications, agriculture, health and transport" he said.

The launch received extensive media coverage and the Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce opened for business on the following Monday 18th May 1987.

REPRESENTING ALL ARAB CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

The new Chamber was established under the auspices of the General Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture which is the representative body for all the Chambers of Commerce in the 21 Arab countries. Similar "Joint Chambers" were already established in many countries around the world in addition to Europe.

The objectives of these Joint Chambers is to encourage and support the growth and expansion of commercial and trading relationships between each country in which they are located and the 21 members of the League of Arab States. Representing the private sector, each Chamber is self-funding mainly through revenue earned from the provision of specific services such as the Certification and Legalisation of commercial documents for businesses trading in the Arab region.





Pictured, left to right, are: Mr. Jim Mitchell, TD, Fine Gael; Mr. Rakan Younis, Secretary General of the Joint A-ICC and Mr. Frank Feely, Dublin City Manager, at a reception to launch the Joint A-ICC in the Berkley Court Hotel recently.

A REPRESENTATIVE ARAB-IRISH BOARD

The board of the Chamber is made up of 12 Arab members nominated by the General Union of Arab Chambers, and twelve Irish members drawn from the membership of the Chamber in Ireland. The membership of the first board represented a broad range of Arab countries and an impressive cross section of Irish companies with interests in the region

FIRST ARAB DIRECTORS

- **H.E. Mr. Nasser Hamad Almalquour** – Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- **Dr. Burhan al-Dajani** – Secretary General of the General Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce
- **Dr. Abdul Hassan Zalzal** – Deputy Secretary General for Economic Affairs
- **Mr. Abdul Karim al-Mudaris** – Secretary General of the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce
- **Mr. Mahmoud Nashar** – The Council of Saudi Arabian Chambers of Commerce
- **Sheikh Abdulaziz al-Sagar** – President of the Kuwait Chambers of Commerce & Industry
- **Mr. Hamdi Tabba** – President of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of commerce & Industry
- **Mr. Abdel-Qader Abdellatif** – Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
- **Sheikh Ahmed Bin Omeir al-Hani** – President of the Oman

TOP: Fitzwilliam Post May 1987

ABOVE: Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs - May/June 1987

Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce
The Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce was launched in Dublin on 12 May 1987. The Chamber, which is being set up by the Arab League Union of Chambers of Commerce, is similar to those which exist in the other member states of the European Community. It will offer services to companies which are trading with Arab markets. Ireland's exports to Arab countries were worth IRE363 million in 1985.

Speaking at the launch of the Chamber, the Minister for Health, Dr Rory O'Hanlon TD, said:

"I feel it is timely to establish a group whose broad aim is the encouragement of Arab-Irish trade and co-operation. This is a welcome development in relations between Ireland and the Arab States... From my own point of view the health care area is of course of immediate concern. We have been particularly involved in the recruitment and servicing of hospitals in the Middle East region."

- **Dr. Siddig Busneina** – President of the Federation of Libyan Chambers of Commerce & Industry
- **Mr. Bahdi Fallaha** – The Syrian Chambers of Commerce
- **Mr. Rakan Sabar Younis** – Secretary General and Chief Executive of the Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce

FIRST IRISH DIRECTORS

- **Mr. Peter Mc Kimm** – Irish Exporters Association and Bord Bainne (Irish Dairy Board)
- **Mr. Michael O'Doherty** – Delap & Waller
- **Mr. Louis Maguire** – Auctioneer
- **Mr. James Fay** – Fay International Co. Ltd
- **Mr. Joe Geoghegan** – The Irish Export Board
- **Mr. David Hanley** – PARC Consultants
- **Mr. Alistair McGuckian** – Masstock Ltd
- **Mr. Michael Larkin** – Michael Larkin Associates

- **Mr. Ambrose McInerney** – McInerney & Co. Ltd
- **Mr. Michael Hayden** – Electricity Supply Board
- **Mr. Stephen Malone** – Malone O'Regan

ARAB-IRISH TRADE – 30 YEARS OF GROWTH AND CHANGE

In 1988, the year following the Chamber's establishment, Irish merchandise exports to the Arab world amounted to €372m. This figure has grown to €2.25 billion in 2016.





John Gibbons looks at a new development in Irish-Arab commercial relations

The Middle East's man in Dublin

THE launch today of the Joint Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce highlights growing Irish involvement with the Arab world, a market with 100 million of the world's richest consumers.

The chamber's secretary general is a 46-year-old Iraqi, Rakan Younis, an affable chain-smoking, former champion long jumper and founder member of the Arab League Union of Textiles. Younis boasts an impressive background in industry and academia, having studied in Cardiff University as an undergraduate mathematician and in the Lodz Research Institute in Poland, where he took a diploma in textile engineering.

The initiative for the chamber came from the Arab League Union of Chambers of Commerce who elected Younis to come to Ireland and provide the initial funding. The Dublin office is intended to pay for itself.

Younis has been in Ireland for the last seven months, establishing contacts and spreading the impact of the Joint Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce. Ireland is the last EEC country in which such a chamber is being established.

"Since last September we have found that there are great possibilities in promoting trade in the industry, commercial, education and health sectors," says Younis. Meanwhile, the chamber has circulated letters to key individuals and companies in the Arab world, extolling the virtues of Ireland as a trading partner, and establishing lines of communication with com-

panies interested in investing in or exporting to Ireland.

The chamber is governed by a board consisting of some of the most distinguished business people in the Arab world, as well as senior Irish export executives. Chairing the board is Peter McKimm, director for personnel at Bord Bia (the headquarters of which is situated just a stone's throw from the chamber offices in Dublin's Lower Mount Street), while Matuszek's chief executive, Alanair McGuckian, and CTT's assistant chief executive for marketing services, Joseph Geoghegan, are also on the board.

The chamber will be offering a wide range of services to members who are trading with, or thinking about moving into the

Arab market. These include a certification and documentation department, which will clear commercial invoices and other business documents in advance.

To facilitate Irish business people interested in visiting Arab countries, the chamber will help in speeding up the process of obtaining visas. Later, they also plan "airlifts" of potential customers and suppliers and buyers both into Ireland and the Arab world.

Other general services to be supplied by the chamber include making seminars on aspects of exporting and importing, which will deal specifically with the kinds of difficulties and restrictions that may arise in certain types of trading. In addition, the chamber boasts an Arab-English word processor, which can help to translate documents rapidly, as well as providing a general translation service and reference material to members.

Being a native of Iraq has given Rakan Younis a unique insight into the kind of problems from which Ireland's image suffers overseas. He says that the Middle East, like Ireland, is often only reported internationally in terms of its military conflicts. Younis is sensitive to this, and sees his job as being as much a diplomat as a commercial attaché.

He also believes that "certain sectors" of the Irish media do

not know what is really going on in the Arab world, and he sees as part of his job to demystify myths about the Middle East.

Companies such as the Aer Lingus subsidiary, FABC, have already stated the need of Ireland's £50 million a year exports to the Middle East, and have done so in the context of the exports sectors — services, Matuszek is another Irish-based company that has (in Saudi Arabia) shown that language and cultural barriers need not stand in the way of the business that understands its customer.

"Arabs are very selective about whom they do business with," cautions Younis. "You must first build up a friendship, and then trade will follow from that." One of Younis's jobs will be to dispel the myth that in Arab countries "the only thing Ireland can offer is live beef and unprocessed foods". The chamber is more interested in computer software, textiles, dairy products, glassware and tourism.

Although he has experienced some anti-Arab prejudice in the last few months, Younis says that he finds this country "very friendly and warm" and dismisses any talk about cultural impediments as irrelevant. "Ireland is a Catholic country, but where did your religion emanate, but from the Middle East," he says with a smile.



First Arab-Irish chamber set up

DUBLIN—The first joint Arab-Irish Chamber of commerce (A-ICC) was officially established here on Tuesday under the directorship of Rakan Younis and chairman Peter McKimm.

It was hoped that the joint A-ICC would fulfil the need for a "professional and accredited organisation to promote trade, commerce, co-operation and understanding" between Ireland and the Arab states, the organisers said.

They added that the chamber would also work to promote "mutual understanding between the Irish and Arab peoples and develop stronger ties in the field of business information, culture and education."

Irish exports to the Middle East amounted to 363 million Irish pounds last year, consisting largely of meat and dairy products. The joint A-ICC would encourage the growth of many other industrial, agricultural and consumer goods, the chamber said.—Kuna

TOP 5 MARKETS IN 1988

1.	Egypt	€102m
2.	Iraq	€85m
3.	Saudi Arabia	€25m
4.	Libya	€85m
5.	U.A.E	€16m

TOP: P.J. Moriarty, Mr. Tim Pat Coogan, Mr. Rakan Younis and Frank Feely

Left: Irish Times 12 May 1987

Right: Khaleej Times 14 May 1987

TOP 5 MARKETS IN 2016

1.	Saudi Arabia	€820m
2.	U.A.E	€384m
3.	Egypt	€219m
4.	Kuwait	€119m
5.	Lebanon	€91m



In 1988 the main product categories exported were manufactured food products, meat, live cattle, dairy products and office machines.

In 2016 this profile has changed dramatically, resulting from the impact of FDI companies now serving the Arab markets from production plants in Ireland, from the expansion of new indigenous Irish businesses into the region and from the rapid growth in the food sector.

TOP 5 PRODUCT CATEGORIES IN 2016

1. Chemicals/Pharmaceuticals	€1,318m
2. Food & live animals	€434m
3. Data processing machines equipment	€185m
4. Machinery & Transport equipment	€172m
5. Manufactured goods, miscellaneous	€102m

Irish imports from the Arab countries have fluctuated over the years influenced mainly by changes in the volume of petroleum and related products arriving in any year. Total imports in 2016 amounted to €184m of which €33m was accounted for by petroleum products.

Other significant categories were vegetables and fruit, fertilizers, plastics, electrical machinery & appliances, clothing and various other manufactured products.

COLLABORATIONS AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

From day one the Chamber forged close and long-lasting relationships with all the Arab embassies accredited to Ireland (whether based in Dublin or in London); with the General Union of Arab Chambers; with the key trade development agencies Enterprise Ireland and Bord Bia (Food Board);

with the Irish Exporters Association and of course with the Chambers of Commerce in Ireland and in the Arab countries. In fact

Enterprise Ireland and Bord Bia have been represented on the Chamber's board from the beginning and have collaborated on many projects and activities over the past three decades.

PRUDENT MANAGEMENT AND STEADY PROGRESS

The comparatively low volume of Irish exports to the Arab markets in the 1980's and 1990's meant that the revenues earned by the Chamber in its first decade were limited which restricted its ability to engage in the range of developmental activities to which it aspired. However, the arrival of many FDI manufacturing plants in Ireland in the 1990's, which served the Arab markets, led to a significant growth in demand for the Chamber's specialist services and an improvement in its financial fortunes.

This was particularly so in the case of new pharmaceutical companies, medical equipment suppliers, new ICT equipment and service providers, food manufacturers including baby formula products, telecommunications equipment and technologies, soft drink concentrates, financial services including aircraft leasing and a host of other products and services from new foreign owned businesses operating from Ireland.

The growth in the number of indigenous Irish companies also establishing a foothold in the region, due mainly to the great efforts of Bord Bia and Enterprise Ireland, added further to the rise in demand for the Chamber's services.

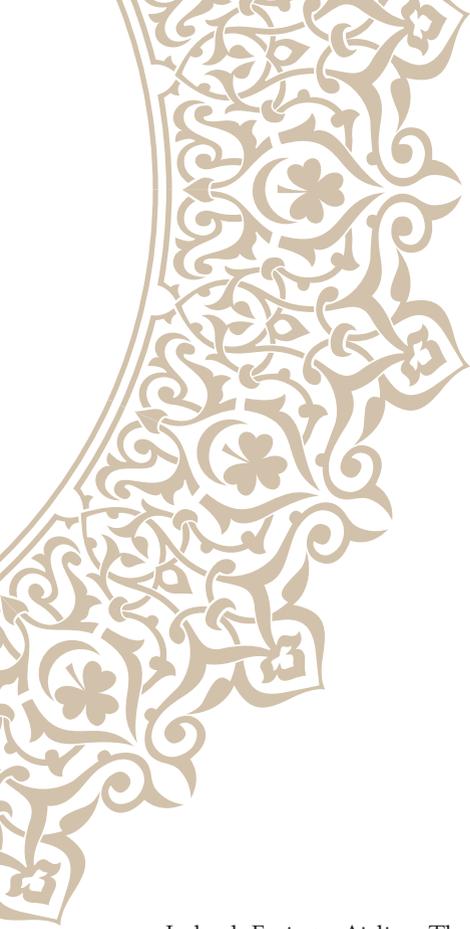
This allowed the Chamber to grow and to expand its range of activities and services in recent years, including a move to a new Head Office at 34 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2.-

NEW ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

In recent years the Chamber has:

- Published a macro economic study about the medium and long-term opportunities for Ireland in the Arab World
- Initiated the Arab-Irish Business Forum Conference, in partnership with Enterprise





- Ireland, Emirates Airline, The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade and Bord Bia
- Supported publication of the Arab-Irish Journal
- Participated in, and supported, Irish Trade Missions to Arab countries
- Organised work-shops on various aspects of doing business in the Arab markets
- Received and supported business delegations from the region visiting Ireland
- Arranged round-table briefing meetings with Arab ambassadors
- Introduced electronic delivery of certain services
- Supported the formation and activities of the Ireland Saudi Arabia Business Council
- Sponsored and supported the establishment of the Dublin Arabic Film Festival

A GROWING ARAB-IRISH RELATIONSHIP

When the Chamber started up in 1987 there was only one Arab embassy in Dublin representing Egypt with the remainder represented by their embassies in London. This number has grown to six since then with new missions representing Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Sudan. These embassies have played an important role in facilitating and encouraging further development in bi-lateral trade with their respective countries and the Chamber enjoys a very close and productive relationship with each of them.

In recent years Ireland opened a new embassy in Abu Dhabi to complement its missions in Cairo and Riyadh, while Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia/ Food Board and Tourism Ireland have established new offices in the Middle East. The number of trade missions and other business development activities between Ireland and the Arab markets has increased steadily in both directions. The Chamber has been glad to support these activities

RIGHT: HE Ambassador Ciaran Madden Irish Ambassador to UAE and Mr Aidan Cotter CEO Bord Bia welcoming the Dubai Royal Family to the Irish Pavilion at Gulfood



BOTTOM RIGHT: First meeting of the board at the Chamber's new Headquarters at 34 Fitzwilliam Place



whenever possible and looks forward to continuing to do so on an increasing scale in the future.

Arab investments in Ireland have grown appreciably in recent years also, especially in the bloodstock sector, property and financial services. In addition we have seen growing support for major sporting events such as Dubai Duty

Free sponsorship of the Irish Derby and the Dublin Arabic Film Festival; Etihad's past support for the GAA, Emirate's sponsorship of the Irish Open and Qatar Airline's new partnership with the Dublin Horse Show.

There are now more than 13,000 Irish people living and working in the Arab countries and around the same number of Arabs living in Ireland including several thousand students.

Arising from these and many other such developments Ireland's relationship with the Arab world has expanded and deepened significantly in recent years, and the close and friendly connections now established look destined to continue to grow strongly in the future.





LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The Arab markets represent one of the biggest trading regions for Ireland outside of Europe and North America and can be expected to grow in importance in the coming decades.

Today the population of the Arab countries is around

365 million people compared to 500 million in the EU. By 2050 there will be 620 million consumers in the Arab world compared to less than 450 million in the EU by then. With growing wealth, expectations and discretionary spending power, as well as massive infrastructural and social needs, these markets will offer a broad array of significant opportunities for many Irish companies in the coming decades.

There are over 400 Irish companies doing business in the region today and this number should double over the next ten years. The region has the advantage of being only a few hours flying time away, has a growing population and a need to import many products and services which Ireland can supply competitively. Daily, non-stop flights to the Gulf have boosted bi-lateral business activity in the GCC region and new connections with North Africa, currently under consideration, will accelerate business growth to the main

TOP: Caption L to R Rafal Sabir Head Of Translations, Evelyn Harrington Director and Trade Services Manager, Ahmad Younis Secretary-General & CEO, H. E. Ambassador Dr. Saeed Mohammed Al Shamsi Ruth Spain Trade Services Assistant Manager, Orla Treacy Office Assistant, Dima Shannan Office Assistant being presented with and award for outstanding mutual relationship for 30 years.

ABOVE: Khaled Daouk, Vice Chairman, AICC; Joe Geoghegan, Chairman, Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce; Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; and Ahmad Younis, Secretary General, Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce at the official opening of the AICC new Headquarters

Mediterranean Arab markets in the coming years.

We can expect a sharp increase in focus on the Arab region as Irish businesses seek to diversify in response to the impact of Brexit on their UK business and in response to the anticipated trends in international trade and the growing attractiveness of the Arab markets.

Joe Geoghegan

Joe Geoghegan is the current Chairman of the Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce (AICC). When the Chamber was first established in 1987 Joe was Assistant Chief Executive, Marketing Services, at Coras Trachtala/Irish Export Board

(CTT) where he worked closely with the CEO, Alan Mc Carthy. He played a key role in supporting the establishment of the AICC including the transfer of CTT's trade documentation services for the Arab countries to the new chamber. He was invited to become a director of the AICC at its foundation and attended its first board meeting. He has served as a director of the Chamber for the past 30 years including as Chairman for the past four years.

He is also the Honorary Consul of Jordan in Ireland.

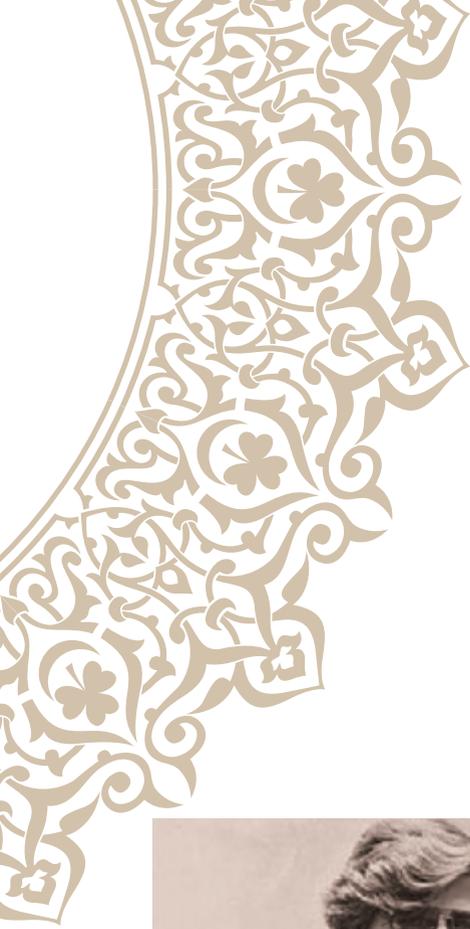
Louis Maguire

Louis Maguire attended the first board meeting of the Chamber and served as a director until his retirement in January 2017. He succeeded Peter McKimm as Chairman in 1999. He is also the Honorary Consul of Tunisia in Ireland

Ahmad Younis

Ahmad Younis is the current Secretary General & CEO of the AICC having taken up the position in January 2010. Born in Baghdad, he moved to Ireland with the rest of the Younis family in 1987 and is now a fully integrated Dubliner.





TOP RIGHT: The AICC is a main sponsor of the Dublin Arabic Film Festival. Zhara Moufid, Festival Director, and The Edge.



MIDDLE RIGHT: Dubai Duty Free Irish Derby

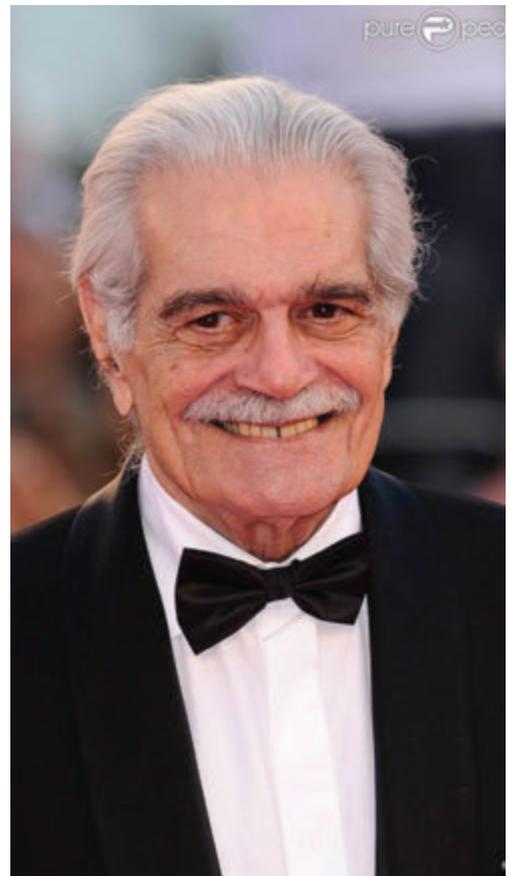
BOTTOM RIGHT: Omar Sharif opened the first Dublin Arabic Film Festival



RAKAN YOUNIS

Prior to being appointed to set up the new Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce, Rakan Younis was Director General of the State Organisation for Textiles, at the Ministry of Industry in Iraq where he was responsible for a workforce of over 22,000 people. Born in Mosul, he was one of eight final year high school students awarded a prestigious National Scholarship to study at Cardiff University in the UK where he excelled at mathematics. He later studied at the Lotz Research Institute in Poland where he received a diploma in textile engineering. Rakan was also a founding member of the Arab Union of Textiles as well as a former champion long jumper in his youth.

He skilfully steered the AICC through its formative years and was much admired and respected by the Chamber's members and clients, by the General Union of Arab Chambers as well as by his peers in the other Joint Chambers in Europe and around the world.





TOP LEFT: Rory McIlroy at the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open

MIDDLE LEFT: Roundtable Meeting with Egyptian Ambassador H.E Soha Gendi

BOTTOM LEFT: Trade Services Team Left to Right Dima Shannan, Thomas Lebain, Ruth Spain, Orla Treacy, Rafal Sabir





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- 1: Presentation of Arab-Irish Business Forum Award to Alastair McGuckian

- 2: An Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Enda Kenny T.D. Meets the Irish Saudi Arabia Business Council.

- 3: Yassr Arafat and Rakan Younis

- 4: Minister Richard Bruton T.D. Launching The Arab Irish Economic Report



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THE ARAB-IRISH BUSINESS FORUM 2016

The 2nd Arab-Irish Business Forum was held on 15 April, 2016 at Dublin Castle. The Forum was organised by the Arab-Irish Chamber, Enterprise Ireland, Emirates Airline, Bord Bia and The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, and supported by Clyde & Co and Jenkinson Logistics.

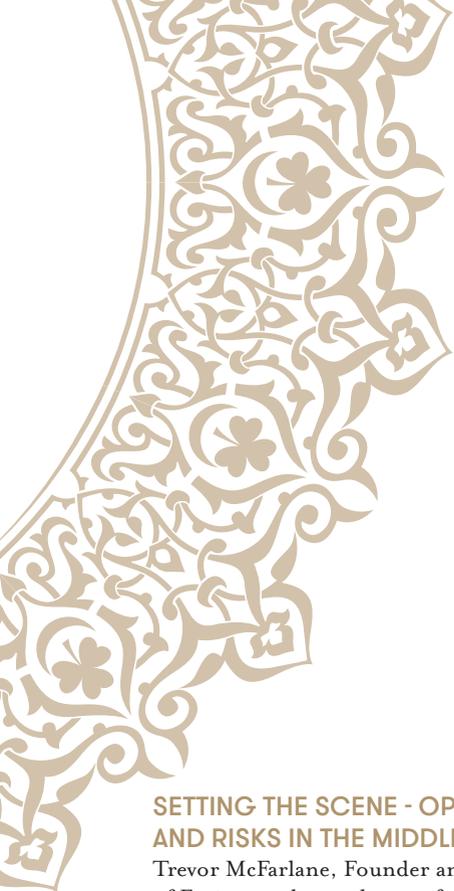
Over 200 delegates were welcomed by the Chairman of the AICC, Joe Geoghegan, who highlighted the importance of the Arab markets for Ireland and outlined the significant opportunities on offer to Irish companies in the region. Business leaders from the Arab world

joined their Irish counterparts at the Forum, where it was announced that Irish exports to the Middle East are set to reach €6bn by 2017.

According to Ahmad Younis, CEO of the Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce: "This announcement on Irish exports really demonstrates the scale of possibilities and opportunities for Irish businesses in the region. Should this growth trend continue, it is anticipated that by 2020, 16,000 new jobs would be supported by Irish exports to the Arab world, almost doubling its current number."

ABOVE: Ahmad Younis AICC Secretary-General with His Excellency Dr. Saeed Mohamed Ali Al Shamsi Ambassador of the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates





SETTING THE SCENE - OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Trevor McFarlane, Founder and Chief Executive of Emir, was the moderator for the day. He advises executives from a wide range of companies and regularly speaks and moderates at conferences, presents at board and ministerial level and hosts Dubai Eye's Business Breakfast Radio Show.

Trevor outlined the main trends and challenges currently influencing business strategy for Irish companies, and offered forward-looking analysis of the region, including a vitally important viewpoint on the business strategy needed to deal with major trends such as political instability, low oil prices and currency issues.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS - GERARD LAWLESS

The keynote speaker was Gerard Lawless, Head of Tourism and Hospitality at Dubai Holdings, who gave his personal perspective based on 18 years of living and working in the UAE. Gerard, who served 18 years with the Jumeirah Group as President and CEO, is presently the Chairman of the World Trade & Tourism Council (WTTC).

STRATEGIC ADVICE - GETTING MARKET READY AND MANAGING YOUR SUCCESS

The panel discussion on this topic comprised of Mishal Kanoo, Chairman of The Kanoo Group - one of the largest and longest-running family-owned companies in the Middle East, which has been in business for over 125 years; Martin McGuigan, Partner Aon Hewitt Middle East, which attracts and retains the best talent in the Middle East; and Mirna Sleiman, Head of Governments EMNA Thomson Reuters, who manages and grows business and market share within the government sector.

THE PRACTICALITIES & LEGALITIES OF DOING BUSINESS IN THE REGION

Niall O'Toole, Partner, and Stephen McKenna, Senior Associate, two Irish lawyers based in the

1: Joe Geoghegan
AICC Chairman

2: Ahmad Younis
AICC Secretary-
General with Trevor
McFarlane Founder
and CEO of Emir.

3: Gerard Lawless,
keynote speaker

4: Mishal Kanoo
Chairman Kanoo
Group with Enda
Corneille Country
Manager Emirates

5: Stephen Mc
Kenna Senior
Associate and Niall
O'Toole Partner -
Clyde & Co

6: Joe Geoghegan
AICC Chairman,
Mirna Sleiman Head
of Governments
EMNA Thomson
Reuters, Mohammad
Tahboub co-founder
of Bayanat and
Gerard Lawless
Head of Tourism and
Hospitality Dubai
Holdings

7: His Excellency Dr.
Saeed Mohamed
Ali Al Shamsi
Ambassador of the
Embassy of the
United Arab Emirates
with Enda Corneille
Country Manager
Emirates Airline

UAE with Clyde & Co., outlined the practicalities and legalities of doing business in the region. They gave critically important advice on a host of issues, including agency and partnership agreements, the different options available when setting up a local presence in the region and employment law.

FEED THE GULF REGION - OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR IRISH COMPANIES

Ali Omar Abdualla, Director of Policy and Strategy at the Food Security Centre, Abu Dhabi, gave an insightful overview on food security.

FOCUS ON NEWER MARKETS

Abdelhakim Marrackchi, Hany Salam and Mohammad Tahboub gave their respective observations and experiences into three very different markets: Morocco, Egypt and Jordan.

Abdelhakim Marrackchi is the CEO of Maghreb Industries and Vice-President of the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGEM) and President of CGEM International Commission. He is also the former Vice-Chairman of the Moroccan Council for Food Industry.

Hany Salam is the Managing Director of Salamtex, a limited partnership textile company and family business, which was established in 1936. Hany is a board director of the Textile Export Council, the Egyptian Chamber of Apparel & Home Textile Industries, and the Egyptian-Belgian Business Association.

Mohammad Tahboub is co-founder of Bayanat, a successful IT Solutions Provider in Jordan and the Middle East region. Mohammad is a board director on the Jordan Chamber of Commerce and the Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce.

MARKET CASE STUDIES

Market case studies were presented by Miagen, Keogh's Farm and Blackwater Engineering.

'What to Plan for the Coming 12 Months' was presented by Trevor McFarlane, Founder and Chief Executive of Emir. ■



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ABOVE: Presentation by the Jordan Chamber to the Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce

To round off proceedings on the day at the Arab-Irish Business Forum, Mr. Mohammad Tahboub, Director of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce and guest speaker, presented the Arab-Irish Chamber with a plaque. Mr. Tahboub thanked the Chamber for their continued success and for their efforts with Arab-Irish trade and relations.



ABOVE: Presentation of Forum Outstanding Achievement Award was presented to Alastair McGuckian, Chairman, M21

The Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce presented Alastair McGuckian with an Outstanding Achievement Award in recognition of the Antrim businessman's major contribution to the development of Arab-Irish trade. Widely regarded as one of the pioneers of the vertically integrated dairy industry, Alastair is the founder and former CEO of Masstock, which he established in 1970 with his brother, Paddy. Masstock helped establish a modern day dairy industry in Saudi Arabia and, in 1977, founded Almarai, a joint venture with Prince Sultan Bin Mohamed Bin Saud Al Kabeer. Almarai became the leading food company in the Middle East, with 40,000 employees and a 65% share of the milk market in Saudi Arabia together with one of the largest dairy herds of its type in the world.

Almarai was established as part of a general movement in Saudi Arabia to achieve food security through self-sufficiency, with Alastair McGuckian widely credited as the driving force behind the enterprise. Joe Geoghegan, Chairman of the AICC, commented: "Who'd have thought it would be possible to establish a dairy farm of such scale in the middle of the desert, but that's what the McGuckian brothers did!"

"Alastair has led the way for the more than 450 Irish companies doing business in the Middle East and Gulf region today, and Masstock/Almarai is a wonderful example of what can be achieved in what has become a land of opportunity for Irish businesses."





Award from The Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

The Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce attended the 45th United Arab Emirates National Day celebrations. Approximately 550 guests attended the event, including a number of Ministers, Ambassadors accredited to Ireland and other high ranking officials.

To mark this special occasion, his

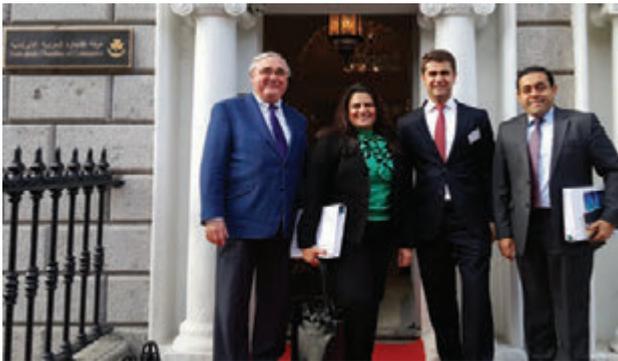
PHOTO LEFT TO RIGHT:
The AICC Team with H.E. Dr. Saeed Mohammed Al Shamsi Ambassador to the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

Excellency Dr. Saeed Al Shamsi Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Ireland presented the Chamber with an award recognising the outstanding mutual relationship with the United Arab Emirates.

Ahmad Younis, Secretary-General & CEO, congratulated the team of the Chamber who have helped to make this happen. ■



Business briefing with Egyptian Ambassador



The The Egyptian Ambassador to Ireland, H.E. Soha Gendi, met a group of Irish companies at the Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce (AICC) recently to brief them about business opportunities in the Egyptian market.

The companies represented a cross section of business sectors, varying from established exporters to those looking at the region for the first time.

The AICC Chairman, Joe Geoghegan, pointed out that Egypt is the third largest market for Ireland in the Arab world, with merchandise exports of €305m in 2015 representing an increase of 83% over the previous year.

Ambassador Gendi told the meeting that Egypt has a population of 92 million people - more than twice that of the next most populous Arab country, Algeria, with 40 million. This fact alone indicates the significant untapped potential which Egypt offers now and into the future.

Ambassador Gendi also briefed the meeting about the significant opportunities for investment in the country, noting that a new Double Taxation Agreement has been put in place between Egypt and Ireland. This is expected to encourage more investments and joint ventures involving Irish businesses in the years ahead.

The Egyptian government has embarked on several large infrastructural projects in recent years, such as widening the Suez Canal. More

PHOTO LEFT:
Left to right: Joe Geoghegan, AICC Chairman, H.E. Soha Gendi, Ambassador Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Ahmad R. Younis, AICC Secretary-General & CEO, and Mr. Mostafa Mohamed Youssef, Consul Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

PHOTO RIGHT:
Attendees at the Business briefing with H.E. Soha Gendi, Ambassador Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt

projects are in the pipeline, including the construction of a new Administrative Capital. These offer exciting possibilities for Irish companies that have the expertise and broad range of products and services that will be required for such projects.

Additionally, the plans to upgrade Egypt's main airports will offer opportunities ranging from security systems to airport retailing, from mechanical and electrical services to ICT infrastructure. Egypt also offers significant opportunities for the food sector, including beef and livestock, dairy ingredients, infant formula and branded consumer products.

Ambassador Gendi encouraged Irish travellers to again consider Egypt as a holiday destination, noting that its reduced security risk is now being acknowledged by travel advisory services. She also referred to the importance of direct flight connections between Ireland and Egypt, mentioning that this matter is under active consideration following a recent formal agreement between both countries.

The positive discussions at the meeting led to the conclusion that a trade study visit to Egypt by a group of Irish companies in the future should be considered.

Joe Geoghegan confirmed that the AICC supports this suggestion and undertook to discuss this with Enterprise Ireland and Bord Bia. ■





PICTURED: DAFF
President Jim Sheridan,
DAFF Director Shara
Moufid with U2's The Edge

3rd Dublin Arabic Film Festival

For the third year running the Chamber was a lead sponsor with Dubai Duty Free of the Dublin Arabic Film Festival which was held at the Irish Film Institute in November 2016. This event established and led by leading film director Jim Sheridan and supported by the festival director Zhara Moufid has the objective through the medium of film, of promoting greater awareness and appreciation of the depth and variety of Arab culture and society. It also aims to counteract the stereotypical one dimensional and misleading narrative presented daily in the electronic and print media.

Building on the success of the previous two years the 2016 festival was the best and most successful to date with large attendances at each film and associated events. It also achieved extensive and positive media coverage including TV and Radio interviews with Jim Sheridan.

The event kicked off with the European premier of a new short film, 11th Hour, which Jim Sheridan had just completed and which has won high acclaim. The story is

based on a personal experience by the Irish journalist Lise Hand at the time of the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers in New York in 2001 and starred the Mexican/Lebanese actress Salma Hayek.

The opening feature film of the festival was the powerful new Egyptian movie Clash which was set in a riot in Cairo following the overthrow of President Morsi in 2013. An uncomfortable and unsettling experience which conveyed with powerful realism what involvement in a mass riot is like in real life.

The festival was also supported for the third year in a row by the Chester Beatty Library which presented two classic Arab films at its theatre at Dublin Castle as part of the festival programme.

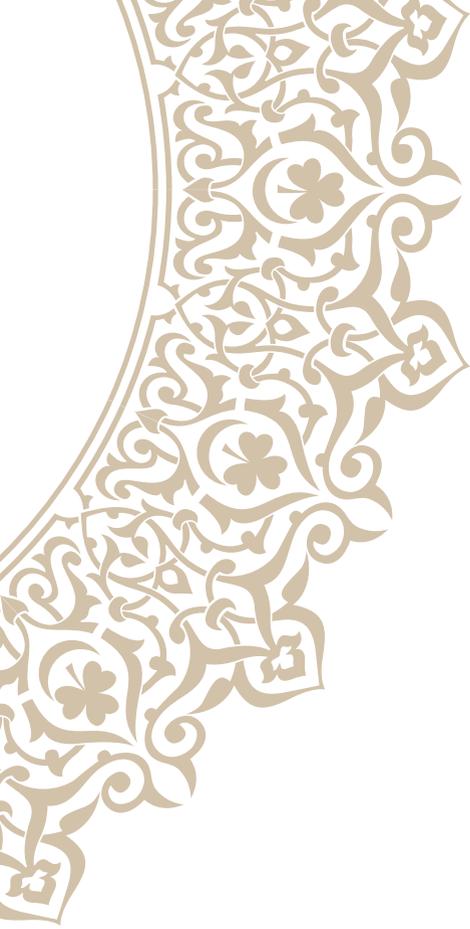
As in the past the Arab embassies in Dublin provided their strong encouragement and support to the Festival and the sponsors of the event expressed satisfaction with the professionalism of its organisation and the level of media coverage received.

AICC Chairman Joe Geoghegan is also the Honorary Chairman of the Dublin Arabic Film Festival. ■



FAR LEFT: AICC Secretary General and CEO Ahmad Younis, DAFF Director Zhara Moufid and Mr. Mohammed Al Shamsi First Secretary of the United Arab Emirates

LEFT: Irish Film Actress Amy Huberman



TOP: Left to right
AICC Chairman Joe Geoghegan, US
Ambassador to Ireland H.E Kevin O'Malley,
Dubai Duty Free Vice President Sinead El Sibai,
Ambassador to Egypt H.E Soha Gendi, DAFF
Director Zhara Moufid and AICC Secretary
General and CEO Ahmad Younis

MIDDLE: AICC Trade Services team with
Ambassador to Ireland H.E Kevin O'Malley and
U2's The Edge

BOTTOM: Mr. Abdulaziz A. Aldriss former
Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, H.E Soha Gendi
Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt and
Ahmad Younis AICC Secretary General and
CEO with members of the Trade Services team





Letter of Credit and documentary collection workshop

In November 2016, the Chamber organised an in-house workshop on Risk Comparisons between payment by Letter of Credit and documentary collections. The workshop was presented by Mr. Laurence Bacon, Managing Director of Export Bureaux.

Laurence is a speaker/panellist at many international conferences and

PHOTO LEFT TO RIGHT:
Mr. Laurence Bacon Managing Director
of Export Bureaux and Mr. Ahmad Younis
AIACC and Secretary-General and CEO.

his banking experience in Letter of Credit Departments is coupled with over 30 years' experience in major importing and exporting companies, which places him in the unique position of being able to use first-hand knowledge gained in both areas.

The workshop was a great success and we hope to run more in the future. ■





Reception for Council of Saudi Chambers

In November 2016, the Chamber organised a reception for the delegation from the Council of Saudi Chambers which was led by Eng. Mohammed Al Sogaih.

The delegation were visiting Ireland to meet with the Ireland Saudi Arabia Business Council. During their visit they met with The Taoiseach Enda Kenny, as well as the Minister of State for Employment and Small Industries Mr. Pat Breen TD. Two agreements were signed between Irish and Saudi companies during the course of their visit.

Ahmad Younis, CEO and Secretary-General

ABOVE:
AICC Secretary General
and CEO addresses the
audience

welcomed the delegation to Ireland and commented 'It is important to have a Saudi Embassy in Ireland to continue on the great work which has been done by the former Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Ireland Mr. Aldriss who is now a director of the Chamber. It is significant that seventeen different companies travelled to Ireland as part of Minister Flanagan's Trade Mission in November.'

Delegation members represented a broad range of business sectors and the reception was an opportunity to meet potential new Irish business partners. ■





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1: Mr. Abdulaziz A. Aldriss former Ambassador of Saudi Arabia and AICC Director with Ahmad Younis AICC Secretary General and CEO

2: Mr. Mohammed Hmoud Al Shamsi First Secretary Embassy of the United Arab Emirates with Ahmad Younis AICC Secretary General and CEO

3: Ahmad Younis AICC Secretary General and CEO, Tom O'Dowd Astron Engineering and Joe Geoghegan AICC Chairman

4: AICC Chairman Joe Geoghegan, Mr. Abdulaziz A. Aldriss former Ambassador of Saudi Arabia and AICC Director with Ahmad Younis AICC Secretary General and CEO and Joseph Lynch Chairman and Secretary of the Ireland Saudi Arabia Business Council





Trade Mission to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates

In November 2016, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan TD, led a three-day trade mission to Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Dubai with the delegation comprising 37 Irish companies.

Organised jointly with Enterprise Ireland, the Trade Mission is part of ongoing efforts

ABOVE:

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan TD with Trade Mission participants

to raise Ireland's profile internationally, to improve the already-strong bilateral trade and investment linkages with the Gulf region and to provide a forum for Irish companies active in Saudi Arabia and the UAE to develop their relationships with customers, partners, and other stakeholders. The Trade Mission

is also part of Enterprise Ireland's broad drive to increase the export market penetration and diversification of Irish companies post-Brexit.

The mission facilitated high-level business contacts for Irish suppliers spanning a number of key sectors, including International Education, Lifesciences, Digital Media, ICT, Telecommunications, Financial Services, Aviation, Agri-technology and Business Services.

Minister Flanagan promoted Ireland and its world-class companies during a series of high level business engagements with private and public organisations. He also undertook a series of engagements with representatives of the Irish business community in the region, including the Irish Business Network Saudi Arabia, the Abu Dhabi Irish Business Council and the Dubai Irish Business Network.

Speaking before his visit, Minister Flanagan said:

"I am delighted to be leading this highly ambitious Trade Mission, involving 37 companies, who are forging successful partnerships in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. This visit will strengthen our economic, political and cultural ties with these key priority markets.

"The Gulf is a strategically important region for us and there are significant opportunities for even more Irish companies to do business here into the future.

"This Trade Mission will include a number of high-level meetings and will serve to strengthen Ireland's economic, political and cultural ties with these key priority markets. I look forward to working with our partners in Enterprise Ireland to produce real results for the Irish economy.

"Significantly, this mission is also an opportunity to reassure our important trading partners of Ireland's commitment to the EU, following the UK vote last July."

Kevin Sherry, Executive Director Global Business Development at Enterprise Ireland, who accompanied Minister Flanagan on the trade mission, added:

"A key focus for Enterprise Ireland is growing

indigenous Irish companies on a global scale. Trade Missions, like this multi-sectoral one to the Middle East, play a vital role in promoting Ireland's world-class goods and services in international markets; and Enterprise Ireland works with Irish companies to expand their international reach and penetration into high-growth markets.

"This trade mission will facilitate practical relationship building for Enterprise Ireland client companies with both current and prospective new customers in the region, as well as raising the profile of Ireland at the highest levels of Government in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The objective of these missions is to deliver increased export sales to the region which support job creation in Ireland."

Ahmad R. Younis, Secretary-General & CEO of the Chamber, participated in the trade mission and added: "Irish exports to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia increased by 33% to nearly €1.1bn while The Emirates increased by 23% to €441m in 2015.

"Looking at recent export figures, 2016 looks like another year of increases for these two markets, and highlights the significant role that Arab markets plays in the Irish economy. The performance and growth of the Irish economy coupled with the country's strong recovery following the economic downturn, is having a positive impact on Ireland's trade with Arab countries."

The three city Trade Mission involved a series of high-level business meetings, targeted sector events, meetings with senior Government Ministers and one-to-one meetings between Irish businesses and a wide range of local businesses.

Another key objective of the Trade Mission was to provide a strong platform to further promote Ireland and Irish companies as world-class strategic partners across multiple sectors in the Middle East. These type of missions also demonstrate how Enterprise Ireland can act as a conduit to those world-class goods and services. ■



LEFT:
Charlie Flanagan TD,
Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Trade



President hosts a Garden Party focused on the Sustainable Development Goals

On 9 June, President Michael D. Higgins and Sabrina Higgins hosted a garden party to acknowledge

Individuals and organisations working to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals agreed in New York in September 2015.

The event—which took place in the Presidential residence, Áras an Uachtaráin, and saw television and radio presenter Ryan Tubridy as the Master of Ceremonies—was held to acknowledge the work of NGO's, civil liberty organisations, trade unions and entrepreneurs in fostering public understanding of the historic Sustainable Development Goals and working toward their successful implementation. President Higgins's characterised the gathering as being, in essence, "a collective for sustainability."

The UN-endorsed goals, agreed by world leaders in New York last September, chart the future of development up to the year 2030 and cite the priority areas of inequality that require our collective attention and drive. There are 17 goals, within which lie a total of 169 targets; but, ultimately, the aim is to make the world a substantially better place for all global citizens by 2030.

In his speech, President Higgins expressed the need now to "turn words into action" and to start the process of implementing the goals.

Referencing the refugee/migrant crisis, President Higgins highlighted how some "42,000 people are displaced every day through acts of violence". According to the UNHCR,



PICTURED:
Ahmad Younis, AICC Secretary General and CEO
with Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

there were 59.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2014 - the highest level since World War II.

Discouraging the use of pejorative language that often sees refugees in desperate flight characterised as "swarms" or "hoards", President Higgins suggested that Irish people, in particular, should reflect on the long, perilous journeys taken at sea to seek refuge in foreign lands over the last several hundred years, and, indeed, the many who lost their lives in the process.

Another area singled out for particular mention was the lack of real focus in development work on eliminating gender inequalities, with less than 1% of the global development budget spent on this vital issue.

The President also highlighted how the planet will host some 9.4 billion citizens by 2050 – a significant percentage of whom will be young people, with some 40% living in Africa. We owe this generation of young people better opportunities and a route out of poverty and exclusion, the President stressed, warning that achieving real progress will require new thinking and a fresh approach to development.

The overall emphasis on the day, however, was one of positivity and celebration, looking to embrace the challenges and opportunities presented by the Sustainable Development Goals. In his closing remarks, President Higgins reminded us that we are all "practitioners" of one kind or another", and urged those present to "work together for a sustainable, fair and just world." ■



Deputy Governor - Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority



The AICC hosted a business dinner for the Deputy Governor Research and International Affairs of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority, Mr Fahad Al Shathri, Ph. D, and his colleague, Mr Meshari Alkadhi during their recent study visit to Ireland. Dr Al Shathri is a member of the Saudi Government SME Commission and he is especially interested in learning about Ireland's experiences in developing the SME sector, which has grown so successfully in recent decades.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has recently adopted a National Transformation Programme, 'Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030', which charts a path towards the goal of less reliance on oil through the development of a broad range of indigenous manufacturing and services sectors which will be sustainable in the long term and will provide high quality jobs for the expanding population.

One important aspect of the vision is to encourage and support the rapid expansion of the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector – an area in which Ireland has gained much experience in recent decades.

The discussion considered many of the challenges that

will be faced, which led to suggestions and ideas about how to deal with them based on the Irish experience. The importance of suitable educational opportunities, work experience and mentoring were stressed, as well as the encouragement of entrepreneurship and risk-taking. The attracting of overseas partners and investors will also bring valuable skills and know-how, as well as successful products, technologies and market expertise.

Another challenge highlighted was the removal, as much as possible, of red tape and complex rules and regulations. It was also noted that improved standards would be required in the areas of financial management and reporting.

The business dinner was attended by the Chairman of the AICC, Joe Geoghegan, Secretary General, Ahmad Younis, and board members Peter Jackson, Peter Mc Mahon and Abdelaziz Aldriss (former Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Ireland). Mr A J Noonan, former Chairman of the Small Firms Association and board member of the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland, also attended. ■





Visit of new Ambassador of Qatar

H.E. Mr. Yousef Ali Al-Khater, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the United Kingdom, Ireland and Iceland visited the HQ of the Chamber where he met with the Secretary-General & CEO, Mr. Ahmad Younis while in

Dublin to present his Letter of Credence to President Michael D. Higgins. His Excellency was accompanied by Mr. Mahmoud Ayyad, Head of Protocol at the Embassy. ■



PICTURED:

Left to Right Ahmad Younis AICC, Secretary-General & CEO, H.E. Soha Gendi Egyptian Ambassador to Ireland, Minister Pat Breen TD, H.E. Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohamed Al Khalifa Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain and H.E. Dr. Saeed Mohamed Ali Al Shamsi Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates

Bahrain Ambassador's visit

H.E. Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain, presented his Letter of Credence to the President Higgins at Áras an Uachtaráin. H.E. was accompanied by Mr. Fahad Albinali, First Secretary at the Embassy.

During his stay in Dublin, the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates, Dr. Saeed Mohamed Ali Al Shamsi, hosted a dinner in his honour where His Excellency met with other Arab Ambassadors, politicians and directors of the Arab-Irish Chamber of Commerce. ■





Focus on Morocco



The AICC was pleased to welcome the newly appointed Moroccan Ambassador to Ireland, HE Mr. Lahcen Mahraoui, and his Deputy Head of Mission, Mr. Rachid Seghrouchni, to the Chamber on 17 January, 2017 to discuss Moroccan/Irish trade and commercial relations, and to consider new areas of potential opportunity in the coming years.

At the outset, it was acknowledged that Morocco is geographically the nearest Arab country to Ireland and that there is a long history of bilateral trade and commercial involvement between both countries, which offers many opportunities for further growth and expansion.

Furthermore, Morocco has 'Advanced Status' in its relationship with the EU in acknowledgement of the several formal Agreements now in place between Morocco and the EU, which, among other things, simplifies the conduct of business in both directions.

In recent years Morocco has witnessed the development of new industrial sectors such as automobile manufacturing, aeronautics, ICT,

TOP: HE Mr. Lahcen Mahraoui Ambassador Moroccan Embassy presents his credentials to President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins

LEFT: Ahmad Younis AICC Secretary General and CEO, H.E. Mr. Anas Khaled outgoing Ambassador of Morocco, Joe Geoghegan AICC Chairman

RIGHT: Left to Right Mr. Rachid Seghrouchni Deputy Head of Mission Moroccan Embassy, Ahmad R. Younis AICC Secretary-General & CEO, HE Mr. Lahcen Mahraoui Ambassador Moroccan Embassy and Joe Geoghegan AICC Chairman

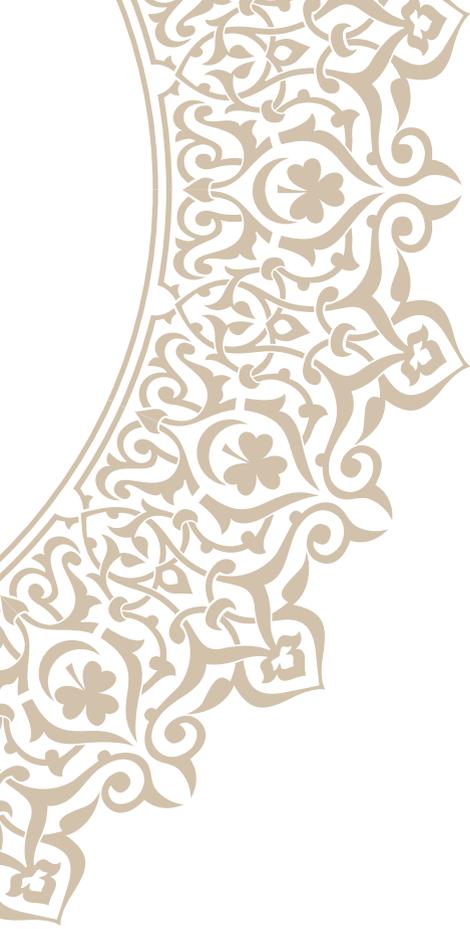
transport and logistics, financial services, telecoms and pharmaceuticals. These have grown up alongside the more traditional sectors of fertilisers, citrus and other fruits, vegetables, olive oils, fish products, textiles, ceramics and tourism.

Ambassador Mahraoui also highlighted that Moroccan businesses have extensive connections throughout West Africa and further into the continent, and they are interested in forming partnerships with Irish companies wishing to develop opportunities in these markets.

Morocco offers trade and investment opportunities for a broad spectrum of Irish companies ranging from agri-business and food processing to the growing areas of ICT, telecoms, financial services, logistics, sustainable energy and health/pharma products and services.

The positive discussion led to the conclusion that both parties will consider some specific activities, which could be jointly undertaken to stimulate further the level of interaction between Irish and Moroccan businesses in the coming years. ■





Retirement of Fingal Dublin Chamber CEO



The Arab-Irish Chamber were guests of honour at the Fingal Dublin Chamber of Commerce dinner to mark the retirement of CEO Tony Lambert.

Some 23 years ago Tony was a founding member of what was then the Swords and District Chamber of Commerce. In the interim, the organisation has been through a number of reincarnations and one merger to become the Fingal Dublin Chamber, with Mr Lambert as its CEO.

The two Chambers have worked closely together over the past 23 years to meet the documentation needs of the large number of exporters in the Fingal area. They have witnessed enormous changes in the economic and business landscape across the Fingal

PICTURED:
Left to Right Ruth Spain AICC, Tony Lambert CEO Fingal Dublin Chamber and Ahmad Younis AICC Secretary General and CEO.

region in that time.

Talking about the role of the organisation Tony said, "The Chamber has been to the forefront in representing the business community, first and foremost."

The outgoing Chamber CEO added: "Government and local government need to know there is somebody they can talk to who has the confidence to speak on behalf of the business community and I think that is what the Chamber provides."

Looking forward, Mr Lambert believes that transport infrastructure are the big ticket items that need to be addressed in Fingal if it is to prosper in the years ahead. That infrastructure includes the early deliver of Metro North, an improved road network and the delivery of a new runway at Dublin Airport. ■





Spreading a message of Peace

In June 2016, the AICC received a visit from goodwill ambassador Mohammed Stefan Leca. Mohammed is on a mission to spread a message of peace.

What makes this mission even more interesting is the fact that Mohammed and his wife Noor are driving around the world, visiting 37 countries in 80 days.

PICTURED:
AICC team members with
Mohammed Leca

Mohammed said: "In the times we live in, we have become almost like robots; our main purpose in life has become to make money and attain power. We neglect our family and friends just to accumulate material possessions, and I find that both sad and boring."

The AICC made a contribution to support this message of peace. ■



The Chamber staff attend an empowering evening focusing on wellness, performance and resilience

The impressive panel, included Author and Sports Psychology Lecturer, Dr Olivia Hurley; Irish International Rugby Star, Jenny Murphy; Irish Sprinter and Director of All-Things at PepTalk, Ailis McSweeney and EMEA Group Health Director of Fitbit, Aideen O' Colmain.

The panel discussed goals, resilience and mental wellness, and five of the interesting insights they shared were

1. DON'T CHANGE YOUR GOAL, CHANGE YOUR PROCESS

Ailis McSweeney, who holds the Irish 100 metre sprint record, spoke about the importance of setting goals. So, if you find yourself struggling to meet your goal, it doesn't mean you can't do it, or should stop. She suggested to take a step back, look at what is stopping you and see what can be altered or changed. Your first step should never be to change your goal, but to change your process.

2. BE PROUD TO BE POWERFUL

Irish international rugby star, **Jenny Murphy**, had her first taste of sport thanks to her dad bribing her with a 99. At the time, there wasn't a girls' team so she ended up playing alongside boys. When she started to play rugby, she fell in love with the sport. It encouraged her to be fast, to be competitive and made her proud to be powerful. This is something all attendees could agree with. As women, we should never shy away from success or play-down our power.



PICTURED:
AICC team members with journalist and broadcaster Theresa Lowe

3. RESILIENCE AND COURAGE

Dr Olivia Hurley spoke about the importance of resilience, and the importance of the language we use. We shouldn't encourage 'mental toughness' as it suggests that someone who is not mentally tough is mentally weak. We should instead, encourage resilience and courage. According to Olivia, a key characteristic of high-performance athletes is their courage to be imperfect. They strive for excellence, but never perfection. Perfection is impossible.

4. ADAPT TO CHANGE

Another key characteristic among athletes- that can be applied to business and personal life- is how they adapt to change, Olivia said. Our brains are wired to be wary of change, we don't like it. However, it's a part of life, and although you won't always welcome change, you can work harder at adapting to it.

5. A CULTURE OF WELLNESS

EMEA Group Health Director of Fitbit, Aileen O' Colmain, spoke about Fitbit's focus on employee wellness. This isn't just about little changes like tracking steps and taking the stairs, it's also about being mentally well. The panel were all in agreement about the importance of workplace wellness programmes, especially in professional services where there can be a focus on busy-ness and how many hours you put in, as opposed to being productive and present. ■



Jasmine Ball



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The Arab-Irish Chamber joined a host of Ireland's favourite celebrities and leading business minds at the Irish Red Cross Jasmine Ball in aid of Syria.

The event, which was held at the Clayton Hotel, helped raise more than €100,000 to support of Syrian children and their families who have been impacted by more than six years of violent conflict.

More than 700 guests attended the event, which was organised by a voluntary organising committee comprised of some of Ireland's leading business people. The group, made up of CEOs, Marketing Executives, and entrepreneurs, combined their skills, contacts and entrepreneurial spirit in an effort to help people in Syria.

Irish Red Cross Secretary General Liam O'Dwyer, praised the work of the volunteers

1: Former Minister Pat Carey Chairman of the Red Cross with Mr. Abdulaziz A. Aldriss former Ambassador of Saudi Arabia and AICC Director and H.E. Dr. Saeed Mohamed Ali Al Shamsi Ambassador of the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

2: Sinead Spain group head of news Communicorp and Ruth Spain AICC

3: Modar Nasser, Dima Shannan, Rafal Sabir and Martin Jacob Director JMDL

4: AICC CEO with members of the Trade Services team

5: AICC Director Michael Quigley and his wife Ann

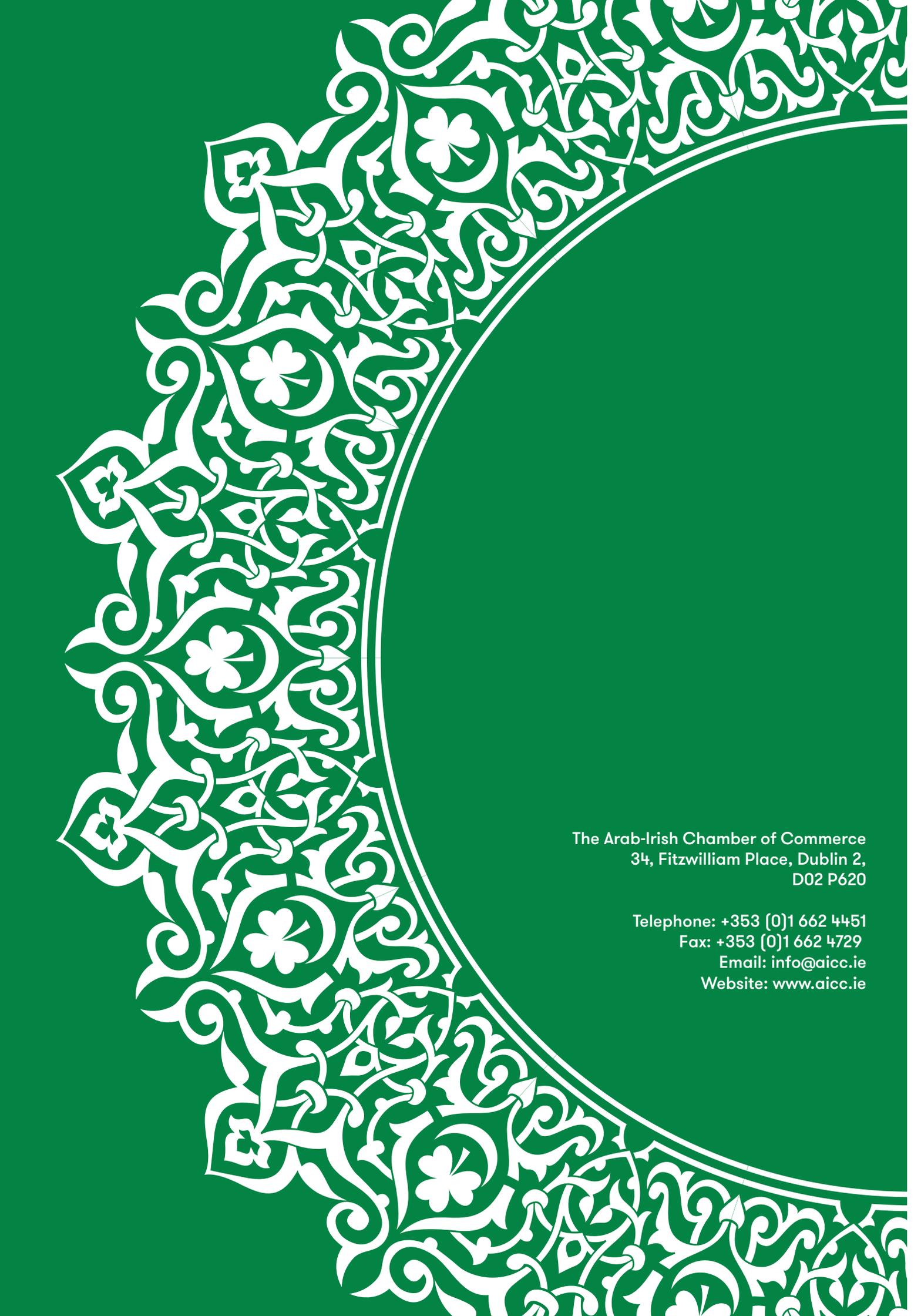
6: Members of the AICC Trade Services team

involved: "Time has become a precious commodity for us all. We are very grateful to the committee of volunteers who put together this great event. It is only with the support of volunteers and donors that we can continue to help in Syria."

All funds raised go directly to supporting the health and education needs of Syrian children.

The Irish Red Cross and International Red Cross movement is working closely with the Syrian Arabic Red Crescent (SARC) to provide a timely and neutral response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. It has been six years since the crisis in Syria began. Over 400,000 people have been killed, another 1.5 million injured and nearly 8 million people internally displaced. It is estimated that 13.5 million people, half of whom are children, are in need of immediate assistance, four out of five Syrians now live in poverty. ■





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