

WIRTSCHAFTS FORUM

NAH- UND MITTELOST[®]

No. 2 – March / April 2009

C 46321

Contents

Iraq: First visit of a German Foreign Minister in Iraq after 22 years	1
Editorial	3
Personalities	3
Iran: Gerhard Schroeder's visit to Iran	4
Jordan: Jordan attracting more foreign investments	8
Egypt: "Towards a Strategic Energy Partnership between Egypt and the EU"	12
UAE: UAE least dependent on oil exports	16
Palestinian Territories: Hot spot Gaza	17
Kuwait: Will the Kuwaiti government get better grades?	18
Middle Eastern airlines and the German aviation market - Open Skies vs. Aviation Conventions	19
German foreign trade with the countries of North Africa and the Near and Middle East	20
Fairs and conferences 2009	21
85 th NUMOV-Länderforum	22
UAE: UAE refreshes its transport model	22
International Renewable Energy Agency "IRENA" founded	23
News & Projects	24
News in brief	28
Turkish currency	28
Exchange rates	28
New airport for Mazar-e-Sharif	29
Iran: Etisalat active in Iran	29
Business page	30
Business enquiries	31
SIEE* Pollutec	31
Services for NUMOV members	31
NUMOV Services	32
Application form for members	32
Introducing a NUMOV member: Bayer Technology Services	33
Imprint	34
Board of NUMOV	34

First visit of a German Foreign Minister in Iraq after 22 years

by Ludwig Schulz



H. E. Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, German Minister of Foreign Affairs, giving a present to Iraqi Prime Minister H.E. Nouri al-Maliki

Ties between Iraq and Germany have become notably stronger in the beginning of the year 2009. In 2008 already the German Federal Minister of Economics and Technology and German officials as well as a large business delegation of NUMOV had visited Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region for the first time in two decades. In the beginning of this year relations were perceivably intensified, when **H. E. Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier** visited Baghdad and Erbil - the first German Foreign Minister to visit the country in 22 years. His two-day visit on February 16th and 17th, 2009 gave evidence to the trust and support Germany wishes to administer to political and socio-economic development in Iraq. "The Iraqi government has achieved important successes in

stabilising the country in recent months," Steinmeier told reporters before leaving for Iraq. "My visit shows that we want to support the new Iraq as it moves towards consolidating democracy and the peaceful balance between religion and ethnicity."

Germany has in fact a lot to catch up: the post-war economic relations leave room for improvement, in 2007 the exchange of goods reached a mere € 360.6 mn. Exports were mainly electronics and machinery, amounting to € 319 mn and imports were almost exclusively crude oil, amounting to € 41.5 mn. Germany ranks far behind other countries in foreign exports to Iraq:

continued on page 10

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