

# First International Trade Show In The North Of Iraq

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The Iraqi Chamber of Commerce and Industry listened to foreign businessmen who repeatedly emphasised that Kurdistan is the gateway to Iraq, as the region enjoys greater safety and the regional administration is able to attract foreign investment.

It organised DBX Kurdistan, the first international trade show and conference in free Iraq, in collaboration with the regional government in Erbil, from September 15th – 18th. Around 305 foreign and local companies representing 30 countries participated, along with most Iraqi and Kurdish ministries.

As its name tells us, DBX Kurdistan was the first international trade show hosted by Iraq. Many rebuilding exhibitions were held in neighbouring countries, and consequently, their impact was limited. Moreover, many international firms took part in DBX, among them General Motors, General Electric, DHL, Caterpillar, Mercedes Benz, Siemens and Motorola.

The interest of the regional government in making the exhibition a success was clearly demonstrated and it put all its resources at the disposal of the organisers. DBX was inaugurated by the president of the government of the area, Massoud El-Barazani. He emphasised that it has been only a little over two years since the door to the world was opened to us. "The Kurdistan Region is your gateway to Iraq and we will do our best that you may express your entrepreneurial spirit and thrive among and along with us. Airport services are technically ready and flights to international destinations have begun and will develop much further. Telecommunication, transportation, and accommodation services that meet international standards are available and rapidly improving and expanding. international banking services are under intense development".

He concluded that holding the exhibition in Erbil illustrates the historical unity of the Iraqis.



Discussions on tourism in Kurdistan جانب من الندوة الخاصة بالسياحة في كردستان التي أقيمت على هامش المعرض

The head of Kurdistan Tourism, underlined the existence of significant tourism investment opportunities in this area; tourist sites have not been destroyed, the natural scenery is magnificent and expatriate Kurds who returned are venturing into the tourism sector and setting up travel agencies specialised in travel to Kurdistan.

The Iraqi oil minister, whose department had a strong presence at this event, indicated that there is an action plan for the creation of 15 development projects in Kurdistan, including giant refineries and warehouses. The president of the Iraqi-American Chamber of Commerce and Industry, welcomed participants and visitors, wishing the government of the area every success with the exhibition.

The exhibits covered an area of 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>, and included all the equipment necessary for reconstruction: large road-building machines, the most developed industrial

products related to the building industry (electric, medical, coating and building materials for buildings, offices and factories). Cars, utility vehicles and passenger cars, took up the lion-share of exhibition space.

During the conference held in conjunction with the exhibition, ministers and their representatives put forward the most progressive proposals for investment in Iraq and discussed the need for granting facilities to foreign investors. Kurdistan was regarded as the starting point for reconstruction.

Conference papers concentrated on the best way to develop Iraq and Kurdistan which can exploit the fact that it is a peaceful region, untouched by the ravages of war.

The exhibition was well covered by the mass media (satellite TV, radio, and Arab and Kurdish newspapers). Representatives of the American and British embassies were present and many contracts were signed by importers and exporters. ■