Interview with Oliver Alexander, Alexander & Partners.

1. What’s the link between Germany and Qatar?

Germany and Qatar are very closely linked by deep friendships on state and civilian levels and by ample cultural and business relationships. Such links are perpetuated through close cooperation between the two countries. Notably, Qatar and Germany have decided to stage a cultural exchange year in 2017, during which Qatar will host cultural events in Germany and vice versa.

2. Which areas of European tax law are pivotal for Arabs to understand if they are looking to move to the region?

With regard to transactions in the real estate sector, real estate transfer tax, taxation of revenue from lease and rent as well as property tax will be decisive for the valuation of a transaction as well as the structure of the deal. In merger and acquisition and venture capital transactions, corporate tax and capital gains tax will be pivotal. Therefore, retaining sound tax advice at an early stage of a transaction is essential for structuring the deal as well as the post transaction set-up to ensure optimised tax treatment.

3. How do the business environments differ in Europe and the Arab world?

The way business is done is not so different in these regions. Trust between business partners and a professional attitude is paramount. However, as is true for every international business relation, Arab and European business partners will have to be aware of certain particulars of the markets in which they engage. That is why we focus not only on delivering top tier legal, tax and business advice, but also assist our clients with our profound experience in the business culture of both the Middle East and Europe.

4. With its current financial crisis, is Europe still a sound investment?

Germany, being the economic and industrial powerhouse of Europe, is a particularly solid investment market. As a highly industrialized, export-driven country, Germany was less affected by the financial crisis of 2008 than economies predominantly based on the financial industry. The real fortunes of Germany are its highly innovative SMEs and family owned businesses, which are driven by innovation and leadership in technology and form the backbone of its export economy. More than 50% of the world’s so-called hidden champions are located in Germany. Moreover, the German real estate market has proven to be stable and continuous in attracting international investors who focus on established, high value markets, such as Munich and Hamburg, as well as new and dynamic markets, such as Berlin. In addition, the financial crisis and the subsequent devaluation of the common euro currency have made investments in Germany even more interesting. For these reasons the Berlin real estate market has been one of the most dynamic worldwide over the past few years.

5. How does the breakdown of the FTA negotiations affected business between companies based in Europe and those in the GCC?

We do not see that business was negatively affected, since the GCC countries are booming out of their own strength and European companies are well positioned to execute projects in the GCC. Moreover, Germany in particular offers fantastic opportunities for private equity investments in new and renewable energy, environment, logistics and IT, and especially in the SME sector. Additionally, the German start-up market is one of the most prosperous worldwide, with the venture capital market growing at a correspondingly rapid rate.

Germany and Qatar are very closely linked by deep friendships on state and civilian levels and by ample cultural and business relationships.

Alexander & Partner specializes in advising clients from the Middle East and the GCC in particular on investments in real estate as well as merger and acquisition and venture capital transactions in Europe and Germany.

Working from our head office in Berlin as well as representations in Doha, Dubai and Muscat we pride ourselves on assisting our clients not only in the complex legal, financing and tax matters of cross border transactions but also in understanding foreign market practices and business cultures. With close ties to both Germany and the Middle East and a true commitment to these markets our team of top tier advisors is the ideal partner for your ventures.

Alexander & Partner
Law and Finance
Schillerstraße 41 - 10707 Berlin, Germany
T +49 30 88708567 - info@alexander-partner.com
www.alexander-partner.com

Qatar
T +974 55531474

Oman
T +968 9826 9892

United Arab Emirates
T +971 5 0471 9612