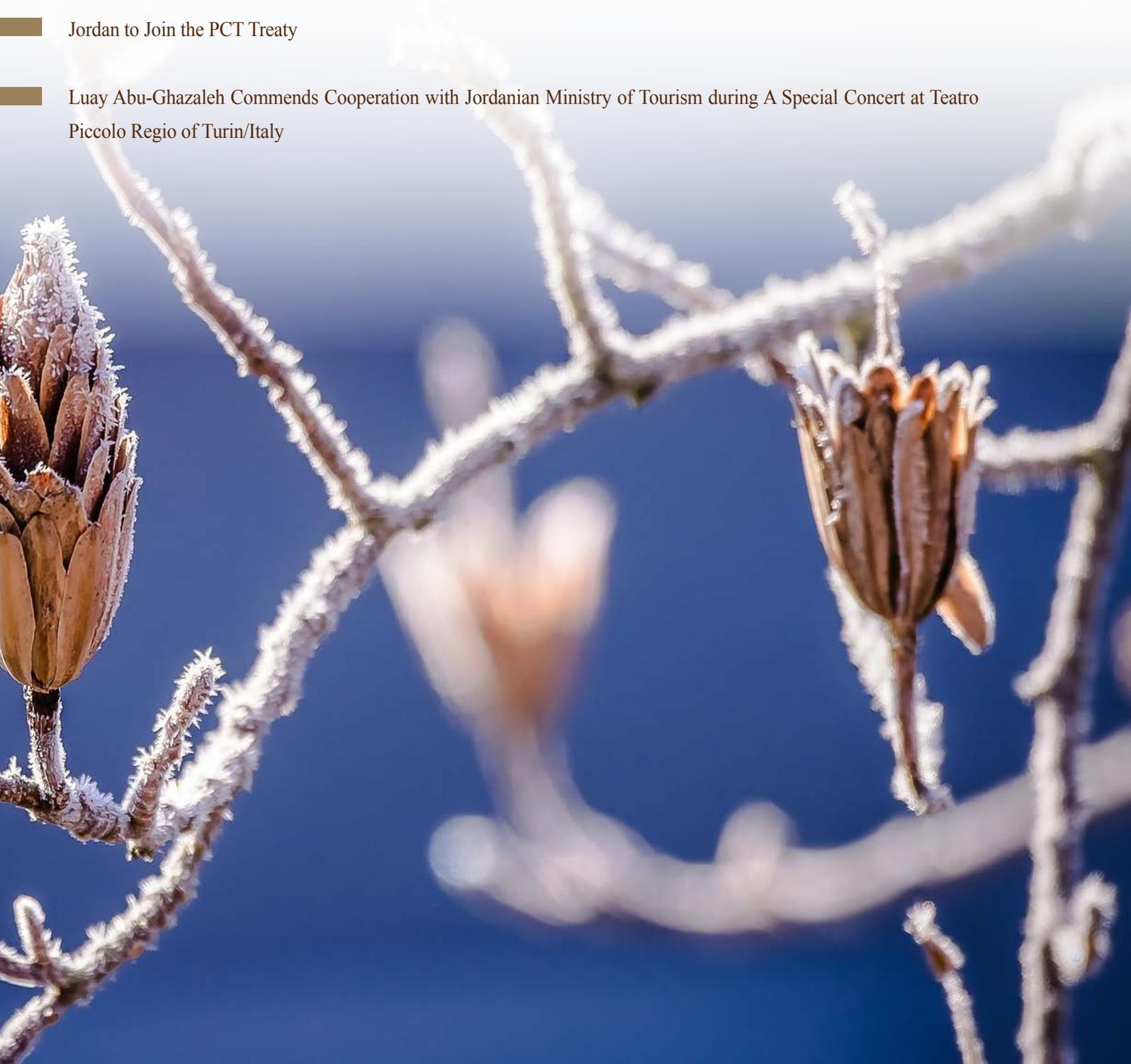


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Jordan to Join the PCT Treaty

AMMAN - The Jordanian Council of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister Mr. Hani Al-Mulki approved the accession of Jordan to the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). The Treaty provides procedural facilitations with a 90 percent discount on the submission fees offered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to Jordan.

The accession of Jordan to the PCT would benefit both local and foreign applicants, which would contribute to the increase of patent applications submitted to the Directorate of Industrial Property Protection, affiliate of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

The Council instructed the Minister of Foreign Affairs to deposit the accession documents with the Secretary General of WIPO and authorized the permanent representative of the Kingdom in Geneva to sign the Treaty.

Source: Agip.com



UAE Granted 185 Patents in the First Ten Months of 2016



ABU DHABI - From January to October 2016, the Ministry of Economy's International Center for Patents Registration (ICPR) has granted 185 patents out of 1,368 registered applications, the Ministry's data shows.

"The most significant achievements of the Intellectual Property Sector during the first 10 months of 2016 was the reception and registration of 1,368 patent applications, with the evaluation of 837 applications completed and resulting in the granting of 185 patents," said Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri, Minister of Economy, in a report issued by the Ministry on the occasion of the UAE's 45th National Day.

In addition, he added, the Ministry received 700 requests for industrial design certificates, 251 of which were granted. There were also 500 requests for the registration of Intellectual Property Rights, 346 of which were granted. Trademark registration applications filed at the Ministry totaled 16,464 as of mid-November 2016, with 15,377 applications completed.

Al Mansouri said that the development of the Intellectual Property system and the protection of creator and inventor's rights are main pillars in the UAE's efforts to enhance the environment of innovation and create a knowledge-based economy because of their importance in preventing

fraud and preserving the rights of institutions, companies and individuals.

He explained that such initiatives encourage inventors and provide the appropriate environment for transforming creative ideas into applications and coming up with innovative solutions that can spur economic growth and improve the competitiveness of the UAE.

The Ministry's most prominent achievement in this sector for 2016 was the opening of the International Center for Patents Registration, the culmination of a series of efforts made by the Ministry to develop the Industrial Property Department. Plans for the center included several stages involving the inception, development and operation of the center within the Ministry.

Moreover, training, advisory and other pertinent aspects were undertaken in collaboration with the Korean Intellectual Property Office.

Source: Emirates News Agency (WAM)



DHA Urges Mandatory Health Insurance before Year Ends to Avoid Fines

DUBAI - As the date for enforcing penalties for those who have not complied with the Dubai mandatory health insurance scheme nears, Dubai Health Authority, DHA, has urged sponsors who have not yet provided their employees and dependents with insurance to complete the process as soon as possible.



The last and final phase in the three-year rollout ended on July 31st, 2016, however the authorities delayed the issuance of penalties on individuals until December 31st. Penalties are already in place for those companies who fall into the earlier roll out phases (Phases 1 and 2) and have not complied with the deadlines.

Presently, approximately 88 percent of the population with Dubai visas have mandatory health insurance. “Those who have not complied with the

law are already in violation and the penalties on individuals will begin after the year ends. However, we urge the public not to wait until the last day,” Dr. Haider Al Yousuf, Director of Health Funding at the DHA, said.

DHA has partnered with General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA), so that no new visa will be issued or an existing one renewed where the individual concerned does not have health insurance coverage in place at the time of visa application or renewal.

“The cooperation with GDRFA is to ensure compliance, but people who fall under phase three need to understand that the fines will apply after the due date, so they cannot wait until their visa renewal date unless it is earlier than December 31st, otherwise they will accumulate fines,” said Al Yousuf.

The fine is AED500 per employee, per month, and will be applicable from January 1st, 2017.

Source: Emirates News Agency (WAM)

Qatar Replaces Sponsorship Law with Contract-based System



DOHA - Qatar abolished the kafala (sponsorship) system and implemented new reforms to improve workers' rights, the Ministry of Administrative Development Labor and Social Affairs announced recently.

The new measures have come one year after Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani signed the reforms into Law.

The new law replaces the kafala system with a modernized contract-based system that safeguards worker rights and increases job flexibility, announced Minister of Administrative Development Labor & Social Affairs Dr. Issa Bin Saad Al-Jafali Al-Nuaimi at a press conference.

The law abolishes the kafala system and guarantees greater flexibility, freedom and protection to Qatar's more than 2.1 million salaried workforce.

Al-Nuaimi said: "The state of Qatar is enormously grateful to the millions of workers who have come to Qatar to build our nation's infrastructure during this period of rapid change. The new law is the latest step towards improving and protecting the rights of every expatriate worker in Qatar."

"We welcome any comment or constructive criticism, and will continue to do so in the future. However, we urge the international community not to draw any definitive conclusions until there has been time to see the new Law in action.

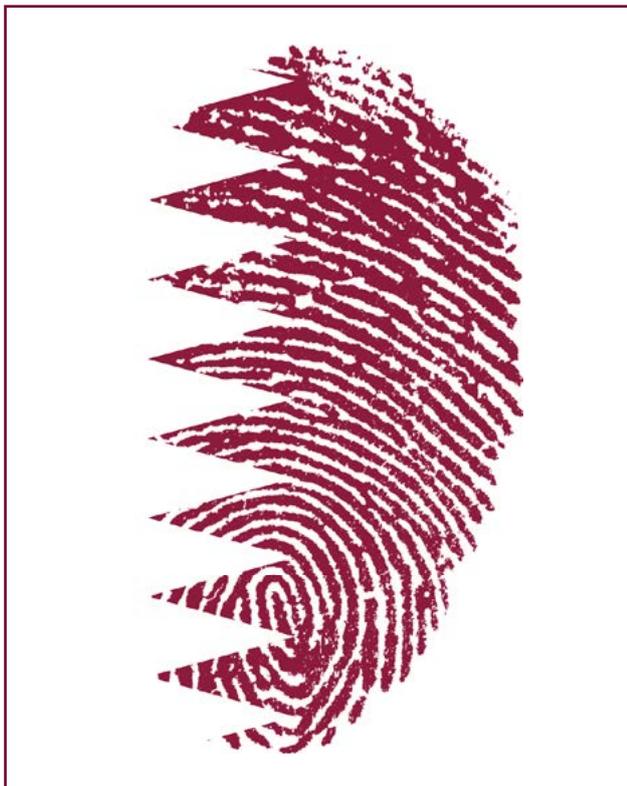
"At its core, we are doing this because we believe it is the right thing to do and because it provides tangible new benefits to expatriate workers. This is why we will work diligently to ensure it is properly implemented, including increasing our monitoring capabilities and hiring more

compliance inspectors to tighten the net on companies who violate the Law.”

On the subject of enforcing the Law, Brigadier Mohammed Ahmed Al Atiq, director general of the Department of Passport and Expatriates Affairs in the Ministry of Interior, said: “Enforcing Law No. 21 of 2015 is a government priority. Its success will be measured by how it is implemented in the weeks, months and years ahead.”

Under the new rules:

Freedom of movement is explicitly guaranteed. Expats have the right to leave the country after notifying the employer, whether to take leave or for an emergency. Expats also have the right to permanently leave the country before or after completing the duration of their contract, after notifying the employer according to the terms of the contract.



If the employer rejects a leave request, the migrant worker can appeal to the Exit Permit Grievances Committee, which has to respond to all requests within three days. The applicant will be able to leave the country unless he is wanted in connection to any active criminal proceedings, or has defaulted on any debt in Qatar that remains unsettled.

Expats will no longer need approval from their existing employer to change jobs if they complete the length of a fixed-term contract. Individuals in open-ended contracts will also be able to change jobs without their existing employer’s permission, provided that they complete a five-year service period.

All prospective migrant workers will be able to see a copy of their job contract, prior to leaving their country of origin, as obtaining a work visa will now require the existence of a job contract approved by the Ministry.

Employers found to have confiscated passports can be fined up to QR25,000 per worker. When enacted, this will be the toughest financial penalty against passport confiscation within the region.

Source: Saudi Gazette



Germany: Approves the Bill on Amendments to Change-in-ownership Rules

BONN - The Federal Council permitted the bill on amendments to the change-in-ownership rules on December 16, 2016. The bill will enter into force after its publication in the Official Gazette.



According to the section 8c of the Corporate Income Tax Act and under the change-in-ownership rules, a company is not allowed to carry over losses if, within five years, more than 50% of the capital or participating interest, membership or voting rights in that company are transferred, directly or indirectly, to a purchaser or a person related to the purchaser. The loss carry-forward will be disallowed pro rata for transfers of shares or voting rights between 25% and 50% within 5 years.

The bill provides for an exception to the application of the change-in-ownership rules in cases where the loss-making company's business operations are continued unchanged from the time of incorporation, or at least during the three fiscal years prior to the change in ownership. If the conditions are met, taxpayers may avoid application of the change-in-ownership rules and subsequent forfeiture of loss carry-forward by filing a respective application with the tax authorities.

However, the forfeiture of loss carry-forward will still apply if, in subsequent years, one of the following events occurs:

A temporary or final discontinuation of the business operations; a change to the purpose of the business operations; takeover of an additional business operation; participation as a partner in a partnership; becoming a controlling parent of a group of companies under the group taxation regime; or assets being transferred to the loss-making company and recorded below fair market value for tax purposes.

Source: Regfollower.com

Luay Abu-Ghazaleh Commends Cooperation with Jordanian Ministry of Tourism during A Special Concert at Teatro Piccolo Regio of Turin/Italy

TURIN/Italy – Deputizing for HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Mr. Luay Abu-Ghazaleh, vice chair of Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization (TAG-Org) and CEO-Managing Partner of Abu-Ghazaleh Intellectual Property (AGIP) highly commended the cooperation with the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in promoting tourism through musical concerts and events.

Speaking at a special concert held in Turin in Italy on the occasion of introducing the PETRA music project at Teatro Piccolo Regio of Turin as part of the UNESCO global campaign #Unite4Heritage, Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh said that Tourism is an international language.

“HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh has been involved in the tourism sector for a considerable time in his strong belief that tourism is one of the world’s fastest growing industries that has a strong and positive impact on the economies of all countries. We believe that through music we can achieve positive results and enhance the image of the region,” Luay Abu-Ghazaleh, who is a strong supporter

of building bridges between countries through tourism, said.

“This cooperation with the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism is unique and we believe that more global events should be planned to promote tourism in Jordan and also to tell the world that the Kingdom is a welcoming, safe and hospitable country,” Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh who is also the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Jordan added.

Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh is heavily involved in the Arab –Sino relations being the President of the Board of Directors of Talal Abu-Ghazaleh-Confucius Institute which was founded to promote learning Chinese language and culture in Jordan, in order to reach a better mutual understanding between Arab and Chinese cultures.

“We hope that this concert will open the door to more activities in the field of music and will strengthen the cultural relations between the two countries,” he concluded. Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh, a graduate of Claremont McKenna College with a degree in International Management, is

the recipient of the Young President's Organization Alex Cappello Best of the Best Membership Award is a member in various organizations and global entities such as the International Trademark Association (INTA), the Association of European Trade Mark Owners (Marques) and the Canadian Association Internationale pour la Protection de la Propriété Intellectuelle (AIPPI) in addition to others.

As the chair of the Young Presidents Organization and the Young Presidents Organization, Middle East North Africa Regional, he believes strongly in the power of youth in driving the economy forward especially in the tourism and information technology sectors.

The full-house concert was attended by Dr. Emad Hijazeen (Petra Development

and Tourism Region Authority - Deputy Chief Commissioner representing the Minister of Tourism HE Ms. Lina Annab, and by several representatives of Italian institutions.

The PETRA initiative is also the result of a joint venture, started in December 2015, between UNESCO Amman Office, Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization, the Jordanian National Orchestra Association and the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA).

The PETRA music project and PETRA album by Luca Aquino and the Jordanian National Orchestra, produced by Talal Abu-Ghazaleh International Records, is gaining resonance in Europe and is acclaimed by the music critics.

Source: TAG-Org News

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