



MAFEX explores new business opportunities in the Middle East

- **The Middle East is once more a central point for MAFEX internationalization. The Association, in collaboration with ICEX Spain-Exports and Investment organized a study mission to Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait to discuss new business options for the Spanish railway industry in relation to the many transport plans announced for the coming years.**

Madrid, April 27th 2014.- The Spanish Railway Association (MAFEX), in collaboration with ICEX Spain-Exports and Investment, begins this week a round of contacts in Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait in a study mission to explore further business opportunities in the Middle East. This trip, which will run from April 27th to May 1st, is included in the intense activity plan to boost the internationalization that the Association has scheduled for 2014.

The mission seeks to expand the Spanish presence in markets with large infrastructure projects in emerging areas and rail transport.

Oman: A national network of over 2,000 kilometres

The first target of this mission is Oman, a country where the choices which the Spanish industry has with ambitious initiatives such as the "National Railway Project" will be studied. This project includes the construction, operation and maintenance of a network composed of more than 2,000 kilometres across the Sultanate. It is part of the Gulf Railway, a program of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) with which it is intended to join, with a new railway line, its six member states (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman).

According to previous studies, 12,000 kilometres of track and about 10.2 million concrete sleepers will be necessary. Also, 35 kilometres of tunnels, 45 kilometres of viaducts and 39 kilometres of railway bridges will be constructed. The scale of the work also includes the construction of stations, service centres facilities for rolling stock, maintenance workshops and operation control centres.

A special item for rolling stock has also been announced, in which the acquisition of up to 85 locomotives, 30 diesel multiple unit (DMU) for passengers, 80 cars and 500 freight wagons is contemplated.

Bahrain and Kuwait: Impulse to subway and light rail

Within the series of meetings scheduled on this mission study, MAFEX will also travel to Bahrain and Kuwait to show its interest in railway projects announced by the respective transport administrations.

Bahrain has plans for the construction of a light rail network, which has a budget of more than 7,500 million euros. Meanwhile, a visit to Kuwait reinforces the recent visit of His Majesty King Juan Carlos, who was accompanied, among others, by the Minister of Urban Works, Ana Pastor.

The intensification of trade relations with Kuwait comes at a key moment to boost infrastructure in the country. The new Master Plan of the Kuwait National Rail Road Network (KNRR) and the Gulf Railroad provides the connection to other countries in the Gulf and Kuwait's Metro, a project with great opportunities for Spanish companies, which have in this field an experience that is highly valued abroad. The network will have 171 kilometres and 70 stations.

**About MAFEX*

The objective of the Spanish Railway Association (MAFEX) is to carry out promotional activities in other countries, as well as to defend their general interests.

Created in 2004, it currently has 71 members representing more than 85% of Spanish rail industry's exports, according to official figures in 2012. Known as the official collaborating organization of the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness through its Subsecretariat of Trade, the Association is supported by GRUPO AGEX, to which it belongs, and by different national and international organizations and institutions.

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