

## Special Number on Arbitration in the Arab World: Editorial Note

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Having looked at China in its last special number (December 2007), the Journal now focuses on another region experiencing tremendous economic growth: the Arab world. As countries in the region benefit from soaring oil prices, many have seen their domestic economies grow and are attracting substantial foreign investment. Having amassed substantial amounts of capital, some countries in the region are starting to invest abroad. Against this backdrop, it is not surprising to see an increased interest in international arbitration in the Arab region.

Arbitration is certainly not a new concept in the Arab world. It has long been acknowledged as a method of dispute resolution and was referred to in the Qu'ran as early as the seventh century. The renewed interest in arbitration is largely due to the economic changes referred to above. But it has also been sparked by a “new generation” of lawyers that has emerged in the Arab world. This new generation—often with an Arabic background but trained in western jurisdictions—enjoys the international aspects of arbitration and thrives on being part of the international arbitration circle.

The contributors to this Journal's special number, many of whom are part of this “new generation” of Arab lawyers, share their thoughts on a wide and compelling range of topics. This special number starts off with an interview of an eminent Arab arbitration practitioner. In his interview, he discusses a range of Arab arbitration-related topics including the differences between arbitration in the various Arab countries and also controversial issues such as the low participation of Arab arbitrators in international arbitration. Other contributors survey the position of arbitration in various Arab jurisdictions including Dubai, Jordan and the Maghreb countries. One author explores how bilateral investment treaties can protect foreign investors in the Arab world and Arab investors abroad. Other contributors provide new statistical information on ICC arbitrations in the Arab world, and raise interesting questions about Arab-related arbitrations, including why so few Arab nationals are appointed as arbitrators or why so few Arab seats of arbitration are chosen. Finally, two practitioners take a sociological perspective: one raises the fundamental question of what “development of arbitration” in the Arab world means in the first place; the other investigates whether the Arab world actually has the means of driving international commercial arbitration.

A number of articles in this special number are based on papers that were presented at the ICC-CCAT-UTICA Conference “Arbitration in the Arab World: An International Perspective” held in Tunis on May 17–18, 2007 and at the French Cour de Cassation

Conference entitled “Aspects of International Arbitration in the Law and Practice of Arab Countries” held in Paris on June 13, 2007.

I am delighted to have had the opportunity to serve as Guest Editor for this special number of the Journal and I am grateful to Michael Moser for his invitation to do so. I hope you will find this special number on arbitration in the Arab world thought-provoking and that it will further stimulate discussion on the topic. Please do let us have your thoughts and comments at <editorjoia@kluwerlaw.com>.

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Guest Editor