

UAE-Swiss co-operation on green energy feasible

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The UAE remains Switzerland's most important economic partner in the Middle East in terms of trade volume, a Swiss minister said yesterday.

"Trade volume between the two countries has increased continually over recent years," said Moritz Leuenberger, Minister of Energy, Environment, Transport and Communication.

"The fact that Switzerland has an embassy in Abu Dhabi and a consulate general in Dubai underlines our strong interest in participating in the economic development of the UAE. Economic ties between Switzerland and the Emirates are excellent and much more intensive than I thought."

Leuenberger said the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi, which ended yesterday, would play a key role in mobilising the world to embark on a global energy revolution.

"We have to shift radically to a path that is more sustainable for the climate, the environment and energy security," he added.

"In my country public awareness of these issues is already strong – especially when high oil prices, disrupted gas supplies or melting glaciers as a consequence of climate change make the headlines.

"What made the summit so special was that it took place in a country that is a major oil producer."

Leuenberger said there was potential for co-operation between the two countries in the renewable energy sector.

"Swiss public and private research institutions and enterprises are leaders in a number of renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies, which could be particularly suited to the UAE. Among these options are solar power, electricity transmission and building technologies.

"And the newly established Swiss Village Abu Dhabi Association will set the basis for creating a Swiss section in Masdar City. Swiss companies and research institutes will be invited to make use of commercial space at a central location in the zero-carbon city," he added.

The 23 Swiss exhibitors that took part in the summit showcased solar and biogas technologies, advanced building materials that reduce energy demand for cooling and automation and control systems.

One of the most exciting projects at the exhibition was the Solar Impulse, a solar-powered plane that will fly around the world with no fuel and zero emissions.

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