

## **New service for international companies in Vienna**

### **Vienna Business Agency expands service for setting up business operations and highly qualified international employees**

The number of international companies establishing business operations in the City of Vienna has continually increased in recent years. At present, approximately 20,000 highly qualified international employees work in the Austrian capital. For international firms, the underlying conditions during the phase of locating a business in Vienna are a decisive factor. For this reason, the City of Vienna is expanding its service offering in this area via the Vienna Business Agency, and is opening an innovative service hub. Effective immediately, the “Expat Center Vienna” serves as a central platform for international companies and their highly qualified employees. This service also targets expatriates who work in top positions in international firms in Vienna, for example professionals or executives deployed in their Viennese subsidiaries. “International companies and their highly qualified key employees are immensely important to Vienna as a business location. Working together with them, Vienna has emerged as an East-West business interface. The City of Vienna is expanding its personal offering for expats and their families in order to increase the attractiveness of Vienna in international competition. Vienna is a cosmopolitan city full of opportunities. My aim is to have the professionals and executives working here serve as ambassadors conveying this image of the city throughout the entire world. As a result, new companies will locate their business operations here, which in turn creates added value and secures jobs”, says Renate Brauner, Vice-Mayor and City Councilwoman for Financial and Economic Affairs on the occasion of the opening of the newly-founded office.

During the years 2004-2009 alone, the Vienna Business Agency in cooperation with the national business promotion agency ABA – Invest in Austria attracted some 540 international firms to Vienna. This resulted in investments of EUR 450 million and the creation of 4,800 new jobs. These firms have a greater need for well qualified domestic as well as international employees.

The quick and unbureaucratic availability of information as well as the right contacts at the right time are decisive for the success of these companies and their highly specialized employees in part, Brauner adds. The expat service center located on Schmerlingplatz in the heart of Vienna and equipped according to state-of-the-art European standards functions according to the one-stop-shop principle. A team of experts offers the expatriates and their family members individual and customized consulting services in all issues of daily life and all the initial information required for starting work and staying in Vienna. The offering of the service hub also targets expatriates who have already lived in Vienna for a longer period of time.

#### Score points with service for international firms

“On the global economic stage, Vienna has to make a name for itself as a business location, position itself internationally with an economically-oriented image and attract investors as well as key foreign employees. They bring know-how, growth and the internationality we have to further expand in the future”, says Brigitte Jank, President of the Vienna Chamber of Commerce in underlining the importance of expatriates.

“The founding of the Expat Center Vienna is particularly important for the internationally-oriented Viennese industry and helps to make our business location even more attractive“, states Johannes Höhrhan, Managing Director of the Vienna Industrialists’ Association. “In this connection, it is especially important to me to point out that we cannot simply let immigration happen, but we have to actively shape it. Against this backdrop, the Expat Center conveys a positive signal about the way in which the City of Vienna deals with the issue of immigrants”, Höhrhan continues.

With the help of workshops and events on various topics, the Expat Center Vienna will support a better integration of expatriates and their families in Viennese society. “The aim of the Expat Center is to organize the start and the life and work of expats in Vienna so efficiently, pleasantly and profitably as possible”, explains Gerhard Hirczi, Managing Director of the Vienna Business Agency which initiated the Expat Center. This offering has been made possible by a cooperative partnership with experts from the City of Vienna as well as private providers.

## Vienna – Top location for international employees

An increasing number of internationally networked companies and group headquarters decide for Vienna as a business location. The geographical proximity to CEE markets combined with a pronounced understanding for the languages, culture and business practices in Eastern Europe are just as decisive as a research- and technology-friendly business environment, the stable political and economic conditions and not least a unique quality of life in the world.

One example of such a company is Henkel Central Eastern Europe, which has been coordinating Henkel Group's business operations in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia for more than 20 years, and now encompasses management responsibility for 32 countries. "Last year we had to manage close to 150 personnel transfers in the CEE region, including 70 people with the short or medium-term goal of working in Vienna", says Günter Thumser, President of Henkel CEE. "We require these highly qualified key employees, both for being able to train them at our headquarters in Vienna as well as to more effectively manage this huge region, and are grateful for initiatives such as the Expat Center Vienna, which offers substantial assistance to these dedicated people. As a result, the traditional competitive advantages of Vienna as a business location will be consolidated or even upgraded once again", Thumser adds.

"The Expat Center Vienna will make the Vienna business location even more attractive for international companies, due to the fact that it actively supports expatriates to more effectively deal with the challenges of a new working environment such as taking care of administrative formalities with public authorities, ensuring the integration of the family and learning a new language, and thus adjusting more rapidly to the new circumstances", says Germar Wacker from the Austrian subsidiary of the internationally successful Canadian transport company Bombardier.

Against this backdrop, the Vienna Business Agency has already been working for close to 30 years to support national and international companies settling in Austria's capital city. The Vienna Business Agency already offers comprehensive support services to international firms of any size which want to set up business operations in Vienna via its "Internationalen Wirtschaftsservice" (International Business Service).

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“We help to make the start-up in Vienna as easy as possible, from initial consulting and finding suitable office space and commercial properties to assistance with public authorities and information on public funding”, Hirczi explains. “The Expat Center Vienna makes it possible to further optimize our service offering for international firms“, Hirczi concludes.