

Tribune

The Emirates: a Country with an Incredible Future

Pascal Renouard de Vallière

Advisor in International Relations

The discovery of the United Arab Emirates on the occasion of a business trip I made approximately a year ago was a true emotional shock for someone like me, used to this part of the world that I thought I knew well. Thanks to the administration of the Presidency of the Emirates' Council who helped me with this trip, I became fully aware of the incredible desire to capitalize on the efforts of the seven Emirates in the federation, more particularly those of the three principal ones: Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah, all focused on the same objective: to play a major role in the world economy and occupy a central position in regional development. The Federation owes this two-fold goal first to the visionary and statesman who understood the opportunity and force that a union between states and people could provide: I am obviously referring to the great leader behind this Federation, who presided it for many years, the late lamented Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al-Nahyane.

For a European such as myself, one can only be sensitive to the efforts made and immediately visible in each realization and in each of the players in this continuous progress to retain a strong tradition and culture in order to build a better future. In this, Europe and the United Arab Emirates have identical and complementary values.

Today, the media have allowed the entire world to discover images of the Emirian federation: modern buildings majestically towering over the seafront, bathing in the warm breezes of the desert bordered by greenery, the luxuriousness of which is a challenge in light of the climate and a tribute to nature; and the immense sail of the impressive Burj Al Arab Hotel rising from the waves to symbolically crown the Emirian vessel off to conquer tomorrow. These are strong images that feed one's imagination and remain long after one has left the country.

Burj Al-Arab is the symbol of the Emirian vessel off to conquer tomorrow

Leading Edge Technologies

But what I noticed the most during my very short trip was what is not seen from the outside but must be sought at the heart of where knowledge is shared and the future is invented: the Zayed University that has existed since 1998, the United Arab Emirates University of Al Ain and the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Sharjah, to cite only a few of the many higher education institutions that are the pride of the Emirates.

There, I discovered young men and women who, within the calm and peace of exceptional premises fully dedicated to education, are thirsty for the most in-depth knowledge of leading edge technologies. I was impressed by the passion they bring to their work and the obvious pride they feel and share for their education, aware that they are tomorrow's leaders, those who will continue to create major economic projects and who will provide their country and its inhabitants with a better life. In this context, I noted that the Emirates invest heavily in education, as they believe that in an increasingly globalized world, education is a crucial basis for prosperity.

After all I observed and felt, I can only encourage my compatriots and, more generally, everyone in the world, to come to the Emirates for a visit, and also to invest in both the economic and cultural arenas in order to participate in the incredible future this country promises and which, I am convinced, can only seduce them as I was seduced.