Visitors to Berlin are being invited to feel and celebrate the Peaceful Revolution with a week of activities. Here’s how people in the UAE can also take part, the anniversary’s project leader tells **GN Focus**

Two generations have come of age in a newly reunified Germany—the children of tomorrow, as the Scorpions referred to them in their epic smash, *Wind of Change*.

With more than 200 events this week, Germany’s historic capital will attempt to take residents and visitors back to the magic of the moment, to that glorious night when the Berlin Wall, history’s most divisive border, was breached in the Peaceful Revolution of 1989.

A host of special events this week will attempt to recreate the feeling of...
The wall has years

that moment 30 years ago. Berlin will be transformed into an open-air art exhibition and festival venue until November 10, with activities at seven city locations that are inseparably linked to the revolution. Commemorative highlights include a large-scale art installation and a stage show on the evening of November 9, both at the iconic Brandenburg Gate. 3D video projections on to buildings facades around the city, seven open-air exhibitions and augmented reality experiences.

Visitors around the world will be able to celebrate alongside, with several experiences now accessible online.

“The fall of the wall on November 9 is one of the happiest moments, if not the happiest moment, in recent German history, with a worldwide impact by bringing the confrontation between the Eastern and Western blocs to a close and preparing the ground for a united Europe,” Simone Leimbach, Project Head, 30 Years Peaceful Revolution – Full of the Wall at organisers Kulturprojekte Berlin, tells GN Focus. “It has become a symbol for freedom worldwide.

“The actions of the courageous citizens of East Germany who stood up for freedom, democracy and human rights made the impossible possible, and they did so peacefully. This is something that still inspires us today and can give people the strength to engage with the challenges facing us today and in the future.” History is written in everyday places and by very different people. That is still as relevant today as it was back then. We therefore want the visitors to take part in the celebrations, but also to learn about the past events and discuss their relevance for the present and the future.

In particular, visitors to the city should look up to the skies. Inspired by protesters who raised banners to declare a more democratic future, 30,000 people in Berlin and worldwide were asked to think about their memories of these past events, as well as their wishes and visions for the future. These messages, written on 30,000 ribbons, are part of Patrick Shearn’s Visions in Motion (pictured on page 1).

Curated by Kulturprojekte Berlin, the handcrafted artwork federates in the skies above Berlin this week, spanning the 100 metres over the Straße des 17. Juni towards the iconic Brandenburg Gate.

Global participation

People in the UAE and other parts of the world can send personal messages to the city at Mauer10.Berlin, these will be projected at the Gate throughout the week.

For those who actually want to experience what life in divided Berlin was like, the augmented reality (AR) app Mauer10 will bring the now mostly disappeared wall to life on smartphones, taking users on a journey through time and to some important episodes of the Peaceful Revolution. Across the world, it can be accessed online via Facebook messenger at M.me.mauer10.

And as the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Wall is taking place this weekend, there is an extra poignancy to this patriotic gesture.

Moritz Drucker, Pastor to the German Protestant Church at the Brandenburg Gate, says the breaking down of the wall in 1989 had a huge impact on his life.

“My family was actually split because of the wall. I had some aunts who lived in East Germany and they were sometimes able to travel to visit us, but of course we felt there was a divide between us.

And then, suddenly, the wall came down and we were reunited as a family.

Working for the church, Drucker says it’s his job to bring Germans, and especially those in the UAE, together for activities and worship.

“‘I am often among other Germans, eating together, doing music, plus we have the desert in the background and the mountains of Ras Al Khaimah, or we go to the beach,” he says. “For me this is very important because I can live my culture and speak my language together with other people.

Sense of community

Another German ex-pat, Juliane Niederste-Holberg, a Deputy Kindergarten Manager at DHD German School and teaches the German language to youngsters. She meets a lot of German expats but adds, “I also love the local people, that’s the reason I am here in the UAE.”

It may be 30 years since the Berlin wall fell, but she recalls the day vividly.

“I was outside, making music with some friends and at midnight a lot of people came to the pub to celebrate and it was just a great, great day,” she says.

“We actually went to the wall and climbed up and danced on it. The next day when the border was open and people from the East could come through, we welcomed them with chocolates and a big hula.”

Stay connected

Another German ex-pat, novelist and film director Daniela Tully, by the way, she has no need to visit Germany every day, thanks to the tunes of Hasselhoff, and just feels really good. ‘We had a lot of luck when we watch videos of it coming down and see the people celebrating, I still get quite emotional,” she says.

Juliane Niederste-Holberg
 Deputy Kindergarten Manager, DHD German School

Moritz Drucker
 Pastor, German Protestant Church

Tommy Schneider
 Business development manager, Dubai’s Emirates Club

Daniela Tully
 Novelist and film director

By Emma Procter
Special to GN Focus

They may be a few thousand miles from their country of origin, yet Germans residing in the UAE feel strongly about upholding their culture and interacting with each other to maintain a sense of camaraderie.

And as the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Wall approaches, expats explain its impact on their lives and how they uphold their culture in the UAE.

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UAE-GERMANY TIES BUILT ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS

**Ernst Peter Fischer**, the German Ambassador to the UAE, talks about bilateral cooperation and the anniversary of the fall of Berlin Wall

On November 9, we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. This history and landmark day in 1989, the former East Germany opened the borders to the West and thousands of East Berliners streamed across the border. Most Germans will never forget what they did and how they felt on that day. For me as a citizen of Berlin, this was truly one of the most remarkable days of my life. The wall, which shaped the history of my city since 1961, was being torn down. The fall of the Berlin Wall was the result of peaceful cooperation in Europe, building trust step by step between former enemies. It was a moment of unprecedented and overwhelming joy.

Bilateral ties

Since the foundation of the UAE in 1971, the development of our bilateral relations has been a success story. The establishment of a strategic partnership in 2004 underpinned our special relationship. Today, the UAE is not only one of our most important trading partners in the region but also an active and engaging partner in many other fields. Our bilateral relations were the visit of HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, with German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the Federal Chancellery in Berlin.

Prize stable in regions and cultures:

Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, to Germany in June. With the joint statement being signed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, the UAE and Germany are working to touch down the walls to unite people instead of separating them. The Year of Tolerance in the UAE is a good example for understanding how to do that by celebrating the diversity of a society and respecting its members’ different cultural back-grounds. This is the spirit following the path of the historic developments on November 9, 1989, and I am truly convinced that this spirit will foster the special bond between the countries even further.

Bilateral trade:

Bilateral trade between Germany and the UAE in 2018 was €9.5 billion, with €5.8 billion in exports to the UAE and €3.7 billion in imports from the UAE. The UAE is Germany’s biggest trading partner in the Middle East and North Africa.

BILATERAL TRADE

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GERMAN EXPORTS TO THE UAE

- Airplanes
- Automobiles
- Machinery
- Electrical equipment
- Chemical products

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German exports to the UAE in 2018 were €8.3 billion, with €5.8 billion in exports to the UAE and €2.5 billion in imports from the UAE. The UAE is Germany’s biggest trading partner in the Middle East and North Africa.

GERMAN IMPORTS FROM THE UAE

- Airplanes
- Automobiles
- Machinery
- Electrical equipment
- Chemical products

German imports from the UAE in 2018 were €1.2 billion, with €5.8 billion in exports to the UAE and €2.5 billion in imports from the UAE. The UAE is Germany’s biggest trading partner in the Middle East and North Africa.

GERMAN IMPORTS FROM THE UAE

- Airplanes
- Automobiles
- Machinery
- Electrical equipment
- Chemical products

The UAE and Germany have a strong and amicable relationship.

Bilateral relations have been the cornerstone of our political and economic cooperation since the establishment of the UAE in 1971 and the establishment of our bilateral relations in 2004.

Industrial relation:

Many German companies, large as well as small and medium-sized, have been calling the UAE home for many years. Equipped with a transparent and always improving business environment, the UAE continues to act as the primary hub for German firms operating in the region and beyond.

In addition to serving as a commercial centre, the UAE is increasingly attracting German companies, adding value locally with their goods and services made in Germany. The country’s strong manufacturing and engineering industry is turning digital. No wonder that the term Industry 4.0 was actually created in Germany. Together with a vibrant start-up community, Germany has been reinventing itself to remain the economic powerhouse of Europe.

The ambition of the UAE leadership to become a platform for 21st-century technologies is on the same wavelength with the Industry 4.0 approach. Hence, a number of government and private sector representatives have started to embark on a bilateral discussion on how to take the already deep and extensive economic relations to the next level. A good example for this is the upcoming Global Manufacturing and Industrialisation Summit 2020 (GMIS) that will take place during Hanover Messe in April 2020.

Two sectors that deserve specific attention are training and education, as well as healthcare. Acknowledging the historically strong pull factor of the Anglo-Saxon educational system, we strongly believe that Germany’s vocational training tools and approach correspond well with the UAE’s plans to enable and prepare local talent for jobs in some of the emerging industries.

The same is true for the German healthcare system.

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German-Emirati relations started even before the official formation of the UAE, initiated by one of the world’s most progressive and trusted automotive manufacturers, Mercedes-Benz. This relationship is owed largely to the visionary businessman Abdulla Jallal Al Fahim, the late founder of the ALFAHIM Group and one of the main contractors to the UAE’s economic prosperity.

In 1962, before the country had proper infrastructure, including roads, buildings and electricity, a German delegation from Mercedes-Benz flew in to invest in the budding oil-rich emirate and open a distributorship for their luxury brand. After a few years, a partnership between Al Fahim family and Mercedes-Benz commenced in 1967 with an order of four premium Mercedes-Benz vehicles, which paved the way for a new beginning. This robust alliance between two nations and two companies signaled a new beginning supported by mutual values and vision.

With a pioneering vision, ALFAHIM Group inaugurated the UAE’s first Mercedes-Benz authorized distributor, operating at international standards under a newly formed subsidiary called Emirates Motor Company (EMC). Bringing in luxury saloons to durable trucks, and everything in between carrying the legendary Mercedes-Benz star, the business continued to rapidly flourish.

By the 1980s, EMC strategically relocated from its first showroom on Corniche Road to a modernized and grander facility on Airport Road. Situated on the fringes of the capital city, EMC’s iconic retailing Mercedes-Benz start signaled a landmark entrance to Abu Dhabi for travelers moving between the emirates.

EMC has had a successful journey from its humble beginnings in the 1960s to the prolific reputation it has built for itself and the iconic Mercedes-Benz brand in the region. The historical growth of EMC and the Mercedes-Benz brand was also a symbol of the progress of the UAE and ALFAHIM Group’s commitment to the sustainable development of the automotive industry in the country.

Today, EMC is recognized as a flagship general distributor in the region, and on the global stage, EMC once housed the world’s largest Mercedes-Benz facility for a decade. The company has seven purpose-built premises with a well-integrated network of showrooms, offices, part depots, and service centers accommodating clients from across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, including Al Ain and Al Dhafra.

Moreover, the ALFAHIM Group business member has earned the title of General Distributor of the Year from Daimler Middle East for many years. More recently, EMC’s Commercial Vehicles has deservedly earned General Distributor of the Year, for the second consecutive year, corroborating the high level of business excellence the entity has achieved.

In true Mercedes-Benz tradition, EMC persistently strives for the utmost in customer experience and an unlimited commitment to service excellence. Marketing and distributing one of Germany’s leading automotive brands in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi for the last 57 years, ALFAHIM Group and EMC’s growth track record has been phenomenal, as has its enduring partnership with Mercedes-Benz and Germany.
A combination of factors have ensured that automobiles built by the Teutons are perceived as superior to the rest in their handling dynamics. Winding mountain roads and twisty B-roads call for tasteful handling, and German engineers have over the years developed chassis and suspension systems that can tackle the most tortuous of chicanes with ease.

It also helps that the legendary Nürburgring race track is right at their doorstep, and they use its famed Nordschleife to fine-tune these cars. Then there is the Autobahn, with its virtually unrestricted speed limits, that spurs powertrain experts to test their own limits with every iteration of a performance model.

It’s not just performance and handling that the Germans have perfected. After acquiring erstwhile British über-premum marques Rolls Royce and Bentley respectively, BMW and Volkswagen have shown that they can take opulence and luxury to the next level too. Mercedes-Benz has also proven its mettle here with its own Maybach sub-brand.

German manufacturers aren’t sitting complacently on their laurels either. As the automobile world is making a shift towards electric, connected and autonomous mobility, the Teutons are at the forefront in research and development in these areas too.

All these factors have contributed to the sustained growth and firm establishment of German automobiles as the most sought after in the global market. For many, it comes down to choosing a car, it is “The best or Nothing.”

Winter wonderland

Mountains, adventures, history, charming festive markets and culinary treats – exploring Germany doesn’t have to be a summer experience, says Nicole Zaspel

Top attractions

Home to more than 110 national natural landscapes, 46 UNESCO World Heritage Sites as well as 200 long-distance cycle tracks and 300 premium hiking trails, Germany offers the perfect all-year travel experience with unique diversity. Explore the breath-taking natural landscapes of the North Sea Coast with its quaint North Frisian Islands and the stunning Thuringian countryside ride with its famous Wartburg castle. Spend time in cities such as Dusseldorf, Dresden, Leipzig and Stuttgart, filled to the brim with culture, history and culinary hotspots. Families visiting Germany will enjoy a wide range of activities featuring various nature parks and outdoor zones together with many theme parks across the country.

What to do in winter

Although Germany offers a year-round travel experience, the winter is a special time, when towns, cities and villages are adorned with festive decorations and the world-famous Christmas markets open their doors. Small cabins and stalls selling tasty wintry treats and arts and crafts line market squares and castle courtyards. The smells of gingerbread and traditional festive beverages waft through the air and choir’s strike up festive melodies under twirling lights. No matter which German region you will choose to visit, you will definitely enjoy the Christmas market traditions and the festive spirit.

For more information, visit Germany.travel

– The unit�Manager Marketing & Sales, German National Tourist Office

Rising demand for German degrees

Mona Osman, Counselor, Study in Germany, Goethe-Institut, explains what makes Germany a perfect study-abroad destination for UAE students

Do courses come cheaper in Germany than in the UK or the USA? What about the cost of living?

Yes, courses come cheaper in Germany than in the UK or in the US, as most of the universities are state-owned and charge nothing or only a very small tuition fee. As for private universities, students always have the chance to apply for a scholarship.

Cost of living in Germany is moderate compared to the rest of Europe and the US. Students are offered semester tickets for free transportation and they can eat at the universities at discounted prices.

Do German universities have courses in English?

Yes, German universities have courses in English.

While some universities offer courses from English from the bachelor’s level, depend ing on the field of study, many programmes are available in English on the master and PhD level. Nevertheless, it helps a lot if you have some proficiency in German when studying in a German-speaking country.

For more information on lan guage courses, visit Goethe.de/gulfregion

Have you noticed any growth in demand for German degrees in the UAE?

There has been a significant rise in demand for German degrees, especially in technical subjects.

As the official counsellor for Study in Germany, under the umbrella of the German Embassy, the number of students counselled at the Goethe Institut are always rising with many enquiries from Abu Dhabi and Dubai, along with strong interest from Al Ain and the northern emirates such as Ajman and Ras Al Khaimah. The Goethe-Institut offers tailor-made counselling through face-to-face meeting and emails.

What essentially encourages students from the UAE to head to Germany for higher studies?

The main factor is the quality of higher education that Germany is known for and also the cost factor, especially when compared to the services offered.

What programmes do UAE students primarily opt for when they enrol in Germany?

Due to the UAE students primarily opt for engineering and medical programmes in Germany. Do courses come cheaper in Germany than the UK or the USA? What about the cost of living?

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For more information on language courses, visit Goethe.de/gulfregion
EMIRATES MOTOR COMPANY (EMC)

What’s driving the future?

● Frank Bernthaler, CEO of Emirates Motor Company Passenger Cars (EMC PC), explains how Mercedes-Benz caters to major trends influencing future mobility.

How has EMC evolved along with the Mercedes-Benz brand since 1962?

The automotive business is probably living its biggest transformation process ever and EMC is preparing itself to become the luxury car market?

What are the general trends in the luxury car market?

In today’s world, Mercedes-Benz would not be able to achieve its goals if it does not extend the leadership role in the market it already has.

How do you maintain an edge over your competitors in the luxury car segment in the UAE?

We represent the leading luxury car brand in the world, and EMC offers the largest number of models with the Mercedes-Benz lineup. You can own an entry-level A-Class or purchase a luxury flagship, the Mercedes-Maybach. You can drive a hatchback, a coupe, a sedan in different sizes or you can choose an SUV from compact shapes to large 4x4 models. EMC has been the first of the German luxury brands to introduce plug-in hybrid models in the UAE, and we will be launching the first fully electric version of the newly established EQ brand in 2020.

Finally, could you talk about your association with Mercedes-Benz and EMC?

I joined Al Fahim Group’s Automotive Division in June 2014 after almost 25 years in different positions, countries and continents for Daimler, working with brands such as Mercedes-Benz, smart, Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge. My relationship with EMC, though, goes back to the mid-1990s and so does my experience for the Middle East, including the UAE.

I have learned what it means to be on the distributor side of the business and I am trying to apply this experience on a daily basis when dealing with customers, suppliers, principals as well as my colleagues. It has been an exciting journey and the future will be even more exciting, given the fact that all aspects of future mobility will play a more dominant role from now onwards.

Being part of this future is what motivates me every day and the odds of being successful are very high, because the combination of a world-class brand such as Mercedes-Benz with the local knowledge, foresight and power of the Al Fahim family is the best recipe you can have.

GOETHE-INSTITUT

Promoting cultural collaboration in the Gulf region

The Goethe-Institut is the official cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany abroad. It promotes German language, fosters international cultural collaboration and conveys a comprehensive image of Germany.

In the Gulf region, the Goethe-Institut was established in 2004 in Abu Dhabi, coordinating the activities of its two branches in Dubai – founded in 2007 – and in Muscat, founded 2012. From Abu Dhabi, it also initiates programmes in the other emirates, as well as countries in the Gulf.

It aims to encourage intercultural exchange and dialogue, thereby initiating projects that strengthen the cultural exchange and open new perspectives of collaboration for the countries of its interest.

The Goethe-Institut offers German language classes and cooperates with teachers for German as a foreign language. In the Gulf region, you can attend classes in Germany and take exams in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Muscat. Registration for its upcoming winter semester is now open. For more information, visit Goethe.de/gulfregion

E&P major focuses on the UAE with a stake in the Ghsha Concession

Wintershall Dea holds a 10 per cent stake in the Ghsha Concession, the largest gas, oil and condensate fields yet to be developed in the country.

Wintershall Dea holds a 10 per cent stake in the project in partnership with the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) as operator, as well as ENI, OMV and Lukoil.

This investment came after Wintershall Dea successfully completed appraisal wells in the technically complex Shuwaikh sour gas field in 2015 and 2017, demonstrating the company’s operational excellence and building further trust with ADNOC.

Recently, Shuwaikh was introduced in the Ghsha Concession.

The mega project is expected to produce more than 1.5 billion cubic feet of gas a day when it comes on steam around the middle of the next decade, enough to provide electricity to more than two million homes. In addition, more than 120,000 barrels per day of oil and high-value condensates are expected to be produced. Through its investment in Ghsha, Wintershall Dea intends to establish a strong and long-lasting presence in Abu Dhabi in partnership with ADNOC.

In 2019, Wintershall and DEA, two German companies with a long and proud heritage, merged to form a new European E&P champion. Wintershall Dea is now Europe’s leading independent natural gas and oil company and is intent on growth. Having produced around 590,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day (boe/d) in 2018, it intends to raise that to around 750,000 boe/d by 2023.

With a 40-year contract for the Ghsha concession, the company intends to make a major, long-term contribution in the UAE. Wintershall Dea is proud to be a partner to ADNOC. Additionally, the company takes its responsibilities as a partner and guest in the country seriously, focusing not only on the money it invests but also on the wider in-country value it can offer to the UAE.
MINDS OF ENGINEERS. PIONEERS AT HEART.

Wintershall and DEA became Wintershall Dea. We are the leading independent gas and oil company in Europe. We explore and produce gas and oil – worldwide. Responsibly and efficiently. Going ahead as one. For we are pioneers at heart, equipped with 245 years of experience in engineering excellence.

wintershalldea.com