

## Qatar Puts Brazilian Bus Company into Road of Success

Contributed by Geovana Pagel  
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Company Comil Carrocerias e Onibus (Comil Bodies and Buses), from the city of Erechim in the southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul, has closed a deal for the export of 514 buses to Qatar. This is the greatest sale made by the company to a single client.

Last year Comil started selling to the Middle East with what was, up to then, their greatest contract with a client: 273 buses to Saudi Arabia. In less than a year the Arab country reached the top of the list of destinations of the manufacturer, together with Chile and Mexico.

The order of 514 buses to Qatar will be delivered in two lots, with deadlines for June and August. Of this total, 414 units are of the urban model and 100 of the highway model.

According to estimates by the director of the International sector at Comil, Luiz Amaral, in 2005 the countries in the Middle East and North Africa should answer to 50% of the manufacturer's exports, which should reach 1,200 bodies, against the 799 units exported in 2004.

"Our plan is to continue negotiating with Saudi Arabia, where we had a very good feedback from Taesco (the greatest bus operator in the region), which ended up working as our business card. There are also new business possibilities in Qatar, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iraq," he explained.

The director says that the company has had a distributor in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates for two years. "The return from the distributor's work came quickly, a lot sooner than we had imagined when we decided to start prospecting the Arab market," says Amaral.

### Growth

On the market since 1986, Comil is currently one of the main manufacturers of buses and bus bodies in Brazil. The company produces highway, inter-municipal and urban vehicles, as well as, minibuses and minibuses.

The company's headquarters, in the city of Erechim, has a factory of 30,000 square metres, built in an area of 120,000 square metres, and employs about 1,500 workers.

In 1998 the company started a heavy process of investments in quality, technology and human resources. Since then, Comil's production increased in about 65%.

From 2001 to 2004, Comil increased their exports in about 350%. The company closed the year with 799 units exported. Last year, exports represented 50% of revenue by the company, which sells to clients in 29 countries in South and Central America, Africa and the Middle East.

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