

**ISRIA (subscription) - Washington,DC,USA / Finland: Prime Minister Vanhanen met leaders of Qatar and spoke at Doha Forum on democracy**

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Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen met on Sunday (3 May) Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of Qatar, in Doha. The visit also included discussions with Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Abdullah bin Hamad Al Attiyah, Minister of Energy and Industry.

The meetings focused on bilateral relations between the countries, including economic relations and increases in investment. Climate and energy themes and regional issues were also addressed at the meetings, while economic issues were discussed in a live TV interview broadcast by Al Jazeera.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Vanhanen participated in the 9th Doha Forum on Democracy, Development and Free Trade. In his speech on free trade and the economy, he emphasised the importance of free trade for small and open economies such as Finland. "Our joint commitment to reject economic, trade and investment protectionism and to strengthen our partnership is ever more important as we are facing the current uncertainty and unpredictability of the world economy," Matti Vanhanen said.

"Globalisation means not only taking advantage of global markets, but also bearing global responsibility. We must be able to address climate change and other long-term environmental problems. Therefore, clean technologies are among the key areas with vast future growth potential," he stressed.

He also pointed out that investment in clean technologies would continue despite the current economic crisis. "Developing better technologies brings competitive advantage today and will continue to do so in the future," he said. Know-how, technology and innovation should be the cornerstones of climate policy at all levels – from national to global level, he added.

Prime Minister Vanhanen returns to Finland on Monday 4 May.