



مركز الخليج للأبحاث  
Gulf Research Center

# GULF-EUROPE RESEARCH PROGRAM



JANUARY 2025



# GULF-EUROPE

## RESEARCH PROGRAM



**Gulf Research Center**  
Knowledge for All

All Rights Reserved to Gulf Research Center (GRC) © 2025





# Table of Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Foreword  | 2   |
| Introduction  | 3   |
| 1. About the Gulf Research Center                             | 5   |
| 2. The Gulf-Europe Research Program                           | 7   |
| 3. Honors   | 9   |
| 4. GRC Projects on Gulf-Europe Relations                      | 11  |
| 5. GRC Events on Gulf-Europe Relations                        | 53  |
| 6. GRC Publications on Gulf-Europe Relations                  | 69  |
| 7. GRC Training Programs on Gulf-Europe Relations             | 93  |
| 8. GRC Global Cooperation Agreements & Partnerships in Europe | 97  |
| 9. Select Participations on Gulf-Europe Relations             | 105 |



## Foreword

In July 2004, the Gulf Research Center established a dedicated research program on relations between the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU) in order to provide a framework for understanding, researching, and analyzing the growing and increasingly diversifying ties between these two important regions.

Since that period, the research program has grown both in terms of the scope of studies and activities that it has conducted as well as the type of subjects being covered. Key components have been projects conducted with the support of the European Union such as the Al-Jisr Project on EU-GCC Public Diplomacy and Outreach and the more recent twelve-part webinar series delving into the EU's Strategic Partnership with the Gulf region document.

In October 2024, the Gulf Research Center took the additional and important step of opening its Brussels office. The Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels will serve as a contact office to both maintain regular interactions with all EU institutions on the developments occurring in the Gulf region as well as a place where regular and informative discussions about the European-Gulf relationship can take place.



This brochure provides an overview of the many other activities that make up the Gulf-Europe research program at the Gulf Research Center, including areas of publication, training programs, workshops and conferences, and the GRCF's partner institutions. Overall, an unparalleled network of institutions and specialists has been put in place that can provide expert insight not only into the bi-lateral relationship between the two regions but which can also offer analysis about the workings of Europe and the strategic Gulf region.

The GRC looks forward to maintaining the momentum and further developing the field of study as far as Europe and the Gulf is concerned.

**Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**  
Chairman

## Introduction

In October 2024, the Gulf Research Center (GRC) started a new chapter with the opening of its Brussels office. The Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels (GRCF-B) is dedicated to providing in-depth analysis on the multifaceted relations between the EU and the GCC countries through wide-ranging research, events, and activities, as well as training and educational opportunities. The office is the culmination of the work that has been carried out since 2004 when the Gulf-Europe research program at the Gulf Research Center was first established.

As the world is undergoing multiple transitions in the field of political, economic, security, and social developments, the relationship between Europe and the Gulf region is taking on new dimensions. The COVID experience highlighted the fragility of supply-chains, the crisis in Ukraine confronted Europe with the specter of war on its own continent, and the numerous conflicts in the Middle East underline once again how the security and stability of Europe and the Gulf are intertwined. The GRC's mission in this context is to put forward research that promotes understanding and cooperation and which highlights both the opportunities and challenges that this changing environment provides.



Gulf-Europe relations are rapidly expanding on institutional and personal levels, driven by an increased awareness that the two regions share many similar interests that require better degrees of policy convergence and cooperation. The EU-GCC Summit meeting at the head-of-state level held in Brussels on October 16, 2024 represents a milestone that underscores the determination of the two sides to establish an encompassing strategic level of ties. The research program of the Gulf Research Center dedicated to the Gulf-EU relationship is determined to support a fully-functioning and mutually beneficial relation between both regions.

I look forward to engaging with collaborators interested in promoting a strong and wide-ranging Gulf-European partnership through the work of the Gulf Research Center.

**Dr. Christian Koch**  
Executive Manager of the GRCF-B, and  
Director of Research at the GRC





## I - About the Gulf Research Center







## I - About the Gulf Research Center

The Gulf Research Center is an independent think tank based on the concept of “Knowledge for All.” Its priorities are to serve the issues and goals of the people and countries of the Gulf region. The Center was established in July 2000 and it currently has offices in Jeddah and Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Geneva, Switzerland (The Gulf Research Center Foundation - GRCF), in Cambridge, UK (branch office), and in Brussels, Belgium (Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels - GRCF-B).

Since its inception, the GRC has been committed to providing an Arab Gulf perspective on regional and global developments to promote regional peace and stability and positively influence the policy processes of local, regional, and external actors in all its activities, which include conducting research and studies and organizing conferences, forums, and workshops. The GRC has translated and published more than 500 books specializing in politics, security, economics, international relations, environment, and the media. The 2019 Global Go-To Think Tank Index Report listed the Gulf Research Center, for the 11th year in a row, as one of the leading think tanks in the Middle East and worldwide.

In terms of research, the GRC's mission is to contribute information and knowledge relating to the Gulf by providing a comprehensive, independent, and credible platform for advanced research on GCC politics, economics, defense, security, and social issues, and their implications and relevance. The GRC undertakes research on all elements impacting policymaking in the Gulf, including



political systems and development, foreign relations of the Gulf, defense and security issues, the economy, as well as environmental issues, and the role of energy and its regional and worldwide dimensions.

In each of its research programs, it is the objective of the GRC and its extensive community of researchers and contributors to shed light on unexplored issues and relationships that are and will be of increased importance both for the Gulf region and the rest of the world. A main focus of the GRC research program on Gulf Foreign Relations is the interaction of the Gulf states with external actors, both regionally in the wider Middle East and globally. Within this research area, GCC foreign relations with a number of countries and regions are analyzed in order to be able to adequately and comprehensively understand the dynamics that are driving the foreign policies of the Gulf States, the issues and developments that are determining the direction of those relations, and how the individual and bilateral ties are impacting the broader regional environment.



## 2 - The Gulf-Europe Research Program







## 2- The Gulf-Europe Research Program

One subprogram of the GRC's research on Foreign Relations is the Gulf-Europe Program. The GRC established a dedicated research program on relations between the member states of the GCC and the EU in July 2004 in order to provide a framework for understanding, researching, and analyzing the growing and increasingly diversifying ties between these two important regions. Since then, the research program has grown both in terms of the scope of activities that it has conducted and also in relation to the type of subjects being covered and studied.

This brochure provides an overview of the many other activities that make up the

Gulf-Europe research program at the GRC including project activities, publications, training programs, events such as conferences and workshops, as well as GRC's partner institutions. Overall, an unparalleled network of institutions and specialists has been put in place that provides expert insight not only into the bi-lateral relationship between the two regions, but which can also offer analysis about the workings of Europe and the strategic Gulf region. The GRC looks forward to maintaining the momentum and to continuing to grow this field of study given the many dynamics that characterize the multifaceted ties between Europe and the Gulf.





### 3 - Honors





### 3- Honors

#### Medal of Knight in the National Order of Merit from French President Emmanuel Macron

May 21, 2024

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, received the prestigious Medal of Knight in the National Order of Merit from French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday, May 21st, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This recognition symbolizes Dr. Abdulaziz Sager's strong bond and cumulative achievements in enhancing relations between Saudi Arabia and France.

The ceremony was hosted and organized by H.E. Ambassador Ludovic Pouille, France's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the Residence of France in Riyadh. Distinguished guests and EU Ambassadors were among those who attended the ceremony. After being awarded the Medal, Dr. Sager gave an acceptance speech where he extended his appreciation to President Macron, the government of France, the French Foreign Ministry, the French embassy

in Riyadh, and Ambassador Pouille, as well as outlined the growing relations between Saudi Arabia and France.

Dr. Sager concluded his speech by re-emphasizing that through his organization, the Gulf Research Center, he and his team will continue to work toward strengthening the relations between Saudi Arabia and France in various dimensions, ranging from economics and energy to culture, defense, security, and political coordination. He reiterated his commitment to using all capacities to their fullest to distribute knowledge, raise understanding about both countries, and propose strategies for further nourishing and developing the existing ties between the two countries. Dr. Abdulaziz Sager thanked all the guests for attending the ceremony.







## 4 - GRC Projects on Gulf-Europe Relations

تفاهم وتبادل

TAFAHUM WA TABADUL



EU – GCC Webinar Series

**Panel Session:** Taking Stock and Looking Forward: Outlines of the **GCC-EU** Strategic Partnership



**Dr. Christian Koch**  
Director of Research  
Gulf Research Center



**Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**  
Chairman  
Gulf Research Center



**H.E. Shaikh Abdulla bin  
Ahmed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa**  
Undersecretary for Political Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of  
Bahrain



**Mr. Carl Hallergard**  
Director, Middle East and  
North Africa  
European External Action  
Service – EEAS



**Najla Al-Qassimi**  
Director of Global Affairs  
B'huth, United Arab Emirates



**James Moran**  
Associate Senior Research Fellow  
Centre for European Policy  
Studies – CEPS

November 29, 2022 | 11:00 am – 12:15 pm (CET) | 1:00 pm – 2:15 pm (KSA)



## 4 - GRC Projects on Gulf-Europe Relations

The GRC collaborates in project work with a variety of institutions. Such projects vary from being multi-year endeavors involving a large number of research and event activities, to shorter-term programs focused on specific issues. GRC has acted as both a lead partner and a member in multi-member consortium. Some of these projects have been self-financed while others have received the support of governments and funding agencies. The following is an overview of the key projects undertaken by the GRC.

### GCC-EU Relations Webinar Series

With the release of the EU's Joint Communication on a "Strategic Partnership with the Gulf" and its subsequent approval by the EU Council of Ministers in June 2022, a renewed attempt was initiated to give EU-GCC relations a more structured framework around which to conceptualize and deepen mutual ties. With the document being received favorably by the GCC countries, the GRC felt the need to place the emphasis on working out implementation strategies for the many areas of issues that the document identified – from political and regional security affairs to economic and energy relations, to technology and digital development, as well as education, culture, and humanitarian coordination.

To start the process of identifying the best way forward, the GRC launched a regular webinar series dedicated to specific issues outlined in the joint communication. These webinar discussions were intended to allow both sides to exchange views and present perspectives with the aim of putting forward concrete suggestions for future policy implementation.

All sessions were moderated by Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the GRCF-B and Director of Research at the GRC.

### Session I

Taking Stock and Looking Forward: Outlines of the GCC-EU Strategic Partnership

November 29, 2022



The session highlighted the importance of an increased EU presence on the ground to foster more dialogue and understanding between both blocs, given the natural attraction between the GCC states and the EU. Considering that many of the issues outlined in the strategic partnership document are already being put into practice at the bilateral EU and GCC member states level, it was deemed important to continue bi- and multi-lateral cooperation, and see what bi-lateral projects could be scaled up. Overall, the session put forward several suggestions for policy consideration.

1. The EU should continue to enhance its engagement to understand the security concerns of the GCC. At the same time, the GCC states need to strengthen their presence in Brussels in order to influence the landscape on the ground.
2. The two blocs should make cooperation for renewable energy and the green transition a key aspect of their relationship. This includes knowledge transfer of green technology to the GCC states.





3. The EU should expand the scope of its engagement in maritime security, notably by broadening its mandate to quell weapons smuggling and human trafficking.
4. The EU and the GCC should cooperate on regional security issues such as the situations in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and Sudan. This includes North Africa, with the funding of the green transition in these countries being of particular focus.

## Session 2

### The Energy Transition and Climate Action

December 20, 2022



As part of its commitment, it was highlighted that the EU is looking to expand cooperation with the Gulf countries in terms of stabilizing oil markets, cooperation in hydrogen development, achieving increases in energy supplies and energy efficiency, and making appropriate commitments to emission reduction, and faster deployment of renewable energy. In this context, it was mentioned that increased emphasis is being given to climate diplomacy which is seen as a crucial element in aligning both regions on the goals and standards of the green transition. A key aspect will be the ability to solve the energy trilemma in terms of energy security, affordability, and sustainability.

The webinar made the following recommendations:

1. Create a pan-Arab energy market by integrating Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and eventually Europe into a common electricity grid such as the GCC Interconnection Authority (GCCIA).
2. Create triangular cooperation with multiple countries on several climate fronts. Africa, India, and China were mentioned in this regard. For the EU, it is important not to prioritize its ties with North Africa over that of the Gulf region.
3. It is important to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach and develop a more tailored plan that can accommodate the fact that GCC states differ in size of their economy, economic diversification level, energy transition priorities, and current stage of energy transitions.
4. There is a need to enable avenues of cooperation at the mid-level, parallel to high ministerial level cooperation. This includes partnerships among think tanks, universities, R&D centers, business-to-business forums, government-to-government cooperation, research collaboration, and training and exchange programs to address the main challenges of the energy transition.



### Session 3

#### Regional Security

January 10, 2023



The webinar highlighted a number of points regarding regional security issues. From an EU perspective, it was stressed that Gulf security is a key priority for Europe since security in the region is also a consequential element of European security. In addition to Iran and Yemen, the speakers addressed numerous other topics on which EU-GCC cooperation needs to be considered, including nonproliferation issues, nuclear safety, maritime security (Operation ATALANTA and EMASOH), cybersecurity, energy security, environment and climate change, disaster prevention (pandemics and earthquakes), food security, and counterterrorism, as well as humanitarian aid and donations.

In terms of policy ideas, these included:

1. The Gulf region should be in the lead, with the EU playing a supportive role.
2. There should be a regional initiative and collective security architecture based on inclusiveness and understanding.
3. A more explicit opinion from the Gulf on the European initiative should be made.

### Session 4

#### Enhancing the EU-GCC Trade and Investment Partnership

January 31, 2023



The webinar highlighted four areas of potentially greater joint investments between the GCC and the EU: the oil and gas sector where European awareness regarding the importance of this sector has increased as of late; renewable energy, given the fact that GCC demand in this sector is growing; digital technology including fin-tech industries; and agriculture and food industries in which GCC countries are increasing their investment due to recent developments. Additional opportunities for EU-GCC relations include the increased actorness of the Arab Gulf countries promoting stronger regional cooperation; efforts at boosting production capacity and accelerating the sustainable green transition, and mitigating risks such as pandemics, climate change, and war. Specifically, energy security empowerment is seen as a crucial opportunity for the EU.

Suggestions put forward for policy consideration included:

1. The EU and GCC should involve the Mediterranean and Africa as a means to expand the cooperation between the two blocs.



2. There should be a broader and better allocation of resources and scientific interest to enhance mutual understanding. This includes, for example, the establishment of European studies in Gulf universities as a way to enhance ties between the two regions.
3. The possibility of the establishment of a development bank for Africa co-funded by the GCC and EU was suggested.
4. Creating a civil exchange program for both blocs will enhance the GCC-EU trade and investment partnership.

### Session 5

#### Environmental Sustainability

February 14, 2023



The webinar emphasized the need for greater efforts at the EU-GCC level when it comes to the issue of environmental sustainability, in particular with regard to the growing awareness and governmental readiness to act, which is seen as a degree of momentum that should be taken advantage of. Key priorities for the GCC and EU that were identified from an environmental point of view include

circular economy (resource efficiency and sustainable waste management), sustainable water management (especially pertaining to water reuse and food security), and biodiversity (sustainable land management and tree planting). Other items included environmental monitoring, efficiency standards in buildings, transportation, industry, green mobility, as well as climate mitigation and adaptation.

Policy recommendations that came out of the discussion included:

1. The EU Green Deal should be linked to the Middle East Green Initiative to support each other in policy implementation.
2. The GCC and EU should enhance collaboration through various dialogue mechanisms: pathways and solutions for policymakers, scientific research and training sessions, and coordination on sharing environmental issues.
3. A liaison office between the EU and the GCC on environmental sustainability should be established as a dedicated facility for exchanging expertise, technology transfer, and policy coordination. This idea mirrors the proposal to set up such a facility spelled out in the EU document of a “Strategic Partnership with the Gulf.”
4. A closer link should be established between the GCC Statistical Center and the European Environmental Agency.



## Session 6

### Education and Youth Mobility

March 7, 2023



The session focused on increasing cooperation between the two regions on four themes: student mobility, research and innovation, vocational training, and executive programs.

Several suggestions were put forward for policy consideration.

1. Develop exchange programs, vocational training, summer programs, and language programs to provide both GCC and EU students with opportunities and experiences that will benefit them professionally, as well as positively shape their attitudes towards each region.
2. Engage the youth by designing new programs and involving them in civil society. Digital and online programs should be developed to increase broader participation in both regions.
3. Strengthen collaboration between educational institutions across all levels. This should be applied not only in higher education but also in the schooling system to facilitate the mobility of people for research and work.

## Session 7

### Security Issues

March 28, 2023



The webinar stressed that Gulf security is a key priority for Europe. A main theme was that of maritime security in the region as the Gulf continues to be threatened by piracy and tanker attacks on the region's waters between the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz. Another critical theme in the webinar was non-proliferation and arms control. Despite efforts already in place, the webinar highlighted that the region continues to face threats, from both state as well as non-state actors.

Ideas to advance EU-GCC cooperation in the security field involved:

1. Organize an annual EU naval exercise with the Gulf and reinforce existing EU naval operations with other operations, such as EMASOH, for better international collaboration.
2. Strengthen maritime domain awareness capabilities through projects such as CRIMARIO by operationalizing maritime situational awareness tools in the Gulf, such as YARIS, IORIS, and SHARE.IT.
3. Improve civilian and military capabilities, particularly in research and development.
4. Conduct dedicated training programs for the Gulf partners in the civilian and military areas to boost cyber, hybrid, and space-related security skills.





### Session 8

#### Health Resilience

April 11, 2023



The session underlined the importance of the availability and presence of good governance with well-planned community engagements and interventions. Additionally, it was stressed that health authorities should be empowered and given the space to affect policy decisions that support prevention and better response to future health crises. The speakers of the webinar also emphasized the importance of global surveillance to serve as early warning systems, community engagement, and sharing resources and data (particularly in developing vaccines).

Policy proposals put forward from the webinar included:

1. Globally, it is essential to be proactive instead of reactive.
2. The medical industry must be developed internationally through worldwide public health institutions.
3. Both the GCC and the EU need to invest further in implementing long-term public health policies that include more normative regulations, and incorporate them into the education system to reduce risk factors and promote healthier lifestyles.
4. A better public health workforce and a global data surveillance system should exist.

### Session 9

#### Enhancing Digital Connectivity

May 23, 2023



The webinar highlighted that connectivity is an important aspect of the comprehensive agenda for both the GCC and the EU. While the speakers agreed that there needs to be more development at this level, there are currently various export controls in place by the EU that limit the technology for supercomputing and processing capabilities, despite more readiness in the GCC for this type of connectivity. Another theme highlighted in the session was the security implications of emerging technologies. As data is being generated at an overwhelming rate (both vertical and horizontal proliferation), security issues are compounding.

Overall, the webinar put forward several suggestions for policy consideration.

1. There is a need to move from defense to resilience to address the broad scope of risks of emerging technology.
2. The GCC and EU should increase foresight, resilience, and polymath thinking (convergence of emerging tech).
3. The two regions should continue responsible innovation: security by design coupled with a global governance system.



## Session 10

### Promoting Transport

June 6, 2023



This webinar reiterated the importance of the Gulf region to the EU, given its strategic location between Europe, Asia, and Africa. Overall, the speakers recognized the importance of continuing to deepen cooperation in the transport sector, particularly in railway and aviation, through exchanging expertise to facilitate a mutually beneficial dialogue. The speakers discussed key railway and aviation issues, including the EU aviation strategy, critical recent developments of the GCC railway project and EU railway policy, management of shared railway systems, with a focus on the EU framework for interoperability and safety, and technical, institutional, and regulatory requirements in both the aviation and the railway sectors.

Some of the ideas mentioned as part of steps that could be taken to improve cooperation were:

1. Develop region-to-region cooperation between the GCC and the EU on aviation and transport issues instead of multilateral-bilateral cooperation.
2. Improve cooperation on transport issues, including regulatory aspects, safety, traffic, and social and environmental standards through dialogue.
3. Implement a system that promotes common conditions and prevents competition distortions from leading to unfair competition.
4. Hold regular GCC-EU policy dialogues to identify common priorities and ways to enhance cooperation.

## Session 11

### Humanitarian and Development Cooperation

June 12, 2023



This webinar highlighted that cooperation on humanitarian and development aid is already strong between the EU and the GCC on a bilateral level between European institutions (such as European Commission) and major Gulf donors (such as the Islamic Development Bank). With the increasing global humanitarian crisis, however, there is an urgency to push for stronger global partnerships and more strategic cooperation between the GCC and EU.

The webinar put forward the following policy suggestions:

1. Initiate more dialogue between the GCC and the EU on aid effectiveness, trust-building, and knowledge sharing to determine what is important to each side and how to make assistance available. The two regions can develop a better understanding of each other's approaches through regular dialogue, shared lessons and experiences, and joint work on research projects.
2. Improve funding in the context of GCC-EU relations, which includes improving and strengthening coordination through existing humanitarian donor forums that are undertaking coordinated EU and GCC field assessments in countries of common interest. This will allow the two blocs to identify priorities and joint humanitarian responses in order to develop a joint,



complementary, and coherent EU-GCC strategy for humanitarian operations.

3. Establish a network of focal points to strengthen coordination between the EU and GCC humanitarian and financial organizations. Assigning focal points in each institution will enhance communication and assist in conducting senior and middle level meetings.
4. Conduct partnerships with universities and institutions to learn from the most recent findings and effective methods of implementation.

## Session 12

### Institutional Relations

July 4, 2023



The speakers of the webinar reiterated a common theme in the twelve-session series: GCC-EU relations are now stronger than ever before. Additionally, the Ukraine crisis highlighted that Europe needed to strengthen its relations outside of its traditional circle and focus more on the Gulf region as part of the EU's security policy revision. Thus, the new GCC-EU partnership is expanding to other issues, such as increased political, security, and energy dialogue.

Overall, the session put forward several suggestions for policy consideration.

1. The GCC and EU should work together to address all issues of security in the Gulf and not limit their cooperation to a single issue. This includes more frequent exchanges in other areas such as food, energy, maritime and cyber security.
2. The frequency of the meeting of the EU-GCC joint cooperation should be increased from just once a year.
3. Mechanisms need to be introduced that allow for a quicker exchange of views in terms of the ability to react against regional and international developments.
4. Both sides should agree on a set of important principles that must be available in the strategic partnership document.
5. There is the need to engage students, youth, think tanks, and academics as an additional way to enhance GCC-EU relations. An exciting Diplomatic Exchange Program already in existence should be expanded. Overall, relations cannot be limited to just the political level but other areas should also be supported institutionally.
6. It is important for the EU and the GCC to take advantage of the current atmosphere in the Gulf region and to capitalize on those developments. A renewed sense of optimism for the momentum at hand is needed.
7. Both sides should prioritize issues in order to make real progress in the most important areas and in areas where they can have effective policy responses.
8. The main limitation of not having adequate resources needs to be overcome with both sides committing more funding to the implementation of programs.





## Tafahum wa Tabadul



### Enhancing Multi-Track Dialogue and Cooperation in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula

The Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) and the Center for Applied Research in Partnership (CARPO) with the Orient partnered up to implement the project “Tafahum wa Tabadul - Enhancing Multi-Track Dialogue and Cooperation in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula.” The aim was to generate further understanding (*‘tafahum’*) among regional stakeholders and to foster cooperation (*‘tabadul’*) on common interests in the region. The project started in October 2018 and was funded by the German Federal Foreign Office until May 2023. The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs continued the funding from June 2023 until May 2025.

In the initial three-year phase called Tafahum, project activities were held at three levels. At the first level, security experts from the main regional and extra-regional stakeholders were brought together in a conceptual framework discussion to outline negotiable and non-negotiable security interests. These meetings were held in Vienna in December 2018 and virtually in December 2020.

Second, five working groups were assembled to bring together experts from the GCC states, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Europe and elsewhere. The groups worked along the following themes to allow for a closer examination around which concrete projects for functional cooperation could be considered:

1. Trade and Energy,
2. Environmental Issues and Climate Change,
3. Security Sector Reform and Counter Terrorism,
4. Media Narratives and Discursive Integration,
5. Reconstruction Efforts in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq.

Throughout the period from the fall of 2018 until the fall of 2021, the following events project were held:

- Working Group 2: “Environmental Issues and Climate Change” - March 2019,
- Working Group 1: “Regional Economic Development and Energy Issues” - April 2019,
- Working Group 5: “Reconstruction Efforts in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq” - in cooperation with Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and the Institute for Global Studies, Rome Italy - April 2019 ,
- Working Group 4: “Media Narratives and Discursive Integration” - June 2019,



- Working Group 3: “Counter-Terrorism and Security Sector Reform” - in cooperation with the Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations - July 2019,
- Working Group 4: “Media Narratives and Discursive Integration: Enhancing Media Literacy and Creating a Regional Media ‘Comfort Zone’” - October 2019,
- Working Group 3: “Counter-Terrorism and Security Sector Reform: Constructing a Regional Security Paradigm and Enhancing Parameters for Engagement” - in cooperation with Clingendael, Netherlands Institute for International Relations - December 2019,
- Working Group 5: “Reconstruction efforts in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq: Developing a ‘Regional Stability Paradigm’ and Enhancing Post-Conflict Reconciliation” - in cooperation with Casa Arabe - February 2020,
- Working Group 2: “Reassessing Environmental Challenges in Times of Corona: Health Issues and Water Security” - September 2020,
- Working Group 1: “Trade and Energy Cooperation: From Shared Challenges to Joint Ventures” - October 2020,
- Working Group 4: “Media Narratives and Discursive Integration in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula” - March 2021,
- Working Group 3: “Counter-Terrorism and Security Sector Reform” - May 2021,

- Working Group 1+2: “Towards a Green Recovery in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula (WAAP)” - June 2021,
- Working Group 5: “Reconstruction and Reconciliation Efforts in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq” - August 2021.

In the second project phase starting in December 2021, the concept of Tabadul was added to the original Tafahum project title. Subsequently, project activities proceeded on a more vertical approach with three levels. At the political level (track 1/1.5), officials were tasked with the objective of generating a political climate that is more conducive to regional cooperation and of developing a regional ‘Tafahum for Peaceful Coexistence.’ At the experts level (track 2), stakeholders included economists, environmental scientists, and health specialists who were brought together to collectively examine the energy-climate-health nexus – a concept that entails economic and ecological sustainability, as well as regional health resilience. Finally at the societal level (track 3), CARPO and GRCF aimed to foster people-to-people mobility in the region through exchange activities in the fields of academia and civic education. With its multi-track approach, this project involved policymakers, economic and scientific circles, as well as civil society in all target countries. While each track was working separately, links and fora for interaction and engagement between them were established, as both their interdependence and need for interconnectivity was viewed as relevant and essential.



#### Tahafum wa Tabadul activities from December 2021 included:

- Munich Security Conference Side Event: “Tafahum wa Tabadul: Strengthening Regional Dialogue in the Gulf Region” - February 2022,
- Workshop Track Level 3A: “Regional Networks for Women in Peace and Security Issues: Creating Spaces for Exchange Within the West Asia and Arabian Peninsula (WAAP) Regional Setting” - March 2022,
- Workshop Track Level 2: “The Climate-Energy-Health-Nexus: Sustainability in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula (WAAP)” - May 2022,
- Workshop Track Level 2: “Pollution and the Climate-Energy-Health-Nexus: Sustainability in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula (WAAP)” - October 2022,
- Workshop Track Level 3B: “Enhancing People-to-People Relations through Academia, Education, and Capacity Development Programs” - November-December 2022,
- Workshop Track Level 3A: “Regional Network for Women in Peace and Security Issues: Creating Spaces for Exchange within the West Asia and Arabian Peninsula (WAAP) Regional Setting” - January 2023,
- Workshop Track Level 2: “Regional project development within the Climate-Energy-Health-Nexus: Sustainability in

#### West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula (WAAP)” - March 2023,

- Workshop Track Level 3B: “Enhancing Regional People-to-People Relations Through Joint Work on Media Competencies” - May 2023,
- Workshop Track Level 1: “Enhancing Multi-Track Dialogue and Cooperation in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula” 2nd High-Level Policy Workshop - May 2023,
- Workshop Track Level 1: “Enhancing Multi-Track Dialogue and Cooperation in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula” 3rd High-Level Policy Workshop - August 2023,
- Workshop Track Level 1: “Enhancing Multi-Track Dialogue and Cooperation in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula” 4th High-Level Policy Workshop - January 2024,
- Workshop Track Level 1: “Enhancing Multi-Track Dialogue and Cooperation in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula” 5th High-Level Policy Workshop - June 2024,
- Workshop Track Level 2: “Regional project development within the Climate-Energy-Health-Nexus: Sustainability in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula (WAAP)” - October 2024,
- Workshop Track Level 1: “Enhancing Multi-Track Dialogue and Cooperation in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula” 6th High-Level Policy Workshop - November 2024.



An important element during the project phase was the annual conference that brought together the different levels of the working groups in order to exchange ideas and discuss mechanisms for possible policy implementation. The annual conference was considered an integral part of providing a platform in which decision and policy-making officials could exchange with subject experts and representatives of civil society with regard to project outcomes and the way forward. Annual meetings were held in September of 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

**Other events held during the project phase included the following:**

- Tafahum Workshop: “Building on the Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership” - October 2021,
- Tafahum Workshop: “The Afghanistan Crisis and its Geopolitical Impacts” - November 2021,
- COP27 Side Event: “Climate-Energy-Health-Nexus: An Opportunity for Young Green Entrepreneurship” - November 2022.







## Promoting Deeper EU-GCC Relations

“Promoting Deeper EU-GCC Relations” was a project within the framework of Public Diplomacy and Outreach devoted to the European Union and EU-GCC relations. It reinforced cooperation between countries in the EU and GCC in a number of key strategic areas of mutual interest. The project consisted of two main areas of activity: first, a training component aiming to raise public awareness and understanding of the EU among key sectors of GCC society; and second, a series of workshops to provide a framework for reflection and debate about EU-GCC relations. Both of these components were supported by additional

steps and resulted in the production and targeted dissemination of information via publications and a devoted website platform in order to ensure the increased visibility of the EU in the GCC region.

The project included the following partners: Foundation for Int'l Relations and Foreign Dialogue (FRIDE); Institute for European Studies (IES), Vrije Universiteit Brussel; National Technical University of Athens (NTUA); Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST); Gulf Studies Program, Qatar University; and Masdar Institute.

### Promoting Deeper EU-GCC Relations Workshops



#### Workshop I: Political Transformation in the Arab World and its Relevance for EU-GCC Relations

March 3-4, 2013

Kuwait

The seminar on “Political Transformation in the Arab world and its Relevance for EU-GCC Relations” organized by the FRIDE, the GRC and the GUST was held in Kuwait in March 2013. After a welcome introduction from Robert Cook (Vice President for Academic

Affairs, GUST), Richard Youngs (Director of FRIDE), Christian Koch (Executive Manager of GRCF-B), and Haila Al-Mekaimi (Center For Gulf Knowledge, Kuwait University), the discussions moved to an in-depth assessment of the political development in the Gulf region and what the implications are for the European Union. Given that the EU follows events in the region closely and the EU parliament has passed resolutions on the situations in Bahrain and the UAE, one



of the objectives of the workshop was to allow for an exchange of views and provide a perspective from the GCC states about the impact that the Arab transitions are having on their part of the world.

### **Workshop 2: Promoting an EU-GCC Dialogue on Foreign Policy Issues**

April 29-30, 2013

Doha, Qatar

As part of the project, the GRC along with the College of Arts and Sciences of Qatar University, the Global Governance Institute and the IES at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, hosted a two-day workshop on “Promoting an EU-GCC Dialogue on Foreign Policy Issues” on the campus of Qatar University in Doha on April 29th and 30th, 2013. The workshop was divided into six sessions focusing on EU-GCC relations, Yemen, global governance, the Mediterranean region, non-proliferation issues, and Syria. Each session was introduced by a background paper and was followed by a lively and animated discussion among the participants. In total, more than 70 people took part, including academics and specialists, members of various research institutes, and policy officials from both the EU and the GCC.

### **Workshop 3: EU-GCC Renewable Energy Policy Experts Workshop**

November 26-27, 2013

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

As part of the project, EPU-NTUA in cooperation with the GRC and Masdar Institute organized a Renewable Energy Policy Experts workshop hosted at the Masdar Institute, Abu Dhabi on November 26th-27th, 2013. The two-day workshop

was actively endorsed by the EU-GCC CLEAN ENERGY NETWORK, an initiative created jointly by the EU and the GCC to catalyze cooperation between the two regions on clean energy topics of common interest. Within this framework, the event included high-level policy discussions on the potential for cooperation in the promotion of clean energy. This entailed opportunities for bilateral agreements in various areas as well as exploration of common positions (and debate over points of divergence) with respect to negotiations in multilateral fora.

**The workshop was divided into five sessions focusing on:**

- EU-GCC Energy Policy Cooperation in the Field of Renewables: Status and Prospects,
- Promoting Cooperation on Energy Efficiency and Demand Side Management,
- EU-GCC Cooperation Potential in the Field of Renewables: Technology and Research Perspective,
- EU-GCC Cooperation for Integration of Renewables on the Grid,
- Promoting EU-GCC Cooperation on Water and Power Generation.

Each session was introduced by a background paper followed by moderated discussion among the participants. Limited selected experts were invited to contribute to this high-level event, including academics and specialists, members of various research institutes, and policy officials from both the EU and the GCC side.



## “Promoting Deeper EU-GCC Relations” Training

### Training 1: Training Session for Academics: Understanding the Institutions and Policies of the EU and EU-GCC Relations

September 17-21, 2012

Brussels, Belgium



As part of the project, a 22-member group from the six GCC countries took part in a one-week training program on ‘Understanding the Institutions and Policies of the EU and EU-GCC Relations.’ The program was headed by the Gulf Research Center with the support of the Institute for European Studies at Vrije Universiteit Brussel and the Global Governance Institute. In addition to lectures on aspects of the EU, participants held meetings with members of the European Parliament, the European External Action Service, and the European Social and Economic Committee.

### Training 2: Training Session for Students: Understanding the Institutions and Policies of the EU and EU-GCC Relations

September 8-13, 2013

Brussels, Belgium

Twenty-seven students from the six GCC countries took part in this training session organized by the GRC as part of the project. The students from the GCC were selected according to their fields of study, being either international relations or political science, and for their interest in issues linked to the EU. The group included undergraduate students, graduate students, and young professionals. Five students from Brussels were also selected for the program to give the GCC students a different viewpoint on EU issues and a better insight into student life in Europe. The schedule of the training was divided into lectures, informative sessions, and meetings and visits with professionals. The training session provided GCC students with the opportunity to acquire deeper knowledge about the EU as well as to develop direct contacts with students from Europe, EU professionals, and academics.



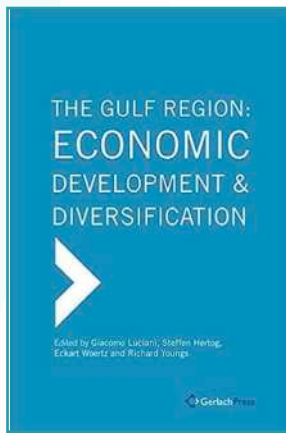


## “Promoting Deeper EU-GCC Relations” Publications

### Books

#### The Gulf Region: Economic Development and Diversification

October 2012

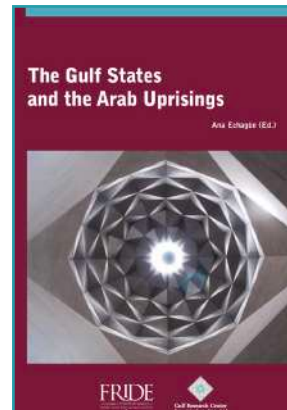


This four-volume set, falling under the broad heading of economic development and diversification highlights many developments that have occurred in the GCC economies, as well as the changing geopolitical realities that have resulted in the GCC states

also turning their interests to regions such as Asia and Africa. The four volumes are entitled Resources Blessed: Diversification and the Gulf Development Model; The GCC in the Global Economy; National Employment, Migration and Education in the GCC; and GCC Financial Markets: The World's New Money Centers. As one of its objectives, the publication aims to highlight how to best reap the benefits of the possible free trade agreement between the GCC and the EU. The target audience is policy officials on both sides as well as academics and specialists with an interest in the GCC's economic situation.

#### The Gulf States and the Arab Uprisings

August 2013



The Arab uprisings have focused much attention on the changes taking place in North Africa and the Levant, and less so on developments taking place in the Arab Gulf. But change appears to be inevitable in this region too. This new book addresses the

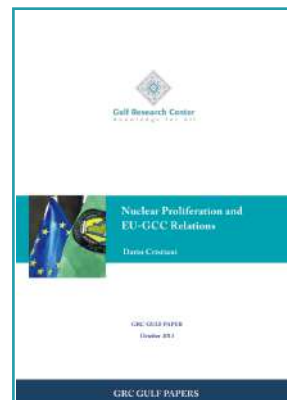
implications of the Arab revolts for the Gulf states in both geopolitical and domestic terms, as well as their impact on relations between Europe and the region. The audience includes the academic community and policy officials who want to get a better understanding of the role that political transformation is playing within the Arab Gulf countries.

### Policy Papers

#### Nuclear Proliferation and EU-GCC Relations

October 2013

By Dario Cristiani



Nuclear proliferation remains one of the key issues of the contemporary global security agenda and one of the major issues of the current strategic configuration of the Middle East. In the



Middle East, nuclear proliferation is an issue of concern for two reasons: first, because of the degree of potential crisis in a structurally unstable region, and second, the presence of a particularly evident strategic interdependence and political competition existing, above all, between those countries belonging to the geopolitical Islamic space, which raises the risk of miscalculations. Thus, the nuclear issue remains central to the strategic calculations of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU). This paper explores the state of relations between the GCC and the EU, the state of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, and the approaches of the EU and the GCC concerning this specific topic.

#### **EU and GCC Countries' Foreign Policies and the Mediterranean Neighborhood – Towards Synergetic Cooperation?**



August 2013  
By Tobias Schumacher  
and Irene Fernández  
Molina

As part of its project “Promoting Deeper EU-GCC Relations,” the GRC released a Gulf Paper entitled “EU and GCC Countries’

Foreign Policies and the Mediterranean Neighborhood – Towards Synergetic Cooperation?” by Tobias Schumacher and Irene Fernández Molina. This paper was presented and discussed at an international workshop “Promoting an EU-GCC Dialogue on Foreign Policy Issues” organized by the GRC, the Institute for European Studies from Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and Qatar University. The workshop was held at the Qatar University, Doha in

April 2013. This paper aims to provide a comparative analysis of the EU’s reinforced, yet ongoing, foreign policy engagement in the Arab Mediterranean and the GCC monarchies’ widening foreign policy activism in the region with a particular emphasis on the period after the outbreak of the Arab Spring. It discussed both the extent to which collaboration between the EU and GCC countries in the Arab Mediterranean is possible and the reasons why such collaboration has not yet materialized and is unlikely to in the near future. The paper also looked at the evolving role of the EU and GCC countries in their Mediterranean neighborhood and the prospects of EU-GCC cooperation in their common neighborhood space.

#### **What is the Status of the EU-GCC Relationship?**



July 2013  
By Valentina Kostadinova

As part of its project “Promoting Deeper EU-GCC Relations,” the GRC is releasing a Gulf Paper entitled “What is the Status of the EU-GCC

Relationship?” by Dr. Valentina Kostadinova, lecturer in politics at the University of Buckingham, UK. This paper was presented and discussed at an international workshop “Promoting an EU-GCC Dialogue on Foreign Policy Issues” organized by the GRC, the Institute for European Studies from Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Qatar University. The workshop was held at the Qatar University, Doha in April 2013. Over the years, the multifaceted EU-GCC



relationship has been analyzed from the political, economic, and security angles. This has provided an overview of the relationship, as well as its positives and negatives. In an effort to go beyond the existing literature, this paper argues that an important aspect of the relationship, so far not explicitly dealt with, has been the divergence in many of the fundamental norms/values held by the two organizations. Arguably, these have led not only to the very different institutional outlooks of the organizations but perhaps even more importantly, to at times drastically different social institutions. Thus, the paper provides a convincing complementary perspective on why despite the widely acknowledged commonality of many of the organizations' interests, the EU-GCC relationship did not develop very smoothly. Furthermore, it points to one substantial area future interactions almost certainly will have to address, if more encouraging outcomes from EU-GCC interactions are to take place. Besides identifying the institutional, structural, material, and normative reasons that are holding back the development of the EU-GCC relationship, the paper discusses the possibilities for these institutionally very different organizations to establish a better working relationship and provides some policy recommendations.

### EU-GCC Cooperation: Securing the Transition in Yemen

June 2013

By Edward Burke



“EU - GCC Cooperation: Securing the Transition in Yemen,” written by Edward Burke, associate fellow at the FRIDE looked at a fundamental issue of importance for both the EU and the

GCC. For the GCC, Yemen is an opportunity to develop and prove its ability in terms of foreign politics. For the EU, it is an occasion to develop its relation with the GCC without being at the forefront of interventions in the Yemeni crisis. This paper highlights the GCC involvement in Yemen, its efforts to stabilize the country and its partnership with the EU. The author suggests that GCC and EU cooperation in Yemen has come a very long way in a short time, demonstrating unprecedented convergence on Yemen's future. Much credit is due to the political leaders and diplomats who responded in a coherent and timely fashion to a confusing and rapidly escalating crisis. This experience has helped to ease mistrust between the EU and the GCC, particularly in some GCC countries where it was previously thought that insurmountable cultural differences between the EU and the GCC prevented effective collaboration in the Middle East.



## The EU and the GCC in Global Governance: Limitations and Future Potential

December 2013

By Joachim Koops, Jamal Shahin, Chloe Smythe, Giulia Tercovich, and Ziggy Vandebriel



The EU and the GCC have been interacting on a number of aspects of global governance for many years. Despite significant differences in size, structure, and political views

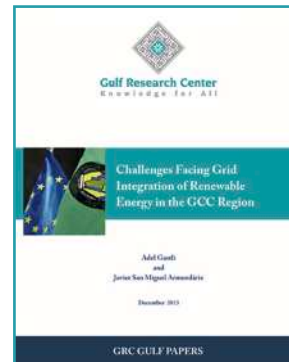
on various topics, both organizations have managed to establish a level playing field wherein a tentative convergence of attitudes towards global governance has been possible. Until recently, this has predominantly been in the field of economic cooperation. The focus on economics has led some to view this cooperation as falling short of perhaps overambitious expectations in political issues, while others view the cooperation as fitting with the EU's external relations and political incentives. While this paper focuses on the opportunities for cooperation in global governance, it is crucial to note that within the EU and the GCC, the scope for engagement is heavily dependent upon the impulse provided by the member states of both institutions. The joint cooperation activities reveal that the EU-GCC relationship is flourishing, but in specific sectors rather than on global lines. This paper seeks to show a sample of these different areas, looking at a range of different global governance challenges and examining how the EU and the GCC can interact in these areas. This

paper also suggests that the engagement of different types of actors in diplomatic relations will support the development of cooperation between the EU and the GCC.

## Challenges Facing Grid Integration of Renewable Energy in the GCC Region

December 2013

By Adel Gastli and Javier San Miguel Armendáriz



This paper, which was presented at the EU-GCC Renewable Energy Policy Experts' Workshop held at the Masdar Institute in Abu Dhabi on November

26th-27th, 2013, presents a review of renewable energy applications, potential, and barriers for the GCC region. It also discusses the different challenges facing the integration of renewables into the grid of the GCC countries. Solar energy exhibits the highest potential for the region, followed by wind energy. Analysis of different solar technologies has demonstrated that solar thermal applications such as concentrated solar power should be further researched for desert climates, as most current power plant implementations rely on water consumption for achieving good efficiencies. A comparison between photovoltaic solar technologies shows that the concentrated photovoltaic (CPV) technology is a promising technology for the GCC region because of its high efficiency and suitable operation in a hot climate. The barriers facing widespread application, as well as integration of renewables into the grid, are mainly related to lack of clear policies and regulatory frameworks in most of the





GCC countries. The technological barriers are being investigated by many researchers in the region. It is recommended that the integration of renewables into the GCC grid be accompanied by the conversion of the current conventional grid into a smart grid. In order to accomplish this, well defined implementation road-maps for the smart grid and renewables must be developed urgently by each GCC country.

### Investigating DSM Solutions Applicability in the GCC Environment

December 2013



By Alexandra Papadopoulou, Afshin Afshari, George Anastasopoulos, and John Psarras

This paper was also presented at the EU-GCC Renewable Energy Policy Experts' Workshop, held at the Masdar

Institute in Abu Dhabi on November, 26th-27th 2013. It presents a coherent overview of the various collaboration efforts and synergies between the EU and the GCC relating to numerous thematic clean energy topics, including energy efficiency and demand side management (DSM) that have attracted interest from both sides, and continue to grow. The aim of this paper is to utilize the existing know-how in the field of DSM and investigate its potential applicability in the GCC environment. Following a thorough review of the existing situation in the GCC, it is clear that a number of barriers inhibiting the further promotion of DSM programs exist, the most important being structural, as well as market-related barriers. The paper

suggests that the proposed DSM initiatives at this point should not focus on technological aspects, but rather on relevant legislative and financial aspects. These DSM initiatives were discussed in depth with GCC stakeholders and energy experts, in order to create a priority shortlist for a number of DSM activities relevant for the region.

### Opportunities for Integrated Energy and Water Management in the GCC

December 2013

By William N. Lubega, Apoorva Santhosh, Amro M. Farid, and Kamal Youcef-Toumi



Another paper from the November 2013 EU-GCC Renewable Energy Policy Experts' Workshop focused on integrated energy and

water management. Electric power is required to produce, treat, distribute, and recycle water while water is required to generate and consume electricity. The goal of this position paper is to identify and motivate opportunities for the operations management and planning of the energy-water nexus. It proceeds in three parts. First, an exposition of the energy-water nexus especially as it applies to the GCC is given. This discussion focuses on the electric power system, the potable water distribution system, and the wastewater distribution system. Then, the paper shifts to opportunities in operations management where recent work in the Laboratory for Intelligent Integrated Networks of Engineering Systems has produced a number of optimization programs to support the deregulated operation of integrated energy-water markets. To highlight the viability of this idea, an energy-water nexus



supply side economic dispatch is presented. Finally, the position paper shifts to discuss planning opportunities for the energy-water nexus for the sustainable development of water and energy resources. These include new methods that encourage renewable energy penetration and balance the portfolio of desalination technologies. It also includes integrated strategies for the design of water infrastructure to minimize embedded energy while reusing water of various qualities. The paper concludes with a description of opportunities for EU-GCC collaboration in the integrated energy and water management area.

### EU-GCC Renewable Energy Policy Cooperation – Exploring Opportunities



December 2013

By Rabia Ferroukhi, Haris Doukas, Stella Androulaki, Emanuela Menichetti, Andrea Masini, and Arslan Khalid

This paper was also presented at the EU-GCC Renewable Energy Policy Experts' Workshop, on November,

26th-27th 2013. The paper provides an analysis of the existing status of renewable energy in the GCC, specifically highlighting ongoing initiatives, future opportunities, and potential benefits from RE deployment, as well as barriers faced by the different GCC countries. With a third of the world's oil reserves, patterns of domestic consumption have never been a significant issue in energy planning in the GCC. This, however, is set to change with the emergence of important energy challenges with economic and

environmental implications. In particular, the region is experiencing astounding growth in domestic demand fueled by rising populations, economic growth, rapid industrialisation and infrastructure development. The rising demand and the current energy pricing structures are putting pressures on government budgets. The increasing consumption is also resulting in forgone export revenues, and in some countries, threatening the long term sustainability of fossil fuel resources. Finally, the reliance on fossil fuels and the regional consumption patterns have already led to some of the highest per capita carbon footprints in the world. As a result, the GCC governments are exploring ways to diversify their energy mix and introduce alternatives. It is in this context that renewable energy is emerging as one of the viable options for energy diversification in the GCC.



## Al-Jisr Project on EU-GCC Public Diplomacy



### EU-GCC Al Jisr Project مشروع الجسر

The Al-Jisr Project was a multi-year project that was supported by the European Commission and organized in partnership with eight European and Gulf institutes. Its main objective was threefold. Firstly, it aimed to enhance public as well as professional knowledge and understanding of the EU, and its policies and institutions among GCC citizens. Secondly, it strove to strengthen reflection and debate about EU-GCC relations and contribute to the future of policymaking between the two regions. Finally, closer links between the EU and the GCC were ensured through the dissemination of information on the EU. The project consisted of five main components which tackled the question of the promotion of GCC-EU relations to its fullest by addressing all aspects possible from training, debate, research, translation, and dissemination of information.

**The activities of the project were divided into the following work packages:**

- Work Package 1: A series of training workshops held in GCC member countries to raise awareness among GCC states, diplomats, academics, and opinion makers about the EU,
- Work Package 2: A series of workshops held in European and GCC countries devoted to the larger concept of “Considering the Scope for Expanding EU-GCC Cooperation: Suggestions for Taking the Relationship Forward,”
- Work Package 3: The translation of key introductory textbooks on the EU into Arabic,
- Work Package 4: A research project on the challenge and potential of economic growth and diversification in the GCC, including an analysis of how the benefits of the expected Free Trade Agreement (FTA) can best be reaped,
- Work Package 5: Creation of a website to ensure that the knowledge gathered, analyzed, and archived in this project was widely circulated.

As part of a broader consortium put together by the GRC, the Al-Jisr Project included the following partners: The Center for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels, Belgium; Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gütersloh, Germany; The Institute of Diplomatic Studies, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; The Euro-Gulf Research Unit at Kuwait University, Kuwait; The Environmental Policy Unit of the National Technical University of Athens, Greece; the FRIDE, Madrid, Spain; Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome, Italy; and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University, Sweden.

### Al-Jisr Workshops



National Technical  
University of Athens



LUND UNIVERSITY  
Center for Middle Eastern Studies





Under Work Packages 2 and 4 of the Al-Jisr Project, workshops were held both to discuss issues of potential cooperation and as discussion forums for the research project. In total, ten workshops were conducted. Participants in all of the meetings included a wide array of policy practitioners, specialists and academics, and members of civil society (for workshop programs and list of participants, please see the project website). The main objectives were to identify potential areas of cooperation and to give policymakers and practitioners of both regions the opportunity to discuss future policy outlines and possibly resolve current deadlocks in these areas. This was accomplished through the publication and then dissemination of numerous policy recommendations that resulted from the meetings.

### EU-GCC Relations and Global Economic Issues

October 1, 2010  
Brussels, Belgium

Organized in conjunction with the CEPS, Belgium



This workshop brought together prominent economists and policy officials from both the EU and the GCC sides as economic relations between the GCC and EU have been developing over a wide area of common interest, primarily defined within the context of a free trade agreement and economic diversification. The purpose of this workshop was to analyze in more detail the dynamics of the global economic financial crisis, the related focus on currency issues, its impact on GCC economic integration as well as issues of international trade and financial regulation and how this impacts the GCC-EU relationship. A particular focus was on identifying areas in which the EU and the GCC can work together more closely and improve their coordination.

### The Third Al-Jisr Research Workshop

June 6-9, 2010  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates



The final session of the Al-Jisr research project evaluated the European presence on GCC markets and considered future options for cooperation. Comparisons were drawn between the EU and the GCC on the basis of international benchmarks. Researchers delivered theories on the practices that might be adopted in the GCC and how they could



be modified to meet Gulf requirements. The concluding remarks outlined that GCC countries need to implement their WTO commitments, strengthen local institutions, capacity building, and set up notification authority.

### **The EU-GCC Partnership: Security and Policy Challenges**

March 16-17, 2010  
Berlin, Germany

Organized in conjunction with the Bertelsmann Stiftung, Germany



Conflicts in the Middle East and the Gulf region are interwoven. Actual or perceived threats over resources, including access to essential raw materials and new markets have the potential to destabilize the region. In this context, Europe has to develop an understanding of the security needs of the Gulf, and effective policies on foreign, security, and defense issues in collaboration with GCC and its neighbors Iraq, Iran, and Yemen. The objective of the workshop was to take a close look at the status of regional security cooperation in the critical Gulf region, to highlight the current main security challenges, and to outline a series

of steps that could be taken to improve or help establish more institutional security cooperation among both the regional and external actors that have a stake in a stable regional security environment.

### **The Mediterranean: Opportunities to Develop EU-GCC Relations?**

December 10-11, 2009  
Rome, Italy

Organized in conjunction with the Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy



This workshop pursued the following questions: can the Mediterranean become a field of cooperation between the EU and the GCC countries? If so, in which perspective should

Mediterranean EU-GCC cooperation be developed? Should the Mediterranean become a dimension in the EU- GCC political dialogue or should it be a separated framework? Should it be an EU-GCC cooperation in or on the Mediterranean? If it were a dimension of EU-GCC relations, how should it be connected with EU political relations with Arab Mediterranean countries (i.e. belonging to the UFM)? Should the various fields of cooperation move on separate tracks or should there be linkages? What could the political and security rationale of EU-GCC cooperation in/on the Mediterranean be? Is it possible to consider potential issues of cooperation (e.g. the Arab-Israeli conflict; Lebanon;



Western Sahara; social and cultural issues linked to migration; counterterrorism; maritime security, etc.)?

### Political Reform in the GCC and its Implications for EU Policy

November 2-3, 2009

Madrid, Spain

Organized in conjunction with the FRIDE, Spain



This workshop focused on the status of political reform in the GCC states in order to provide a better understanding of the transition process occurring in these states. With human rights an integral part of the EU's Free Trade Area negotiations, a thorough understanding of the drivers promoting political reform and an objective assessment of the reform measures being put in place was seen as essential in order to better guide policy decisions. Among the issues discussed in this workshop were the roles of the Gulf monarchies as drivers of political reform, the role of parliaments and local councils, the prospects for judicial reform, the development of civil society, and the interaction between energy dynamics and political reform. A final discussion looked at how the political reform debate

impacts on the overall GCC-EU relationship.

### The Second Al-Jisr Research Workshop

October 11-14, 2009 in Doha, Qatar

Organized in conjunction with the Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar



The second research workshop held in association with the Center for International and Regional Studies at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar discussed the key challenges to diversification and sustainability of economic development in the region. Aspects of bilateral trade between the GCC and the EU countries were addressed. The discussions drew on the aspect of human capital and the correlation between the development prospects of non-hydrocarbon manufacturing in the GCC and the lack of skill of the domestic workforce. The cluster dealing with financial aspects shed light on the coming up establishment of the GCC monetary union, the future of the US dollar and the role of the euro. Lastly, the GCC's foreign policy tools were scrutinized in the framework of their diversification in security cooperation.





### The EU and the GCC: Challenges and Prospects under the Swedish EU Presidency

June 8-9, 2009

Lund, Sweden

Organized in conjunction with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Lund University, Sweden



The purpose of the workshop was for GCC, Swedish, and EU officials to outline an agenda for the promotion of EU-GCC relations ahead of the handover of the presidency of the EU to Sweden on July 1, 2009. The meeting was an important opportunity to impress upon Swedish policy officials the GCC perspective with regards to such important issues as the Iranian nuclear program, the situation in Afghanistan and the overall priorities for regional development such as education. Participants in the end agreed that there was much to recommend in order to move the relationship forward between the two sides. The consensus was that there was a need to put focus on pressing issues in the short-term as well as set the pillars for more long-term engagement.

### The EU-GCC Partnership Cooperation in Higher Education

March 10-11, 2009

Kuwait City, Kuwait

Organized in conjunction with the Bertelsmann Stiftung, Germany and the Euro-Gulf Research Unit of Kuwait University, Kuwait



With education identified as a national priority by GCC member states, institutional cooperation between the GCC and the European Union in higher education could provide tangible benefits and lead to closer ties between the regions. The target of the two-day meeting was to encourage dialogue and to formulate recommendations for actors involved in educational reform processes. In particular, questions included: what can the EU and the GCC do to improve educational systems and strengthen exchange of experiences between both regions and how can institutions of both regions set up common initiatives?



### Enhancing the EU-GCC Relations within a New Climate Regime: Prospects and Opportunities for Cooperation

February 26, 2009  
Brussels, Belgium

Organized in conjunction with the CEPS, Belgium and the Environmental Policy Unit at the National Technical University of Athens, Greece



With the rise in demand for energy resources, in particular from Asia, the strategic significance of the Gulf region has increased. As a result Europe needs to develop closer ties with the energy sector of the Gulf countries as the current relationship remains underdeveloped. Researchers evaluated the opportunities for cooperation between the EU-GCC in the framework of a new Climate Regime, in the rational use of energy, in carbon capture and sequestration and in nuclear energy. In addition, they assessed the concerns raised on the European policy agenda over energy security risks in the Gulf region.

### The First Al-Jisr Research Workshop

February 1-4, 2009  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates



The first Al-Jisr Research Project workshop looked at the challenges and potential of economic growth and diversification in the GCC states, including an analysis of how the benefits of the expected Free Trade Agreement (FTA) could best be reaped. The workshop aimed at a number of integrated future scenarios to judge the region's regional and international economic role as well as the shifting functions of state and business in it.





### Al-Jisr Training

#### Understanding the Institutions, Agencies and Policies of the European Union

September 26-October 1, 2010

Brussels, Belgium



The GRC and the CEPS organized a training program to provide journalists from the GCC region a platform from which they would gain an insight into the workings of the EU. The program featured in-depth presentations on key aspects of how the EU works and operates, field visits to various EU institutions like the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, as well as other organizations in Brussels. It was a unique opportunity for the selected journalists to access high-level officials to discuss various aspects of GCC-EU relations including the current state of relations and issues concerning the Free Trade Area negotiations.

#### European Union (EU) - Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Relations

April 18-20, 2010

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



The GRC and the Institute for Diplomatic Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia held a training program for GCC diplomats in the Saudi capital for three days from April 18th to 20th, 2010. The sessions brought together more than 40 diplomats representing all GCC states in an effort to focus and analyze the issues defining the EU-GCC relationship and explore ways of how to make current cooperation more effective.

#### Understanding the European Union

January 10-14, 2009

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



The GRC, the Institute for Diplomatic Studies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Riyadh and the CEPS, held a five-day executive training course for 55 GCC diplomats in Riyadh. The objective of the program was to provide a platform from which GCC diplomats could gain insight into the workings of the EU and to create a network of people interested in fostering the strategic relationship between the Arab Gulf region and Europe. The program provided professionals concerned with deepening their knowledge about the European Union with in-depth presentations on key aspects of how the EU works and operates including EU enlargement, the constitutional process, the EURO and GCC currency union, and the impact of the possible GCC-EU FTA.

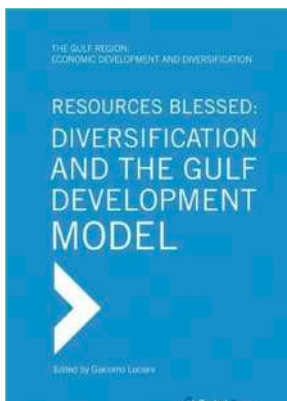


## Al-Jisr Publications

Information products represented a main part of the Al-Jisr Project since they were integral to the overall public diplomacy and dissemination activities supporting the advancement and deepening of EU-GCC relations. Books, policies, and research papers related to ongoing discussions and debate within the EU about how to improve relations with the GCC states were produced on several topics.

### Books

#### Resources Blessed: Economic Development and Diversification in the GCC



The largest of the volumes coming from the research project component resulted from clusters 1, 2 and 4. The main question posed was to what extent Gulf economies had actually diversified. One can measure diversification in several different

ways, and the conclusion drawn is that this is different depending on the period of time under scrutiny; depending on whether one looks at composition of GDP or exports; depending on how one considers government services; and depending on how one categorizes industrial activities downstream of resources extraction (oil refining, petrochemicals) or closely related to their availability (aluminum, phosphates, iron, steel, glass, in addition to other energy and resource-intensive industries). One preliminary

conclusion drawn was that the Gulf countries have adopted a unique combination of policies which have led to apparently positive outcomes, although with significant differences between the cases.

#### The Gulf Region in the Global Economic Context

March 2013

Edited by Richard Youngs



The volume resulting out of cluster 7 of the research project component looks at how the Gulf region has emerged as the new leading player in the Arab world, and how Europe has been slow to recognize the changing geopolitical realities. The result of which has been

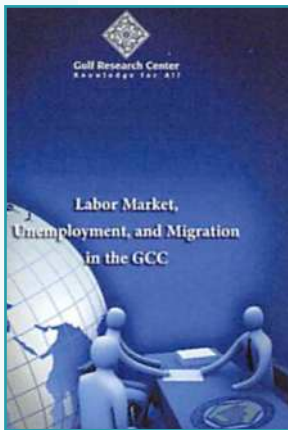
the GCC states turning to Asia and Africa to build new economic links while strengthening old ones. The Gulf's proactive internationalism is not limited to economics and energy. In security and politics too, a myriad network of new agreements and initiatives has been forthcoming in recent years. However, the GCC states now need to move ahead with reforms that will enable them to deal with the pressures arising out of issues such as raised expectations from a period of high revenues and the region's demographics.



## Labor Market, Unemployment and Migration in the Gulf

July 2012

Edited by Steffen Hertog



The volume resulted out of cluster 6 of the research project component and covers various issues including the GCC economies' comparative strengths and weaknesses related to the labor market, unemployment

and migration; female participation in the economy; and education and economic development.

## GCC Financial Markets

May 2011

Edited by Eckart Woertz



The volume examines how an increased need for finance meets underdeveloped capital markets in the countries of the GCC. Ambitious development plans in fields like petrochemicals and infrastructure, as

well as a rapidly growing population form the backdrop of this scenario. While world

capital markets show on average a balanced capital structure of debt securities, stock market capitalization, and bank assets, bond markets in the GCC countries are underdeveloped and the capital mix is heavily skewed towards banks. This book outlines the structure of various segments of GCC financial markets and points to regulatory challenges and possible future developments. The issues range from capital market structures to the planned GCC Monetary Union, Islamic banking, and sovereign wealth funds. In the wake of the global financial crisis and international currency turmoil, financial markets in the GCC countries face particular challenges.

## The Role, Development and Competitiveness of the GCC Financial Sector

January 2011

Edited by Eckart Woertz



The volume resulted out of clusters 3 and 5 of the research project component. Included are such issues as the Gulf's financial sector with a focus on trends of regulatory change, financial diversification,

regional and international consolidation of banking intermediaries as well as the Gulf's potential as a regional and global hub, and the behavior and future of the GCC's sovereign wealth funds. It also looks at the issues surrounding GCC monetary unification including discussing future scenarios of exchange rate policy, currency





pegs, and monetary policy. Changes in the Gulf business environment with respect to privatization and government ownership, business regulation, and the strengths and weaknesses of the private sector, as measured by global indicators, and the potential for specialization in other services, including tourism, are also discussed.

### **The EU and the GCC: Challenges and Prospects under the Swedish EU Presidency**

September 2010

Edited by Christian Koch and Leif Stenberg



More than two decades after the 1988 EU-GCC Cooperation Agreement, institutional ties between the two blocs have emerged at several levels. On the multilateral level, interactions

between the EU and the GCC states have taken the relationship forward over the years. Relations have also proceeded similarly at the bilateral level between individual member states. However, the progress has not always been smooth. The issue of an FTA has become a sticking point and negotiations have yet to yield a concrete result. Beyond the FTA issue, however, there are several areas such as education, economic governance, Islamic finance, and the empowerment of women where the EU and the GCC could expand their collaboration. The two sides could also have a closer dialogue on

security issues. In addition, civil society organizations in the two regions could further inter-regional cooperation. The papers in this volume examine some of these aspects of GCC-EU relations and suggest ways for a more broad-based and effective collaboration.

### **The Mediterranean: Opportunities to Develop EU-GCC Relations**

June 2010

Edited by Roberto Aliboni



The volume resulting from the workshop held in Rome in December 2009 focused on the EU's policies of cooperation with its Mediterranean neighbors and looks into how GCC countries can assist

the transition process in these countries. Does the Southern Mediterranean offer opportunities for cooperation between the EU and GCC countries? Indeed, given the Gulf's economic boom and growing investment in North Africa, GCC countries are well positioned to play a more central role in the Mediterranean. In addition, the Gulf region has close political ties with states such as Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria. Saudi Arabia and Qatar, for instance, have already played an active diplomatic role in the last few years in mitigating potential conflict situations.



## Background Studies

### **Gulf Security: Between Balance of Power and Collective Security**

March 2010

Compiled by the Center for Applied Policy Research and the GRC

The conference overview paper was put together for the workshop on “The EU-GCC Partnership - Security and Policy Challenges” held in Berlin from March 16th to 17th, 2010. The paper provides an overview of political as well as academic proposals to organize cooperation and security affairs in the Gulf. The underlying rationale was the sense that the Gulf region is not only a political and security hot spot of great strategic importance, given the frequency of major wars, its natural resources and geopolitical location, but it is also particularly interesting for scholars of international relations, since it was for a long time regarded as a realpolitik balance of power system par excellence.

### **Taking Stock of the EU-GCC Cooperation in Education, Science, and Technology: Conference Overview Paper**

March 2009

Compiled by the Center for Applied Policy Research and the GRC.



The paper summarizes the various areas of cooperation that exist between the EU and the GCC in the area of higher education. This includes Joint

Council and Ministerial Meetings, Bilateral Agreements, the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window, the Jean Monet Program, TEMPUS, the EU/EC Framework Programs for Research and Technological Development, other specific EU programs/calls, as well as university-to-university cooperation, cooperation in R&D, science and technology transfer, and vocational training.

### **Enhancing the EU-GCC Relations within a New Climate Regime: Prospects and Opportunities for Cooperation**

February 2009

By John Psarras, Alexandros Flamos, and Kostas Patlitzianas



The paper offers a detailed analysis of the prospect for developing renewable energy sources, rational use of energy, carbon capture sequestration and nuclear energy in the EU-GCC context.

It concludes that enhancing the EU- GCC relations within a New Climate Regime is expected to bring mutual benefits through the transformation of carbon economy constraints into continuously raising green economy opportunities and in parallel serving the triple objective of producing secure and affordable energy, reducing the impact on climate change, and ensuring that energy contributes to competitiveness and economic development.





## Policy Briefs

### The EU-GCC Partnership: Security and Policy Challenges

May 2010

By Michael Bauer, Christian-Peter Hanelt, Christian Koch



The policy brief looks at the sub-complex of the greater Middle Eastern regional system with its own distinct security-political practices and challenges. It includes three regional great powers, i.e. Iran, Iraq,

and Saudi Arabia and on the regional margins, Yemen, a fragile state with its own domestic affairs. The emergence of the Gulf as a geo-strategic space has gained it prominence on the international security agenda. For this reason, various external actors have continuously played an important role in regional affairs. The US-led coalition forces' failure to establish a post-invasion order in Iraq led to chaos and civil war conditions which resulted in the final dismantling of the balance of power in the Gulf. Consequent uncertainty regarding the strategic ambitions of regional actors is aggravated by the absence of a functioning framework in which security issues can be addressed. This paper draws on presentations and discussions that took place at a conference on Gulf Security in Berlin in March 2010 and combines them with the overall findings of the Al-Jisr Research Project and its recommendations.

### The Gulf Takes Charge in the MENA Region

April 2010

By Edward Burke and Sara Bazoobandi



The Gulf has emerged as the new leading player in the Arab world. However, the financial crisis has dealt a serious blow to the region's economy and the prospects of integration. The GCC complained of not

being consulted by the EU over the Union of the Mediterranean, but it has failed to offer MENA countries an equivalent alternative. The GCC countries are the only part of the Middle East with the resources to mitigate rising political and economic pressures that afflict the region through increased and more efficient allocation of development funds and investments to foster job creation. To succeed, Gulf donors need to rethink their engagement in the region, moving away from facilitating loans and grants and in the direction of in-country development assistance programs.

### Political Reform in the GCC and its Implications for EU Policy

February 2010

By Edward Burke and Christian Koch



The paper questions the status of political reform in the Gulf region in relation to governance issues and the changing international position of the GCC countries.



It explores the roles of the Gulf monarchies as drivers of political reform, the role of parliaments and local councils, the prospects for judicial reform, the development of civil society, and the interaction between energy dynamics and political reform. One of the aims of this paper is to highlight to Europe the change and transition process occurring within the GCC such as demographic issues, raising political demands, and a changing media environment.

### Exploring Opportunities in the EU-GCC Relationship

October 2009

By Christian Koch



GCC-EU relations are characterized by a certain dichotomy. While economic ties have been steadily growing and the relationship has taken on a more political dimension, the potential of that relationship has not been fulfilled, as unfortunately there have been more obstacles and setbacks than overall advances. In order to overcome this dichotomy and in light of current critical regional developments the paper outlines the existing problem areas and proposes alternative strategies to move the relationship forward.

### Promoting EU-GCC Cooperation in Higher Education

May 2009

By Michael Bauer and Christian Koch



This policy brief examines how the member states of the EU and the GCC should expand their areas of cooperation in the field of higher education. It highlights areas and ideas to be contemplated by officials and policy

practitioners from both the European and the Gulf side when it comes to devising new programs of cooperation. Examples include exchange programs for students, researchers, and young professionals in scientific and technological research as well as development that could lead to concrete results. Moreover, it outlines how both the EU and the GCC should seek to engage with reform efforts, as both the EU and the GCC states face many of the same issues in terms of the development of their educational institutions, the proper dissemination of knowledge, quality and equality within education, and modernization of their systems.



## Impasse in Euro-Gulf Relations

April 2009

By Richard Youngs



In the paper, it is argued that the Gulf has long been a neglected area within EU foreign policy, a fact that has been further compounded by problems that surfaced towards the end of 2008

when trade negotiations between the EU and the GCC collapsed. The EU has been unable to resolve the tensions between its economic and political strategies in the Gulf. Its approach to economic questions has weakened its geopolitical presence; and its approach to security issues has diluted efforts to promote the governance reforms needed for long-term European strategic and economic interests. Improvements in EU-Gulf relations will require the EU to recognize that leaving relations with the GCC on the back-burner is no longer in its best interests.

## Translations

As part of the dissemination package, the project translated texts on the European Union into Arabic. The aim was to ensure the widest reach when spreading knowledge about the EU among GCC citizens.

The following texts were translated:

## Policy-Making in the European Union (The New European Union Series)

September 2005

By William Wallace, Helen Wallace and Mark Pollack



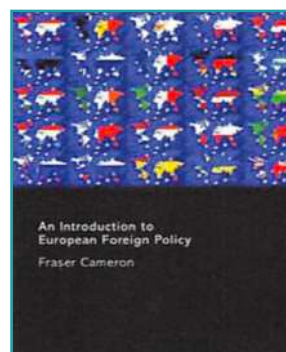
The new edition of this highly successful textbook brings the reader up to date with the range of core policy challenges facing the European Union and the ways in which they are being addressed. It includes a new chapter which lays out

the primary questions of the book against the background of new research and a new chapter on employment policy which covers the major developments in this area.

## An Introduction to European Foreign Policy

March 2007

By Fraser Cameron



This book examines the origins, workings, and priorities of the European Union's foreign policy and its role in world politics, arguing that the EU has become a new and increasingly influential superpower.

It is a concise introduction of the evolution of the EU's international role over the past two decades and illustrates the growing influence of the EU in traditional areas such as trade and development, as well as new areas such as the environment and global governance.



### Europa von A bis Z: Taschenbuch der Europäischen Integration

May 2009

By Werner Weidenfeld and Wolfgang Wessels



The 11th edition of Europa von A bis Z includes updated references to the Treaty of Lisbon and to the upcoming European elections. It is targeted to all those who seek quick, comprehensive,

and precise information about the European integration process. In more than 70 articles, renowned authors explain key issues related to EU affairs in a comprehensible fashion. The edited volume provides background knowledge for readers who want to know more about the European Union and who wish to understand current trends in European politics.

### Al-Jisr Project Website

The project website represented an integral part of the assignment as it allowed not only follow-up and distribution of the results of the Al-Jisr activities, but more importantly created a platform for access to basic facts on the EU and the GCC. The project website contained the entirety of the work related to the project, divided into the respective work packages. In addition, there were links to all consortium partners, a news section with current news items pertaining to EU-GCC relations, a collection of relevant articles and research papers produced by consortium partners

and other institutions on the EU-GCC relationship, as well as a data section providing basic information about the EU as an institution and about its respective member states.

*Note: The website is no longer accessible.*







## POLINARES



POLINARES (Competition and Collaboration in Access to Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources) examined the global challenges faced with respect to access to oil, gas and mineral resources over the next 30 years and proposed solutions for the various policy actors, including the EU. Combined theoretical and empirical analyses used expertise from a wide range of disciplines including political science, economics, geology, engineering, technology, law and security studies.

### The objectives of the project were:

- to identify the main global challenges relating to competition for access to oil, gas, and mineral resources;
- to propose new approaches to collaborative solutions for the various policy actors, including the EU;
- to widely disseminate the results of this research.

To achieve these policy objectives, the POLINARES project was directed at meeting the following research objectives:

- to develop a better understanding of how global interactions and interdependencies relating to oil, gas, and minerals have been changing and are likely to change, how they relate to the development trajectories of different parts of the world, and what their implications are for global economic, social, institutional, and security relations;

- to identify principles which can underpin the development of new policies, new policy-making processes, and new networking systems which, in turn, can assist in promoting an appropriate balance between competition and collaboration with respect to access to oil, gas and minerals in a manner which minimizes conflict and promotes sustainable economic development.

The GRCF is a member of the POLINARES project consortium.

The project ran for three years from January 2010.

More information: <http://www.polinares.eu/index.php>





## The EU-GCC Clean Energy Network



The EU-GCC Clean Energy Network aimed to respond to the common interests of stakeholders active in the field of clean energy, both in the GCC and the EU. The Network is a practical instrument for the development of concrete cooperation activities on clean energy, including the related policy and technology aspects, among various players across the EU and GCC countries.

The project consisted of four main components: First to create a network of GCC and EU entities including universities, research institutes, corporations, administrations, and utilities, to support and work on topics of mutual interest in the area of clean energy; second, to operate and develop the activities of the network including capacity building events and joint research activities; third, to disseminate information and advice to increase knowledge among the GCC states on EU policies in the area of clean energy, and the promotion of joint demonstration projects being mutually implemented in this area; and fourth, to set-up a sustainability strategy for the established network to continue within the framework of a legal and financial structure.

The Network's focus was on the following areas in particular:

- Renewable Energy Sources,
- Energy Demand Side Management & Energy Efficiency,
- Clean Natural Gas & Related Clean Technologies,
- Electricity Interconnections & Market Integration,
- Carbon Capture & Storage.

The EU-GCC Clean Energy Project was a large multi-stakeholder network that aimed to enhance EU-GCC energy relations. The GRC and the Institute of Communications and Computer Systems of the National Technical University of Athens led the project consortium.

The project began on December 22nd, 2009 and continued until December 2012.

More information: [www.eugcc-cleanenergy.net](http://www.eugcc-cleanenergy.net)



## 1<sup>st</sup> Plenary Meeting of the EU-GCC Clean Energy Network

January 18, 2011

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates



Dr. Oskar Ziemelis, GRC Director of Cooperation, and Eng. Imen Jeridi, Researcher in the Science and Technology in the Gulf Program of GRC participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> Plenary Meeting of the EU-GCC Clean Energy Network held on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in the margins of the World Future Energy Summit. During the meeting, distinguished clean energy actors and experts, including representatives from the European Commission and the GCC authorities, presented the results and outcomes achieved so far, since the recent creation of the EU-GCC Clean Energy Network, and exchanged views and information on avenues of EU-GCC clean energy cooperation. The Plenary Meeting was followed by a training seminar on solar resource assessment organized by the EU-GCC Clean Energy Network on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the Higher Colleges of Technology - Abu Dhabi Men's College.

## Energy Security: Potential for EU-GCC Cooperation

November 9-10, 2010

Manama, Bahrain



Organized by the Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (BCSIES), and the Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF), the conference was one of the concluding events of SECURE, a research project funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme with the objective of building a comprehensive framework covering the issues related to security of supply inside and outside the EU. The conference brought together some 150 energy security policy experts, among them Ministers of Oil & Gas/ Energy from the region, representatives of the European Union to the Gulf Cooperation Council, academics, CEOs of the major oil corporations, civil servants, and diplomats in the region. The objective of the conference was to create a platform for discussion and dialogue on past, current, and future energy security problems and solutions. The current and emerging energy and greenhouse gas challenges were also addressed.



### EU-GCC Clean Energy Network Project

April 1, 2010

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



The GRC hosted an informative meeting on the “EU-GCC Clean Energy Network” project that was awarded by the European Commission to a consortium led by the Institute of Communications and Computer Systems of the National Technical University of Athens (ICCS-NTUA) and included the GRC in Dubai as its Gulf region base.

### SECURE



SECURE (Security of Energy Considering its Uncertainty, Risk and Economic Implications) was a research project supported by the European Commission to carry out a wide-ranging study on European energy security.

SECURE developed energy security indicators for the major energy sources and technologies so as to identify risk factors and quantify EU exposure. Costs and benefits

of energy security were evaluated for different energy demand scenarios to help policymakers provide the most appropriate solutions.

SECURE is a collaborative project composed of a strong consortium of 15 partners with diversified expertise. The project started on the 1st of January 2008 and finished in April 2011.

More information: <http://www.secure-ec.eu/>.



## INCONET-GCC2



INCONET-GCC2 was a three year project sponsored by the European Commission's Directorate General for Research and Innovation, with the view to establish a Science, Technology and Innovation International Cooperation Network between the EU and the Arab Gulf countries aiming at bi-regional coordination towards HORIZON2020." The project was implemented by a consortium of 20 international institutional partners from the EU and GCC regions. The overall goals of this project were to support institutional bi-regional policy dialogue in science, technology and innovation, strengthen bi-regional cooperation between research and innovation actors and monitor progress in bi-regional science, technology and innovation cooperation. The Gulf Research Center Foundation was part of the consortium of this innovative and ambitious project.

### INCONET GCC2 International Conference: Collaboration for Innovation: Linking GCC and EU

December 6-8, 2015  
Muscat, Oman

As part of the initiative, this international conference was organized by the INCONET-GCC 2 consortium and gathered representatives from all over the world. The first day was dedicated to on-site visits to local technology parks, incubators and research organizations. The second and third days presented the state of EU-GCC cooperation, collaboration opportunities, and benefits as well as barriers to overcome, with a focus on energy and healthcare as well as smart cities, which have been identified as sectors of mutual interest and benefit between the EU and GCC countries.





## 5 - GRC Events on Gulf-Europe Relations





## 5. GRC Events on Gulf-Europe Relations

Events are a key aspect of the work that GRC carries out because they stimulate collaboration and link GRC with a worldwide network of leading individuals and research initiatives. Events also play a key role for GRC in the Gulf region because they promote widespread research efforts among different institutions from within the Gulf and neighboring regions to heighten awareness of important Gulf-Europe issues.

The following is a list of events that have been conducted within the framework of the Gulf-Europe Program.

### Saudi-European Roundtable

December 10, 2024

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



On December 10, 2024, the GRC hosted a roundtable in Riyadh on the occasion of the visit of Prof. Dr. Daniela Schwarzer, Member of the Executive Board of the Bertelsmann Foundation, and Christian Hanelt, Senior Expert on Middle East from the foundation's Europe's Future Program. The discussions focused on Gulf-Europe relations, addressing key challenges posed by the current regional escalations and exploring Europe's role in promoting stability and security in the Gulf region.

The event was attended by HE Mr. Christophe Farnaud, Ambassador of the European Union to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and HE Mr. Michael Kindsgrab, Ambassador of Germany to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Delegates from the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gulf Cooperation Council, the German-Saudi Arabian Liaison Office for Economic Affairs (GESALO), and leading Saudi experts on European affairs also participated in the discussions. The roundtable provided a platform to assess the challenges shaping European security and economic policies, particularly in the context of the EU's new leadership, the incoming U.S. administration, the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, and the evolving global dynamics involving China and the Middle East.

The roundtable discussion covered how the European Union finds itself at a crossroads, navigating complex internal and external dynamics amidst global uncertainty. Internally, a new structure of informal coordination is emerging, although a formal transfer of competence remains elusive. Neither France nor Germany is willing to act unilaterally on major issues, preferring to consult with other EU member states. Externally, Europe faces a shifting geopolitical landscape as the U.S. gradually withdraws from certain roles, compounded by the unpredictability of U.S. policy under figures like Donald Trump. Concerns over U.S. tariffs, escalating tensions with China, and a potential push toward protectionism further strain Europe's economic growth, which is already under pressure.



### EU-GCC Relations Workshop

October 10, 2024  
Brussels, Belgium



Ahead of the inaugural head of states GCC-EU summit, with the support of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Foreign Policy Instruments of the European Commission (FPI), and in line of the official opening of the Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels Office (GRCF), the GRCF Brussels organized a roundtable on GCC-EU relations on October 10, 2024, to lay the groundwork for collaborative and impactful dialogue, focusing on: political and security matters, economic cooperation and energy partnerships, fostering social ties through people-to-people relations on human rights issues, women and youth engagement.

### The 2024 Gulf Research Meeting

July 9-11, 2024  
Cambridge, United Kingdom



The GRC hosted its 14th annual Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) in Cambridge from July 9th to 11th, 2024, attended by over 400 experts, scholars, and practitioners.

The event's participants were spread out over 13 workshops overseen by 29 workshop directors. The workshops covered a host of issues ranging from security and conflict resolution to AI and climate change related to the Gulf region.

The GRM Opening Ceremony was moderated by GRCF-B Executive Manager Dr. Christian Koch, and included welcoming remarks by Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, and Prof. David Cardwell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Strategy and Planning at the University of Cambridge. This was followed by speeches from H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mr. Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi, Secretary General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, H.E. The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, and H.E. Mr. Luigi Di Maio, European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for the Gulf region.

The second half of the opening ceremony featured a panel discussion with three distinguished women from the Gulf region, and was moderated by Dr. Christian Koch. Panel speakers included H.E. Sheikha Jawaher Ebrahim Duaij Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State of Kuwait, who shared insights on the role of women in peace and diplomacy, with a focus on human rights issues; H.E. Ambassador Nancy Jamal, Chief of Strategic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Bahrain, who discussed her experiences in counter-terrorism, preventing extremism, and developing frameworks for sustainable security; and H.E. Dr. Manal Radwan, Advisor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who reflected on her involvement in high-level security discussions and the evolving international political landscape.





## GCC Ambassadors Luncheon Meeting

May 30, 2024

Brussels, Belgium



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, and Dr. Christian Koch, GRCF-B Executive Manager, organized a luncheon for the GCC ambassadors and representatives of the GCC embassies in Brussels on May 30th, 2024. Those in attendance were H.E. Khalid Ibrahim Mohammed Al-Jindan, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; H.E. Khalid Fahad Al-Hajri, Ambassador of the State of Qatar; H.E. Abdulla Faisal Jabur Al-Doseri, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain; H.E. Nawaf N. Alenezi, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait; H.E. Haifa Al-Jadea, Ambassador of the Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the European Union; H.E. Mohamed Al-Sahlawi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates; and Mr. Humaid Almansoori, Head of Parliamentary Affairs, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates.

During the luncheon, the participants discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the Gulf and Europe and ways the soon-to-open Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) office in Brussels can provide the space to develop and deepen the relationship between both sides by building networks across all official and unofficial channels, thus broadening relations between the Gulf and Europe.

## Maintaining Convergence in EU-GCC Energy Ties Webinar

May 23, 2024



The GRC held a webinar entitled “Maintaining Convergence in EU-GCC Energy Ties” on May 23rd, 2024. The speakers of the webinar were H.E. Dr. Majid AlMoneef, Chairman of the Association for Energy Economics, and Prof. Giacomo Luciani, Master in International Energy Transitions at Sciences Po Paris. Dr. Christian Koch moderated the session.

The webinar discussions highlighted the need for cooperation between the EU and the GCC in many different areas including sustainable energy security and the potential of hydrogen and carbon capture and sequestration (CCUS) technologies. Both speakers emphasized the importance of realistic and flexible approaches to climate commitments and the necessity for technical dialogue and integrated value chain projects to foster EU-GCC collaboration. Regarding technical cooperation on the hydrogen economy, the webinar highlighted how technical cooperation on desalination, infrastructure for hydrogen, and shipping and handling standards are areas for potential EU-GCC collaboration. Regarding the Gulf region, the GCC is investing





in renewables for green hydrogen production and has the potential for blue hydrogen production with CCUS technology. Opportunities within the mineral sector, especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were also mentioned given the EU's concern over critical raw materials. In addition, Europe's revaluation of CCUS and nuclear energy as potential components of reducing emissions have recently opened up areas for renewed cooperation.

### Visit of the State Secretary of the Republic of Germany H.E. Dr. Thomas Bagger

February 27, 2024  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



H.E. Dr. Thomas Bagger, State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, visited the GRC office in Riyadh, along with his accompanying delegation and H.E. Michael Kindsgrab, Ambassador of Germany to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The meeting was held with senior experts and intellectuals from Saudi Arabia, and covered the ongoing regional developments and ways to understand both German and Saudi foreign policy. In terms of regional security, the discussions looked at how Europe can lead the way in assisting in de-escalation efforts in the Middle East. Overall, the roundtable underwent fruitful discussions for both sides to understand the foreign policies of Berlin and Riyadh, especially given the current regional developments.

### GCC-Baltic Relations Webinar

February 21, 2024



The GRC held a webinar entitled “GCC-Nordic Relations” on February 21st, 2024. The speakers of the webinar were Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC; Dr. Nourah Shuaibi, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University; Dr. Omar Al-Ubaydli, Director of Research at Derasat; Sverre Lodgaard, former Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs; Fannie Agerschou-Madsen, Ph.D Candidate at the Danish Institute for International Studies; Dr. Rouzbeh Parsi, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Program at the Swedish Institute for International Studies; and Dr. Tuomo Melasuo, Emeritus Professor at the Tampere Peace Research Institute in Finland. Dr. Christian Koch moderated the webinar.

The webinar covered the different perspectives from the GCC and Nordic states on current developments, both regionally and internationally, the view of GCC and Nordic states regarding their respective relationships, including developments and challenges, and the way forward in developing cooperation between the two regions and identifying critical areas of focus.



## Gulf Research Center & Ambrosetti Roundtable: “A New Relevance of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, and the Middle East - Global Perspectives”

January 14, 2024  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



The GRC and The European House - Ambrosetti (TEHA) jointly organized a roundtable on January 14th, 2024 at the GRC Riyadh office titled “New Relevance of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, and the Middle East - Global Perspectives.” The meeting brought together academics, diplomats, and business community representatives to examine Middle East geopolitics from a nuanced perspective. Welcoming remarks were made by Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, and Luca Miraglia, CEO of The European House - Ambrosetti Middle East & Central Asia. The event featured key speaker Federico Rampini, journalist, writer, and principal expert in geopolitics at TEHA. Guests included H.E. Roberto Cantone, the Italian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and H.E. Christophe Farnaud, the EU Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

## GCC-Baltic Relations Webinar

October 18, 2023



The GRC organized a webinar on GCC-Baltic relations on Wednesday, October 18th, 2023. This webinar was an extension of the GCC-NB8 research project launched by the GRC, which aims to increase the cooperation and understanding of the Gulf's relations with the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8).

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC; Sheikha Najla Al Qassimi, Director of Global Affairs of B'huth (Dubai Public Policy Research Centre); Dr. Konstantinas Andrijauskas, Associate Professor of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University, Lithuania; Peeter Raudsik, Arab-Baltic Relations Observer in Estonia; and Sintija Broka, Head of the Middle East Research Program at the Latvian Institute of International Affairs, each provided their input. Amnah Mosly, researcher at the GRC, moderated the session.

From the Gulf perspective, de-escalation, both in the region and abroad, is vital to all six GCC countries. The Gulf sees an opportunity to collaborate with the Baltic states regarding cybersecurity, maritime security, de-escalation, investment, and trade. One potential collaboration could be the expansion of NATO into NATO+ to include the GCC region. From a Lithuanian perspective, food security was listed as another potential area of collaboration,



especially following the Ukraine crisis. In Latvia, relations with the Gulf and wider Middle East region continue to increase yearly. Energy security is also seen as a crucial aspect of GCC-Baltic relations. From an Estonian perspective, maritime, energy, and cyber security are three aspects of potential cooperation between the GCC and the Baltic states.

### **Young Perspectives on Joint Cooperation: Enhancing the Saudi-German Academic Exchange**

October 5-7, 2023  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



The GRC, in cooperation with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, organized the program on “Young Perspectives on Joint Cooperation: Enhancing the Saudi-German Academic Exchange” at the GRC’s office in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from October 5th to 7th, 2023.

The program is aimed to increase academic exchange between researchers from Germany, on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia on the other, by building and sustaining networks between individuals and institutions in both regions. Ten young researchers participated in the program, divided into separate two-person teams to work on specific issues and write a comprehensive policy brief on issues impacting Saudi-German ties. The workshop allowed for an initial exchange of views on such topics

as Saudi Arabia and Germany in an era of energy transition, the strategic outlook of Saudi Arabia and Germany in a multipolar world, and Germany and Saudi Arabia in a period of social transition. Following the initial program, researchers will continue to work on their policy papers that are due by the end of the year.

### **NATO and the Gulf**

December 12, 2022  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

On the occasion of the first visit of NATO’s



Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, hosted a dinner in honor of H.E. Mr. Jens Stoltenberg and his delegation.

A number of think tankers, area specialists, and media attended the dinner. The discussion focused on the potential for enhanced dialogue and cooperation between NATO and the Gulf, including in areas such as maritime security, energy security, and counter-terrorism. The exchange also covered the current security situations in Europe and the Middle East, with special attention given to the leading role of the Kingdom in coordinating the Arab-Islamic efforts for ending the war in Gaza and delivering humanitarian support.





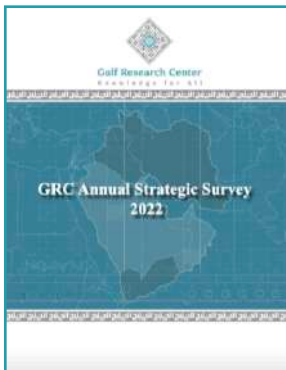
## GRC Policy Forum 2022

July 12, 2022

London, United Kingdom



The GRC organized a policy forum at the Royal Society in London, England, on July 12th, 2022, to address a range of policy issues related to the Gulf region. More than 60 participants, including academics and members of think tanks, attended the event.



The forum began with welcoming remarks by H.E. Dr. Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, the secretary-general of the GCC, delivered virtually. The forum was then followed by a presentation of

the GRC Annual Strategic Review 2022, which outlined key regional developments of that year. The report's results were discussed in two-panel sessions focusing on the current policy issues pertaining to the Gulf region.

The first panel, titled “Gulf Regional Politics, Security, and IR,” was moderated by Dr. Sanam Vakili, deputy director and

senior research fellow of the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House. Speakers of the first panel included Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, chairman of the GRC, Dr. Mustafa Alani, the head of GRC's Defense and Security Program, and Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the GRCE-B.

The experts discussed the regional security challenges and stressed the need to address those issues holistically. They were unanimous in their view that despite several difficulties, communication channels are needed for conflict management and de-escalation efforts to move the region out of crises.

Moderated by Dr. Christian Koch, the second panel was titled “Gulf Economics, Energy, and the Environment.” Speakers at the second panel were: Dr. John Sfakianakis, the head of economic research and chief economist at the GRC. Prof. Giacomo Luciani, a member of the board of trustees at the GRCE, and Dr. Mohammed Abdelraouf, head of the Environment Security and Sustainability Research Program at the GRC.

The second panel highlighted the Gulf countries' awakening to the realities of a global energy economy that is sensitive to climate change and focuses on decarbonization. The experts emphasized how the Gulf economies will have to find new sources of revenue or change their existing structures to boost productivity and be less hydrocarbon intensive.





### Visit of the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz

September 24, 2022  
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia



On the occasion of the visit of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, GRC researchers and staff members Layla Ali, Amnah Mosly, Fatma Basunbol, and Noura Alhazmi, met with the Chancellor, where they discussed their work and the recent developments in German-Gulf ties. Additionally, the GRC is sponsoring, along with the German Consulate in Jeddah, a twin city project between Jeddah and Hamburg to facilitate various parliamentary delegation visits from Germany to the Kingdom in order to support regional cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Germany.

### Europe and the Multi-Polarization of the Gulf

The 2021 Gulf Research Meeting  
July 23-24, 2021



As part of the 2021 GRM held virtually from July 23rd-24th, 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a workshop was held entitled “Europe and the Multi-Polarization of the Gulf” co-directed by Dr. Abdullah Baabood from the University of Singapore, Dr. Emma Soubrier from the Université Clermont Auvergne (UCA), Dr. Geoffrey Edwards from the University of Cambridge, and Dr. Christian Koch.

### Joint Cooperation with ADASTRA

June 3, 2021

The GRC and ADASTRA cooperated in a webinar addressing “Ukraine-Saudi Arabia Relations: Challenges and Prospects for Cooperation.” The webinar invited H.E. Vakhrushev Vadym, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, along with regional experts from both think tanks to discuss the status of the relations and possible future areas of growth and improved ties. Issues addressed included the idea of building bridges of multilateralism and forming alliances and partnerships between the regions; building a comprehensive and stable partnership; establishing better understanding about both regions and the conflicts surrounding them; and how previous cooperation in agriculture, energy, and religious tourism between both countries can be enhanced.

### Joint Cooperation with GEOCASE

March 11, 2021

The GRC cooperated in a joint webinar with Geocase titled “Georgia and Saudi Arabia: Realities and Opportunities” during which the two organizations also signed an MoU



agreement. The webinar featured keynote speeches from both H.E. Abdullah bin Hajjaj Al-Mutairi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Georgia, and H.E. Vakhtang Jaoshvili, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to Saudi Arabia. The discussion was moderated by Victor Kipiani, Chairman of Geocase, and speakers included Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, Dr. John Sfakianakis, GRC Program Director of Economic Research and Chief Economist of the GRC, and Emil Avdaliani, Non-Resident Fellow from Geocase.



### Post-Brexit Britain, Europe and Policy towards Iran and the GCC States: Potential Challenges and the Possibility of Cooperation

#### The 2019 Gulf Research Meeting

July 15-18, 2019  
Cambridge, United Kingdom



At the 2019 GRM held from July 15th to 18th, 2019, a workshop was held entitled “Post-Brexit Britain, Europe and Policy towards Iran and the GCC states: Potential Challenges, and the Possibility of Cooperation”, co-directed by Dr. Geoffrey Edwards from the University of Cambridge, Dr. Abdullah Baabood from the University of Singapore, and Diana Galeeva from the University of Durham.

### Saudi-European Dialogue

October 26-27, 2017  
London, United Kingdom

The GRC and the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) held a “European-Saudi Regional Dialogue” in London on October 26th-27th, 2017. The meeting brought together over twenty analysts and policy officials to look at the issues of Saudi leadership in the Middle East, the shifting alliances in the region, the interplay between domestic and foreign policy considerations and the prospects for broader Saudi-European regional cooperation.

### European-Saudi Arabia Dialogue Meeting

April 4-5, 2016  
London, United Kingdom

The GRC and the ECFR held a “European-Saudi Arabia Dialogue Meeting” at the ECFR offices in London. Following the official Middle East-focused European Global Strategy Review meeting hosted by the ECFR in January 2016, the ECFR and the GRC convened a group of prominent and well-connected Saudi specialists and analysts together with European policy makers and analysts with the aim of gaining a better understanding of Saudi thinking and positioning in the region, as well as exploring



areas for better alignment and cooperation in regional policies. The conversation between the two sides was driven by events in Syria but also looked at the broader situation, including in Yemen as well as the fall out of the Iranian nuclear deal. There was an additional focus on exploring the reasons behind, and the impact of, current Saudi energy policies and how they fit into the regional geo-political context.

### Recent Developments in the Gulf Region: The Impact for Switzerland and Europe

June 14, 2012

Geneva, Switzerland



The GRCF Geneva, held a roundtable discussion on recent developments in the Gulf region focusing on some key aspects like the impact of the Arab uprising on the Gulf monarchies, the situation over the Iranian nuclear programs, as well as the Gulf state's role in the Syrian crisis. The events brought together more than 50 representatives from the Swiss private sector, international organizations based in Geneva, as well as non-governmental organizations and research institutes. Mr. Gilles Roduit, Regional Coordinator for the Middle East at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Berne provided an overview of Swiss-Gulf relations while Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, and Dr. Mustafa Alani, Program Director for Security and Defense Studies for the GRC, provided their analysis on key political, economic, and security-related issues in the Gulf.

### The EU and the GCC in the Mediterranean

#### The 2011 Gulf Research Meeting

July 6-9, 2011

Cambridge, United Kingdom



The 2011 GRM held from July 6th to 9th, 2011 at the University of Cambridge included a workshop titled "The EU and the GCC in the Mediterranean", co-directed by Dr. Tobias Schumacher of the Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology of Lisbon University and Prof. Geoffrey Edwards of the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge.

#### The 2010 Gulf Research Meeting

July 7-10, 2010

Cambridge, United Kingdom



The first GRM held in July 2010 included a workshop held on the subject of EU-GCC Relations. The aim of the workshop was to explore the interaction between





the EU and the GCC, both significant global actors with enormous economic and financial weight. While GCC-EU relations might, therefore, be seen as an attempt at cooperating in managing global issues through such mutually beneficial areas as trade, investment, energy, development, and even Gulf and regional security, they have proved to be limited. In some ways the GCC and the EU appear to be growing apart, and the gap between them widening, at least at the institutional level. Sessions were held on three closely interrelated themes: the economic relationship, the wider political framework, and the security interaction between the two regions.

### Higher Education Cooperation Opportunities between the EU and the GCC

December 7, 2009

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



The Cooperation Agreement between the member states of the GCC and the EU outlines the prospects for cooperation in a number of fields including cultural exchanges and education. In line with the launch of a higher education program for the GCC countries, the European Commission and the GCC hosted a one-day forum

on December 7th, 2009 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to highlight the tools and framework of EU cooperation in higher education and to specifically focus on new available opportunities for the GCC countries. The new program is funded by the European Commission under the Instrument of Cooperation with industrialized countries. The forum brought together prominent speakers from both the EU and the GCC sides and highlighted an important dimension in the growing GCC-EU relationship.

### Joint Launch of Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2008 Arabic Version during the 12th Kronberg Middle East Talks

May 11, 2009

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



The 12th Kronberg Middle East talks of the Bertelsmann Foundation were held in Riyadh with the cooperation of the Institute of Diplomatic Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia and the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, which marked the launch of the Arabic version of the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI). The BTI was translated from English and published in Arabic by the GRC. The BTI is a bi-annual global ranking that measures





and compares transformation processes worldwide on the basis of detailed country reports. The BTI is unique in the sense that it is a qualitative rather than a purely quantitative assessment of how countries have progressed vis-à-vis one another in a number of categories.

### **The EU as a Foreign Policy Actor in the Middle East: The Mediterranean and the Gulf from a Comparative Perspective**

March 26, 2009

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Dr. Thomas Demmelhuber, lecturer at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg in Germany, gave a guest lecture on EU foreign policy towards the Mediterranean and the Gulf. The main objective in his presentation was to shed light on the obvious asymmetry of EU foreign policy in the Mediterranean and the Gulf. In his lecture, he referred to various EU foreign policy documents in order to stress the Mediterranean and the Gulf regions' political and strategic importance for the EU. Based on those foreign policy initiatives, the EU aims to support reform dynamics in both regions in order to foster the rule of law, the

promotion of human rights, and eventually the furtherance of democratic reform. However, Demmelhuber stressed that this is only one side of the coin: the latter objectives are challenged by a striking prime objective to boost the security cooperation with incumbent authoritarian regimes and to stabilize the region.

### **The EU and the GCC: Challenges and Prospects under the French Presidency of the EU**

May 21, 2008

Paris, France

The objective of the meeting was to closely analyze and promote topics that were of mutual interest between the EU and the GCC. It came at a critical time when the institutional relations between Europe and the Gulf region were growing in both their scope and intensity. In light of the French presidency of the EU to begin in July 2008, the meeting developed and put forward a policy catalog of issues that could further enhance EU-GCC relations and lead to greater mutual cooperation. As such, the topics of politics, security, education, culture, energy security, and trade and investment were identified as key focal areas of the discussion.

### **What is the Future for the European Union's New Energy Security Policy?**

May 15, 2007

Brussels, Belgium

The FRIDE, the GRC and EGMONT - the Royal Institute for International Relations, organized a seminar in response to the publication of the EU's new energy security strategy and to



debate those aspects of energy security related specifically to European foreign policies. The one-day seminar was framed around three broad issues: market versus geopolitical approaches; whether member state interests may be reconciled and streamlined within a common European energy policy; and whether external energy policy acts to the detriment of democratic development.

### **The Eighth Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting of the European University Institute**

March 21-25, 2007

Florence - Montecatini Terme, Italy

The GRC held two workshops at the Eighth Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting of the European University Institute at Florence - Montecatini Terme in March 2007. The event was organized by the Mediterranean Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the GRCF-B, led a workshop titled "EU-GCC Relations and Security Issues: Broadening the Horizon" together with Prof. Saleh Al-Mani, Dean of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences at King Saud University in Saudi Arabia. Dr. Eckart Woertz, Program Manager for Economics at GRC directed a workshop about "The Geo-Economic Positioning of the GCC Countries" together with Dr. Hind Al-Sheikh, Assistant Professor of Economics at the Institute of Public Administration in Riyadh. Both workshops resulted in publications.

### **The EU and the GCC: Challenges and Prospects for Cooperation in 2007**

January 30, 2007

German Foreign Office, Berlin, Germany

The Gulf Research Center, the Bertelsmann Foundation and the German Foreign Office held a one-day conference on the topic of "The EU and the GCC: Challenges and Prospects for Cooperation in 2007." Participants included government representatives and academics from both the GCC and EU sides including the EU Commission (DG Trade, DG Relex), the EU Council Secretariat, the forthcoming three EU Presidencies (Germany, Portugal, Slovenia), the GCC headquarters in Riyadh, governmental representatives from each GCC member state, as well as universities and think tanks. Issues on the agenda included the political and security dialogue, education, water, energy and monetary questions. The objective of the meeting was to investigate and promote topics of mutual interest between the EU and the GCC.

### **Fostering EU-Italy-GCC Cooperation: The Political, Economic and Energy Dimensions**

December 13, 2006

Rome, Italy

The meeting brought together policy officials and academics from both Europe and the GCC countries who engaged not only in an assessment about the status of the EU-GCC relationship but also focused on what steps could be taken to improve the level of cooperation, which until then, had not been satisfactory. Three areas were represented in the discussion framework:



EU-GCC cooperation in the context of globalization and regional developments; organizing a regional security system in the Gulf; and the security of European energy supply, the role of nuclear energy and the Gulf countries' contributions.

### EU-Gulf Relations: Enhancing Economic, Political and Security Cooperation

November 26, 2005

Rome, Italy



A workshop entitled “EU-Gulf Relations: Enhancing Economic, Political and Security Cooperation” organized by the GRC and the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) with the support of the Italian Foreign Office in Rome on November 26th, 2005, ended with a call to put past difficulties aside in GCC-EU relations and to promote a better era of ties. The workshop outlined the fact that relations between the GCC and the EU had until then, stayed below their potential, being defined more by broad statements of intention rather than concrete substance. The meeting in Rome brought together representatives from the Italian Foreign Ministry, numerous Italian academic and governmental institutions, as well as officials from the European Union, other EU member states, and numerous delegates from the GCC states.

### Confronting Terror – Promoting the Arab-British Partnership

July 28, 2005

London, United Kingdom



On July 28th, 2005 the GRC concluded a highly successful one day workshop in London at the Carlton Tower Hotel on “Confronting Terror: Promoting the Arab-British Partnership.” Attended by key British government officials and terrorism experts, as well as high level Arab and Muslim delegates and academics, the meeting was a positive step forward on the road to greater collaboration between the Muslim world and the West in the fight against terror. This message was strongly emphasized in the keynote speech of the workshop made by HRH Prince Turki Al Faisal.



## A Window of Opportunity? Europe, Gulf Security and the Aftermath of the Iraq War

November 23-25, 2004

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



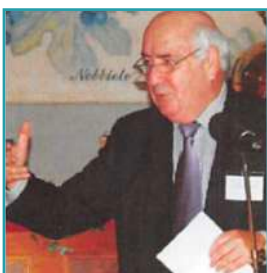
A two-day workshop by the GRC and the Bertelsmann Foundation of Germany called for greater engagement by the European Union in the future Gulf security arrangements. Under the title of “A New Window of Opportunity? Europe, Gulf Security and the Aftermath of the Iraq War,” the event brought together over 30 specialists including representatives from all the GCC member states and numerous EU countries to discuss the impact of the Iraq War on the current security situation in the region and to outline the steps that could be taken by the EU to alleviate the resulting challenges.

## The Future of the Enlarged European Union and its Neighborhood

Lecture by Prof. Dr. Werner Weidenfeld

March 1, 2004

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



That the EU should regard its relations with the GCC as a special partnership based on common key interests and be willing to compromise in areas where conflict seems

inevitable, was the message of Prof. Dr. Werner Weidenfeld, the Director of the Center for Applied Policy Research (CAP) during a lecture delivered at the GRC. Prof. Weidenfeld also suggested that the GCC and the EU should work together towards the establishment of an institutionalized regional security framework in order to overcome some of the significant challenges the Gulf region is faced with.

## The EU Role in the Gulf Region

### GRC First Annual Workshop

January 7-8, 2004

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Cognizant of critical regional developments and the mutual importance with which the GCC states and the EU consider their relationship with one another and

in light of the limited space that academic and scientific circles have allocated to the development of the GCC-EU relationship, the GRC organized a two day workshop in January 2004 titled “The EU’s Role in the Gulf Region.” The main objective of the event was to shed some analytical light on Europe’s role in the Gulf region in an attempt to understand the existing problem areas and to propose alternative strategies to move the relationship forward.





## 6 - GRC Publications on Gulf-Europe Relations





## 6. GRC Publications on Gulf-Europe Relations

### GCC-NB8 Relations

December 2024

By Amnah Mosly



As part of the GCC-EU Research Program, the GRC launched the GCC-NB8 subprogram to increase the cooperation and understanding of the Gulf's relations with the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8), defined

as a regional cooperation that includes Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden. The objective and idea behind this focus was to explore in more detail the status of GCC-NB8 relations and the potential for future growth and cooperation.

### New Faces, Old Challenges: A Path Forward

November 2024

By Houda Barroug



The European Parliament's hearings for the 26 nominated commissioners took place on November 4th-12th in Brussels. These hearings are a critical process in shaping the future of the European institutional apparatus.

These three-hour hearings address a variety of critical subjects to the parliament's functionality, including digital transformation, climate change, the EU's global role, and economic recovery following COVID-19. The candidates were rigorously questioned on their competence, independence, and

adherence to European principles. Notably, during his hearing, Raffaele Fitto of Italy was asked about his association with Meloni's far-right party, while Hungary's Olivér Várhelyi received queries regarding his alleged strong links to Viktor Orbán and his performance in the previous mandate. The hearings highlighted the delicate balance between national interests and EU-wide ambitions, with some contenders less able to articulate a coherent European vision than others. The process also highlighted the European Parliament's expanding involvement in crafting EU policy, with members of the Parliament (MEPs) having the authority to reject candidates and impose portfolio adjustments.

### A Shift in Policy Towards Syria: How Far Should the EU Go?

November 2024

By Houda Barroug



The EU is at a turning point in its strategy towards Syria, especially as it considers a change to engagement with the Assad government. Discussions over the possible appointment of a special envoy to Syria, which

would represent a substantial shift from the EU's long-standing policy of sanctions and diplomatic isolation, highlight this changing approach. Individuals and entities associated with the Assad regime were the primary targets of the EU's sanctions regime, which aimed to pressure the government to comply with international norms, especially those regarding political reform and human rights. However, as regional dynamics change and Arab states begin to re-engage with Damascus, this strategy has come into question for its efficacy.



### An EU-GCC Summit at a Critical Time: Is Europe Ready?

October 2024

By Dr. Christian Koch



On October 16, 2024, the EU and the GCC held their first ever summit meeting at the heads of state level. It comes at a critical time given the situation in the Middle East and the imminent danger between Israel and Iran

are beginning to engulf the entire region. For the EU, the strategic relevance of the GCC states has become clearer in recent years. Efforts to increase the cooperation with these countries have culminated in a new policy approach in June 2022 followed by the appointment of an EU Special Representative for the Gulf region, as well as increasingly closer institutional ties at the political, security, and economic level. The effort is earnest, and the process is beginning to bear some fruit.

### Enhancing Gulf-Europe Relations: GCC-Benelux and Northern Europe

October 2024

By Amnah Mosly



As the Gulf region continues to gain more prominence in global diplomacy, the GCC, both as a bloc and through its member states, has balanced its foreign policy by strengthening relations with its traditional Western partners

while at the same time enhancing ties with other allies. This diplomatic approach reflects the evolving geopolitical dynamics of the region, with the GCC actively seeking to diversify its international relations and solidify its role as a player on both regional and global stages.

### EU-GCC: Time Looks Ripe for Security and Defense Cooperation

October 2024

By Houda Barroug and Eleonora Ardemagni



Increased tensions in the Middle East are pushing the GCC and the EU towards a more coordinated approach to regional security. This opens unprecedented spaces for security and defense cooperation. However, political challenges arise from

internal differences and interests among members on both sides, particularly in the EU. In contrast, GCC members now have more aligned and integrated positions regarding Iran than they did before. Since the countering of non-state armed actors and the proliferation of missiles and drones in the Middle East are now acknowledged as shared security concerns, prospects of EU-GCC security and defense cooperation are gaining momentum. And this looks conducive to collaboration, at least in the short term.

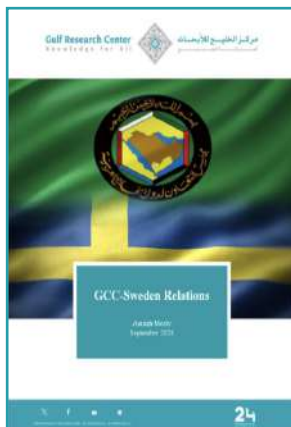




## GCC-Sweden Relations

September 2024

By Amnah Mosly



The last policy brief as part of the GRC's GCC-NB8 Program, the paper explored the relations between Sweden and the GCC countries. The paper explained that the relationship between the GCC and Sweden is multifaceted,

marked by numerous economic, technological, and cultural exchanges. The outlook for GCC-Sweden relations is therefore promising, with opportunities in technology and innovation poised to take center stage.

## On the Right Track: The EU and the GCC Must Maintain the Momentum Towards a True Strategic Partnership

September 2024

By Dr. Abdulaziz Sager



The EU's strategic partnership with the GCC has made significant progress in recent years, with various initiatives and dialogues aimed at fostering closer ties and addressing mutual interests.

However, the EU still needs to take the necessary steps to transform the relationship into a true partnership. The paper argued that by resolving the issues outlined above and continuing to work together, the two sides can see their partnership expand and provide a direct contribution to regional peace, stability, and prosperity.

## Gulf-Europe Relations

September 2024

By Prof. Saleh Mohammed Al-Khathlan



Relations between the GCC and the EU have witnessed remarkable development in recent years, especially in the intensification of meetings and contacts between the two sides and the appointment of the first EU Special

Representative to the Gulf. This development came as a result of major changes in the regional and international environment, especially the Russian-Ukrainian war and its repercussions on the European economy. The paper explained that the importance of the Gulf countries to the EU comes mainly from their role as a reliable source of energy, especially after the European sanctions imposed on Russia, which prompted Europe to reassess its relations with the Gulf and open new channels to enhance cooperation.

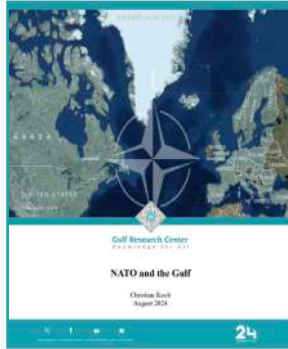




## NATO and the Gulf

August 2024

By Dr. Christian Koch



With the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) of the NATO celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2024, the nature and outlook for the initiative and its impact on the GCC states and their security

should be analyzed and evaluated, not only in terms of the tangible contributions made to the stability of the vital Gulf region but also in light of the changing circumstances that differentiate the current security environment from the one that existed twenty years ago. The paper argues that the dialogue among the NATO initiatives of the MD and ICI should be brought closer together as many of the challenges pertaining to the regions cannot be separated from one another.

## GCC-NATO Relations: Prospects for the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI)

July 2024

By Amnah Mosly



June 2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The paper analyzed the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, its evolution over

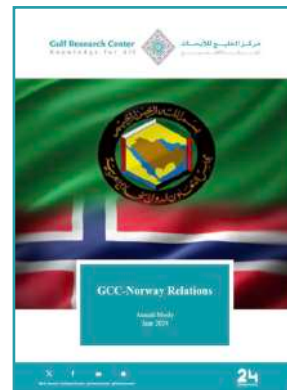
the past two decades, its achievements, shortcomings, challenges, and future prospects.

The paper explained that the expansion into GCC-NATO cooperation will be only natural due to mutual interests between the two sides and the urgency for Gulf security given the rapidly changing security environment in the region.

## GCC-Norway Relations

June 2024

By Amnah Mosly



As part of the GRC's GCC-NB8 Program, the paper explored the relations between Norway and the GCC countries. In recent years, Norway has demonstrated a rising interest in the Gulf states, recognizing the potential for growing

collaboration with the region. The paper argues that, moving forward, the most immediate priority should be managing the differences in perceptions by increasing dialogue and communication to improve other aspects of the bilateral relationship.

## Europe's Toughened Stance on Migration

May 2024

By Dr. Christian Koch and Houda Barroug



On April 10th, 2024, the European Parliament passed the EU's new Pact on Asylum and Migration, the first major reform to the entrance procedures for migrants and asylum seekers after a contentious debate of



almost a decade. The paper argues that what is needed is a push for more positive agenda-setting on mobility and migration that would enable mobility, facilitate visa processing, foster people-to-people contacts (especially through youth exchange), develop the skills that markets require, and rebuild credibility on human rights.

### Europe and Regional Security in the Gulf

April 2024

By Dr. Christian Koch



Over the past few years, efforts have been underway by the European Union and its member states to better define what a European contribution to regional security could look like.

The Strategic Partnership with the Gulf, released in May 2022 by the EU, represents a clear acknowledgment that “the security and stability situation of the Gulf region bears direct consequences for the EU” and that “the European Union stands much to gain from a stronger and more strategic partnership with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its member states.” The paper argues that there is a lot of movement in the relationship between the two sides, which also suggests the potential for a continued deepening of ties on issues referred to in the GCC vision.

### GCC- Lithuania Relations

March 2024

By Amnah Mosly



As part of the GRC's GCC-NB8 Program, the paper explores the relations between Lithuania and the GCC countries. The growing significance of the GCC in global affairs, particularly in the areas of trade,

investment, and energy, has prompted Lithuania to look beyond its immediate borders and reassess its approach to the Gulf region. The paper explains that despite the geographical distance and differing political structures, both parties have recognized the mutual benefits of cooperation and have endeavored to strengthen ties across various sectors.

### GCC- Latvia Relations

March 2024

By Amnah Mosly



As part of the GRC's GCC-NB8 Program, the paper explores the relations between Latvia and the GCC countries. While diplomatic ties between the GCC states and Latvia were

established in the 1990s and 2000s, they have not yet been effectively developed. However, the geopolitical changes, including the Ukraine crisis, have led the Baltic state



to take a closer look towards the Gulf, and develop their relationship with the GCC states in both security and economic fields. The GCC countries' national vision programs to diversify their economy provide opportunities for Latvia. In addition, Latvia's close relations with the EU and NATO play a role in strengthening ties with multilateral frameworks.

### Europe and Red Sea Security

February 2024

By Dr. Christian Koch



The issue of Red Sea security underlines the common assessment and approaches that the GCC states and the EU states have on the issue. This also applies to many of the other conflict situations in the

Middle East region including the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Here, the EU and the Arab states are working together in the Peace Day effort to lay the framework for a revised peace process leading to an independent Palestinian state. The paper argues that in line with the EU's Strategic Partnership approach to the Gulf region, Europe is intensifying its overall efforts to contribute to conflict resolution mechanisms in the Middle East. Operation Aspides is another key element in this developing approach.

### GCC-Iceland Relations

January 2024

By Amnah Mosly



As part of the GRC's GCC-NB8 Program, the paper explores the relations between Iceland and the GCC countries. The paper argues that relations between the GCC states and Iceland remain quite underdeveloped although Iceland, a Nordic Island country, is receiving greater degrees of attention due to its strategic location and economic potential.

### GCC-Finland Relations

November 2023

By Amnah Mosly



As part of the GRC's GCC-NB8 Program, the paper explores the relations between Finland and the GCC countries. The paper provides an overview of the diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations between Finland and the GCC

member states by exploring the historical context, current state of affairs, and future prospects, taking into account various aspects, including trade, investment, diplomacy, and people-to-people exchanges.





## What Europe Expects from COP28

November 2023

By Robert Mason



The paper argues that the EU is well placed to advance climate change policies through its large collective budget. It is spending EUR 118 billion, or one-third of its cohesion budget, to support regions

to reduce carbon emissions. But there is some disagreement between EU states and in different sectors as to whether fossil fuels can be eliminated entirely, with carbon capture included where it is difficult to abate completely. The year 2023 is shaping up to be the warmest on record amid a record number of refugees, 110 million, fleeing from conflict and the effects of climate change. Therefore, the stakes for many EU member states and other states at COP28, especially in achieving the 1.5°C target, could not be greater.

## GCC-Estonia Relations

October 2023

By Amnah Mosly



As part of the GRC's GCC-NB8 Program, the paper explores the relations between Estonia and the GCC countries. Historically, Estonia, a small Baltic nation, has fostered close ties with GCC states primarily through

trade relations and diplomatic engagements. While the historical connection might not be as

deeply rooted as other bilateral relationships, recent developments have paved the way for enhanced political collaboration, as well as in cybersecurity, economic, and cultural/educational cooperation.

## The US and Europe Must be More Balanced to Diffuse Middle Eastern Tensions

October 2023

By Dr. Christian Koch and Amnah Mosly



The GCC-EU Ministerial Meeting held in Muscat on October 9th-10th, 2023, underlined the common position between the two sides, calling “for restraint, for the release of hostages and for access to food, water,

and medicines in accordance with international humanitarian law, and stressed that an urgent political solution to the crisis is needed to prevent this violence from recurring flare-ups again and again.” This momentum now needs to be accelerated forward and further activated. The paper argued that the US together with Europe must engage with all allies to defuse the situation and prevent any further escalation. This can best be done if there is effective and wide-ranging engagement with the Arab world, including with the GCC states.





## GCC-Denmark Relations

September 2023

By Amnah Mosly



As part of the GRC's GCC-NB8 Program, the paper explores the relations between Denmark and the GCC countries. Generally, over the past several years, it is evident that there has been an increased focus from

the EU, as a whole, as well as Denmark, on the Gulf region. While aspects of bilateral relations have witnessed growth in recent years, there still needs to be clarity on what an enhanced partnership could look like between the GCC and Denmark. Therefore, the paper evaluates the current state of ties and how they can be improved on various fronts, such as political dialogue, security cooperation, business partnerships, and economic ties.

## Saudi Arabia's Efforts to Promote Dialogue on Ukraine

September 2023

By Amnah Mosly



Saudi Arabia's growing role in international diplomacy was again highlighted after the Kingdom hosted the Ukraine peace talks among senior officials from around 40 countries in early August 2023 in Jeddah. Following a

similar meeting held in Copenhagen two months prior, the Jeddah meeting allowed for a continued discussion on the crisis in Ukraine. It explored how many political, security, economic, and humanitarian issues, which have also taken on a global dimension, could be tackled. Unlike the meeting in Denmark, where the host country has been vocal and explicit in siding with Ukraine, such as through the recent provision of Danish F-16 warplanes, Saudi Arabia has maintained a more neutral position in the conflict, allowing it to have a more balanced and thus, constructive, role in mediating between the two sides. The paper explained that the Jeddah peace talks served as a constructive step in multiple aspects--advancing the dialogue on ending the crisis in Ukraine, strengthening Sino-Saudi relations, and reinforcing US-Saudi relations.

## GCC-NB8 Relations

July 2023

By Amnah Mosly

Despite the growth of bilateral relations in recent



years, there continues to be a need for an enhanced partnership between the GCC and NB8 states. With the recent expansion of the NB8 to international partnerships such as NB8+USA and UK+NB8, the paper

argues that the focus can now also be placed on GCC+NB8. The research paper provides an overview of current GCC-NB8 relations and lays out potential areas of political, security, economic, cultural, and environmental cooperation.



## Saudi-German Cooperation is Essential for Middle East Security

September 2022

By Dr. Abdulaziz Sager



Coinciding with the visit of the German Chancellor to Saudi Arabia, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, published an analysis entitled “Saudi-German Cooperation is Essential for Middle

East Security.” The analysis explains that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Germany maintain a positive and forward-looking relationship. What is often not understood in Germany is that bilateral ties are based on common principles of peace, security, and development. In Riyadh, Germany is widely seen as a respected and valuable partner. For Berlin, Saudi Arabia should be viewed in the same light. The paper explores areas of cooperation between the two countries, with a focus on energy and economics.

## EU-GCC Relations: Turning a New Page?

June 2022

Dr. Christian Koch



The paper focuses on the positive developments between the EU and the GCC. In January 2022, GCC Secretary-General Dr. Nayef Al-Hajraf visited Brussels on an official visit during which he met with Josep Borell, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign

and Security Policy. That visit was followed by an EU-GCC Joint Ministerial Meeting on February 23rd, 2022 in Brussels, the first ministerial gathering in six years. While holding a ministerial meeting itself was a welcome step, the GCC-EU ties received an additional boost with the release of the joint communication on a “Strategic Partnership with the Gulf” by the European Commission on May 18th, 2022. The paper explores whether EU-GCC ties really entered a new era of a “strategic partnership.”

## Exploring Relations between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council: A Structural Analysis

February 2022

By Matteo Moretti



This paper aims to show how an inclusive framework of theories is necessary to understand the intertwining of material and ideational factors in EU-GCC relations. It builds on the work by Hinnebusch and

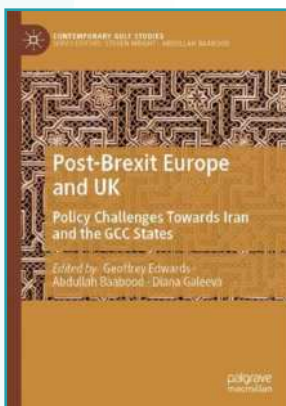
Ehteshami arguing that a multi-level theoretical framework is needed to understand international politics and, in particular, the multi-faceted relationship between Europe and the GCC. By conducting a structural analysis balancing the realist concern for material factors and a constructivist focus on the identity of both the EU and the GCC, the paper explains why the EU's geopolitical presence in the region is weaker than expected and suggests some recommendations for building a more comprehensive European foreign policy vis-a-vis the GCC.



## Post-Brexit Europe and UK: Policy Challenges Towards Iran and the GCC States

November 2021

Edited by Geoffery Edwards, Abdullah Baabood, Diana Galeeva



This book discusses how tensions and unknowns may impact future relations between a post-Brexit UK, the EU, and the countries of the Gulf, including Iran. The authors of this book consider, in different ways, whether British

and EU27 relations with the Gulf states may change or whether the traditions and the weight of their history will reinforce the pre-existing patterns of these relationships. Ongoing changes in the Gulf, the present disputes, and the trajectories of economic reform also influence these discussions. The book analyzes the changing positions of the US, China, and Russia that are likely to impact Europe's interests. It explores outcomes of ongoing world challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the crash of oil prices, to further examine post Brexit Europe and UK policy challenges towards Iran and the GCC states.

## Ukraine-Saudi Arabia Relations: Challenges and Prospects for Further Cooperation

October 2021

By the GRC and ADAstra



The GRC and ADAstra cooperated in a joint paper addressing “Ukraine-Saudi Arabia Relations: Challenges and Prospects for Cooperation.” The paper focuses on approaches to

strengthening the relationship between the two countries. The paper further explores possible areas of cooperation in economics, agriculture, aircraft and space developments, energy, tourism, culture, and education, as well as in political and military fields.

## Georgia-Saudi Arabia Relations: Challenges and Untapped Potential

August 2021

By the GRC and GEOCASE



The GRC and GEOCASE cooperated on a joint paper entitled “Georgia-Saudi Arabia Relations: Challenges and Untapped Potential” focusing on areas of cooperation between

the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Georgia. The paper examines primarily economic issues including tourism, deepening business and commercial relations, as well as progress



in the field of military cooperation. The paper also addresses the connections between the Gulf region and the Caucasus region in formulating policies to deal with intra and interregional affairs, not only for the countries of both regions but also for external actors that are interested and engaged in the two regions. Given that both countries are keen to expand their footprints in the direction of South and East Asia, the paper argues for a closer and more proactive partnership that would strengthen cooperation between the international community and the governments of Saudi Arabia and Georgia.

### Prospects for EU-US-GCC Trilateral Cooperation to Counter Iranian Threats

January 2021

By Ghassan Shams



The paper proposes an EU-GCC-US strategic dialogue that could outline the concerns and way forward for negotiations with Iran. The paper explains that the EU and the US offer a unique position in their

overwhelming influence over the Security Council and their combined economic and military might. It is essential that they utilize and consider the GCC opinion on defining what constitutes an imminent threat in order to prevent the fall out of conflict.

### Opportunities and Challenges for Saudi-European Relations

December 2020

By Dr. Christian Koch



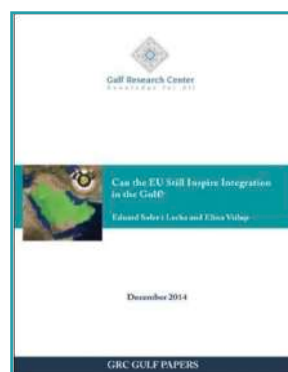
Relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Europe in 2020 continue to be marked by difficulties from both sides. The paper calls for a regular set of high-level strategic dialogues in which

both sides can engage in a process of shared analysis when it comes to the common challenges that must be confronted. In addition, the numerous economic and social changes occurring in the Kingdom represent a basis on which mutually beneficial ties can be further built.

### Gulf-European Relations in 2015

July 2016

By Christian Koch



This paper deals with developments in the relations between the GCC countries and the EU countries during 2015 in terms of the issues and interactions that defined those relations. This paper

is part of the Gulf Yearbook 2015-2016.

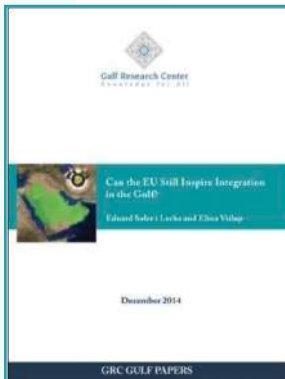




## Can the EU Still Inspire Integration in the Gulf?

December 2014

By Eduard Soler and Lecha Elina Viilup



Despite the fact that the EU finds itself confronted by a deep multi-faceted crisis at the institutional, economic, political, and foreign policy level which undoubtedly has affected the EU's attraction as an integration model and can be expected to hamper the EU's image and reputation as a 'source of inspiration' further in the future, this paper argues that the EU continues to set a relevant example for those regions and countries, such as the Gulf countries, that want to move forward on the path of regional integration. In the view of the authors, the way that the EU has been coping with crises and the solutions that have been found to current challenges, may provide invaluable lessons to other countries and regions which may face similar problems in the future.

## The GCC, the EU and the Merits of Inter-Regionalism

November 2014

By Silvia Colombo



This paper aims at providing an outlook on the future of EU-GCC relations by framing the constraints and opportunities for closer cooperation within the debate about regionalism.

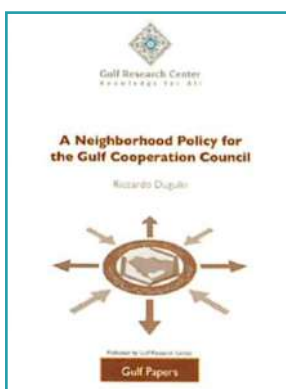
Starting from the assumption that both the EU and the GCC are more or less successful examples of regional cooperation and integration, the paper argues that opportunities to strengthen GCC cooperation and integration at the regional level lie in the pursuit of an effective and strategic dialogue and cooperation between the two blocs. In particular, the paper offers both theoretical and empirical examples of the phenomenon of inter-regionalism, namely the possibility to draw on, copy, and link up with other regional experiences as well as to coordinate common strategies and policies among regional blocs. In this regard, two areas will be briefly investigated: fiscal and monetary governance, and foreign and security policy.



## A Neighborhood Policy for the Gulf Cooperation Council

December 2010

By Ricardo Dugulin



The volatile security environment in the Gulf region underlines the necessity for the GCC countries to interact in an innovative way with their neighbors both to secure their neighborhood and to generate greater

cooperation on their foreign policies. A Gulf Neighborhood Policy (GNP) would create a framework covering the structure and implementation of a range of policies defining bilateral and multilateral ties between the GCC states and selected partner states. In its bid to delineate the outlines of an effective GNP, this paper draws upon the lessons offered by the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). Besides detailing the strengths and shortcomings of the European example, it also looks at how the EU and the GCC can cooperate to make an effective GNP possible. It describes how the GNP can be an efficient tool for the creation of a secure and economically strong neighborhood for the Gulf monarchies.

## EU-Gulf Political and Economic Relations: Assessment and Policy Recommendations

October 2009

By Abdullah Baabood



Following the Second World War, the European powers withdrew from the Middle East but since then, they have made several attempts to come back to the region as economic and strategic partners.

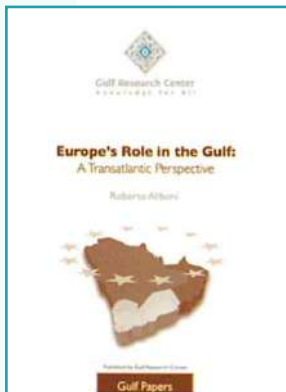
With the advent of the EU, Europe has become an economic power with global interests. Energy needs, market access, and security have been prime motives for the European return to the Middle East. For the EU, which imports more than a quarter of its oil from the Gulf, and whose energy needs are expected to grow, it is imperative to forge close relations with the region. The central theme of this paper is that the EU has not had a coherent approach towards the Gulf region. For various reasons, relations with the Gulf have been conducted on a bilateral basis, and have been kept separate from other EU initiatives like the European Mediterranean Policy (EMP) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). However, there is now a need for the EU to address its critical interests in the Gulf with a more pronounced comprehensive policy.



## Europe's Role in the Gulf: A Transatlantic Perspective

August 2009

By Roberto Aliboni

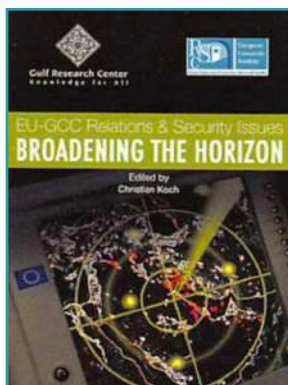


This research paper examines Europe's willingness and ability to play a role in the Gulf, and describes how this fits in with America's role there. It describes US - European relations in the Gulf since the Cold War

and outlines three possible scenarios: weak strategic convergence with America, notably on the subjects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war on terror; some transatlantic cooperation involving NATO, especially through the ICI; and an enhanced EU presence in the region, including in the form of a strategic partnership. The paper tackles the question of whether Europe can be a security player in the Gulf and examines the current lack of synergy between the US and Europe over Gulf issues.

## EU-GCC Relations and Security Issues: Broadening the Horizon

July 2009



Edited by Christian Koch

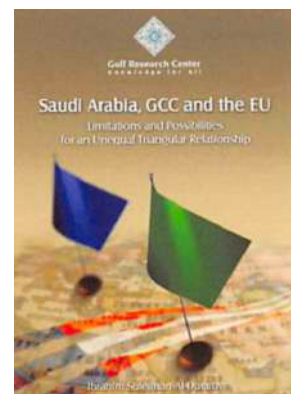
The relationship between the member states of the EU and those of the GCC is multifaceted and has over the years taken on a number of different dimensions. With

security issues such as those related to terrorism, the US-led invasion of Iraq and its aftermath, and concern over a potential Iranian nuclear program coming to the forefront, ties between the EU and the GCC have taken on a security component that up to this stage has remained largely undefined and understudied. The collection of papers included in this volume highlights many of the different salient issues playing a role on the security front and puts forward perspectives under which this new dimension in relations can be better understood. This includes an attempt to move from the currently still vague and largely theoretical notions of GCC-EU security cooperation into more policy applicable and relevant approaches that build on past European experiences.

## Saudi Arabia, GCC and the EU: Limitations and Possibilities for an Unequal Triangular Relationship

June 2009

By Ibrahim Suleiman Al-Duraiby



This book aims to provide a comprehensive study of the possibility of a relationship between Saudi Arabia, through the GCC and the EU. Given the high level of common interests between

the two actors, it is surprising that forms of international cooperation are not highly developed. To date, there has been very little academic focus on the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the EU. This book examines the obstacles confronting the prospective relationship, as well as the impact of external



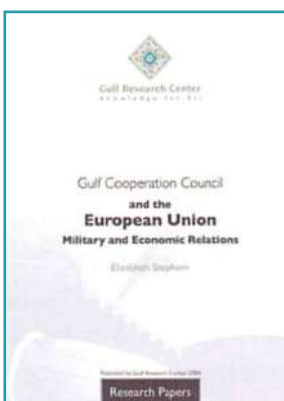
factors, such as the US, and others, such as the 9/11 attacks and the War on Terror.

The research is organized thematically and looks at the following issues which have a bearing on the evolving relationship: the security dynamics, cultural and human rights issues, and the economy. Besides, a number of key areas are explored that illustrate the fluid dynamics of EU-Saudi relations; these include security, political economy, and political culture. Although the relationship is strong in the area of trade, it is not well developed institutionally, and this does not allow it to become a strategic partnership. This is due to certain major factors, including the cultural differences between the EU (and its member states) and Saudi Arabia, the role played by the US in the Gulf region, and the intergovernmental nature of the GCC which has hampered the institutionalization of EU-GCC relations.

### **Gulf Cooperation Council and the European Union: Military and Economic Relations**

January 2009

By Elizabeth Stephens



The GCC-EU relations have unfolded within a bilateral pattern, a reality which has probably sustained their long-standing historical status. To be sure, Europe's interests in the Gulf region are not confined to the mere commodity of oil. In fact, European interests are strategic in character, as clearly shown at different

stages throughout the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century. Even though the GCC states and European countries have entertained a network of strong bilateral bonds, relations at the institutional level between the Gulf Cooperation Council and the European Union as two regional structures have evolved rather slowly, failing to reflect the geographical proximity between the two blocs and the inter-dependence that ties them together. Over the past years, the Gulf as well as European states have avoided broaching the critical issue of collective cooperation during bilateral negotiations. However, at present it seems that a gradual trend is evolving towards boosting bilateral collective cooperation between the two regional entities.

### **Fostering EU-Italy-GCC Cooperation: The Political, Economic and Energy Dimensions**

July 2008

Edited by Dr. Christian Koch



This edited volume contains some of the papers delivered at the workshop organized by the GRC and the Istituto Affari Internazionali in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Italy, in November 2006.

It shows that there exists a wide scope for following through on a more ambitious agenda regarding present EU-GCC ties. Specific areas mentioned include cooperation in the development of strategic oil stocks, the improvement of Gulf education systems





through EU expertise, and the combination of Gulf investments and EU know-how in the development of the neighboring Mediterranean economies.

### **Towards an EU-GCC Project for Developing the Gas Sector in the Gulf Region**

November 2006

By Naji Abi-Aad



The EU-GCC energy project focuses on emphasizing the importance of the gas sector in the GCC states by establishing a gas network, enhancing the competitiveness of natural gas in the energy markets,

and increasing the volume of natural gas exports to the EU through pipelines and LNG projects. This paper introduces a detailed analysis of the areas in which the use of natural gas could be increased, and the economic conditions through which the GCC private sector could be encouraged to depend on natural gas rather than other forms of fuel, especially crude oil and other heavy derivatives of oil. An export pipeline linking the GCC states, especially Qatar, with Europe could achieve some major and important objectives. In fact the European Commission recently prepared a technical study on the possible route, cost and feasibility of this pipeline. This paper deals with these aspects in detail.

### **The European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council: Towards a New Partnership**

September 2006

By Giacomo Luciani and Felix Neugart



This paper presents a new approach to EU-GCC relations. It takes a European perspective on the major political and economic developments taking place within the GCC and Iraq. Additionally, it delineates the

issues in the relations between the two sides on which there could be more focus.

The paper deals with the major aspects of democratization and political reforms in the GCC states, the post-war reconstruction of Iraq, as well as the process of economic growth in this region and the promotion of the role of the private sector as the main driver of development and economic liberalization. It also emphasizes the role of the Gulf commercial bourgeoisie in carrying out these economic activities within the different countries of the region and the Arab World in general. This is quite an important role for initiating the required political change in the future.

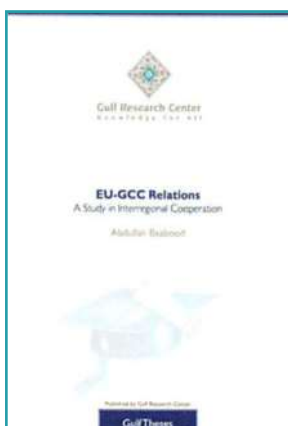
Additionally, the paper looks at the most important themes in the ongoing negotiations between the EU and the GCC, including political and security issues, in addition to those of good governance, human rights, human resources and education, trade and investment, oil and gas supplies, stock exchange and financial markets.



## EU-GCC Relations: A Study in Inter-Regional Cooperation

July 2006

By Abdullah Baabood



The institutional relationship between the EU and the GCC began in 1988 when the two parties signed a cooperation agreement aimed at, among other things, fostering their commitment to regional integration and interregional

cooperation. The agreement included a provision for the establishment of a free trade area. To complement the agreement, the two parties also initiated a political dialogue aimed at fostering their relations. Given the level of interdependence between Europe and the Gulf, both sides expressed high hopes for closer integration and regional cooperation. By 2000, however, it had become evident that the EU-GCC relations had not achieved a great deal of success in this regard. Free trade negotiations had all but stalled and cooperation under the 1988 agreement had proven limited. Political dialogue had stagnated and failed to overcome trade differences and obstacles. Moreover, there was no energy dialogue, although that had been the principal aim of establishing the relationship. The main point of departure for this study is that since the 1980s, changes in the international oil market have greatly lessened European dependence on oil supplies from the Gulf. The security of oil supplies became less pressing compared to maintaining stability in the Mediterranean. This paradigm shift in the EU's Arab policy

was accentuated by the opposition of trans-European petrochemical pressure groups to a free trade arrangement with the GCC. The 1990 proposal for an EU carbon tax also obstructed and delayed FTA negotiations. On the other hand, the nature and dynamics of regional integration within both groups limited their ability to act coherently in conducting their negotiations.

## EU-GCC Relations: Dynamics, Patterns & Perspectives

June 2006

By Gerd Nonneman



This paper examines the development of EU-GCC relations and their movement from a bilateral basis to a more collective level. The paper begins with an examination of European ties with the broader region, and goes on to focus

on recent initiatives and their implications, covering the periods of the Barcelona Process, the Greater Middle East Initiative, and the new neighborhood policy. It examines the impact of the lack of GCC institutions on relations, the different foci of the two blocs in terms of political and economic ties, and the conflicting roles of bilateral and multilateral relations. The paper also examines the EU's desire for political reform, discussing the differences between the GCC and the rest of the MENA region, and noting how these might help in the former's political evolution. It concludes with a number of recommendations for improved relations between the EU and GCC.



## A Window of Opportunity? Europe, Gulf Security and the Aftermath of the Iraq War

June 2005

Edited by Christian Koch and Felix Neugart



During a two-day workshop held in November 2004, the GRC and the Bertelsmann Foundation of Germany explored the possibility of a greater engagement by the EU in future

Gulf security arrangements. Under the title of “A New Window of Opportunity? Europe, Gulf Security and the Aftermath of the Iraq War,” over 30 specialists including representatives from all the GCC members states and numerous EU countries met to discuss the impact of the Iraq War on the current security situation in the region and to outline the steps that could be taken by the EU to alleviate the resulting challenges. The papers from that workshop elaborated upon a number of central themes including the security prerogatives of the Gulf states, the current situation in both Iraq and Iran, the applicability of various security models for the region, and the possibility of expanding the GCC-EU political dialogue on security matters.

## Arab Reforms and the Challenges for EU Policies (Gulf Translations, Issue Number 3)

May 2005



“Gulf Translations” is a series that deals with the most prominent regional and international studies that address some of the important issues of the Gulf region. It offers a number of studies that discern and analyze a wide

palette of topics from an in-depth and objective perspective.

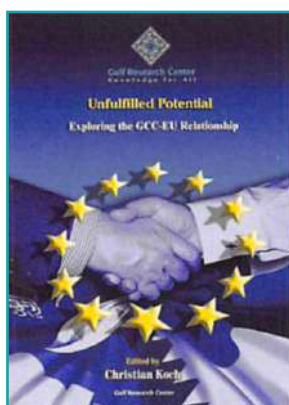
This issue of “Gulf Translations” is devoted to a report prepared specifically on the conference held on “Arab Reform & Challenges of the European Policy.” Indeed, the event constituted a forum for dialogue and offered a unique opportunity for a distinguished pool of Arab and Western decision-makers, academic experts, and scholars to meet and exchange ideas and views about the current conditions regarding the reform issue and its future prospects throughout the Arab world.



## Unfulfilled Potential: Exploring the GCC-EU Relationship

January 2005

Edited by Christian Koch



The current status of GCC-EU relations stands in contrast to the historical, geopolitical, and strategic considerations and interdependence that should lie at the heart of this relationship. In order to overcome this dichotomy and in light of current critical regional developments, the GRC held a two-day workshop in January 2004 entitled “The EU Role in the Gulf region.” The main objective of the event was to shed some analytical light on Europe’s role in the Gulf region in an attempt to understand the existing problem areas and to propose alternative strategies to move the relationship forward. The collection of papers provided for in this volume looks at some of the key facets that play a role in current debates. Starting from a historical perspective, the book contains a Gulf view of the relationship with Europe as well as the factors of the Iraq War of 2003 and US policy and what impact this has had on the overall direction of ties. Ultimately, the tentative conclusion that is reached is that the key to achieving the aspirations of the Gulf and European people lies in the political will of both sides to bridge the chasm that has led their mutual ties to stretch and distort from being proactive to reactive, rather than the other way around.

## Relations Between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council: Record and Promises for the Future

January 2004

By Giacomo Luciani and Tobias Schumacher



Historically, the international relations of the EU have been guided by the interests of its member countries and by the heritage that each of them has chosen to promote, or pass on to the Union. The colonial

legacy plays a crucial role in determining and developing the foreign policy of the Union. The authors approach the relationships between the GCC and EU through analyzing the prevalent operational mechanisms in each of the two regional organizations. The great differences between them hinder the improvement of their collective relations. This renders it imperative upon all the parties concerned to clarify the reasons to facilitate further development. This research paper, however, provides in-depth analysis for the adopted mechanisms and policies by each of the two blocs, highlights the political and institutional priorities for such differences, and presents a workable perspective for bilateral cooperation.





## GCC-EU Quarterly Research Bulletin

The idea behind the GCC-EU Research Bulletin is to inform and engage with the interested academic audience as well as the wider general public on the status of relations between the member states of the GCC and of the EU. The newsletter aims to combine an overview of events within GRC with short informative articles about a particular aspect of the GCC-EU relationship. Issues that have been covered in depth include the outlook for relations under a new EU Commission, the status and prospects for the GCC-EU FTA, aspects of an EU role in Gulf security matters, and the relevance and importance of cooperation on educational issues and programs. Included in the research bulletin is a chronology of events, an information resource section including recent documents and statements, and an overview of recently issued and noteworthy publications.

### GCC-EU Research Bulletin (Issue No. 10) MAY 2008



### GCC-EU Research Bulletin (Issue No. 9) DECEMBER 2007



### GCC-EU Research Bulletin (Issue No. 8) JULY 2007



### GCC-EU Research Bulletin (Issue No. 7) APRIL 2007





### GCC-EU Research Bulletin (Issue No. 6) DECEMBER 2006



### GCC-EU Research Bulletin (Issue No. 3) OCTOBER 2005



### GCC-EU Research Bulletin (Issue No. 5) JULY 2006



### GCC-EU Research Bulletin (Issue No. 2) JUNE 2005



### GCC-EU Research Bulletin (Issue No. 4) FEBRUARY 2006



### GCC-EU Research Bulletin (Issue No. 1) MARCH 2005





## Araa Magazine

Araa Magazine is a monthly periodical that focuses on the affairs of the Gulf region, providing in-depth analyses in Arabic on current affairs in Gulf security, politics, economics, environment, energy, and social issues, in addition to the challenges that the region is facing in these areas. Araa was the first Gulf periodical specializing in Gulf affairs bringing together a network of more than 600 contributing authors, including scholars, academics, and other specialists working in the Gulf region. It is a concrete reference for those in academia and higher education working at various universities across the region. Araa Magazine is an independent platform providing a space for differing opinions within a social and moral responsibility framework. Araa magazine features numerous articles on Gulf-Europe relations.

### Issues

**Araa Issue 199: The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI): The Relationship Between Gulf States and NATO and the Need for Development**



**Araa Issue 182: The Strategic Partnership Between the European Union and the GCC Countries: Prospects and Goals**



**Araa Issue 135: The New Europe: Between its Internal Problems and Turning East**





### Articles

- The EU's Perspective on Crises in the Arab World: Causes and Solutions - Issue 186
- The Repercussions of Global Risks for Europe - Issue 184
- The EU and Iran: Shifting Relations - Issue 183
- The EU's Vision of a Strategic Partnership with the Gulf - Issue 182
- 2022 - A Seminal Year for Europe - Issue 181
- EU-GCC Relations: Turning a New Page? - Issue 180
- Building a System of Regional Security in the Gulf: Europe's Potential Role - Issue 179
- The Energy Transition and EU-GCC Relations - Issue 178
- Taking EU-GCC Parliamentary Ties to the Next Level - Issue 176
- Europe and the Ukraine Crisis - Issue 174
- The Future of Saudi Arabia's Relations with Europe - Issue 172
- Prospects for European Investments in the Gulf Region - Issue 171
- European Trends for 2022 - Issue 169
- Europe and the JCPOA Dilemma - Issue 160
- Opportunities and Challenges for Saudi-European Relations - Issue 156
- Europe and the Future of the Arab World - Issue 131
- The European View of the GCC's Relations with Regional Powers Iran, Turkey, India, and Pakistan - Issue 128
- The EU and the Gulf Region in 2018 - Issue 126
- Stuck in Limbo: The EU and the Current Crisis Over Jerusalem - Issue 123
- Europe and the Military Equation in the Gulf Region - Issue 116
- The GCC and Europe in 2016 - Issue 114
- The European Position on Turkish-Arab Relations - Issue 105
- Prospects for GCC-EU Relations in 2016 - Issue 102







## 7 - GRC Training Programs on Gulf-Europe Relations



Research Center, Center for Applied Policy Research, Executive Learning Program: Understanding the European Union



## 7. GRC Training Programs on Gulf-Europe Relations

Within the realm of Gulf-Europe ties, the GRC has designed unique executive learning programs, independently as well as in cooperation with leading international universities and research institutes, in order to provide comprehensive and exclusive learning opportunities. These programs are designed to provide leadership development opportunities in all aspects of public policy. It is the view of the GRC that programs in governmental processes and critical policy issues are important for understanding today's environment and preparing emerging and established leaders to engage with individuals and institutions more effectively throughout the rest of the world. Participants have the opportunity to learn from and exchange ideas with leading scholars and senior public policy officials in their respective fields.

Getting a better understanding of the current trends and developments of the European political environment is a necessary first step in order to design and ultimately implement a broader scope of engagement. To fill this existing gap, the GRC has organized workshops in various European cities to look at the domestic political scene, the structure and outlook of the political system, the key components of economic policies, and the parameters that determine present day security and foreign policy.

### Youth and Climate Change Contest



The GRC and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Regional Programme Gulf States held a contest in 2023 for youth from the GCC states for papers covering the topic of climate change. The contest aimed to:

- highlight youth voices from the GCC countries on the issue of climate change,
- propose innovative ideas from GCC youth that can be presented to the governments of GCC countries,
- facilitate the establishment of climate change networks among GCC youth.

The winners presented their paper in the framework of the COP28 meeting in Dubai, UAE.

### Training Programs

- Understanding Austria's Domestic and Foreign Policy Orientation - November 2019





- Understanding the United Kingdom's Domestic and Foreign Policy Orientation - October 2019



- Understanding Germany's Domestic and Foreign Policy Orientation - March 2019



### Global Leadership Programs

#### Intensive 3-module leadership courses

Geneva, Switzerland

The GRCF and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) have conducted several Global Leadership Programs as part of their collaboration. The programs took place in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Global Leadership Program features three one-week modules that address the core political, security, and economic challenges in the international system today. The modules are convened at regularly spaced intervals throughout the year.

The program offers participants the opportunity to:

- improve knowledge about global developments in politics, security, and economics, as well as their impact on the state and society;
- analyze current, past, and anticipated changes occurring in the fields of global politics, security, and economics;
- build critical thinking within a unique learning environment, by joining experienced practitioners and scholars from diverse fields in an interactive atmosphere of exchange and debate;
- broaden professional networks across cultures and professional domains, through interaction with peers and experts within the program environment.

#### Previous programs include:

##### Global Leadership Program 2023-2024:

- Module 1: Global Politics - September 2023
- Module 2: Global Security - November 2023
- Module 3: Global Economics - March 2024





### Global Leadership Program 2006-2007:

- Module 1: Global Security - July 2006
- Module 2: Global Economics - November 2006
- Module 3: Global Politics - March 2007



### Global Security & Politics Module - October 22-26 2007



## Understanding the European Union

### A 5-day Executive Learning Program

September 1-5, 2005

Brussels, Belgium



The GRC, in conjunction with the Center for Applied Policy Research at the University of Munich, Germany, held a five-day executive learning program entitled “Understanding the European Union” from September 1st to 5th, 2005 in Brussels, Belgium. The program brought together 30 officials representing the diplomatic, economic, and security sectors of the GCC member states in addition to representatives from embassies in Belgium and the rest of Europe. Understanding the EU is part of the GCC-EU Partnership Program of the GRC and focuses on the increasingly important strategic relationship between the Arab Gulf region and the European Union. The program featured in-depth presentations by high-level experts and policy practitioners on key aspects of the EU’s development including EU enlargement, the constitutional process, the euro and GCC currency union, and the status of the anticipated GCC-EU FTA. The GCC participants also took part in visits to NATO, the European Commission, and the EU Ministerial Council where they received briefings by high-ranking officials on the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU and NATO’s Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.





## 8 - GRC Global Cooperation Agreements & Partnerships in Europe





## 8. GRC Global Cooperation Agreements and Partnerships in Europe

Collaboration with think tanks and research organizations is a vital part of the GRC's mandate. The cooperation agreements that the center has signed with several institutions worldwide aim to support the areas of research, policy facilitation, and implementation of long-term conditions for peace, security, and sustainable development. In partnering with institutions of interest, we hope to work in pursuit of creating greater national, regional, and international awareness on issues pertaining to security and stability in the Gulf region and beyond.

Over the years, the GRC signed numerous agreements and partnerships in Europe. The agreements outlined cooperation in terms of conducting original research on issues pertaining to peace, security and stability, trade, energy, and resources as well as language and culture in the Gulf region and beyond.

### Crisis Management Initiative



### Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)



### Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)



### STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

### Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)



### Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)





The Russian Center for Policy Research  
(PIR Center)



CSS Resources (formerly International  
Relations and Security Network)



Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)



Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)



Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

International Development Law  
Organization (IDLO)



German Near and Middle East Association  
(NUMOV)





Transfer Centre for International Projects  
in Education (IPE) of Zurich University of  
Teacher Education

## ZURICH UNIVERSITY OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Centre for European Policy Studies  
(CEPS)



Fondazione Università Ca'Foscari Venezia  
(Ca'Foscari University Foundation)



**Fondazione  
Università  
Ca'Foscari**

University of Oslo



UiO : **University of Oslo**

St. Gallen Symposium (St.Gallen  
Foundation for International Studies)

## ST.GALLEN SYMPOSIUM

Center for Applied Policy Research (CAP)



Institute of International Sociology  
Gorizia (ISIG)



Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris



**SciencesPo.**





Hochschule Darmstadt, University of Applied Sciences

**h\_da**  
hochschule  
darmstadt

TH Bingen University of Applied Sciences

**TH BINGEN**  
University of Applied Sciences

Ghorfa Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry e.V (Ghorfa)

**Ghorfa** غرفة التجارة والصناعة العربية الألمانية  
Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry e.V.

Chatham House

**CHATHAM HOUSE**

IISS UK

**IISS**

Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)



Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient, CARPO

**CARPO**  
Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient

German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)

**DGAP**

Elcano Royal Institute

**elcano**  
REAL INSTITUTO  
ROYAL INSTITUTE

Adastra

**ADASTRA**



GEOCASE



Bertelsmann-Stiftung



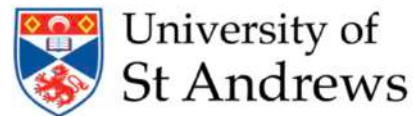
ETH Zurich



The University of Geneva



University of St Andrews



Institute for Environmental Studies and Applied Research



Konrad Adenauer Stiftung



Fraunhofer Society



Geneva Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services (CCIG)



Pädagogische Hochschule Zurich



Arab-Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CASCI)





BRISMES



Avenir Suisse



Institut Choiseul



Republic of Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs



European University Institute



Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI)



Friends of Europe



Institut des hautes études de défense nationale (IHEDN)



IMD Business School



NATO



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

NATO Defense College



Royal Swedish Academy









## 9 - Select Participations on Gulf-Europe Relations





## 9. Select Participations on Gulf-Europe Relations

December 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), held a meeting with Dr. Thomas Volk, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, along with his colleagues at the GRC office in Riyadh. The discussion focused on areas of mutual cooperation and key regional developments.

November 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker at the 10th Rome MED Dialogue, organized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and ISPI (Italian Institute for International Political Studies) in Rome on November 27, 2024. Dr. Sager participated as a speaker on a panel titled 'The Future of Iran-Gulf Relations'. During the session, Dr. Sager underscored the

necessity for a strategic shift in Iran's regional approach, contingent upon Tehran's willingness to embrace such changes. He emphasized that while initiating dialogue is a constructive move, substantial advancements will only occur when all involved parties are prepared to make mutual concessions.

January 2024

Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the Gulf Research Center Foundation's (GRCF) Brussels office, recently met with a delegation of young Bahraini leaders from the 'Youth Pioneer' initiative. The visit, organized by the Bahraini Embassy in Brussels, facilitated meaningful engagement between the delegation and the GRCF team. The Bahraini leaders explored avenues for collaboration while also immersing themselves in the rich cultural offerings of the European Union, fostering a deeper understanding of EU institutions and culture.



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and GRC's Senior Team received this morning at the GRC's office in Riyadh H.E. Balázs Selmei, Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Sándor Major, Deputy Head of Mission, Dr. N. Rózsa Erzsébet, and Dr. László Csicsmann. Many different thoughts and ideas were exchanged on regional and international issues during the visit.





Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), attended a luncheon hosted by HE Mr. Carlo Baldocci, the Ambassador of Italy to Saudi Arabia, at his residence. The lunch honored the visit of HE Mr Alessio Nardi, Advisor to the Minister for Security Policies and Justice, Cooperation, and Development at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, as well as Mr. Maurizio Greganti, Minister Plenipotentiary and Principal Director for the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Gulf countries. The discussion centered on current regional developments and explored pathways for closer collaboration between Italian think tanks and those in the Gulf region to enhance Gulf-Italian relations.

October 2024



Dr. Christian Koch participated as a speaker in the Council of Councils (CoC) 15th Regional Conference in Brussels on October 29, 2024. Dr. Koch spoke in the session on 'EU-Middle East Relations' and discussed how the EU should have a cohesive and unified approach for post-conflict scenarios in the region and how it should build stronger partnerships with key regional players to enhance the EU's influence and effectiveness in addressing conflicts and promoting stability.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Luigi Di Maio, the European Union Special Representative for the Gulf Region at the European External Action Service (EEAS), and his accompanying official delegation, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on October 29, 2024. During this meeting, both sides discussed areas of mutual interest, including cooperation with the GRC Foundation's office in Brussels on GCC-EU research activities.



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Leo Kwarten, a lecturer from The Clingendael Institute, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on October 27, 2024, where they discussed areas of mutual interest and cooperation.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Valerio De Molli, Managing Partner and CEO of the European House Ambrosetti, and his accompanying colleagues at the GRC's office in Riyadh on October 8, 2024, in which they discussed areas of mutual interest and cooperation.



H.E. Mr. Patrick Maisonnave, Ambassador of the French Republic to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, invited Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), to the French Residence for lunch on October 6, 2024. A discussion

took place on various areas of cooperation, including research and education.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr Björn Kavalkov-Halvarsson, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Sweden to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on October 2, 2024. The two sides discussed cooperation and areas of mutual interest.

### September 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR's) first virtual Re:Order Strategy Group Meeting on September 30th, 2024, which is its flagship project that explores emerging visions of the global order.



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), and Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the GRC, met with Sebastian Brökelmann, Deputy Head of Division for the Middle East at the German Foreign Ministry, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 26, 2024. Both sides discussed areas of mutual interest.





Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the GRCF Brussels office and Director of Research at the GRC gave a talk to a group of students and academics from Kuwait and Oman on their visit to Brussels. The purpose of the visit for the delegation was to gain a better understanding of the EU, exchange with academic institutions, and explore potential academic partnerships. The students from Oman and Kuwait represented winners of an essay competition on environmental and climate change topics earlier in the year and were sponsored by the EU. In his presentation, Dr. Koch discussed the work of the GRCF office in Brussels and spoke about developments in GCC-EU relations.



Dr. Christian Koch, Director of Research and Executive Manager of the GRC Foundation Brussels office held a meeting with H.E. Ambassador Abdulaziz Ahmed Al-Malki, Head of Mission of the State of Qatar to the European Union and NATO. In addition to providing an overview of GRCF activities in Brussels, the two sides discussed the state of Gulf-NATO ties as well as development on the EU-GCC front.

Dr. Christian Koch visited NATO Headquarters on September 20th, where he met with Nicola de Santis, Chief of the Public Relations Section and Damien Arnaud, Strategic Engagement Coordinator. They talked about the developments in the Gulf region and possible joint activities.



Dr. Christian Koch and Houda Barroug, Researcher at the GRC, participated in a two-day workshop organized by the Bertelsmann Foundation on the topic of “Strengthening the EU’s Southern Neighborhood Policy.” The workshop brought together 30 experts and officials to explore how the EU’s Southern Neighborhood policy can be strengthened when it comes to socio-economic cooperation, trade and investment, and bilateral and regional cooperation. Dr. Koch provided input on the role of the GCC states and the impact of the increased competition with the US, China, and Turkey.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Liselotte Kjærsgaard Plesner, Ambassador of Denmark to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the GRC office in Riyadh. During the meeting, both sides discussed areas of mutual interest and recent regional developments.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker at the Regional Meeting of the MED Dialogue co-organized by the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI) and the King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC) in Riyadh on September 11, 2024, entitled "From the Gulf to Europe: Greening Energy Relations." He spoke in the opening session of the meeting "Rethinking EU-GCC Strategic Partnership in Times of Crisis," where he addressed the impact of geopolitical factors on GCC-EU relations.



Dr. Christian Koch held discussions with H.E. Mohammed Al-Sahlawi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Belgium and the European Union as well as H.E. Fahad Aljaimaz, Head of Delegation of the Gulf Cooperation Council to the European Union. While updating on the GRCF plans for Brussels, they also discussed the impending EU-GCC Summit meeting scheduled for October 16, 2024 in Brussels.



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager met with Francesco Rocchetti, ISPI Secretary General and Curator of the Rome MED Dialogues, Aldo Liga, Research Fellow for the MENA Centre at ISPI, and Luigi Toninelli, Researcher at ISPI, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 10, 2024. This meeting was in light of the Regional MED Dialogue in Riyadh. Both sides also discussed cooperation between GRC and ISPI and areas of mutual interest.



Dr. Christian Koch met with H.E. Khalid Fahad Al-Hajri, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Belgium and Luxembourg. In their discussion, they focused on Belgian-Qatari relations and how the GRCF office can help to develop those ties further.



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the GRC, met with Birgit Loeser, Head of Division, MENA Regional Affairs from the European External Action Service (EEAS) from the EU, and her colleagues at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 4, 2024. Both sides discussed the development of GCC-EU relations, specifically in light of the upcoming GCCEU summit on October 16, 2024.



Dr. Christian Koch met with H.E. Nawaf Alenezi, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Belgium and the European Union at the Kuwaiti Mission in Brussels. They discussed the preparations for the EU-GCC Summit meeting in October 2024 and

the overall state of ties between the two sides. Dr. Koch also informed the Ambassador about the status of the GRCF office in Brussels and its planned activities.

### August 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager met with H.E. Mr. Balázs Selmeci, Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Mr. Sándor Major, Deputy Head of Mission, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on

August 11, 2024. During the meeting, both sides reviewed relations between the GCC states and Hungary, including between the Kingdom and Hungary specifically, given the developments in the region and in light of Hungary's current presidency of the EU.

### July 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated virtually as a speaker in the "NATO 2024 Beyond the 75th Anniversary" event organized by the NATO Defense College Foundation and the Centro Alti Studi per la Difesa (CASD) on July 8th, 2024. Dr. Sager joined Session II on "Reinforcing Partnerships in the South-A Renewed Strategic Outlook," which discussed ways to enhance strategic and security cooperation between the GCC and NATO.





## June 2024



Dr. Christian Koch participated as a speaker in a panel session at the 6th German-Arab Gulf Dialogue on Security and Cooperation organized by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and the German-Arab Friendship Association (DAFG) in Berlin on June 10, 2024. The panel focused on the 'Socioeconomic Transformations in Germany and the Gulf – Understanding Objectives, Identifying Opportunities for Cooperation.'

## June 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated as a speaker in a panel on Diplomatic Dialogues titled "Ambassadors Unveil Visionary Ventures in Arab-German Collaborations" that was organized by the 27th Arab-German Business Forum in Berlin, on June 5th, 2024. Dr. Sager emphasized the importance of enhancing business ventures between Germany and the Arab region, focusing on the Gulf and specific sectors

in which they can be achieved. Speakers of the panel also included: Dr. Christoph Ploß, Member of the German Parliament, H.E. Maitha Saif Majid Al-Mahrouqi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Germany, H.E. Khaled Mohamed Galaleldin Abdelhamid, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Dr. Dorothea Schütz, Head of the V.D. Subdivision Middle East, Africa, Development Policy-Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, H.E. Mr. Wacef Chiha, Ambassador of the Republic of Tunisia, H.E. Dieter Walter Haller, Managing Director of Haller Consult GmbH.

## May 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager and Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the GRCF-B, visited the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels on May 30th, 2024, and met with Florin Nita from the EUSR Gulf office; Birgit Loeser, Head of MENA I and responsible for GCC; Beatriz Salvador Garcia, Deputy Head MENA I; Elisabetta La Gala, Policy Officer and Viktorija Budreckaitė from MENA 4 responsible for bilateral GCC-EU ties. During the meeting, both sides discussed GCC-EU ties and ways to improve relations in light of regional developments.





### May 2024

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the GRC, participated in the Schuman Security & Defence Forum organized by the European Union External Action Service 2024 in Brussels from May 28th to 29th, 2024. The Schuman Forum is the EU's flagship high-level political event for discussing shared security, defense, and peace issues with its closest partners. Dr. Sager participated in the Think Tank Side Event, which brought together security and defense policy experts from think tanks and academia from the EU and key partner countries. The event focused on critical issues such as peace, security, and defense, aiming to foster stronger cooperation between the EU, its member states, and partner countries.

### April 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager chaired a panel session of the “Saudi, German and European Perspectives on a Changing World: Middle East Peace, Maritime Security, Multipolar World?” in Riyadh, organized by the Center for European Studies at Prince Saud Al-Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies (IDS) and

in cooperation with the German Embassy Riyadh and the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP). Dr. Sager chaired the session, which discussed multipolarity and the role and influence of the Arab Gulf and Europe in a complex world. Participating in the session was Prof. Volker Perthes, Senior Advisor SWP and former UN Under Secretary-General and Special Representative for Sudan.

### April 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager received H.E. Mr. Diego Martínez Belío, Secretary of State for Foreign and Global Affairs of Spain, and his accompanying delegation, along with H.E. Mr. Jorge Hevia, Ambassador of Spain to Saudi Arabia at the GRC's office in Riyadh. Both sides discussed ways to enhance bilateral relations in fields of interest and ongoing regional developments.



### April 2024



Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the GRCF-B, attended the Third Conference on Promoting Regional Security in the Gulf/MENA Region hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland, and the EEAS. The meeting brought together officials from European governments alongside representatives from European think tanks working on the projects related to Middle Eastern and Gulf security. H.E. Luigi Di Maio, the EU's Special Representative for the Gulf region attended the meeting and provided an overview of EU-GCC developments including the High-Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation that took place on April 22nd, 2024 in Luxembourg.

### February 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated as a speaker to the 60th edition of the Munich Security Conference on February 16th-17th, 2024 in Munich. Dr. Sager participated in the session entitled "Red Sea" which focused on the situation in Yemen, the Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aden. He discussed the effects of the Houthi attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea, and the role of actors in ensuring the freedom and safety of navigation in this vital corridor. Panelists of the session also included His Excellency the Chairman of the Presidential Leadership Council of the Republic of Yemen, Dr. Rashad Muhammad Al-Alimi, Senator and Member of the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Christopher Murphy, and the Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the Arab Peninsula in the European Parliament, Hannah Neumann.

### January 2024

The GRC Riyadh office received Beatriz Salvador Garcia, Deputy Head of Division, MENA I Regional Affairs at the EEAS in Brussels. She was accompanied by Jaap Ora, Deputy Head of Mission at the EU Delegation Office in Riyadh and Lacramioara Iwaz, Political Officer at the EU Delegation. From the GRC side, Chairman Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Vice-President Dr. Ahmed Sager and GRCF-B Executive Manager Dr. Christian Koch all attended the meeting. The two sides discussed the status of overall EU-GCC relations and elaborated on ways institutional cooperation can be enhanced. Dr. Sager and Dr. Koch also attended the reception hosted by Amb. Christophe Farnoud of the EU Delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the framework of the first EU-GCC Security Dialogue held in Riyadh.



January 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager received His Excellency Mr. Javier Solana, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain, former Secretary-General of NATO, former High Representative for the EU, and former Secretary-General of the Council of the EU, at the GRC's Riyadh office. During the meeting, several topics related to the Gulf and the Middle East regions were discussed.

December 2023



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the public discussion at the Saudi Armed Forces Command and Staff College where NATO Secretary-General, Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, presented a lecture and

underlined Saudi Arabia's leading role in the Arab and Muslim world, and identified areas where the Alliance and the Kingdom could do more together – namely on maritime security, the protection of critical infrastructure, the fight against terrorism, as well as innovation and military education.

December 2023



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager and Dr. Christian Koch, participated in the 2023 Doha Forum held in Doha, Qatar. Both Dr. Sager and Dr. Koch held numerous meetings on the sidelines of the conference including with H.E. Jassim Mohamed Al-Budaiwi, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and with H.E. Luigi Di Maio, the EU Special Representative for the Gulf Region.





### December 2023

Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the GRCf-B, participated in the annual conference of the European Policy Centre (EPC) entitled “Time for Strategy: Europe 2024–2029 in a Geopolitical World” held in Brussels, Belgium. The event brought together more than 150 attendees from all of the relevant European institutions to discuss the numerous challenges that the EU faces and what appropriate response mechanisms might look like.

### November 2023



Dr. Christian Koch participated in the 7th EU-GCC Business Forum held in Bahrain on November 21st, 2023. The theme of the forum was “Strategies for Economic Inclusion and Sustainable Development,” with panel discussions on energy security, the circular economy, logistics and women’s empowerment. Supporting trade and investment is considered a core element of the EU’s Strategic Partnership with the Gulf.

### November 2023



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in a discussion at the Residence of France with H.E. Mr. Ludovic Pouille, the French Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Ms. Anne Grillo, Director of North Africa and the Middle East in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The discussion focused on the implications of the crisis in Gaza and French-Saudi cooperation on regional issues.

### October 2023



Dr. Oskar Ziemelis, Director of the GRCf, and Amnah Mosly, researcher at the GRC, participated in the Riga Conference 2023 held on October 20th, in Riga, Latvia. The conference discussed security and foreign policy issues mainly from a transatlantic and European point of view.





### October 2023

Amnah Mosly, researcher at the GRC, participated in “The Imagine Forum: Nordic Solidarity for Peace”, held by The Icelandic Presidency for the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre in Reykjavík, Iceland.

### October 2023

Dr. Christian Koch took part in the 2023 European Ideas Forum organized by the Wilfred Martens Center for European Studies held in Brussels, Belgium. The event featured discussions on the shifting geopolitical balances, Europe’s place in a world of disorder, climate security, Europe’s economic competitiveness, and the outlook on the war in Ukraine and relations with Russia.

### October 2023



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated as a speaker to the “NATO 2023: Balancing Priorities After the Vilnius Summit” conference organized by the NATO Defence College Foundation. Dr. Abdulaziz Sager highlighted prospects for GCC-NATO relations and provided perspectives on the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

### June 2023

Dr. Christian Koch met with H.E. Haifa Al-Jedea, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the EU in Brussels. They discussed the current status of Saudi Arabia-EU ties and how the GRC and the embassy can cooperate more closely.

### June 2023



Dr. Christian Koch participated in the 5th German-Arab Dialogue on Security and Cooperation held in Berlin, Germany and organized by the German-Arab Friendship Association (DAFG), the German Academy for Security Policy (BAKS), and the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation. The conference brought together officials and specialists from the GCC countries and Germany to discuss closer cooperation in the fields of security, political ties, economics, and energy.

### June 2023

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager and Dr. Christian Koch held a meeting with Darko Mocibob, Director of the Middle East Division in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting



was also attended by Amb. Wolfgang Amadeus Bruehlhart, the Special Envoy for the Middle East of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### June 2023

Dr. Christian Koch attended the event on “Rethinking EU-MENA Engagement” held at Carnegie Europe in Brussels. The public discussion focused on how the EU can establish sustainable partnerships and build trust with the wider Middle East and how the EU needs to consider regional and local perspectives in its decision making and meet its partners on equal footing.

### May 2023

Amnah Mosly, researcher at the GRC, attended the opening reception of Europe Month 2023 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on May 9th, 2023.



The event was organized by the Consulates General of France, Germany, and Italy in Jeddah, represented by their Excellencies Mrs. Catherine Corm-Kammoun, Dr. Eltje Aderhold, and Mr. Leonardo Costa.

### March 2023



Dr. Christian Koch took part in the inaugural Schuman Security and Defense Partnership Forum held in Brussels at the European Parliament. The Schuman Forum flows from the 2022 EU Strategic Compass and seeks to collectively gauge the evolving geopolitical context as well as take stock of the EU's security and defense partnerships.

### March 2023

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager presented a keynote speech at the “Maritime Security in the Red Sea Workshop” organized by the embassies of France, Denmark; and of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Riyadh in association with the EU delegation, and with the presentation of the European-led Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASoH), which provided European perspectives on maritime security in the Gulf region. In his opening speech, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager focused on the regional perspectives of maritime security in the Red Sea.



### February 2023



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the 59th session of the Munich Security Conference. This year's conference session coincided with the one-year mark of the Russian-Ukrainian war. During the panel session titled "Whole, Free, and at Peace: Visions for Ukraine," Dr. Abdulaziz Sager addressed a question to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

### January 2023



At the invitation of Ambassador Patrick Simonnet, the EU Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of Bahrain, and Sultanate of Oman, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in a meeting with the EU member states ambassadors and heads of missions.

### December 2022



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager received H.E. Ambassador Petra Menander, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Yemen, and the Sultanate of Oman at the GRC's Riyadh office. The Ambassador was joined by her accompanying team. Both sides discussed the Saudi-Swedish relationship and its various fields of development.

### October 2022



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager met with the French Ambassador, Mr. Ludovic Pouille, and discussed the regular partnerships with French research centers on the Ukraine war's impact on global economic and geopolitical balances and cooperation on regional crises.





October 2022



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, GRC's Environmental Research and Sustainability Program Director, participated in the Hydrogen Diplomacy roundtable in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, that focused on enhancing the energy and hydrogen dialogue between Saudi Arabia and Germany, organized by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ).

July 2022

Dr. Christian Koch met with H.E. Yousuf Khalifa Alsada, GCC envoy to the EU. They discussed common projects, including following up on the EU communication on a Strategic Partnership with the Gulf region released in May 2022.

June 2022



Dr. Chrisitan Koch participated in the conference organized by the NATO Defence College Foundation in cooperation with the Fondazione Campagna di San Paolo in Rome and spoke in a panel session on "Balancing Threats and Opportunities."

June 2022



Dr. Christian Koch participated in the closed GCC-EU Strategy Meeting held by the European Council on Foreign Relations in Brussels.

May 2022

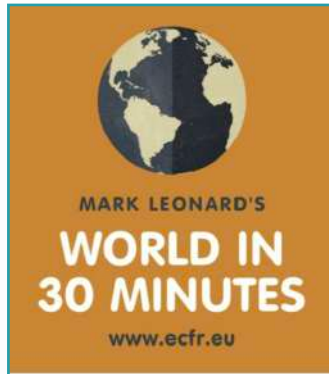


Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated as speaker in the roundtable discussion titled "The Russia-Ukraine War and its impact on the Arabian Gulf" hosted by the NATO-Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Regional Centre (NIRC) in Kuwait in cooperation with Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'École Militaire (IRSEM) and the Fondation Méditerranéenne d'Études Stratégiques (FMES).





March 2022



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager was a guest on the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) weekly podcast, “Mark Leonard’s World in 30 Minutes.”

March 2022



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, participated as a speaker to the Doha Forum and Chatham House closed-door workshop, titled “De-Escalation in Yemen: The Role of Iran and the GCC in Brokering Peace,” at the 20th edition of the Doha Forum.

February 2022



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the 58th Munich Security Conference (MSC), which was held in Munich, Germany.

November 2021

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated virtually in the special ten-year anniversary edition of the Berlin Foreign Policy Forum 2021.

November 2021

Dr. Christian Koch was a speaker at a roundtable discussion on “Regional Security in the Gulf” organized by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and held at the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, New York.

October 2021





Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in “The Maritime & Energy Security in the Gulf” seminar co-organized by The NATO-Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Regional Centre in Kuwait and the NATO HUB for the South.

#### September 2021

Dr. Christian Koch was a speaker at a conference organized by the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation on “Europe and the Gulf States: Developing a Common European Political, Economic and Security Vision towards the Gulf States” held in Cadenabbia, Italy.

#### July 2021

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager attended the NATO Defense College Foundation Conference entitled “Black Sea and Balkan Perspectives: A Strategic Region” organized in cooperation with the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, the NATO Public Diplomacy Division, and the NATO Defense College.

#### July 2021



Dr. Christian Koch met with Ambassador Saad Mohammed Alarify, Head of the Saudi Mission to the EU to discuss exchanges focused on the current state of EU-Saudi relations and means to strengthen cooperation.

#### July 2021

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf participated in and represented the GRC at the EU-GCC Clean Energy Network conference on “Climate Action and Energy Transition in the EU and GCC: Adaptation and Mitigation Solutions.”

#### July 2021



Dr. Christian Koch was a speaker at the European Parliament, Delegation for the Relations with the Arabian Peninsula (DARP), on the topic of “Iraq-GCC Relations: Current State of Play and Future Perspectives.”

#### June 2021

Dr. Christian Koch participated in the German-Arab Gulf Dialogue on Security and Cooperation organized by the German-Arab Friendship Association (DAFG) and the German Federal Academy for Security Policy (BAKS).



### May 2021

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager was a speaker in the joint webinar between the GRC and the EU Institute for Security Studies entitled “EU-Saudi Relations: Assessing the Political Situation in the Region.”

### May 2021



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager was a speaker in the public hearing on “Collective Security in the Gulf Region” organized by the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Subcommittee on Security and Defence of the European Parliament.

### May 2021

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager attended the 2021 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development, under the theme “Promoting Peace in the Age of Compound Risk,” co-hosted by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

### April 2021

Dr. Christian Koch participated in a seminar organized by the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation with H.E. Mutlaq bin Majid Al Qahtani, Special Representative of the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Combating Terrorism and Conflict Mediation.

### December 2020



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager spoke at a virtual roundtable discussion, titled “Assessing Regional Security Dynamics Across the Middle East,” organized by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) and the German Permanent Representation to the EU.

### November 2020



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager spoke at a webinar organized by Chatham House, and discussed the topic “G20 Presidency: Saudi Arabia’s Goals, Priorities and Challenges.”





July 2020



Dr. John Sfakianakis, Head of the GRC's Economic Research Program, spoke at the Chatham House webinar titled "Can Saudi Arabia Emerge Stronger from COVID-19?" He discussed the potential effects of the pandemic on the Saudi economy.

April 2020



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in a closed online seminar organized by the European Council on Foreign Relations along with a group of politicians, experts, and academics.

February 2020



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the 56th Munich Security Conference.

October 2019



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the "Core Group" meeting of the Munich Security Conference in Cairo.





**October 2019**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in the 12th World Policy Conference, entitled “Global Governance” organized by the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) in Marrakech, Morocco.

**October 2019**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated as a speaker to the session entitled “The Future of Iraq and the Region” at a workshop on “Iraq Transition: Seeking New Approaches to State Building,” organized by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London, UK.

**July 2018**

Dr. Christian Koch participated in the Senior Course 132 of the NATO Defence College.

**November 2017**

Dr. Christian Koch gave a lecture to the NATO Regional Security Course 18 held at the NATO Defense College in Rome.

**June 2017**

Dr. Christian Koch participated in a discussion with H.E. Adel Al-Jubair, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation in Berlin.

**March 2017**

Dr. Christian Koch gave a full day of presentations to Senior Course members at the NATO Defence College in Rome, Italy.

**March 2017**

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager participated in a Chatham House conference on “Syria: International Policy Options after Six Years of Failure,” which marked six years since the start of the conflict in Syria. Dr. Sager spoke in the conference’s second panel on the “Role of Regional Actors,” where he looked at the policies of regional actors, specifically the GCC countries, Iran, Russia, and Turkey, towards the Syrian conflict and assessed how developments in Syria and the international environment have affected their decision making.



### November 2016



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager and Dr. Christian Koch participated as speakers to the 9th Edition of the World Policy Conference held in Doha, Qatar.

### September 2016

Dr. Christian Koch gave a full day of presentations to the Senior Course 129, to course members from Modular Short Course 2, as well as the Committee Seminar Group at the NATO Defence College in Rome, Italy, on the subject of “Regional Organizations and their Impact on Global Security: The Case of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).”

### June 2016

Dr. Christian Koch participated in the Book Talk on Arab Geopolitics in Turmoil held at NATO Headquarters on the invitation of Amb. Sorin Ducaru, Assistant Secretary General for NATO's Emerging Security Challenges Division.

### May 2016

Dr. Christian Koch participated in a discussion with Dr. Saad Bin Tiflah Al-Ajmi, former Kuwaiti Minister of Information, held at the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation in Berlin, Germany.

### April 2016



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Program Manager of the GRC's Environmental Security and Sustainability Program, participated in the 91st Rose-Roth Seminar of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly-Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group.

### March 2016

Dr. Christian Koch gave a lecture at the NATO Defence College on “The GCC States and the Security of the Gulf Region.”

### January 2016

Dr. Christian Koch participated in the workshop on “Middle Eastern Geopolitics and the EU's Global Strategy Review” held by the European Council on Foreign Relations in London, UK.

### November 2015

Dr. Christian Koch gave a lecture and presentation to participants of the NATO Regional Cooperation course at the NATO Defence College in Rome, Italy.

### September 2015

Dr. Christian Koch participated in the conference on “The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Sharing Insights on Europe's Key Partner in the Middle East,” organized by the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation and held at the KAS Conference Centre “Villa La Collina” in Cadenabbia, Italy.



# GULF RESEARCH CENTER



Gulf Research Center

[www.grc.net](http://www.grc.net)



**Gulf Research Center  
Jeddah  
(Main office)**

19 Rayat Alitihad Street  
P.O. Box 2134  
Jeddah 21451  
Saudi Arabia  
Tel: +966 12 6511999  
Fax: +966 12 6531375  
Email: [info@grc.net](mailto:info@grc.net)



**Gulf Research Center  
Riyadh**

Unit FN11A  
King Faisal Foundation  
North Tower  
King Fahd Branch Rd  
Al Olaya Riyadh 12212  
Saudi Arabia  
Tel: +966 112112567  
Email: [info@grc.net](mailto:info@grc.net)



**Gulf Research Center  
Foundation Geneva**

Avenue de France 23  
1202 Geneva  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41227162730  
Email: [info@grc.net](mailto:info@grc.net)



**Gulf Research Centre  
Cambridge**

University of Cambridge  
Sidgwick Avenue,  
Cambridge CB3 9DA  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44-1223-760758  
Fax: +44-1223-335110



**Gulf Research Center  
Foundation Brussels**

Avenue de  
Cortenbergh 89  
4<sup>th</sup> floor, 1000  
Brussels  
Belgium



@Gulf\_Research Gulfresearchcenter gulfresearchcenter gulfresearchcenter

[www.grc.net](http://www.grc.net)

مركز الخليج للأبحاث  
المدرسة الجامعية