



Gulf Research Center
Knowledge for All

Türkiye - GCC Relations





1. Key Domestic Developments

Türkiye, a transcontinental nation linking Europe and Asia, continues to operate as a presidential republic under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The years 2024 and 2025 have been marked by heightened political tension, economic stabilization efforts, and growing environmental stress, all of which have shaped the country's domestic direction.

Politically, Türkiye remains deeply polarized. The arrest of Istanbul's mayor and opposition figure Ekrem İmamoğlu in early 2025 sparked widespread protests across major cities. The government's firm response, including the detention of demonstrators and journalists, drew criticism over democratic backsliding and human rights concerns. This event revealed a widening divide between the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the opposition. Meanwhile, new legislation aimed at reducing municipal autonomy and expanding central authority has been viewed by critics as an effort to weaken opposition-led local administrations.

A significant development in mid-2025 was the formal disarmament of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its declaration to end armed struggle. The move, accompanied by a symbolic ceremony in northern Iraq, was welcomed by the government as a turning point in Türkiye's internal security. A parliamentary commission was established to manage the disarmament process and explore avenues for political reintegration of Kurdish actors. The initiative holds the potential to end decades of conflict, though its sustainability will depend on trust and inclusivity. At the same time, speculation continues regarding potential constitutional amendments that could allow Erdoğan to remain in power beyond 2028, reflecting a broader trend toward the consolidation of executive authority.

Economically, Türkiye's focus has shifted toward stabilization after years of volatility. The government's medium-term program, announced

in September 2025, emphasizes disinflation, fiscal discipline, and structural reform. Inflation, which peaked above 70 percent in 2024, is projected to fall to 28.5 percent by the end of 2025, with growth expected at about 3 percent. The Central Bank of Türkiye has maintained tight monetary policy, while fiscal authorities pursue revenue reforms, including a minimum corporate tax and expanded investment through the Türkiye Wealth Fund. Despite these measures, high external debt and fragile investor confidence continue to constrain recovery.

Socially and environmentally, Türkiye faces severe challenges. A major drought in 2025 has led to critically low reservoir levels and reduced agricultural productivity, prompting the launch of a National Water Efficiency Initiative and tighter water management policies. The crisis has reignited debate over resource sustainability and climate adaptation. Alongside these challenges, Türkiye is expanding renewable energy investments, particularly in wind and solar, as part of its 2035 energy transition goals.

Looking ahead, Türkiye's outlook combines progress and risk. Economic stabilization offers a degree of predictability, but persistent inflation, political polarization, and environmental pressures threaten to undermine resilience. The coming years will test the country's ability to maintain stability, foster inclusive governance, and sustain long-term development amid tightening political and economic conditions.

Key Economic and Social Data in Türkiye at a Glance

- **GDP:** \$1.132 trillion USD (2024)
- **GDP per capita:** \$15,473 USD (2024)
- **Annual Growth Rate:** 3.2% (2024)
- **Inflation (CPI):** 33 % (September 2025)
- **Population:** 86,302,975 (2023)
- **Unemployment Rate:** 8.45% (2024)



- **Credit Rating:**

- Standard & Poor: BB- with a stable outlook (2025)
- Moody's: Ba3 with a stable outlook (2025)
- Fitch: BB-+ with a stable outlook (2025)

2. Türkiye's Foreign Policy

Türkiye's foreign policy in 2025 is driven by a desire to balance strategic autonomy with regional influence, seeking to project power, secure economic interests, and maintain flexibility amid global realignments.

Regionally, Türkiye has sharpened its diplomacy across the Middle East, Mediterranean, Africa, and the Caucasus. In Libya, for example, Türkiye renewed maritime and energy cooperation with the Government of National Accord and re-established a diplomatic and limited naval presence in Benghazi and western Libya, provoking reactions from Greece, Egypt, and the European Union.

In the eastern Mediterranean, Türkiye has again taken a firm stance on maritime jurisdiction, expanding its claims in waters disputed with Greece and Cyprus while seeking to enforce its 2019 maritime agreement with Libya. These actions have heightened tensions with European and NATO partners.

Türkiye has also reframed its approach toward Iraq. Turkish officials now present Iraq as a strategic partner for regional stabilization, trade, energy integration, and connectivity rather than merely a security frontier. Ankara continues to employ a dual-track approach that combines diplomacy and security cooperation with both central and regional Iraqi authorities.

In relations with Israel and the Palestinian issue, Türkiye has maintained a firm position throughout 2025. Relations with Israel deteriorated sharply after the October 7, 2023 Hamas attacks and Israel's subsequent military offensive in Gaza. On November 4, 2023, Ankara withdrew its ambassador from Tel Aviv in protest of what it

called a humanitarian tragedy in Gaza and Israel's refusal to agree to a ceasefire. Diplomatic ties have remained suspended since then, and relations further worsened in 2025 after an Israeli strike targeted a Hamas delegation in Doha. Türkiye condemned the attack as a clear violation of Qatari sovereignty and international law, accused Israel of adopting terrorism as state policy, and joined ceasefire mediation talks in Doha alongside Qatar.

In late September and early October 2025, Türkiye played an active diplomatic role in renewed international efforts to end the war in Gaza. Following meetings between U.S. President Donald Trump and several regional leaders on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Ankara endorsed the U.S. 20-point Gaza peace plan, which called for a permanent ceasefire, the release of hostages, and Gaza's reconstruction. Türkiye, along with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, and Indonesia, issued a joint statement welcoming the initiative and pledging support for its implementation. Shortly after, Turkish officials took part in ceasefire negotiations in Sharm El-Sheikh, reflecting Türkiye's expanding role as both a regional power and a credible mediator. President Trump publicly thanked President Erdoğan for Türkiye's constructive engagement and contribution to advancing dialogue among the negotiating parties.

Beyond the Middle East, Türkiye continues to deepen its engagement across Africa, particularly in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, through defense cooperation, infrastructure projects, and diplomatic initiatives. Its largest overseas military base remains in Somalia, which serves as a hub for its regional presence.

Energy diplomacy remains central to Türkiye's foreign policy in 2025. The country is actively diversifying its gas supply by signing new LNG agreements and advancing its goal of becoming a regional energy hub. This strategy is designed to reduce dependence on Russian and Iranian gas while increasing Türkiye's leverage in European energy markets.

Finally, Türkiye is recalibrating its relationship with the United States and other Western powers. In October 2025, Turkish officials proposed a settlement in the long-running U.S. legal case involving Halkbank in an effort to reduce bilateral tensions. Although no final agreement has yet been reached, the initiative signals Ankara's readiness to manage difficult issues through diplomacy. Around the same time, President Erdoğan reaffirmed Türkiye's support for peace efforts in the Middle East during a call with President Trump, emphasizing that lasting peace requires an end to Israel's military escalation.

3. Türkiye-GCC Fact Sheet

Türkiye's Trade in Goods with GCC Countries in 2024 (in \$USD)

GCC Country	Total Trade (USD)	Türkiye's Exports (USD)	Türkiye's Imports (USD)	Trade Balance	Share of Total GCC Trade
United Arab Emirates	\$15.66 B	\$8.30 B	\$7.36 B	+ \$0.94 B	50.4 %
Saudi Arabia	\$7.05 B	\$3.99 B	\$3.06 B	+ \$0.93 B	22.7 %
Qatar	\$1.10 B	\$714 M	\$386 M	+ \$328 M	3.5 %
Bahrain	\$153 M	\$153 M	Data not available	Estimated positive (est)	0.5 %
Kuwait	\$800 M (est)	\$561 M (est)	\$152 M (est)	+ \$409 M (est)	2.6 % (est)
Oman	\$927 M (est)	\$422 M (est)	\$505 M (est)	- \$83 M (est)	3.0 % (est)

Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

- **Saudi Arabia:** 1932
- **Kuwait:** 1969
- **Qatar:** 1972
- **Bahrain:** 1973
- **United Arab Emirates:** 1973
- **Oman:** 1973

Key Turkish Officials with Responsibility for the Gulf Region

- **Minister of Foreign Affairs:** Hakan Fidan
- **Minister of National Defence:** Yaşar Güler
- **Minister of Trade:** Prof. Ömer Bolat

Key Research Centers and Think Tanks

- Center for Türkiye's Economic and Strategic Studies (TESAM)
- Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research – SETA
- Turkish Economic and Social Science Foundation (TESEV)
- Turkish Foreign Policy Institute (FPI)
- Edam

Key Experts

- Soli Özel - Professor of International Relations at Kadir Has University
- Galip Dalay – Brookings Institution
- Henri Barkey, Professor of International Relations, Lehigh
- Ali Bakir – Assistant Professor in Ibn Khaldon Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, Qatar University
- Sinem Cengiz - Researcher and Political Analyst, Qatar University

4. Key Developments in Türkiye-GCC Relations

Since 2021, the rapprochement between Türkiye and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states has evolved into a stable and strategically aligned partnership. Emerging after the 2021 Al Ula Declaration that restored unity within the GCC, this renewed engagement has been driven by Türkiye's economic needs and the Gulf states' diversification agendas. Cooperation has expanded across trade, investment, and defense. In 2024, Türkiye and the GCC launched formal free trade agreement negotiations, marking a new phase of institutionalized economic



integration. Gulf investment in Turkish industries, particularly energy, infrastructure, and defense, has grown steadily, while Turkish firms have increased their presence in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Defense collaboration has also strengthened, with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf partners signing agreements with Turkish companies to enhance local military production.

High-level diplomatic exchanges have intensified, exemplified by the 2024 Türkiye–GCC Strategic Dialogue in Doha and increased coordination on regional issues such as Syria and Gaza. Türkiye’s role as both a bridge and a counterbalance to Iranian influence remains a key factor in Gulf strategic planning. Despite residual competition for regional influence, relations in 2025 are defined by pragmatic cooperation rooted in mutual economic and security interests.



Türkiye-Saudi Arabia

- October 2025: Türkiye and Saudi Arabia, with participation from other GCC states, began cooperation on large-scale solar and wind energy projects in Syria as part of regional reconstruction efforts. The new agreements, valued at over 1,000 megawatts in capacity, mark a significant step in post-conflict energy development and demonstrate joint Gulf-Turkish engagement in stabilizing northern Syria.
- October 5, 2025: Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) signed a memorandum of understanding with Türkiye’s State Railways (TCDD) to strengthen cooperation in rail infrastructure, traffic management, maintenance, and training.
- Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan visited AlUla, Saudi Arabia, to attend the Middle East Security Conference (MSC). His participation reflected Türkiye’s ongoing diplomatic coordination with Riyadh and other Gulf partners on regional security, the Gaza conflict, and energy cooperation.
- July 24, 2025: At the IDEF 2025 defense expo in Istanbul, Saudi Arabia’s military industries authority (SAMI) concluded three memorandums of understanding with Turkish defense firms including ASELSAN, MDH Makel, and Ayyazilim. These agreements target localization of military land systems production in Saudi Arabia. Simultaneously, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia reportedly are in advanced talks over a **US\$6 billion defense cooperation agreement** covering warships, tanks, missiles, and the potential integration or export of Türkiye’s KAAN fighter jet.
- June 26, 2025: Saudi utility ACWA Power moved to finalize its first deals in a planned USD 5 billion push in Türkiye, including two large-scale solar plants, signaling a step-change in Saudi investment in Türkiye’s green energy sector.



- May 2025: In May 2025, Saudi Foreign Minister His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan met with Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan in Riyadh. They co-chaired the second Saudi-Turkish Coordination Council, a bilateral forum for strengthened political, economic, and security exchange. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the diplomatic training academies of both countries.
- March 12, 2025: Saudi Defense Minister His Highness Prince Khalid bin Salman hosted his Turkish counterpart, Yaşar Güler, in Jeddah. The meeting focused on defense cooperation, military-industrial collaboration, and deepening strategic ties.

Türkiye-United Arab Emirates

- October 2025: On October 2, 2025, the central banks of Türkiye and the UAE formalized a bilateral currency swap agreement worth 18 billion UAE dirhams (equivalent to about USD 4.9 billion). Alongside the swap, the two banks signed memoranda to promote use of local currencies in cross-border trade and to integrate payment systems.
- July 2025: Türkiye and the UAE signed an "Agreement on Mutual Protection of Classified Information in the Field of Defence Industry," establishing frameworks for safeguarding sensitive data in joint defense projects. The pact is intended to support deeper military cooperation, particularly in defense technologies.
- July 2025: His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, paid an official visit to Türkiye, meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to deepen cooperation on trade, defense, and regional diplomacy. During the visit, seven bilateral agreements were signed across strategic sectors, and the Türkiye-UAE High-Level Strategic Council was inaugurated, marking a new institutional framework for long-term cooperation.
- May 2025: Türkiye actively sought UAE investment in AI, data centers, connectivity, and green energy projects. Dubai Islamic Bank committed USD 150 million in sharia-compliant financing for Turkcell's technology expansion. The Turkish Investment Office reported rising bilateral investment activity across multiple sectors.
- On February 5, 2025, the UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Lutfullah Göktaş had been appointed as the new Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the UAE. His credentials were received in the UAE.
- January 2025: On January 27, 2025, the UAE and Türkiye held their Second Session of Political Consultations, during which they reviewed the growing bilateral relationship and signed new agreements covering economic and investment cooperation. At that meeting, officials cited a 108 percent increase in bilateral exchange in 2023, reaching USD 36.3 billion.
- On December 30, 2024, President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the UAE held a phone call with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. They discussed bilateral relations, cooperation in all fields, and regional developments.
- November 2024: In an interview with Anadolu Agency, Ambassador Tugay Tuncer, Türkiye's envoy to the United Arab Emirates, stated that Türkiye and the UAE had signed more than 50 agreements over the past three years across the political, economic, defense, social, and cultural spheres. He described the relationship as having made "significant strides in all areas," reflecting the broad scope and growing depth of the partnership between Ankara and Abu Dhabi.



Türkiye-Qatar

- September 2025: Between September 27 and 29, Türkiye's intelligence chief İbrahim Kalın traveled to Doha to participate in mediation talks on the Gaza conflict, joining Qatari and U.S. envoys in efforts to broker a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. Kalın's meetings with Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani underscored the close coordination between Ankara and Doha in regional diplomacy. Türkiye played an active supporting role in shaping the ceasefire framework and in aligning humanitarian assistance efforts in Gaza.
- September 2025: Following the September 9, 2025 Israeli airstrike in Doha, which targeted members of a Hamas delegation, Türkiye strongly condemned the attack, calling it "a grave violation of Qatari sovereignty and international law." Ankara expressed full solidarity with Qatar, emphasizing that such actions undermined diplomatic efforts for peace. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and senior officials coordinated closely with Qatari counterparts to deliver a unified diplomatic response and to safeguard ongoing negotiations.
- July 2025: Turkish Ambassador to Qatar, H.E. Dr. M. Mustafa Göksu, stated that Türkiye and Qatar have signed **117 agreements** across many sectors including: defense, energy, trade, culture, education, and emphasized their alignment in foreign policy around regional crises and humanitarian issues.
- July 2025: The "Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Humanitarian Assistance" signed by Türkiye and Qatar on November 14, 2024, officially took effect in July 2025 following ratification and publication in Türkiye's Official Gazette. The agreement establishes a framework for joint deployment of humanitarian aid, field hospitals, reconstruction initiatives, and shared logistical support.
- August 2025: A revised Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEOA) between Türkiye and Qatar entered into force, eliminating multiple tariffs and reducing non-tariff barriers. Turkish officials project that this will boost bilateral trade significantly over the coming years.
- November 2024: During the 10th meeting of the Türkiye-Qatar Supreme Strategic (High Strategic) Committee in Ankara, President Erdoğan and His Highness Sheikh Tamim Al Thani, co-chaired and oversaw the signing of eight new agreements. These cover cooperation in humanitarian aid, archives/document management, media and communication, youth and sports, road transport, trade facilitation, as well as defense technical and military cooperation.
- November 2024: On November 3, 2024, President Erdoğan received the credentials of Sheikh Mohammed bin Nasser bin Jassim Al-Thani as Ambassador of Qatar to Türkiye.
- June 2024: The Sixth Joint Ministerial Meeting of the Strategic Dialogue between the Cooperation Council and the Republic of Türkiye, was held in Doha, Qatar. His Excellency Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, chaired the meeting. The session was attended by Their Highnesses and Excellencies, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the GCC countries, as well as His Excellency Hakan Fidan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye.



Türkiye-Oman

- September 2025: Oman and Türkiye held joint security talks in Ankara. The Omani delegation was led by Major General Idris bin Abdul Rahman Al Kindi, Secretary General of Oman's National Security Council, while the Turkish side was headed by H.E. Okay Memiş, Secretary General of Türkiye's Security Council. The discussions covered a range of regional and international issues of common interest, with a particular focus on the need to maintain security and stability in the region.
- September 2025: At Gastech 2025, BOTAS, Oman LNG, and PetroChina signed strategic cooperation agreements on LNG trade, floating storage/regasification units (FSRUs), and joint capacity expansion.
- July 2025: Oman and Türkiye signed a renewable energy and alternative fuels MoU to develop net-zero projects starting in 2027 in Oman, including collaboration in green energy technologies.
- July 2025: Türkiye and Oman signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) covering joint work in oil and natural gas exploration, transport, and renewable energy, including electricity, hydrogen, and energy efficiency projects.
- November 2024: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of Oman conducted a state visit to Türkiye on November 28–29, 2024, at the invitation of President Erdoğan. The visit produced a joint statement affirming commitment to bolstering cooperation in politics, economy, defense, energy, education, and regional security. Several memoranda and agreements were signed, and both leaders called for increased trade and investments.
- April 2024: Oman and Türkiye signed a 10-year gas supply contract. Starting in 2025, Oman will provide Turkish company Botas with 1 million metric tons of gas annually.



Türkiye-Bahrain

- September 2025: Turkish Airlines and Bahrain's Gulf Air signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance bilateral aviation cooperation, covering areas such as route expansions, shared services, and possibly joint ventures.
- July 2025: Bahrain and Türkiye held the third round of political consultations in Ankara, led by Ambassador Dr. Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Undersecretary for Political Affairs at Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Burak Akçapar, Türkiye's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. The discussions focused on regional developments and explored opportunities to deepen cooperation in trade, investment, defense, and education.
- May 2025: In May 2025, Bahrain's Ambassador to Türkiye, Ibrahim Yusuf Al-Abdulla, met with Rifat Hisarcıklioğlu, President of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB), in Ankara. The meeting focused on strengthening bilateral trade and economic cooperation, with both sides emphasizing the importance of expanding private sector partnerships and increasing mutual investments.
- February 2025: Bahrain's Ministry of Industry and Commerce reaffirmed the widening dimensions of cooperation with Türkiye, and both sides have discussed increased joint



investment, especially in industrial projects.

- March 2024: Dr. Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Political Affairs, met with Ahmet Yıldız, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Türkiye, during the third Antalya Diplomacy Forum. The discussion focused on reviewing and enhancing the areas of cooperation and friendship between Bahrain and Türkiye, with the aim of advancing the mutual interests of both countries.
- November 2024: The Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry announced plans to enhance trade collaboration with Türkiye, calling bilateral economic cooperation “a strategic priority.” Business councils in both countries expressed interest in organizing new trade exhibitions and investment forums to promote Turkish goods and services in Gulf markets.

Türkiye-Kuwait

- September 30, 2025: The Turkish Embassy in Kuwait hosted a high-level reception for Mr. Ahmet Burak Dağlıoğlu, President of the Investment Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, alongside senior officials, diplomats, and leading members of Kuwait’s business community. The event highlighted the deepening economic and strategic partnership between the two countries. During the reception, Türkiye and Kuwait emphasized the untapped potential in business-to-business relations, particularly in the fields of trade, defense, tourism, and investment. Kuwaiti investments in Türkiye have surpassed USD 2 billion, with over 427 Kuwaiti companies currently operating in the country, reflecting the growing confidence and engagement between their private sectors.
- September 26–30, 2025: On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to discuss

expanding political, economic, and defense cooperation and regional issues.

- July 17–24, 2025: Kuwait received its first Bayraktar TB2 armed UAVs from Türkiye, holding a ceremony in Kuwait City. The deliveries stem from a ~USD 367–370 million 2023 contract with Baykar and include training, support, and munitions packages.
- April 24, 2025: Kuwait’s Deputy Foreign Minister, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, met Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan in Ankara during the ninth round of political consultations, reviewing bilateral ties and coordination on regional files.
- December 26, 2024: Kuwait’s newly appointed Ambassador to Türkiye presented credentials to President Erdoğan in Ankara, underscoring continuity at the diplomatic level following the May 2024 state visit.
- May 2024: During an official state visit to Ankara, His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, held high-level talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, marking a significant milestone in bilateral relations. The visit, which coincided with the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two nations, resulted in the signing of six cooperation agreements covering the fields of diplomacy, defense, trade, housing, investment, and interior and disaster management. Among these was an executive protocol on defense procurement and a strategic dialogue framework designed to institutionalize high-level consultations between the two governments. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to expanding economic and security cooperation and emphasized the importance of strengthening coordination on regional stability and humanitarian efforts.



Since 2021, Türkiye's rapprochement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has developed into a political partnership supported by expanding security and economic cooperation. After the Al Ula reconciliation, Ankara rebuilt trust with Gulf capitals and established regular coordination on regional issues. By 2025, this cooperation had become multidimensional, covering diplomacy, defense, energy, and trade.

High-level engagement has been central to maintaining this momentum. Throughout 2025, President Erdoğan met with Saudi and Kuwaiti leaders during the UN General Assembly, while Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates held strategic consultations in both Abu Dhabi and Ankara. These exchanges reinforced a shared approach to de-escalation, humanitarian relief, and conflict management. Türkiye's participation in Gaza mediation with Qatar, the United States, and other partners in late 2025 reflected this new alignment, as did coordination with Doha to sustain mediation efforts after the September strike in Qatar.

Security cooperation is also expanding where interests converge. With Saudi Arabia, Türkiye is pursuing defense-industry localization, strengthening military contacts, and cooperating on new rail and transport projects. With Oman, collaboration now includes energy security, anchored in a ten-year LNG supply agreement starting in 2025 and new memoranda on hydrocarbons, power systems, and renewable energy. These initiatives indicate a growing convergence of priorities focused on stability, resilience, and diversification.

Economic relations provide the most durable basis for this partnership. Türkiye-GCC economic integration is deepening, supported by complementary strengths. The GCC's energy wealth and financial capacity align with Türkiye's manufacturing base, skilled labor force, and large domestic market. Infrastructure development in both regions, including logistics hubs and new transport corridors, is reducing transaction costs and increasing trade volumes.

Both sides are also advancing ambitious economic diversification agendas. The GCC's drive to reduce dependence on hydrocarbons coincides with Türkiye's efforts to expand its export markets, encouraging cooperation in manufacturing, technology, health, and tourism. These synergies have already led to greater capital flows, joint contracting, and defense-industrial collaboration.

The ongoing Türkiye-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations have become the centerpiece of this economic expansion. Talks began in March 2024 and have advanced from framework setting to drafting. The first round, held in Ankara in July 2024, established the scope of negotiations and exchanged lists covering goods, services, investment facilitation, tourism, health, and rules of origin. Although the initial goal of concluding by the end of 2024 was not achieved, technical discussions have continued through 2025 under the direction of Trade Minister Ömer Bolat and GCC Secretary-General Jasem Albudaiwi. Both sides remain committed to a comprehensive deal that will include chapters on investment and regulatory cooperation.

The outlook for Türkiye-GCC relations remains positive. Improved political trust, compatible economic structures, and aligned diversification strategies provide strong momentum for further integration. Turkish officials have set an ambitious target of reaching 150 billion dollars in annual trade with the broader Arab world. If the FTA moves to the legal drafting stage and establishes joint mechanisms to harmonize standards and streamline customs procedures, cooperation is likely to evolve into a stable, rules-based partnership capable of withstanding regional shocks and supporting long-term strategic alignment between Türkiye and the Gulf states.



5. Supporting Documents

Publications

- [Turkey and the Struggle for Strategic Balance Among the Great Powers - October 2025.](#)
- [Revisiting Türkiye-GCC Economic Cooperation amid Trump 2.0 - April 2025](#)
- [GCC-Türkiye Relations: Dawn of a New Era – Gulf Research Center - June 2015](#)

Araa Publications

- [Turkish Mediation to Stop the War Unlikely: Biden Urges Türkiye to Side with the West and Open Dialogue with Ankara - April 2024](#)

Events

- The Gulf Research Center's Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) 2025, held from July 22 to 24, conducted Workshop 1 titled *"GCC States and Non-Arab Regional Middle Powers: Opportunities and Challenges Amidst Shifting Regional Balances."* The workshop examined how the Gulf region, as a highly penetrated sub-regional system, continues to be shaped by intra-regional rivalries and cooperation, along with the strategic involvement of non-Arab regional powers, namely Turkey, Iran, and Israel. It highlighted the differing approaches of GCC member states toward these powers, with each Gulf state formulating its policy according to its own national priorities, security concerns, and political agendas amid shifting regional and global dynamics.
- On July 14, 2025, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), welcomed Dr. Celalettin Duran, Director General of the Center for International Relations and Diplomacy (Milletlerarası İlişkiler ve Diplomasi Merkezi) (MID) in Turkey, along with his colleagues, at the GRC office in Jeddah. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss areas of mutual interest and explore potential avenues for cooperation between the two institutions.

- The Gulf Research Center organized the GCC-Türkiye Economic Forum from November 11-13 in Istanbul, aiming to boost economic collaboration between GCC countries and Türkiye. Jointly organized with the International Cooperation Platform (ICP), the event featured over 450 participants, including more than 200 Turkish and Gulf companies, and was supported by key entities such as the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Türkiye (DEİK).
- On September 27, 2023, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager and Mr. Cengiz Özgencil held a roundtable introduction meeting for the "GCC-Türkiye Economic Forum" in Istanbul. The meeting included Ambassadors of the GCC in Türkiye and representatives from the Turkish ministries of foreign affairs, trade, and investment.





Gulf Research Center

Knowledge for All



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