



NEWSLETTER

The latest news from EU-GCC project



World
Environment Day

Time for
Nature

Royalty free picture | Source Pixabay

In this issue

Green Deal summary

Policies and General Principles of Environment Protection in GCC

Enabling Europe to lead the green and digital transition

GCC countries celebrating WED

Correct and verified information to date

Editorial

As we celebrate World Environment day, this edition of the newsletter pays special attention to the measures being taken in both the EU and GCC to address global warming. Significantly climate and environmental challenges are not only an environmental issue but an economic opportunity. Reaching emission targets will require innovative action by businesses to invest in new technologies, redesigning production processes, reducing waste and increasing recycling. The EU-GCC Dialogue on Economic Diversification project with its mission to assist GCC countries reduce their dependence on hydrocarbon sectors stands ready to play its part in supporting further moves to develop new environmental technologies.

*EU GCC Dialogue on Economic Diversification Project
05th of June 2020*



Building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe.



The European council 'strategic agenda 2019-2024' sets out the priority areas that will steer the work of the European Council and provide guidance for the work programmes of other EU institutions.

The strategic agenda focuses on four main priorities:

- *protecting citizens and freedoms*
- *developing a strong and vibrant economic base*
- *building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe*
- *promoting European interests and values on the global stage*
- *It also sets out how to achieve those objectives.*

Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to Europe and the world. To overcome these challenges, Europe needs a new growth strategy that transforms the Union into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where

- there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050
- economic growth is decoupled from resource use
- no person and no place is left behind

Europe needs to step up its **action to manage climate change, which is an 'existential threat'**. It also needs to embrace technological evolution and globalisation while making sure that no-one is left behind.

Priority actions identified by the European Council include:

- ensuring that EU policies are consistent with the Paris Agreement
- accelerating the transition to renewables and increasing energy efficiency
- reducing dependence on outside sources, diversifying supplies and investing in solutions for the mobility of the future
- improving the quality of air and waters
- promoting sustainable agriculture
- implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights at EU and member state level
- calling on all EU countries to move forward and step up their climate action

For more information: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/eu-strategic-agenda-2019-2024/#group-Green-Europe-QlfeRNUWRh>



Policy areas

Biodiversity

Measures to protect our fragile ecosystem

From Farm to Fork

Ways to ensure more sustainable food systems

Sustainable agriculture

Sustainability in EU agriculture and rural areas thanks to the common agricultural policy (CAP)

Clean energy

Opportunities for alternative, cleaner sources of energy

Sustainable industry

Ways to ensure more sustainable, more environmentally-respectful production cycles

Building and renovating

The need for a cleaner construction sector

Sustainable mobility

Promoting more sustainable means of transport

Eliminating pollution

Measures to cut pollution rapidly and efficiently

Climate action

Making the EU climate neutral by 2050

The EU will be climate neutral in 2050. To do this, the EU has proposed a [European Climate Law](#) turning political commitments into legal obligations and triggering investment.

Reaching this target will require action by all sectors of the economy, including

- investing in environmentally-friendly technologies
- supporting industry to innovate
- rolling out cleaner, cheaper and healthier forms of private and public transport
- decarbonising the energy sector
- ensuring buildings are more energy efficient
- working with international partners to improve global environmental standards.

The EU will also provide financial support and technical assistance to help people, businesses and regions that are most affected by the move towards the green economy. This is called the Just Transition Mechanism and will help mobilize at least €100 billion over the period 2021-2027 in the most affected regions.

Extract from Opening Remarks by Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans at the Press Conference on a Green and Just Recovery - 28 May 2020

“For us, if we take on this extra burden of loans and grants, of a higher EU Budget, we have to make sure that we take decisions that will take us to the future and not into the past. The future is with a green, resilient and digital economy that makes sure that there are sustainable jobs, economic growth and that we are able to react to other challenges when they come.”

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_20_964

For more information: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en#timeline



Policies and General Principles of Environment Protection in GCC

Recognizing the importance of the development and environment, and desiring to develop long-term solutions for the environmental problems emerging from the developments that have occurred in the GCC States,

The Supreme Council adopted the document of "The Policies and General Principles of Environment Protection at the GCC States" the most important policies are the following:



- (1) Adopting a comprehensive concept of environment, which includes all surrounding media such as water, air, land and all elements therein such as inanimate things, plants, animals, natural systems and processes and human activities, as well as developing a law based on this concept for environment protection.
 - (2) Establishing and completing the legislative and coordinating bodies, supporting the executive bodies in charge of the implementation of the regulations, rules and standards of environment protection and providing the capabilities of observation and surveillance.
 - (3) Taking into account the environmental considerations and making the environmental planning an integral part of the comprehensive planning in all industrial, agricultural and constructional fields, and adopting the environmental assessment of projects and subjecting their licenses to the approval of the authority in charge of environment protection.
 - (4) Developing and unifying rules, legislation and standards required for the protection of environment and rationalizing the utilization of natural resources and conservation of wildlife.
 - (5) Coordinating the efforts made by Member States to prevent the adverse effects of the development and industrialization projects
 - (6) Observing the environmental outcome of the projects set up in other countries with foreign aids from the GCC States
 - (7) Promoting the community's awareness of the environmental issues and fostering the sense of individual and collective responsibility for environment conservation.
 - (8) Proving the Labor Force in charge of the environment affairs and supporting the training plans.
 - (9) Compilation and exchange of regional and international information on environment and utilizing such information for the planning process.
 - (10) Encouraging scientific research to identify the environmental problems and preparing a directory of the available expertise in the field of environment protection.
- States

For more information: <https://www.gcc-sg.org/en-us/CooperationAndAchievements/Achievements/CooperationinthefieldofHumanandEnvironmentAffairs/Pages/EnvironmentalCooperation.aspx>



Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements



The GCC States have signed or accepted more than 33 regional and international agreements and conventions in the field of environment and the protection of wildlife and natural resources. The agreements on biological diversity, protection of the ozone layer, climatic change, drought control and international trafficking in endangered species are among the agreements that have drawn the

attention of the GCC States and in which the GCC States have achieved considerable success in the application of some of them. Given the importance of these agreements, the GCC States have formed a working team for each agreement to follow up the relevant developments with a view to maintaining the interests of the GCC States at both the regional and international levels. The most important agreements that were signed or accepted by the GCC States are the following:

1. Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, and Montreal Protocol and amendments thereof
2. The Agreement on Conservation of Immigrating Wildlife Species
3. The Convention on international trafficking in endangered species
4. Basel Convention on hazardous materials and trans-border movement thereof
5. UN Convention on Biological Diversity
6. UN Framework Agreement on Climatic Change and Kyoto Protocol
7. UN Drought Control Convention
8. Kuwait Regional Convention on Protection of Maritime Environment and protocols
9. Convention on Control of Vessel-related Pollution
10. Convention on Control of Sea Pollution
11. International Convention on Overseas Intervention and protocols
12. Agreement on Civil Liability in Maritime Claims
13. UN Convention on Maritime Law
14. Agreement on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damages
15. International agreement on establishing an international fund for Compensation of Oil Pollution Damages
16. PIC Agreement
17. Convention on Prohibition of Production, Use and Storage of Chemical Weapons and Destruction thereof
18. International Agreement on whales
19. International Agreement On Plant Protection
20. Agreement on Permanent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
21. International Agreement on Wet Lands (Ramsar Agreement)
22. Agreement on the Protection of International Heritage
23. Regional Agreement on Conservation of Wildlife and Habitat thereof at the GCC

For more information: <https://www.gcc-sg.org/en-us/CooperationAndAchievements/Achievements/CooperationinthefieldofHumanandEnvironmentAffairs/Pages/EnvironmentalCooperation.aspx>



Research and Innovation Performance report: Enabling Europe to lead the green and digital transition

The report on the EU's Science, Research and Innovation Performance analyses how Europe performs in the global context. It highlights the need for research and innovation (R&I) to support sustainable and inclusive growth of companies, regions and countries, making sure that no one is left behind in the quest for strengthening innovation systems, especially in less-developed regions. It also emphasizes the importance of ensuring that Europeans have the right skills, in the light of new technological revolutions, as well as the significant role of R&I policy in reinforcing companies' productivity, resulting in jobs and value creation, in a sustainable way.

In particular, the 2020 edition of the biennial report presents 11 policy recommendations to support our people, planet and prosperity.

Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth said: *“Research and innovation is at the core of the response to the unprecedented crisis we are facing and can significantly contribute to the economic recovery. The 2020 Science, Research and Innovation Performance report shows how research and innovation are central to bring about the ecological and digital transitions Europe needs. Horizon 2020 and the future Horizon Europe programme play a crucial role in this*

this transformation.”

The EU ranks among the top players in scientific production and excellence, for example accounting worldwide for 25% of top-cited scientific publications on the topic of climate and for 27% in the area of bioeconomy. When it comes to patent applications in these two areas, the EU is also leading the way with 24% in climate and 25% in bioeconomy. Yet, more efforts are needed to turn research results into sustainable marketable

solutions as well as to build a strong [European Research Area](#) and increase the effectiveness of public research systems. And, as digitalisation is transforming R&I, the right policy mix should foster deep-tech and researchers' digital skills, alongside promoting open science and

ensuring sufficient investments in high-quality data infrastructures. [Horizon Europe](#), the EU's next research and innovation framework programme, will be a key part in stepping up and steering R&I efforts, through its mission-oriented approach and European partnerships.

Building on the EU's excellence and top performance in science-based research and innovation, the Science, Research and Innovation Performance report presents 11 policy recommendations, grouped around three main pillars:

- R&I for a safe and just space for humanity;
- R&I for global leadership;
- R&I for economic and societal impact.



For more information: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/science-research-and-innovation-performance-eu-2020_en



How the GCC countries celebrated the World Environment Day 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic that started in China's Wuhan late last year has left behind a trail of deaths. Strangely enough, the pandemic seems to have given the environment some breathing space. Nature is cleansing herself and slowly reclaiming the lost space. The lockdown which was imposed since mid-March to combat the spread of the coronavirus pandemic resulted in significant improvement in air quality across the world. It also has seen a positive effect on wildlife as well.



A peacock is seen on a deserted road at Juhu in Mumbai during the COVID-19-induced lockdown. PTI

The coronavirus lockdown also saw the water quality improve and the pollution rate decrease. The World Environment Day 2020's theme is 'Celebrate Biodiversity', this celebration Day urges global leaders to address this link and take urgent action in order to safeguard the diversity of life on the planet, and ultimately our own.

Biodiversity provides various ecosystem services for the planet, including fresh water, stable and farmable soils, climate change mitigation, and food. Biodiversity is also integral to a bustling economy as it is the foundation for ecotourism, forestry, many of our pharmaceuticals, and food production.

Thankfully several global initiatives are working to reduce this loss. The United Nations Environmental Programme is collaborating with countries to develop National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans. Earlier this month, the EU released its Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for 2030, which will focus on expanding the EU protected area network, a new EU Nature Restoration Plan, creating transformative change, and succeeding in the global biodiversity challenge.

How the GCC countries celebrated the World Environment Day:

To commemorate this day **Kuwait** organized an online event in partnership with international NGOs, in which eminent personalities, have participated the event was organized on the 4th of June.



In **Oman**, the Sultanate's government represented by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs was keen to develop several mechanisms for protecting wildlife and preserving their natural habitats.

The Law on Environmental Protection and Pollution Control came to make environmental planning an essential part of a larger planning for development in all fields, to sustain and prioritize the concept of protecting the environment and preventing pollution

Some other initiatives were launched to celebrate the World Environment Day
http://ropme.org/396_Env_Day.clx

Whereas in Qatar, private and public initiatives took place, aiming to raise children's awareness as illustrated below. <https://muscateer.om/en/news/oman-celebrates-world-environment-day-idaGlsag==>



The government of Qatar has also taken part in the celebrations of the World Environment Day, as the country gives great care to the implementation of the environmental programmes, projects and initiatives, in particular maintaining biodiversity and the awareness of related issues.

The Ministry of Municipality and Environment (MME) explained that it has been carrying out biodiversity projects and programmes in many related areas. <https://www.gulf-times.com/story/664937/Qatar-marks-World-Environment-Day>

In KSA, on this occasion, the ministry has broadcast awareness messages urging all to care for the environment, shedding light on the damage and negative impact of biodiversity loss, in addition to sharing efforts and experiences of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to preserve the environment.

Saudi Aramco's Manifa field and biodiversity protection area.



On World Environment Day, the UAE has made a leap in the expansion and development of protected areas increasing from 44 in 2019 to 49 in 2020.

In his statement to mark the occasion, Dr. Zeyoudi added that forging ahead in the economic sphere has never been enough for the UAE. "A parallel priority is to ensure that the country's economic growth does not come at the expense of the environment," he noted.

"On World Environment Day 2020 that occurs under the theme 'Biodiversity', we reflect on our success in protecting flora and fauna at home and abroad that has established our country as a globally acclaimed leader in environmental stewardship," the minister added.

<http://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395302846322>



For more information, the editorial team suggests the links below:

European Union

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/?Page=1>

<https://ec.europa.eu/trade/trade-policy-and-you/publications/news-archive/>

Gulf Wide

<http://www.gdnonline.com/>

<http://gulfbusiness.com/>

<https://www.arabianbusiness.com/gcc>

Bahrain

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/>

<http://www.bna.bh/en/index.aspx>

KSA

<http://www.arabnews.com/>

<http://saudigazette.com.sa/>

<https://www.spa.gov.sa/?lang=en>

Kuwait

<http://www.arabtimesonline.com/news/>

<http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/>

<https://www.kuna.net.kw/Default.aspx?language=en>

Oman

<https://timesofoman.com/>

<http://www.omanobserver.om/>

<https://www.muscatdaily.com/>

https://www.omannews.gov.om/ona_eng/#/home

UAE

<https://www.khaleejtimes.com/>

<https://gulfnews.com/>

<https://www.thenational.ae/>

<http://wam.ae/en>

Qatar

<https://www.qatarday.com/news-category/local>

<https://www.qatarliving.com/news>

<https://www.gulf-times.com/>

<https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/>



EU-GCC Dialogue on Economic Diversification

A project funded by the European Union

As always, we welcome your feedback on the topics and sectors that interest you most and you would like to see covered in future editions of the newsletter.

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