



The European Union
&
The Gulf



Message by the Head of Delegation



Ambassador Adam Kulach
Head of EU Delegation Riyadh

The Delegation of the European Union in Riyadh, which is accredited to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar, is Europe's diplomatic mission to the region. It was established in 2004 and covers bilateral relations between the EU and the Gulf countries as well as relations between the EU and the Cooperation Council of the Gulf Arab Countries (GCC) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Today the European Union is the largest trade partner of the Gulf countries with whom we have a shared interest in a stable and prosperous region, including in our common neighbourhood in the Mediterranean. With 28 countries, over 500 million people, one of the largest GDP's and as the biggest exporter in the world, the EU has a lot to offer to the Gulf region in terms of expertise, business opportunities, exchange of ideas and people-to-people contacts. The EU also offers support and advice to the GCC States as they advance through a similar process that led to what is now the EU, which under the founding Treaty of Rome in 1957 also began as a partnership between six Member States.

The European Union Delegation in Riyadh is closely engaged with our host countries, in constant dialogue with their people and their leaders and trustfully cooperating on matters of common interest while explaining and holding up the values of the European Union.

The European Union is an active, attractive and reliable partner of the GCC States, and we in the Delegation are working for this.

H.E. Ambassador Adam Kulach
Head of Delegation

What is the European Union?

The European Union (EU) is not a federal State but it is not simply an international organisation either. The EU is a unique entity where its 28 Member Countries have renounced to a part of their sovereignty to create a common space of peace and exchange for their citizens.

The origins of the European Union go back to 1950 with the European Coal and Steel Community that originally brought together six countries after their devastating confrontation in World War II: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

Today, the EU has 28 Member States and over 500 million inhabitants. The EU is a common market and it guarantees four freedoms: free movement of goods, capital, services and people.

EU citizens have to be treated the same and have the same rights as the citizens of the EU country in which they are. Through the citizenship of the European Union, the citizens of the EU Member States enjoy a number of benefits in all 28 Member States – and beyond:

- They have the right to move, reside, work and invest freely within the EU.
- They have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate in the European Parliament and municipal elections in whichever EU country they reside.
- Outside the EU, they have a right to protection by the diplomatic and consular authorities of any other EU country, should their home country not be represented.



EU Map



Euro currency symbol and coin

What is the European Union?

Today, a large part of the EU is in an area without borders for EU-citizens and foreign visitors alike: thanks to the Schengen agreement, border controls are a thing of the past between 26 European countries. The only tell-tale sign informing of the crossing of a border is a signpost with the name of the country you are entering, making travelling abroad as simple as travelling to another city.

Visitors from the GCC benefit as well: One single visa allows them to travel to or do business in more than two dozen countries. In 19 of them, they will also enjoy the comfort and economic benefits of being able to pay in one single currency, the Euro (€).

The European Union is not only a top destination for business, investment and tourism. It is also the biggest donor of Official Development Assistance.

The European Union also has exclusive powers in several policy areas and its acts are binding for the Member States. The decision-making process involves the following main institutions:

- The European Commission, which proposes laws, supervises their application and upholds the interest of the Union as a whole;
- The European Parliament, which represents EU's citizens and is directly elected by them.
- The Council, which represents the individual European Member States.
- The Court of Justice of the European Union, which ensures that all countries and institutions duly apply EU-law and protects the rights of the citizens.



9 MAY
EUROPE DAY

Europe Day Logo

Europe Day is celebrated on the 9th of May and marks the day in 1950 when French foreign Minister Robert Schuman first proposed the creation of the European Coal & Steel Community which eventually developed into the EU.

The European Union and the World



EU High Representative
Federica Mogherini

The European Union works on the international scene to promote peace, respect of human rights, development, economic growth, stability and to encourage the establishment of open markets.

The European Union is also a successful example of economic and political integration for the common interest of its Member Countries. It is perceived as a model of integration in many other regions of the world.

The EU contributes to peace, stability and promotion of human rights through political dialogue, international presence and by providing humanitarian aid. It works closely with other countries and international organisations such as at the United Nations and the World Bank.

Through development aid, technical cooperation and financial assistance the European Union contributes to the eradication of poverty and the enhancement of quality of life.

As a world player in international trade, the European Union has a major role in the World Trade Organisation. It is the world's biggest trader and is committed to promoting free, open markets for goods and services, thus benefiting both rich and poor countries.

Europe's External Representation

The European External Action Service was created in 2011, as the new "ministry" responsible for EU diplomacy. It is chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The European External Action Service and the High Representative are the eyes, voices and arms of the European Union in the world. This allows Europe to speak with a common voice and be fully present in bilateral relations and international organisations.

Besides the High Representative and the Headquarters in Brussels, the European Union is present worldwide through a network of EU Delegations – the EU's diplomatic missions – with currently over 140 offices.

In the GCC, the European Union is represented by a Regional Delegation in Riyadh, covering all the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council except for the United Arab Emirates where a separate mission was opened in 2013. The Delegations of the European Union chair the cooperation of the European Member States in their host countries and they are the sole actor that can take action in the name of the Union in the areas of its exclusive competence.



The European Union

Basic Information on the EU

Founded in
1957

Member States
The EU has 28 Member States.

Population
The EU has a combined population of more than 500 million people.

Languages
The EU has 24 official languages. Citizens have the right to communicate with the EU in these languages as well as obtain public documents from the EU in these languages. The most widely understood and spoken language in the EU is English whilst the most widely spoken mother tongue in the EU is German.

Currency
The Euro is the common currency of the EU which is currently adopted by 19 EU Member States and uses the specially created symbol €.

Economy
The EU accounts for one-third of the world's economic production. Europe is the world's largest exporter of manufactured goods and services, and is itself the biggest export market for around 80 countries. Together, the European Union's 28 members account for 16% of world imports and exports.

Combined GDP for EU
€14.3 trillion

GDP per capita
€ 25,000

For more information on the European Union
visit the website www.europa.eu



EU Flag



Belgium



Greece



Lithuania



Portugal



Bulgaria



Spain



Luxembourg



Romania



Czech Republic



France



Hungary



Slovenia



Denmark



Croatia



Malta



Slovakia



Germany



Italy



Netherlands



Finland



Estonia



Cyprus



Austria



Sweden



Ireland



Latvia



Poland



United Kingdom



GCC Logo



United Arab Emirates



Oman



Bahrain



Qatar



Saudi Arabia



Kuwait



GCC Secretariat Building
© GCC Secretariat General

The Gulf Cooperation Council

Basic information on the GCC

Founded in
1981

Member States

The Cooperation Council of the Gulf Arab Countries (GCC) is comprised of 6 Member States: the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, and the State of Kuwait.

Population

The GCC has a combined population of more than 47 million people.

Language

Arabic

Currency

The GCC countries are preparing a currency union similar to the Eurozone,

Economy

The GCC is the biggest producer of oil in the world and a major producer of natural gas. It enjoyed considerable economic growth in the past years and is now moving towards a diversification of its economies.

Combined GDP for GCC

US\$ 1.60 trillion

GDP per capita

US\$ 33,300

For more information on the Gulf Cooperation Council
visit the website www.gccsg.org .

EU-GCC cooperation

Political Relations

The relationship between the EU and the GCC is governed by a Cooperation Agreement signed in 1988. The EU has also been committed to sharing its experiences of economic integration, including on monetary union, with the GCC which is undergoing a similar process to that of the European Union.

The EU and its member states have a long established historical relationship with the countries of the Gulf which continues to the present day and forms the foundations of the political dialogue between the two regions.

Both sides are committed to negotiations towards a Free Trade Agreement which were initiated in 1990. The objective of the Cooperation Agreement is to contribute towards strengthening stability in a region of strategic importance and to facilitate political, trade and economic relations. It aims to broaden economic and technical cooperation as well as cooperation in the fields of energy, industry, trade and services, agriculture, fisheries, investment, science, technology and the environment.

Under this Cooperation Agreement framework, an annual Joint Council/Ministerial Meetings between EU and GCC foreign ministers was established, as well as a Joint Cooperation Committee between senior officials. In addition, working groups have been established in the fields of industrial cooperation, energy and environment and in 1996 decentralised cooperation (university, business and media cooperation) was added to the agenda. Since 2003, there has been a regular Economic Dialogue, where topics such as unified trade policy, the fiscal aspects of a single currency, and the move from the customs union to a single market have been covered.

At the 2010 Joint Council, an EU-GCC Joint Action Programme for the years 2010-2013 was agreed. This programme led to increased cooperation in an array of policy areas.



The European Union and The Gulf Cooperation Council Working Together



Education & Science



Nuclear Safety



Telecom & I.T.



Industry



Tourism. Antiquities. Museums



Culture & Dialogue



Environment & Climate Change



Investment & Trade



Energy. Electricity. Water

EU-GCC cooperation

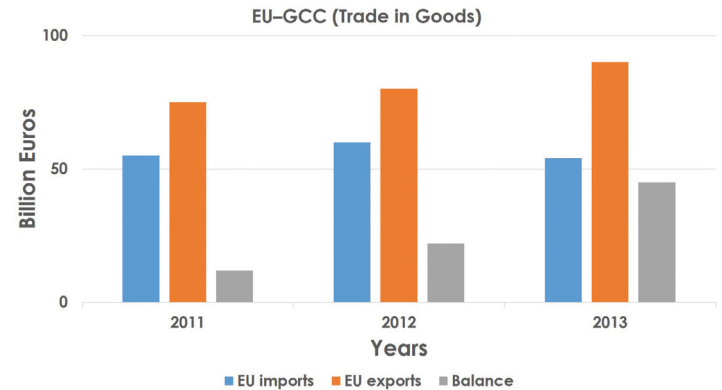
Economic and Trade Relations

The EU and the GCC countries have long-standing trade and investment links. All six GCC nations are members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) with Saudi Arabia the most recent member (since 2005). Since the 1980s European Union exports to the GCC have been constantly increasing.

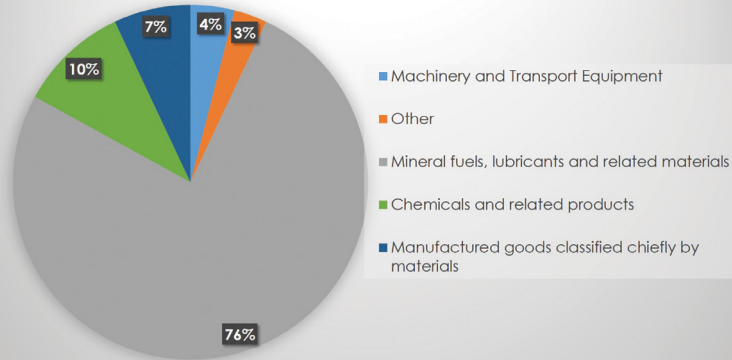
EU-GCC total trade in goods amounts to around €150 billion (2013). The GCC accounts for 4,4% of total EU trade and is a significant market for EU exports (5,5%).

The EU is the first trading partner for the GCC covering 13.8% of its total trade, followed by China (11.9%), Japan (11.8%), India (11.1%) and the USA at 9.1% (2013 figures).

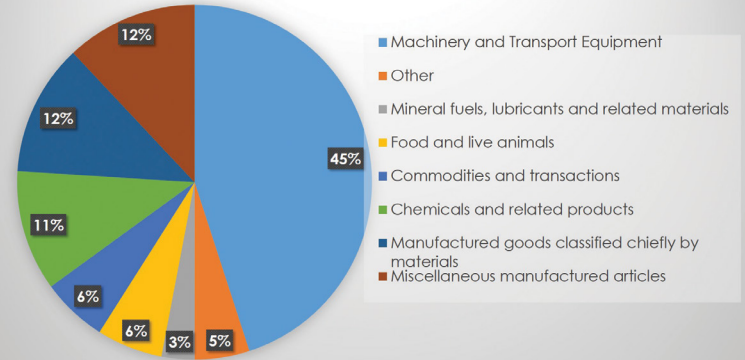
EU-GCC trade grew by 5.8% on average between 2008 and 2013. EU exports to the GCC Region consist mainly of manufactured products (78%, of which 44.6% of machinery and transport equipment and 11 % of chemicals) and agriculture and raw material (8.7%), while EU imports from the GCC Region consisted mainly of fuels, and mining products (78.2%) and chemicals products (10,1%) (2013 figures).



European Union Trade with GCC - Imports (2013)



European Union Trade with GCC - Exports (2013)



EU-GCC cooperation



Erasmus Mundus

Erasmus Mundus: Academic Exchange Programme

Erasmus Mundus is a global EU initiative active in the Gulf countries that is supported by the EU Delegation. It is an international exchange programme that aims to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation between the EU and the Gulf in academic areas. The EU provides financial support in the form of a scholarship to eligible students, teaching staff and scholars to pursue studies at European higher education institutions as a part of their studies at partnering higher education institutions in the Gulf. The scholarships are offered to eligible applicants from institutions where there is pre-existing cooperation. For the students, teachers and scholars who take part in the programme it represents a great opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills and also to experience a different culture and society.

For more information about Erasmus Mundus in the Gulf visit the website <http://emgulf.eu>



INCONET-GCC 2

INCONET-GCC: Joint Research Opportunities

INCONET-GCC is an initiative for cooperation in Research. It develops and supports dialogue between the GCC and the EU by bringing together policymakers and stakeholders from the GCC and EU Member States. It established a dialogue and action platform to identify common interests in research areas, set up science and technology priorities, support capacity-building activities, and enhance the interaction between different cooperation instruments of the European Commission and EU Member States. It promotes actions in order to monitor, develop, promote and contribute to the creation of synergies among the various science and technology cooperation programmes between the GCC and the EU Member States.

For more information visit the website www.inconet-gcc.eu



EU-GCC
TRADE AND BUSINESS
COOPERATION FACILITY

EU-GCC Business and Trade Co-operation Facility

The EU-GCC Business and Trade Facility was launched in 2014. It aims to increase trade and investment opportunities through enhancing policy dialogues between the EU and GCC policy-makers and business community. The project will forge closer links between the business communities in the EU and in the GCC. It will also contribute to removing regulatory obstacles by introducing a wide range of demand-driven activities.

For more information visit the website <http://eu-gcc.org>



**Delegation of the European Union
to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar**

Al-Maathar, Thabet al-Loghawi street, villa 25
P.O. Box 65995
Riyadh 11566
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Tel.: + 966 11 482 70 57
Fax: + 966 11 281 52 21

delegation-saudi-arabia@eeas.europa.eu

Twitter @EUintheGCC

Opening hours:

Sunday – Thursday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (GMT+3)

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/gulf_countries

December 2014