

EURO-GULF MONITOR

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WEEK IN BRIEF

1. Bahrain conducted first official diplomatic visit to Israel.
2. The UAE and Greece established strategic partnership and cemented cooperation in foreign policy and defence.
3. Saudi Arabia reopened land border with Iraq after 30 years.
4. Oman celebrated its 50th National Day anniversary
5. Tunisian President and Qatar's Emir met in Doha to discuss Libyan Political Dialogue Forum's outcomes and measures to facilitate bilateral trade, including an FTA agreement.



ROUND & ABOUT THE GULF

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Wednesday, 11 November – Bahrain's Information Minister, Ali Al-Rumaihi, announced that a new media and publications law will be soon presented to the National Assembly. The law seeks to enhance freedom of speech, expression and seeking information, introducing new measures to assist and protect journalists and media personnel.

STATE OF KUWAIT

Tuesday, 17 November – Kuwait and Qatar signed a series of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) during the 5th session of the Joint Kuwait-Qatari Higher Cooperation Committee. The MoUs cover cooperation in investment, Islamic Affairs, agriculture, civil services and administrative development.

SULTANATE OF OMAN

Wednesday, 18 November – Oman marked its 50th National Day anniversary. According to the national tradition, Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al-Said pardoned 390 prisoners, including foreign citizens.

STATE OF QATAR

Tuesday, 17 November – Qatar's hosting of the FIFA Club World Cup 2020, the 17th edition of the football tournament, was rescheduled from December 2020 to 1-11 February 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Wednesday, 18 November – Saudi Arabia reopened land border with Iraq for trade after 30 years. The Kingdom reopened the Arar desert crossing with Iraq for the first time since 1990, when it closed it in response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. The reopening was attended by a delegation from Riyadh and the Kingdom's Ambassador to Iraq, Abdulaziz Alshamri.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Sunday, 15 November – The UAE announced the extension of its Golden visa system to highly-specialised foreign workers in the country. Deputy President and Prime Minister of the UAE, Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, announced that the country will grant 10-year residency to specialists in AI, big data, virology, epidemiology and all PhD holders.



- Tuesday, 17 November–The European External Action Service (EEAS) launched the ‘We need to talk about Yemen’ (#TalkAboutYemen) communication campaign. The project presents stories and art pieces by Yemeni people with the goal of raising awareness and attention about the Yemeni conflict that started in 2015.



- Friday, 20 November–President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, will represent the European Union (EU) at the G20 Summit hosted by Saudi Arabia on 21 and 22 November 2020.

KEY OFFICIAL VISITS



- Sunday, 15 November–Armenia’s President, Armen Sarkissian, visited the UAE, where he met with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. They discussed the ceasefire with Azerbaijan and developments in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Mohammed bin Zayed welcomed the ceasefire as a step towards achieving regional stability.



- Sunday, 15 November–Tunisia’s President, Kais Saied, met with Qatar’s Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and Prime Minister, Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al-Thani, in Doha. The discussion covered the outcomes of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum held in Tunis as well as the necessity to sign a Qatari-Tunisian free trade agreement and establish a sea line to facilitate trade.



- Monday, 16 November–Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, met with France’s Minister of the Armed Forces, Florence Parly, during her visit to the UAE to review bilateral military and defence cooperation.



- Wednesday, 18 November–Bahrain’s Foreign Minister, Abdellatif Al-Zayani, led the Kingdom’s first diplomatic visit to Israel. He met with Israeli President, Reuven Rivlin, Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, in Jerusalem. The discussion focused on the embassies’ opening as well as establishing online visa systems and weekly flights between the two countries.



- Wednesday, 18 November–Bahrain’s King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, and Jordan’s King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussain held a tripartite summit in Abu Dhabi to discuss the Palestinian issue, as well as cooperation in health, food and security.



- Wednesday, 18 November–Greece’s Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, and Foreign Minister, Nikos Dendias, travelled to the UAE for a meeting with Abu Dhabi’s Crown Prince, Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. The UAE and Greece announced the establishment of a bilateral strategic partnership and signed an agreement on cooperation in foreign policy and defence.



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About the Euro-Gulf Monitor: The Arabian Gulf is rapidly becoming a geopolitical pivot. As a result, it is important to understand the internal and international dynamics unfolding in the region and the countries that compose it. The Euro-Gulf Monitor includes a small, carefully selected, batch of the most important news and events unfolding in the Arab Gulf countries to help you map the region’s trends and the dynamics of its relations with Europe, published weekly by the Euro-Gulf Information Centre.