

EURO-GULF MONITOR

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WEEK IN BRIEF

1. French and Qatari officials discussed Gulf Crisis, Libya, Lebanon and countering terrorism and violent extremism.
2. Kuwait's parliamentary elections sent 31 new parliamentarians to the 50-seat National Assembly, 19 MPs were re-elected and no woman secured a seat.
3. Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince met with United Kingdom's Prime Minister to discuss cooperation and normalisation with Israel in London.
4. The European Union hailed efforts by Kuwait and the United States to solve the GCC rift.
5. Bahrain's national air carrier, Gulf Air, signed five agreements on cooperation in aviation with Israeli companies.



ROUND & ABOUT THE GULF

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Sunday, 6 December – The Royal Bahraini Air Force (RBAF) conducted a four-day joint exercise with the US Air Force. The exercise sought to boost defence capabilities, increase the involved armed forces' coordination, and increase joint military action against threats to regional security.

STATE OF KUWAIT

Saturday, 5 December – Kuwait's parliamentary elections sent 31 new parliamentarians to the 50-seat National Assembly, 19 members were re-elected and no female candidate secured a seat. The first session of the new Parliament will be held on 15 December.

SULTANATE OF OMAN

Sunday, 6 December – Oman's government established a new joint-stock energy company called Energy Development Oman (EDO), which will predominantly focus on renewables and alternative energy resources. EDO will own stocks in the state-owned oil and gas company, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), and interests in the Sultanate's largest oil and gas operation, Block 6.

STATE OF QATAR

Thursday, 10 December – Qatar introduced a QR160.1 billion state budget for 2021 fiscal year. The revenues, of which a majority comes from oil (QR121.6 billion), are projected to decrease by 24% compared to 2020, assuming an average price of \$40 per oil barrel.

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Tuesday, 8 December – Saudi Aramco and the US oil services company Baker Hughes established a joint venture, Novel. The new facility will be constructed at Saudi Arabia's King Salman Energy Park (SPARK), and it will develop non-metallic products for energy sector applications, as part of the Kingdom's strategy to diversify its economy.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Wednesday, 9 December – The Abu Dhabi National Company (ADNOC) awarded the US company, Occidental Petroleum Corp (Oxy), an exploration concession of the onshore Block 5 along the UAE's border with Oman. Oxy will own a 100 percent stake in the exploration phase, investing up to \$140 million (USD).



- Saturday, 5 December–The European Union (EU) praised the Kuwaiti and US efforts in mediating the GCC crisis and reiterated its willingness to continue cooperating towards a diplomatic settlement of the crisis.



- Saturday, 5 December–The Head of the EU Delegation to Bahrain, Patrick Simonnet, met with Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, on the sidelines of the Manama Dialogue 2020, to discuss enhancing EU-Bahrain cooperation in several fields.



- Sunday, 6 December–Bahrain and Germany held the 4th round of political consultations in Manama. The meeting was co-chaired by Bahrain's Foreign Ministry Undersecretary for International Affairs, Abdulla bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, and the German State Secretary at the Federal Foreign Office, Miguel Berger. They discussed cooperation, and highlighted the importance of fulfilling bilateral agreements signed by the two states.



- Wednesday, 9 December–The Foreign Ministries of the Netherlands and Kuwait held a virtual meeting to discuss bilateral relations. The talks focused on establishing an economic and commercial forum to boost trade, as well as health, security and military cooperation, the Kuwait Vision 2035 and the country's energy transition.

KEY OFFICIAL VISITS



- Sunday, 6 December–Egypt's Prime Minister, Mostafa Madbouly, received Saudi Arabia's Minister of State, Essam bin Saeed. They discussed the activation of the Egyptian-Saudi Investment Fund, established in 2016, as well as cooperation and investments in tourism, health, infrastructure, education, and food sector.

- Monday, 7 December–A Saudi delegation discussed trade and investment opportunities in Baghdad, signing two agreements. The delegation, which included 22 Saudi businessmen, was headed by the Kingdom's Minister of Information, Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi, who was received by Iraq's President, Barham Salih.



- Tuesday, 8 December–Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, met with Sudan's Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, the Head of Sudan's Transitional Council, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Omar Qamaruddin, in Khartoum. They discussed bilateral cooperation and regional issues, particularly the Saudi Minister praised Sudan's support to solve the Yemen crisis.

- Wednesday, 9 December–Bahrain's national air carrier, Gulf Air, signed five agreements on cooperation in aviation with Israeli companies, EL AL Airlines, TAL Aviation Group, Israel Aerospace Industries Aviation Group, Q.A.S. Israel Ltd and Newrest Israel, during an official visit to Israel.



- Thursday, 11 December–Qatar's Emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, received French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian, in Doha. During the visit, the French Minister also met with his Qatari counterpart, Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani.



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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.