



EU-GCC RELATIONS

Relations between the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) and the European Union have significantly expanded over the past few years.

EUROPEAN UNION

OVERVIEW

GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

EU DELEGATIONS IN THE GCC

TRADE IN GOODS

(European Commission, 2023)

	1957	FOUNDATION	1981	
27	MEMBERS	6		
4.2 million km²	AREA	2.7 million km²		
447.4 million	POPULATION	50.4 million		
44.4 years	MEDIAN AGE	32 years		
\$16.8 trillion	GDP	\$2.2 trillion		

(Eurostat, World Bank)



€175.1 B (2022)

+41.3%
(from €123.9B in 2021)



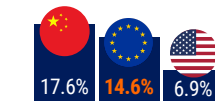
EU was the GCC's **2nd main trading partner** after China in 2022.

The GCC accounted for **3.1%** of EU's global trade



GCC IMPORTS FROM EU

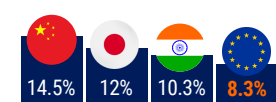
€90.7 B
(+20.4% since 2021)



The EU was GCC's **2nd main source of imports** after China

GCC EXPORTS TO EU

€76.1 B
(+115% since 2021)



The EU was GCC's **4th largest export market** after China, India and Japan

MILESTONES

- 1974:** Euro-Arab Dialogue after the 1973 war and energy crisis.
- 1979:** The Delegation for Relations with the Gulf States established in the European Parliament (since 2009 renamed "with the Arab Peninsula").
- 1985:** The first European Commission-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) ministerial meeting in Luxembourg.
- 1988:** The EU-GCC Framework Cooperation Agreement signed in Luxembourg (in force since 1 January 1990).
- 1990:** The EU-GCC Free Trade Agreement negotiations began (suspended since 2008).
- 1995:** The first Troika Ministerial Meeting in Granada agreed to enhance EU-GCC cooperation.
- 2004:** EU's first delegation to the Gulf opened in Riyadh with initial responsibility for all six GCC countries.
- 2003:** The first EU-GCC dialogue on countering terrorism and terrorist financing; The EU-GCC Economic Dialogue.
- 2010:** The EU Science and Technology International Cooperation Network for GCC (INCONET-GCC) and the EU-GCC Clean Energy Technology Network were launched.
- 2011:** The first EU-UAE annual human rights dialogue. Other countries followed: Bahrain (2016), Qatar (2018), Kuwait (2020), Saudi Arabia (2021), Oman (2022).
- 2013:** The EU delegation to the UAE in Abu Dhabi opened, followed by delegations in Kuwait (2019) and Qatar (2022).
- 2014:** The GCC joined the EU's CBRN Centres of Excellence Initiative; Schengen visa waiver approved for UAE nationals.
- 2016:** The first EU-GCC Business Forum in Brussels; The first EU National Institutes of Culture cluster in Qatar.
- 2017:** The EU-GCC Dialogue on Trade and Investment Issues commenced.
- 2018:** The EU-GCC Dialogue on Economic Diversification initiated.
- 2020:** The Enhanced EU-GCC Political Dialogue, Cooperation and Outreach Project launched.
- 2022:** The EU 'Strategic Partnership with the Gulf' Joint Communication released.
- 2023:** Luigi Di Maio appointed as the first EU Special Representative for the Gulf region.
- 2024:** The first EU-GCC Regional Security Dialogue held in Riyadh.

TRADE IN SERVICES

(Eurostat, 2023)

€47.9 B (2021)

+68.8%
(from €28.4 B in 2020)

€31.8 B
Since 2012, EU's exports of services to the GCC nearly **doubled**.



ENERGY

(Eurostat, 2023)

7%

The GCC accounted for **7% of EU's imports of oil and petroleum products** in 2022.



Saudi Arabia was the EU's **4th biggest supplier of oil and petroleum products**

15.2%

Qatar was the EU's **2nd largest supplier of LNG** after the US.

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS (FDI)

TOURISM

(Eurostat, November 2023)

€216 B 2022 **€227 B**
EU FDI stocks in GCC **GCC FDI stocks in EU**

€84.4 B 2017 **€72.5 B** 2018
By 2022, the values **tripled**

Investors from the **UAE and Saudi Arabia held 1.8% and 0.8% of all FDI in the EU.**

In 2022, EU was the **main foreign direct investor in Saudi Arabia.** (Eurostat, EEAS)

#10
The **UAE was the 10th most popular destination for EU tourists** in 2022, making up **2%** of all trips by EU residents outside of the EU.

GCC IS A KEY HUB FOR EU FLIGHTS

In the first half of 2023, the number of EU passengers travelling to the GCC **surpassed pre-pandemic levels.**

+61.3%
increase since 2013

In 2022, **18.3 million passengers travelled from the EU to the GCC** (mostly UAE and Qatar), the **third highest number** after North America & North Africa.



+77% Saudi Arabia **+64%** Qatar
the **biggest % increase** of passengers from the EU from 2012 to 2022.

(Eurostat, 2023)

HIGHER EDUCATION

8,234 (6.9%)
GCC students pursuing higher education abroad **study in the EU**

The **EU was the 3rd most popular destination**, after the US and UK.

The EU was the most popular among students from the **UAE (2nd place) & Saudi Arabia (3rd).**

(UNESCO Institute of Statistics)

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