



EU-GCC COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

The European Union (EU) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have sought to strengthen their institutional partnership in recent years, marked by intensified engagement and new strategic priorities. This infographic outlines some of the key documents, actors, formats, and thematic areas that shape this evolving cooperation.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

EU-GCC Cooperation Agreement (1988)
→ legal basis for institutional cooperation, established a Joint Council and a Joint Cooperation Committee

5-Year Joint Action Programme (2022-2027) → concrete activities and cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, climate change, energy, green transition, security, people-to-people contacts, and humanitarian aid

Negotiations on bilateral **Strategic Partnership Agreements** between the EU and individual GCC countries announced in July 2025

Bloc-to-bloc Free Trade Agreement (FTA) → negotiations launched in 1990, stalled since 2008; but talks renewed in 2024

Bilateral FTAs → The EU launched FTA negotiations with the UAE (May 2025)

EU'S STRENGTHENED FOCUS ON PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GCC SINCE 2022



2022: **The Strategic Partnership with the Gulf**, the EU's first strategy for the region, aims to strengthen relations with GCC and its members



February 2025: The EU Commission established the **Directorate-General for the Middle East and North Africa (DG MENA)**



2023: Appointment of the first **EU Special Representative for the Gulf region**, Luigi Di Maio



June 2025: Roberta Metsola was the first **European Parliament President** to visit the GCC, meeting with the GCC Parliamentary Speakers in the UAE.

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL & STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT



EU-GCC Summit (top level – Heads of State/Government)
→ first held in October 2024 (Brussels)
→ biennial; next in 2026 (Saudi Arabia)



EU-GCC High-Level Forum on Regional Security & Cooperation (Ministerial level) → launched in April 2024, focus on maritime security, hybrid threats, and crises



EU-GCC Joint Council & Ministerial Meeting (Foreign Ministers & EU High Representative)
→ held annually since 1990 (except in 1995 and 2017–2021)



GCC Secretary-General and EU Political & Security Committee meetings



Troika Meetings
→ held on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York



Political Committee of Senior EU and GCC officials (annual)
→ latest 26th Meeting held in May 2025 in Riyadh

DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS



The EU Delegation in **Saudi Arabia** also covers GCC, Bahrain and Oman. The EU also has Delegations in the **UAE (2013), Kuwait (2019) and Qatar (2022)**.



The GCC has a Mission to the EU in **Brussels** and the GCC countries have their own missions to the EU.

TECHNICAL & PREPARATORY STRUCTURES



EU-GCC Joint Cooperation Committee
→ technical body working to implement the 1988 Agreement



Regional Directors' Meeting
→ EEAS geographic directors and GCC counterparts support the Joint Council preparations

KEY BODIES INVOLVED



GCC Secretariat General
GCC Supreme Council
GCC Ministerial Council

SECTORAL DIALOGUES & THEMATIC INITIATIVES

ENERGY & CLIMATE

- Energy Experts Group
- Clean Energy Network (2010-2021)
- Cooperation on Green Transition Project (since 2024)
- The Investment & Finance Green Transition Forum and the first Green Transition Forum (October and November 2024)

POLITICS

- Enhanced Political Dialogue, Cooperation & Outreach Project (2020-23)
- EU Outreach Facility for the GCC (2020-25)
- Political Dialogue (since October 2022)
- Young Leaders in Regional Diplomacy Programme (since in 2024)

AIR TRANSPORT

- Civil Aviation Dialogue (since 2013)

SECURITY

- Dialogue on the Fight Against Terrorism & Terror Financing (since 2003)
- GCCPOL and Europol Letter of Intent (2017)
- Regional Security Dialogue (since 2024)

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & EDUCATION

- The EU Science and Technology International Cooperation Network for GCC (2010-2017)
- EU CBRN Centre of Excellence Regional Secretariat in the UAE (2014)
- GCC participation in EU's Horizon Europe Programme and Erasmus+

ECONOMY, TRADE & BUSINESS

- Economic Dialogue (since 2003)
- Dialogue on Economic Diversification Project (since 2018)
- Trade and Business Cooperation Facility (2014-2017)
- Business Forum (since 2016)
- Trade and Investment Dialogue (since 2017)

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- Structured cooperation on humanitarian aid
- Coordination disaster response mechanism between the EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre and the GCC Emergency Management Centre (since 2024)



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ABOUT

Headquartered in Rome, Italy, the Euro-Gulf Information Centre (EGIC) is a non-profit, non-partisan, think-and-do tank, established on 1 October 2015. The Euro-Gulf Information Centre blends research and analyses with outreach and engagement. We are proud of being an action centre that contributes to enhancing strategic, cultural, economic and political ties in the Euro-Gulf space. Through specialised platforms, programmes and activities, EGIC works hard to develop human-to-human and institution-to-institution contact points in order to strengthen relations and constructive engagement.

EGIC also provides information services to organisations and individuals that seek to deepen their understanding of the trends unfolding in both Europe and the Gulf. EGIC is a firm believer in breaking paywalls and provides open access information – infographics, articles, reports (etc) – to the interested public. Finally, EGIC organises a wide assortment of events ranging from conference and seminars to workshops, art exhibitions, travels and specialised training.



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