



EU OUTREACH FACILITY FOR THE GCC



Launched in December 2020, this €6.5 million project is funded by the European Union through its Partnership Instrument. Running till 31 December 2025, this is one of the three projects supporting further cooperation between the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) both regionally and at an individual country level. The other projects being the EU-GCC Dialogue on Economic Diversification and the EU-GCC Cooperation on Green Transition.

As countries of the Arabian peninsula seek to implement their national transformation agendas,

there are greater opportunities to boost cooperation between the European Union and the GCC States.

The EU Outreach Facility for the GCC contributes to the deepening of EU-GCC relations through concrete activities carried out across the region on issues of mutual interest, as identified in the Joint Communication for a Strategic Partnership with the Gulf, which was published in May 2022.



The project's activities are conceptualised and implemented in close cooperation with EU Delegations in the region and other relevant EU services. They aim to:

- 1 Enhance the understanding of the EU in the region.
- 2 Build long-standing relationships and networks with key stakeholder groups.
- 3 Respond to GCC national priorities with an EU added value in areas of mutual strategic interest.
- 4 Consider the particularities of individual GCC countries.
- 5 Secure co-ownership.
- 6 Create synergies with other EU and Member States projects.
- 7 Mainstream gender and youth across all activities.



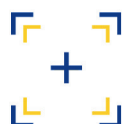
Stakeholders:

The project activities are aimed at a large number state and non-state EU and GCC actors, namely political leadership, government officials, the business community, think tanks, academia, NGOs, media representatives, youth organisations and the public at large.



Scope:

- Deepening of the political dialogue through capacity building, technical assistance and awareness-raising activities, study tours, advisory services and events of all formats including workshops, conferences, simulation games, seminars and others.
- Supporting the implementation of the Cooperation Arrangements that have been signed between the European External Action Service and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the six GCC countries.



Focus on four areas:

- 1 **Recognising the EU as a partner of choice** in the national transformation processes in GCC countries.
- 2 **Strengthening the implementation of Cooperation Arrangements** in the region.
- 3 **Enhancing the understanding and perception of the EU.**
- 4 **Strengthening trust and mutual understanding** between EU and GCC citizens.

Examples of implemented activities:



High-Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation

The Project supported the organisation of the EU-GCC High Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation, which took place in April 2024 in Luxembourg. The Forum aimed to enhance the political dialogue between the EU, the GCC and their Member States, and to further strengthen coordination on issues related to regional and global stability and security. Chaired by the EU High Representative Josep Borrell, with the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar as rotating presidency of the GCC and the Secretary General of the GCC, the event served as an opportunity to hold frank dialogue on regional security matters between the EU and GCC Foreign Ministers.



'Young Leaders in Regional Diplomacy' Programme fostering EU-GCC diplomatic exchange

As part of an ongoing commitment to bolster people to people contacts, the European Union, under the patronage of the EU Special Representative for the Gulf, Luigi Di Maio, hosted 14 young GCC diplomats to Brussels and Bruges in May 2024. The visit served as an opportunity to facilitate greater exchange of ideas and broaden the EU-GCC collaboration across all areas of mutual strategic interest. During their visit, the GCC diplomats met with senior EU officials, representatives of prominent European think tanks and GCC diplomatic missions, and engaged in discussions with Member States' diplomats at the European Diplomatic Academy.



High-level Trainings on Museum Management with the Saudi Museums Commission

The project designed a series of workshops on museum management in partnership with the Saudi Museums Commission, targeting museum staff, students enrolled in museum studies, history of art, or related disciplines, and wide-ranging interested public. Three workshops were organised: (1) Museums and Their Roles in Our Societies; (2) Collection Management and Design of Museum Activities; and (3) Inventories, Documentation and Preservation of Collections. In addition, a public lecture on 'The Role and Importance of Museums and Heritage in Our Societies' was conducted at Princess Nourah University.



'Ensuring Freedom of Religion and Belief (FORB): From Theory to Practice'

Building on the two previous editions organised in Manama in 2022 and 2023, the Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence and the EU Delegation to Bahrain will organise a third conference on Freedom of Religion and Belief in Brussels. This third conference, entitled 'Ensuring Freedom of Religion and Belief: From Theory to Practice', addresses a unanimous call for strengthened implementation of FORB at both regional and global levels. For the first time, it will feature the theme of hate speech, which remains a significant challenge in societies, undermining peaceful coexistence, social cohesion, human rights and democratic values.



Clinic 'Green Jobs and The Youth Perspective'

This clinic took place as part of the collaboration between the European Union Delegation to Oman, the Environmental Society of Oman (ESO) and the Asyad Group to launch a series of lectures to shed light on the challenges facing Oman in its fight against climate change, in line with its commitment to promote climate cooperation among local communities. In the framework of these series, the EU contributed towards a clinic on 'Green Jobs and The Youth Perspective', based on EU experience on the evolving landscape of the green job market, on identifying and developing essential green skills and the pivotal role of education in fostering a sustainable future. This clinic also served as a unique platform for Omani youth to connect with both global and local leaders in green industries.



Urban Hackathon on Urban Planning and Environmental Sustainability in Oman

In 2023, the EU hosted the first-ever hackathon of its kind, a competition among 30 young talented Omanis, selected from over 400 applicants and spread across five teams, providing bottom-up solutions to enhance Muscat's landscape by addressing the most pressing issues on sustainable development and the green transition. The solutions were in line with Oman Vision 2040, the Omani National Strategy for Urban Development and the European Green Deal. Similar hackathons have been successfully implemented in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

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