



**COOPERATION
BETWEEN
THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITY
AND GCC**

The Cooperation Council

EN

Riyadh, 8 May 2007
CE-GOLFE 3503/07 (Presse 100)

**17th GCC-EU JOINT COUNCIL AND MINISTERIAL
MEETING
(Riyadh, 8 May 2007)**

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The seventeenth session of the Joint Council established in accordance with the Co-operation Agreement between the European Community on the one hand, and the States of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar and State of Kuwait) on the other hand, was held in Riyadh on 8 May 2007. The GCC delegation was led by H.R.H. Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and President of the Ministerial Council of the GCC. The GCC Secretariat was represented by H.E. Abdulrahman Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Secretary-General. The EU delegation was led by Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany and President of the Council of the European Union. The European Commission was represented by Commissioners Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Peter Mandelson.

P R E S S

2. The meeting took place in a friendly and constructive atmosphere. In preparation of this meeting, GCC and EU officials had met in Brussels on 27 February 2007 in the Joint Co-operation Committee and on 12 March 2007 in the Regional Directors' meeting respectively.
3. As regards the **implementation of the 1988 Cooperation Agreement**, the Joint Council stressed its shared political will to strengthen relations and co-operation in all areas covered by Agreement. It was agreed to reinforce co-operation in the field of energy taking into account recommendations and proposals made by the Energy Expert Group held on 27 April 2007. The Joint Council looked forward to their implementation. It insisted on the urgency of finding practical ways to strengthen co-operation in the field of education between universities in both regions, and on strengthening the participation of GCC countries in the EC's Erasmus Mundus programme through the creation of a "Gulf Window". Furthermore, the Joint Council welcomed the new opportunities opened by the Seventh EU Framework Programme in the field of science and technology. Both parties agreed to establish contacts at expert level for concrete action in both fields. The Joint Council, emphasizing the importance of furthering co-operation on environmental issues, welcomed the first EU-GCC experts meeting on climate change, held in Brussels on 22 January 2007. The GCC and the EU encouraged holding this meeting on a regular basis. The Joint Council agreed that a second Economic Dialogue meeting should take place in 2007. Finally, expert contacts should take place in the field of satellite navigation. It also agreed to promote cultural dialogue.
4. The Joint Council, recognising that important progress has been made on negotiations of a Free Trade Agreement and noting that the parties are getting closer to an agreement, reaffirmed its commitment to such an agreement and encouraged the negotiators to further intensify their efforts to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome in the nearest future.
5. The Joint Council heard an overview on the state of play regarding **developments in the GCC** – in particular concerning the result of the Supreme Council Summit (“Jaber Summit”) in Riyadh in December 2006 – and **in the EU**.
6. The GCC and the EU reviewed a **number of international and regional political issues of mutual interest** with a view to supporting and enhancing regional peace, security and stability, which remain shared foreign policy objectives of key importance. The GCC and the EU reiterated their determination to develop and advance this political dialogue on the basis of mutual respect in order to seek common solutions to the common challenges facing their respective regions and peoples, fully respecting international law and the UN Security Council resolutions.

7. As regards the **Middle East Peace Process**, the GCC and the EU confirmed their shared positions not to recognise any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties. The GCC and the EU welcomed the Arab Peace Initiative as reaffirmed in the declaration of the Arab League Summit of 29 March 2007 held in Riyadh, and support it as an important opportunity to move the Middle East Peace Process forward. In this context, they are looking forward to the meeting between the EU and the Arab League designated working group to take place in Brussels on 14 May. They also welcomed the Quartet's intention to work closely with regional partners in that respect. They welcomed the recent efforts undertaken by the Quartet to promote a result-oriented dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in the framework of a renewed political process, with the aim of ending the 1967 occupation and creating an independent, sovereign, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side by side in peace and security with Israel as a step towards achieving comprehensive peace in the Middle East. They welcomed the formation of a Palestinian Government of National Unity pursuant to the agreement reached in Makka on 8 February 2007, which lays the foundation for Palestinian reconciliation. The GCC and the EU reiterated the continuing need to coordinate and mobilize international assistance in support of the Palestinian people and welcomed the continued efforts by the international community to providing humanitarian relief to the Palestinian population. They called on Israel for the immediate transfer of all withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues. The GCC and the EU also recalled the utmost importance of the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access. They furthermore called for the immediate release of Palestinian ministers and legislators as well as of the Israeli soldier. They stated that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace must meet the legitimate aspirations of both the Israeli and Palestinian people, in line with the relevant UNSC resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map and would include Lebanon and Syria.
8. The GCC and the EU called on all Lebanese to work for uniting ranks, enhancing security and stability through dialogue, complying with democratic and constitutional legitimacy in order to preserve the unity, sovereignty and identity of an independent **Lebanon**. They reminded its neighbours of their obligations to respect Lebanon's sovereignty. Both parties underlined they would extend support for Lebanon politically and economically, including for reconstruction and welcomed the results of the Paris III Conference to support Lebanon on 25 January 2007. The GCC and the EU underlined the importance of full implementation of all relevant UNSC Resolutions, including 1559, 1680, 1701 and UNIIIC related resolutions, and stressed the need for all parties to co-operate towards this end. They encouraged the Government of Lebanon to extend its control over the entire Lebanese territory.

9. The GCC and the EU expressed deep concern about the seriousness of the situation in **Iraq** and called for respect for the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Iraq. The GCC and the EU reiterated their firmest condemnation of the terrorist attacks, sectarian violence, murders and hostage-takings committed in Iraq. They expressed regret that the campaign of terrorist violence in Iraq is prolonging the suffering of the Iraqi people and hampering the political process and reconstruction in Iraq. The GCC and the EU consider national reconciliation as key to the solution of Iraq's problems. A process of national reconciliation is of utmost importance for achieving stability in Iraq. They called on the Iraqi government to ensure the establishment of a safe, stable, independent, prosperous and democratic Iraq that is at peace internally and with its neighbours, that upholds international law, human rights, cooperates constructively with its neighbours, and whose territorial integrity is preserved. The GCC and the EU reaffirmed their commitment to continue helping Iraqi reconstruction. They reaffirmed their support to the central role of the UN in the political and economic reconstruction. The GCC and the EU warmly welcomed the launching of the International Compact with Iraq in Sharm El Sheikh on 3 May, 2007. They expressed their support for the initiatives aiming at strengthening dialogue, co-operation and stability in and around Iraq, such as conferences of the Neighbouring Countries. The GCC and the EU welcomed the outcome of the Conference of Iraq's Neighbouring States with international participation in Sharm El Sheikh on 4 May, 2007 convened by the Government of Iraq and hosted by the Government of Egypt. They reiterated their support for the International Compact with Iraq.
10. With respect to **Iran**, the GCC and the EU expressed their concern at the Iranian nuclear programme and their commitment to a diplomatic solution. They reaffirmed the importance of reaching a negotiated solution to the crisis and in this regard urged for full compliance with the requirements set forth by the IAEA. The GCC and the EU underlined that the international community is united and determined to uphold the authority of the IAEA and the United Nations Security Council. They emphasized their commitment to fully implement all relevant UNSC resolutions.
11. Both sides expressed concern at the lack of progress towards resolution of the territorial conflict between the United Arab Emirates and Iran over Abu Musa and the Tunbs Islands. They reiterated their support for a peaceful solution to the conflict in accordance with international law, either through direct negotiations or by referring the issues to the international Court of Justice.

12. The EU and the GCC exchanged views on **regional security issues**. They agreed that regional and territorial conflicts, international terrorism, organized crime, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, present serious threats to security that can only be contained by increased international and regional co-operation in these fields. Both sides acknowledged that security and stability, as well as regional integration, are necessary factors for peaceful development both within and in-between countries and regions.
13. The EU and the GCC agreed that a more stable and prosperous future will be built by continuing to focus on and promote values of tolerance and moderation. They will continue working together to build bridges between different cultures and promote mutual knowledge, understanding, respect and dialogue. The GCC and the EU welcomed the appointment by the UN Secretary-General of his High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations and commit themselves to support his endeavours to put into practice the principles and recommendations of the Alliance of Civilizations initiative.
14. The GCC and the EU reiterated their strong and unequivocal condemnation of **terrorism** in all its forms and manifestations, whatever the origin, cause or alleged motives. The GCC and the EU have undertaken to prevent any financing and supporting of terrorism and incitement of terrorist acts. They reaffirmed their resolute commitment to combat terrorism in full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Recalling their commitment to strengthening the UN framework for the fight against terrorism, the GCC and the EU appealed to all States to ratify and implement the 16 international counter-terrorism Conventions and Protocols without reservations, and to implement all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. They confirmed their commitment to working together to conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, including a legal definition of terrorist acts. The GCC and the EU welcomed the new Global Counterterrorism Strategy and stand ready to implement it in full. The GCC and the EU expressed their appreciation for the efforts to combat terrorist financing. They welcomed that the fourth EU-GCC Joint Seminar on Combating Terrorist Financing would take place on 22 and 23 May in Doha.

15. The GCC and the EU reaffirmed that they share the universal values of respect for **human rights and democratic principles**, which form an essential element of their relations. They welcomed recent development relating to representative bodies in the region, including those related to Al-Shura. Both sides reiterated their continued commitment to the promotion and protection of all human rights. They expressed their shared willingness to reinforce their dialogue and develop concrete cooperation on human rights, including in the context of the UN Human Rights Council. The common wish for enhanced dialogue would lead to greater understanding and tolerance among civilizations and cultures. The two sides expressed their commitment to promote the universal values which they share, while bearing in mind the significance of national and regional particularities and their various historical cultural and religious backgrounds.
16. The GCC and the EU reaffirmed that the **proliferation of WMD** and their means of delivery both to state and non-state actors represents one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. The international community shares a responsibility for actively preventing these threats. The multilateral treaty system is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation system. The GCC and the EU will ensure full compliance with, and national implementation of, their existing obligations under non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and agreements and work for the strengthening and universalisation of these instruments, in particular in view of the first Preparatory Committee of the NPT 2010 Review Conference. The GCC and the EU stressed the importance of the establishment and implementation of effective systems of national export controls in accordance with UNSC resolution 1540. The GCC and the EU value and support the goals and principles of the Proliferation Security Initiative. The GCC and the EU reiterated their shared objective to pursue the establishment of a zone free of WMD and their means of delivery in the Middle East, including the Gulf region. Regarding the GCC Supreme Council decision to conduct a GCC study to develop a joint program in the field of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes, the EU welcomes the GCC's intention to closely co-operate with the IAEA in accordance with international standards and regulations.
17. The **18th meeting of the Joint Council** will be held in the EU in 2008.
-