



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**20th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting ,
Luxembourg, 14 June 2010**

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

1. The 20th session of the Joint Council established in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community on the one hand, and the States of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf on the other hand, was held in Luxembourg on 14 June 2010.

The GCC delegation was led by H.E. Shaikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al Salim Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister of the State of Kuwait. The GCC Secretariat was represented by H.E. Abdulrahman Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Secretary General.

The EU delegation was led by H.E. High Representative Catherine Ashton.

The meeting took place in a friendly and constructive atmosphere. In preparation of this meeting, GCC and EU officials had met in Brussels on 12 April 2010 at the Joint Cooperation Committee and on 13 April 2010 at the Regional Directors' meeting.

P R E S S

2. EU-GCC Relations

EU and GCC Ministers endorsed the EU-GCC Joint Action Programme that was negotiated by Senior Officials at their meeting on 9-10 February 2010 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The Ministers agreed that the Joint Action Programme reflects a shared ambition to reinforce cooperation in a number of key strategic areas of mutual interest, including economic, financial and monetary cooperation; investment, trade, energy and the environment, transport, industry, telecommunications and information technology, education and scientific research, and culture and mutual understanding. They called for its effective implementation within a timeline of three years.

They welcomed the 10th EU-GCC Energy Experts' Group meeting in the State of Kuwait on 2 June 2010 and the strengthening and widening of cooperation in the field of energy, including on natural gas and energy efficiency, notably through the EU-GCC clean energy network. They noted with satisfaction the launching of cooperation on nuclear safety and security, with a joint workshop held at the GCC Secretariat on 8 June 2010. In the education field, the Joint Council welcomed the launching of the specific GCC window under Erasmus Mundus in order to foster mobility of university students, professors and academic staff.

The Joint Council expressed its determination to work towards a reinforced cooperation on environment and climate change in the coming years, and welcomed the latest steps on research and development co-operation with the establishment of a regular policy dialogue and the launching of a network linking researchers, academics and businessmen.

The Joint Council underscored the importance of a continuous dialogue regarding global economic and financial issues, and welcomed the decision to hold the second EU-GCC Economic Dialogue in Brussels in the near future.

The Joint Council called for continued progress on those areas as well as in other areas of the Joint Action Programme, including trade promotion and investment, transport and cooperation in cultural heritage, where concrete actions should be launched by both parties.

The EU and GCC agreed to continue their consultations on the FTA with a view to concluding the negotiations as soon as possible.

3. International and Regional Issues

The Joint Council reviewed a number of regional and international political issues of mutual interest. The GCC and the EU reiterated their determination to develop and advance the political dialogue between them based on mutual respect with a view to seeking common solutions to the, common challenges facing their respective regions, fully respecting international law, the United Nations Charter and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

The two sides welcomed the mediation efforts undertaken by the State of Qatar to assist the parties in Darfur to reach a just and sustainable peace as well as the efforts to resolve the border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea.

3.1. Developments in the Middle East

The EU and the GCC condemned the use of violence during the Israeli military operation in international waters against the Flotilla sailing to Gaza on 31 May. The EU and GCC deeply regretted the loss of life among the members of the Flotilla. Both sides called for an immediate, impartial, credible and transparent inquiry.

They expressed their deep concern on the humanitarian situation in the Gaza strip and called for the immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of all crossings in accordance with the relevant UNSC Resolutions, in particular UNSC Resolution 1860, and the full respect of international humanitarian law.

The EU and the GCC called for an immediate end to all acts of violence, and all other activities which are contrary to international law and endanger civilians.

The Joint Council reaffirmed the EU and the GCC shared position that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East is vital for international peace and security.

The two sides reemphasized that peace in the Middle East should be achieved through negotiations between the parties concerned and in all its tracks in accordance with the Madrid terms of reference and based on the principles of land for peace, the two-state solution, the relevant UNSC resolutions, the Road Map, and previous agreements reached between the parties.

Both sides expressed their continued support for the Arab Peace Initiative, which was reaffirmed in the Arab Summits, including Sirte in 2010.

They underlined the fact that the Quartet welcomed, on March 19 in Moscow, the readiness to launch proximity talks between Israel and the Palestinians. The Quartet emphasized that the circumstances which made it possible to agree to launch the proximity talks be respected. The proximity talks are an important step toward the resumption, without preconditions, of direct bilateral negotiations that resolve all final status issues aimed at a comprehensive peace in the Middle East within the next 24 months, as specified by the Quartet.

The two sides reaffirmed their shared position not to recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by both parties including with regard to Jerusalem, as the future capital of two states. They called for the urgent resumption of negotiations that will lead within an agreed timeframe to a two state solution with the state of Israel and independent, democratic, contiguous and viable state of Palestine living side by side in peace and security. In this regard, they called on all regional and international actors to support this political process, including through confidence building measures, and to refrain from any provocation or unilateral measure that could jeopardize it.

The EU and the GCC stressed their common position that Israeli settlements anywhere in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace. In this regard they called on Israel to immediately end all settlement activity in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, including natural growth, and dismantle all outposts. They reiterated that

settlements, the separation barrier, where built on occupied land, demolition of homes and evictions are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two state solution impossible.

The EU and the GCC fully supported the implementation of the Palestinian Authority Government Plan "Palestine, ending the occupation, establishing the state", as an important contribution and will work for enhanced international support for this plan.

They underlined their support for efforts aiming at securing Palestinian reconciliation and the need to prevent a permanent division between the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza.

3.2. Iraq

The EU and the GCC welcomed the recent general elections held in Iraq on 7 March 2010. These elections marked an important milestone in Iraq's democratic process. They look forward to the quick establishment of an inclusive and stable government free from foreign interference. They condemned all acts of violence and underlined the importance that these acts do not deter Iraq from completing the ongoing democratic process.

The EU and the GCC reconfirmed their positions to promote peace, stability and security in Iraq and underlined their full support for the central role of the UN/UNAMI in assisting Iraq in implementing relevant UNSC resolutions. They reaffirmed their support to initiatives aiming at strengthening dialogue, co-operation and stability. They underlined the need for all partners to support Iraq in its efforts to achieve stability and called for respect for the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Iraq. They also reaffirmed that national reconciliation is the key to the solution of Iraq's problems and underlined the urgency of making further progress in this regard.

They expressed their support for the UN efforts for the return of Kuwaiti prisoners and nationals of other countries or their corpses as well as other Kuwaiti property including its national archive.

3.3. Iran

Both sides called on Iran to fully comply with the relevant resolutions adopted by UNSC and the IAEA. The Joint Council called again upon Iran to restore confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. They also recalled their commitment to the full implementation of relevant UNSC resolutions. They expressed their support for the international efforts, including those by China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and with the support of the EU High Representative, to reach a peaceful, negotiated solution. They reiterated their support to the efforts of the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton to meet with Iranian counterparts to discuss their nuclear programme and other issues of mutual concern. The EU and GCC underlined the importance of maintaining dialogue on this issue.

Both sides welcomed the efforts of Turkey and Brazil to secure progress on the Tehran Research Reactor agreement as a confidence building measure.

The EU and GCC reiterated their concern at the lack of progress towards resolving the dispute between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic republic of Iran over the three islands of Abu Musa, Lesser Tunb and Greater Tunb. They reiterated their support for a peaceful settlement of this dispute in accordance with international law, either through direct negotiations between the parties or by referring the matter to International Court of Justice.

3.4. Yemen

The EU and GCC welcomed the return of calm on the border between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Yemen. They expressed their support for all efforts made to secure unity, stability and territorial integrity of Yemen. They also expressed their shared commitment to support Yemen's development as a unified, stable, democratic and prosperous state and encouraged the Government of Yemen to continue efforts in this regard.

Both sides agreed that a comprehensive approach was needed in Yemen, with strong support from the international community and in particular Yemen's neighbours, including in the context of the Friends of Yemen' process. They agreed to enhance dialogue and cooperation on the issue.

3.5. Terrorism

The Joint Council reiterated its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, irrespective of motives. The EU and the GCC stressed the importance of combating terrorism in full respect for international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law and humanitarian law.

The two sides urged all states to ratify and implement the 16 UN counter-terrorism conventions and protocols, and to implement all the relevant UNSC resolutions. Both sides expressed their determination to support the UN Global Counter- Terrorism Strategy, and to work for a renewed consensus in the General Assembly when the Strategy is reviewed in September 2010.

They reaffirmed their commitment to the further development of international standards for combating terrorism within the framework of the United Nations. They also agreed to continue to work towards conclusion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, including a legal definition of terrorist acts.

The EU and the GCC reaffirmed their commitment to combating the financing of terrorism. In this context, they also look forward to continuing and developing the Joint GCC EU dialogue on combating terrorism financing.

The EU and the GCC recalled the recommendations and decisions arrived at the Riyadh International Conference on fighting terrorism, including the call of the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia, to establish an international center for fighting terrorism. The EU and the GCC also recalled the opening of the International Center for Counterterrorism (ICCT) in The Hague on the 31 of May 2010.

3.6. Piracy

The Joint Council reiterated its concern about the threat of piracy which is disrupting economic activity, regional and international trade and maritime safety and security.

Both sides welcomed the recent UNSC resolution (1918) on the prosecution of piracy suspects and were looking forward to receiving the report of the UN Secretary General on sustainable solutions.

The two sides commended efforts by the international community and states, including the EU and its Operation Atalanta, to protect ships and vessels off the coasts of Somalia and other initiatives aimed at the implementation of the relevant UNSC resolutions, while fully respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia, international law and the United Nations Charter.

The EU and the GCC highlighted the importance of the reinforcement of maritime capacity in the broader region of the Horn of Africa and in this respect invited participants to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Djibouti Code of Conduct to implement it fully as soon as possible. The EU and the GCC highlighted the importance of the coordination of all efforts in order to address this phenomenon under international rules. In this regard, they welcomed the meetings of representatives from 35 nations and international organizations which were hosted in March in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain within the framework of the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE), to share information and deconflict counterpiracy efforts off the coast of Somalia.

3.7. Non-proliferation

The Joint Council underlined that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems continue to constitute a serious threat to international peace and security.

The EU and the GCC reaffirmed their support for international treaties and conventions to prevent the proliferation of WMD and their determination to fully implement their respective treaty obligations and other commitments. The two sides welcomed the successful Nuclear Security Summit that took place in Washington from 12 to 13 April 2010. They called on all countries, including in the Middle East, to accede to the international treaties and conventions, without delay and without conditions.

The EU and the GCC welcomed the successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, New York, 3-28 May. The two sides reiterated support for the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East, including the Gulf region.

The two sides attached importance to the development of peaceful uses of nuclear technology in accordance with the highest non-proliferation, safety and security standards and obligations. They welcomed the GCC commitments in this regard. The two sides underlined the importance of continuing international cooperation in order to strengthen nuclear safety and security.

The EU and the GCC confirmed their commitment to actively participate in the negotiating process on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) that would set high international standards to regulate the legal trade in conventional arms.

The EU and GCC also confirmed that they would cooperate closely to achieve a successful outcome of the Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in 2011.

3.8. Human Rights

The EU and the GCC exchanged views on human rights. The EU and the GCC reiterated their continued commitment to the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant international instruments.

3.9. Dialogue between cultures

The EU and the GCC underlined the importance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, cooperation and respect for cultural and religious diversity, and condemned all forms of hatred and intolerance. The EU and the GCC expressed their joint commitment to the promotion and protection of the values of tolerance, moderation and coexistence.

Taking into consideration the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Alliance of Civilizations of November 10th 2009, the EU and the GCC welcome this initiative as an essential contribution to multilateral efforts for intercultural dialogue. They expressed satisfaction that all GCC and EU Member States have joined the Group of Friends of the Alliance, and that some of them have formulated National Strategies. They look forward to the 2011 Alliance Forum, due to take place in Qatar, and express their hope that this will prove a success and will help to create new opportunities for common action and to increase the visibility of the Alliance in the region.

Both sides welcomed the important initiative taken by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz, to advance interfaith dialogue. As a support for this initiative, first meetings were held in Mecca, Madrid and New York.

The EU and the GCC also welcomed the establishment on 14 October 2009 of a Joint European Commission – Arab League Liaison Office in Malta, and underlined the importance of this initiative as a platform for developing dialogue and cooperation to address the common challenges facing both sides.

The 21st meeting of the Joint Council will be held in the UAE in 2011.
