



**Gulf Research Centre Cambridge**  
Knowledge for All

## **The 2010 Gulf Research Meeting**

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**University of Cambridge**

### **Workshop 10**

### ***EU-GCC Relations***

#### **Workshop Directors**

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#### **Abstract**

There are a number of issues specific to the GCC and the EU and in addition, there are also a number of global issues that have particular relevance to the relationship which this workshop will discuss and address in depth. Through a number of themes, this workshop seeks to highlight the former while locating the relationship firmly into the wider regional and global context.

#### **Workshop Description and Rationale**

The aim is to have papers from both the EU and Gulf perspective for the following themes.

1. Given the suspension of negotiations on the GCC-EU free trade agreement, the economic and commercial relationship needs to be re-examined. Given the length of time so far taken by the negotiations, quite what advantages to each side are there in either pursuing the agreement or in allowing it to lapse?

2. While the GCC is a sub-region of the Arab world, EU relations with the entire region, specifically through its Mediterranean policies and its different Mediterranean initiatives culminating in forming a Union for the Mediterranean, is not without relevance to the GCC. How does the GCC view this special relations with the Mediterranean of which it has been so far excluded and what linkages, if any, are, in fact, possible between the two tracks?
3. The current global financial crisis has raised important questions *inter alia* about the role of the Gulf Sovereign Wealth Funds. What has been their impact in terms of Europe's financial well-being so far?
4. One of the factors that have continuously bedevilled GCC-EU negotiations has been European demands over human rights and democratization and Gulf claims of unwarranted interference. Given the EU's inaction over breaches of the former and limited reforms towards the latter, quite how significant are such factors in the overall political relationship between the EU, its members and the Gulf states?
5. Given (iii), it would be valuable to look more deeply behind the political relationship to explore how Europe and the Gulf perceive each other. Inevitably there will be variations between the states, some with long historical ties, others with little or limited contact. Cultural as well as political factors need to be taken into account in seeking to provide critical insight into the background to the current relationship.
6. Given the significance of energy exports to the Gulf States, Europe's obvious susceptibility to interruptions of its oil and gas imports, and the growing demands of China and India, a better understanding of the energy relationship is necessary.
7. Energy may well be a critical element in the security relationship between Europe and the Gulf. Europe's own efforts to establish a meaningful/acknowledged Security and Defence Policy have been largely ignored or dismissed. NATO since the Istanbul Initiative has sought to establish a role. Individual European Member States have retained or seeking to expand their role. An examination of the EU/NATO/Gulf states nexus on security that takes in the new/different actors at different levels is

## **Workshop Director Profiles**

**Dr. Geoffrey Edwards** is a Reader in European Studies in the Centre and holds a Jean Monnet chair in Political Science. He is a Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he is also a Graduate Tutor. He has held research posts at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and a number of other institutions including the Federal Trust and Chatham House. He specializes in the European Union, its institutions and its foreign and security policies. In the Centre he teaches courses on European Security and Foreign Policy and on the Politics of European Integration. He has also taught on the papers on European integration and British politics at undergraduate level. His recent publications have focused on the EU's foreign policy with articles on European security culture, the EU's foreign policy and the impact of the new Member States, on the EU's Neighbourhood Policy, on EU-Gulf relations and on the EU Counter-terrorist policies - the last in a special issue of the *Journal of Common Market Studies* in January 2008.

**Dr. Abdullah Baabood** is the director of the Gulf Research Centre at the University of Cambridge. Abdullah graduated with a Master's in Business Administration, a Master's in International Relations as well as a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Cambridge. Dr. Baabood has a general interest in International Politics and Economics, particularly in the areas of globalization and regionalism. His research interests also focus on the GCC states' economic, social and political development and GCC's external relations. He has published, presented and attended several International seminars and workshops on these topics. Dr. Baabood is a member of a number of academic and professional bodies and holds board memberships for several business organizations and committees.