GULF RESEARCH CENTER
NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2026

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EU-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Foresight Dialogue

30 September – 1 October 2026

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



Overview

The Gulf Research Center (GRC), together with the European External Action Service (EEAS), convened the first-ever EU-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Foresight Dialogue in Riyadh on 30 September and 1 October 2026. Over 70 participants from Saudi Arabia and the European Union attended, including officials, experts, and practitioners. The Dialogue forms part of GRC's ongoing efforts to strengthen GCC-EU relations and its work under the GCC-EU Research Program. By bringing both sides together to explore shared futures, it deepened EU-Saudi engagement ahead of the second EU-GCC Summit, to be held in Riyadh on 24 October 2026.

Day 1: 30 September

Opening remarks were delivered by Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the GRC; H.E. Luigi Di Maio, European Union Special Representative for the Gulf Region; Dr. Khalid Alsubaie, Assistant Director General for European Affairs and Director of the Western Europe Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Mr. Mathieu Briens, Director for Gulf Countries, Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf, European Commission; and Dr. Yaser Faquih, Chief Economist, Ministry of Economy and Planning, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The remarks reflected the growing EU-Saudi partnership and the upcoming EU-GCC Summit, against the backdrop of evolving regional and global dynamics. The discussion highlighted opportunities to further strengthen dialogue and cooperation across areas of shared interest.

Session 1, "Geopolitics in an Era of Global Transitions," examined the major global forces shaping the EU and Saudi Arabia, including shifts in geo-economic power, evolving supply chains, emerging security dynamics, and changes in multilateral governance. Participants discussed shared challenges and converging long-term interests, and how foresight can help both sides anticipate risks, identify opportunities, and position themselves within the broader regional context. Key points included:

- Participants discussed how the EU and Saudi Arabia can strengthen their relations in a shifting global order, with China's growing role identified as a significant factor shaping both sides' strategic calculations.
- Discussion turned to expectations for the upcoming EU-GCC Summit, including what the EU is expected to bring to Riyadh and the need for the Summit to deliver concrete outcomes.
- Participants noted that diversifying partnerships is a shared interest, and that closer EU-Saudi coordination can help both sides navigate great-power competition without being drawn into rigid alignments.



Session 2, "At the Crossroads: Economic Diversification in the Changing Global Economic Order," explored how global economic shifts intersect with Saudi Arabia's vision for the future and the EU's long-term priorities. Discussions considered possible futures for trade, supply chains, and investment, alongside the role of skills, innovation ecosystems, and regulatory frameworks in supporting diversification. Participants also considered how closer collaboration could support competitiveness, attract investment, and advance sustainable economic development. Key points included:

- Participants highlighted the work of the European business community in the Kingdom, including the chambers of commerce, in supporting Saudi-EU commercial ties.
- It was noted that setting up a business in Saudi Arabia has become comparatively easy, which in turn makes it easier for the Saudi and EU business communities to connect and cooperate.
- Discussion focused on how the EU can do more to support Saudi Vision 2030, going beyond trade towards investment, skills, and joint ventures in new sectors.



Session 3, "Shaping the Future of the Energy Transition," examined how current developments are redefining energy security and shaping the transition to cleaner energy. It explored opportunities in clean energy, hydrogen, and critical raw materials, and the contribution of stronger, more connected value chains to sustainable growth. Discussions addressed how Saudi Arabia and the EU can balance affordability, reliability, and sustainability amid geopolitical uncertainty, and the potential for closer cooperation on investment, technology, and infrastructure. Key points included:

- Participants observed that Saudi Arabia has taken a more pragmatic, practical approach to areas such as hydrogen, while EU strict regulatory requirements can make energy cooperation more difficult, prompting calls for greater flexibility in the EU's approach to the Kingdom.
- The war in Ukraine was cited as having exposed Europe's energy dependencies, underscoring the case for diversifying supply and for Saudi Arabia as a major long-term energy partner.
- Participants suggested that cooperation on hydrogen, clean energy technologies, and critical raw materials could be advanced through joint pilot projects and greater alignment of standards and certification.





Session 4, "AI, Connectivity, and the Future of Innovation: EU-Saudi Technological Futures," examined the strategic implications of advances in artificial intelligence, connectivity, digital infrastructure, and cybersecurity for the partnership. Drawing on Saudi Arabia's expanding innovation ecosystem and the EU's regulatory and digital governance frameworks, participants explored possible futures for AI development, data governance, digital trade, and emerging technologies, and how both sides can encourage innovation while addressing trust, security, and responsible use. Key points included:

- There was broad agreement that stronger AI governance and regulation are needed on both sides.
- Participants recognized the significant progress Saudi Arabia has made in developing its AI policies and ecosystem, which has opened new avenues for EU-Saudi cooperation.
- It was noted that the EU's regulatory landscape is more complex, given the need to coordinate across 27 member states, and that this makes close dialogue on compatible approaches all the more important.

Day 2: 1 October

Day 2 opened with a session on “Foresight, from Framing to Practice,” which gave a brief overview of how the European Union has institutionalized strategic foresight in policy planning and long-term governance.

Saudi and EU experts then took part in a forward-looking simulation designed and run by Forward Global. Participants worked in mixed teams on a fictional, fast-escalating crisis in which the failure of a shared international system began to cascade across water, supply chains, agriculture, and later cybersecurity and communications. Each team was asked to assess the situation, separate established facts from possible scenarios, set its red lines, and choose among a set of response options.

In the closing discussion, participants reflected on how differently the teams worked. Some began from sector-level detail and built outward, while others began from the broad picture and worked down. Many said that the ease of reaching common ground in the exercise showed what is possible in the wider relationship, and that mutual understanding and trust were the key ingredients. The program concluded with a site visit to At-Turaif District, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Diriyah.

Conclusion

The Dialogue marked a milestone as the first dedicated EU-Saudi foresight exchange. By combining high-level discussion on geopolitics, economic diversification, energy, and technology with a hands-on simulation, it built practical working relationships and a shared habit of thinking ahead. It strengthened EU-Saudi ties at a pivotal moment and provided a constructive foundation for the EU-GCC Summit in Riyadh on 24 October 2026.





Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Institute for Diplomatic and Consular Training (INESDYC)

September 9, 2026

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) is pleased to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Institute for Diplomatic and Consular Training (INESDYC) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

The MoU was signed by Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the GRC, and H.E. José Rafael Espaillat, Ambassador-Rector of INESDYC. It establishes a framework for closer research and institutional cooperation through joint studies, knowledge exchange, policy dialogue, and capacity building.

The partnership will place particular emphasis on deepening understanding of relations between the Gulf and the Dominican Republic, while supporting wider research on the Gulf's engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean. Through this cooperation, GRC and INESDYC aim to bring researchers and practitioners from both regions into closer dialogue and identify opportunities for future collaboration.

"Through Syrian Eyes" Film Program

Damascus, Syria

September 9, 2026



The Gulf Research Center (GRC), in collaboration with the Taqaddum Center for Dialogue, Development, and Peacebuilding, has released a new episode of Through Syrian Eyes entitled "Is the People's Assembly a Constituent Assembly or a Parliament?"

Topics addressed in the episode include: What powers does the Syrian People's Assembly hold, and which laws will it address first? How will it carry out its legislative and oversight responsibilities? The episode also explored the Assembly's role in transitional justice, the national budget, and international agreements, as well as the main challenges it faces.

These questions were discussed with Dr. Madonna Bashara, Second Deputy Speaker of the Syrian People's Assembly. The episode is presented by Abdullah Al-Ghadawi, Director of the Taqaddum Center.

Watch the full episode here.

September 14, 2026



The Gulf Research Center (GRC), in collaboration with the Taqaddum Center for Dialogue, Development, and Peacebuilding, has released a new episode of Through Syrian Eyes entitled **"Media in the New Syria: Regulatory Laws and Journalistic Ethics."**

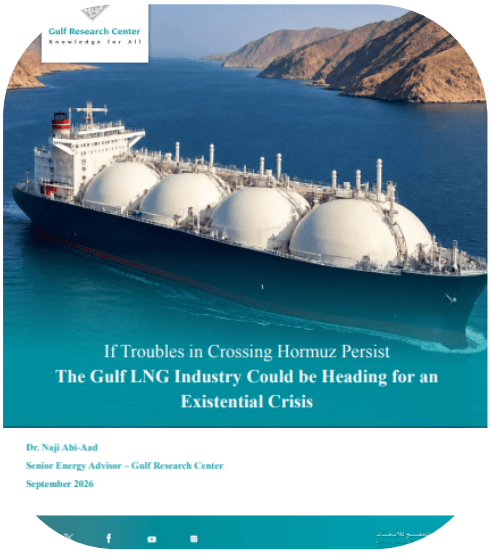
The discussion looks at the following questions: Does the new media law protect journalists' freedom and shield them from interference by security authorities? Where are the boundaries between freedom of expression and journalistic responsibility, and who defines them? How should Syria's media landscape respond to the challenges posed by social media?

The episode explores these questions with writer and journalist Ahmad Assi; writer and journalism researcher Yarub Al-Eissa; and Baraa Othman, a member of the Executive Office of the Syrian Journalists Union. This episode was presented by Abdullah Al-Ghadawi, Director of the Taqaddum Center.

Watch the full episode here.

The Gulf Research Center produces various publications through its research programs, projects, and Gulf Research Meetings. The GRC's publications can be accessed on its website via this link; the commentary and analyses can be found here; and selected Arabic articles can be found here.

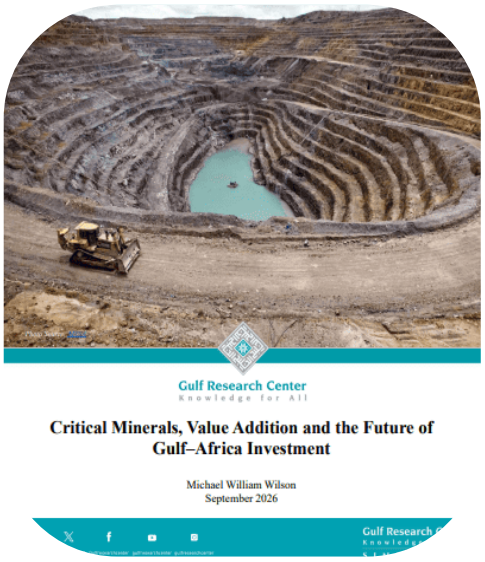
Commentary & Analyses



If Troubles in Crossing Hormuz Persist the Gulf LNG Industry Could be Heading for an Existential Crisis

Dr. Naji Abi-Aad

September 2026



Critical Minerals, Value Addition and the Future of Gulf–Africa Investment

Michael William Wilson

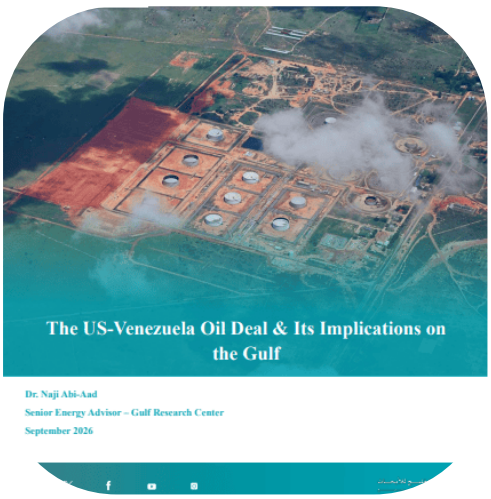
September 2026



The Bishkek SCO Summit: From Multipolar Ambition to Practical Cooperation

Layla Ali

September 2026



The US-Venezuela Oil Deal & Its Implications on the Gulf

Dr. Naji Abi-Aad

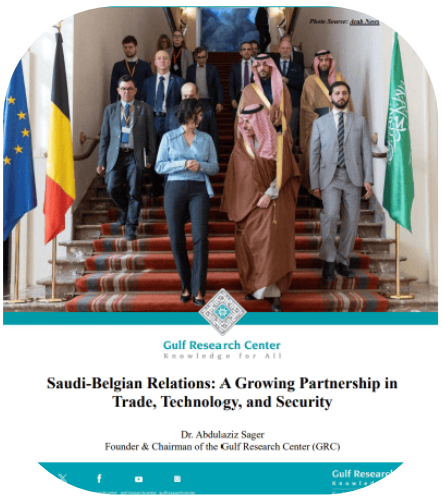
September 2026



Canada and the GCC: Strategic Convergence in a Fragmenting International Order

Amnah Mosly

September 2026



Saudi-Belgian Relations: A Growing Partnership in Trade, Technology, and Security

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager

September 2026

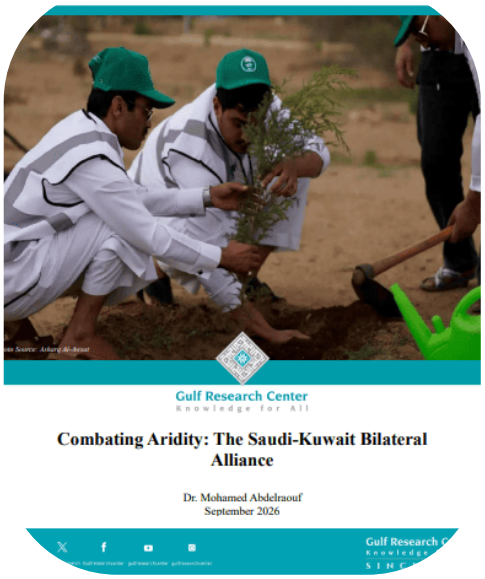
Commentary & Analyses



Relations saoudo-belges : un partenariat en plein essor dans les domaines du commerce, de la technologie et de la sécurité

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager

September 2026



Combating Aridity: The Saudi-Kuwait Bilateral Alliance

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf

September 2026



Toward a Formal U.S.-GCC Framework: Completing the Dual-Track Strategy

Amnah Mosly

September 2026



NATO-GCC Engagement: A Question of Appetite

Houda Barroug

September 2026



Saudi-EU Relations: Toward a Strategic Partnership

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager

September 2026



EU-Gulf Defense Cooperation Driving Rapprochement Amid Regional Turmoil?

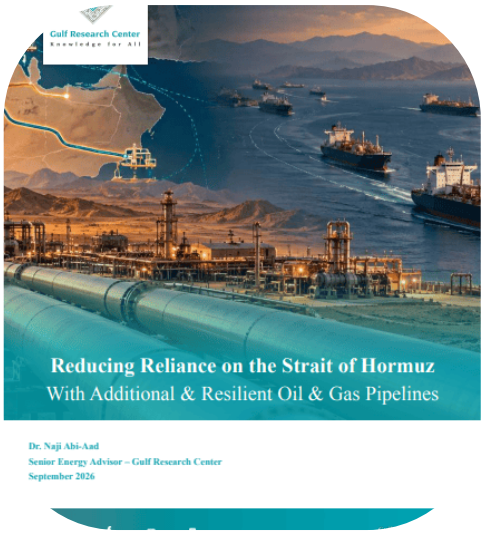
Chantal Hohe

September 2026

Commentary & Analyses



Saudi-Canada Relations: Strategic Consolidation and Future Horizons
Gulf Research Center
September 2026



Reducing Reliance on the Strait of Hormuz With Additional & Resilient Oil & Gas Pipelines
Dr. Naji Abi-Aad
September 2026



Saudi Arabia and Spain: Deepening Partnership in the Vision 2030 Era
Hannan Alghamdi
September 2026

Selected Arabic Articles



China's Constraint and the Strength of the Gulf's Strategic Position: The Limits of Economic Pressure on Iran
Dr. Noura Shuaibi
September 2026



If Troubles in Crossing Hormuz Persist the Gulf LNG Industry Could be Heading for an Existential Crisis
Dr. Naji Abi-Aad
September 2026



Digital Sovereignty over Data and Cloud Infrastructures: Cross-Border Limits of Legal and Judicial Jurisdiction, with the CLOUD Act and Schrems II as a Mode
Dr. Fatimah Ali Fahad Al-Huwail
September 2026

Selected Arabic Articles



Saudi Belgian Relations

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager

September 2026



The New Digital Environment: Declining Mobilization and the Challenge of Socialization

Prof. Saleh Al Khathlan

September 2026



The Artificial Battlefield: AI-Generated Disinformation and Information Resilience During the 2026 Iran War

Mayar Al-Hatem

September 2026



Saudi Initiatives for the Development and Advancement of Artificial Intelligence

Abdulaziz Al-Aqeel

September 2026



Saudi EU Relations

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager

September 2026



From the Strait of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb to the Arabian Sea: Diversifying Saudi Arabia's Oil Export Routes

Ziad Althawadi

September 2026

Selected Arabic Articles



Reducing Reliance on the Strait of Hormuz through Additional and Resilient Oil and Gas Pipelines

Dr. Naji Abi-Aad

September 2026



Could Beijing Serve as the Gateway to the East in the Strategic Balance Equation?

Rear Admiral (Retd) Eng. Saleh Sunaydih Alotaibi

September 2026



Postponing the Disarmament Process: An Analysis of the Positions of Baghdad, Washington, and Tehran

Dr. Rasha Al azzawi

September 2026

Country Updates & Trade Reports



Denmark-GCC Relations - September 2026

Gulf Research Center

September 2026



Saudi-EU Trade Relations - English - Arabic

Gulf Research Center

September 2026



GCC-Poland Relations

Gulf Research Center

September 2026

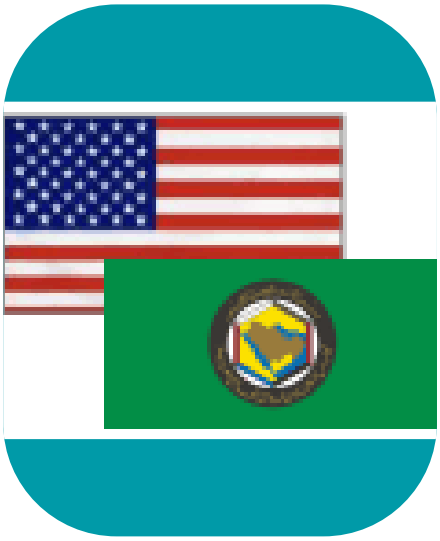
Selected Arabic Articles



South Korea - GCC Relations - September 2026
Gulf Research Center
September 2026



Relations Commerciales saoudo - Arabic - English - Belges
Gulf Research Center
September 2026



U.S - GCC Relations
Gulf Research Center
September 2026

Araa Magazine



Pakistan-GCC Relations
Gulf Research Center
September 2026



September 2026 Issue 225
Gulf Cooperation Council States: Challenges, Risks, and Responses
To download the PDF version:
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Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme

The Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme is an international independent, non-partisan, non-profit programme established in 2010 and hosted and supported by the Gulf Research Center. The programme provides data, analyses, and recommendations contributing to the improvement of understanding and management of Gulf labour migration, population, and labour markets, engaging with, and respecting the viewpoints of all stakeholders. Visit the website here.

13th GLMM Workshop

GLMM organized its 13th workshop entitled "Africa-Gulf Migration, Mobility and Trade: Past and Present, Policy and Prospects," in Nairobi, 9-11 September 2026.

The workshop was directed by Prof. Linda Oucho (African Migration Development Policy Centre , Kenya) and Dr. Faisal Garba (University of Cape Town, Migration and Mobility Hub, South Africa).

The workshop was co-organised with the African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC), Kenya; Africa Migration Policy Centre (AMPC)/ Friederich Ebert Foundation (FES), Ethiopia; the ILO FAIRWAY Programme, Kuwait-Kenya, and the Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient (CARPO), Germany.

The programme started on 9 September at the Mövenpick Westlands Nairobi with a fireside chat entitled: "Labour Migration between Africa and Arab States - Strengthening Cooperation for Improved Labour Migration Governance." It brought together policymakers, regional actors, researchers, and civil society representatives to discuss emerging priorities for labour migration governance between Africa and the Arab states. The conversation explored opportunities to strengthen cooperation between countries of origin and destination, improve migrant worker protection, and enhance the role of regional and interregional dialogue platforms in supporting fair and well-governed labour migration.

Panellists:

- Ryszard Cholewinski, Senior Labour Migration Specialist, ILO
- Lawrence Egulu, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda
- Teresa Wabuko, Central Organization for Trade UNIONS (COTU), Kenya
- Sophia Amimo, Domestic Workers Returnee Network of Kenya
- Murtaza Khan, Fragomen
- Edith Murogo, Centre for Domestic Training and Development



Fireside Chat, 9 September 2026

On 10 and 11 September, the workshop entitled "Africa–Gulf Migration, Mobility and Trade: Past and Present, Policy and Prospects" took place at the IBIS Westlands Nairobi. Over two days, the workshop moved from the deep and contradictory history of Africa–Gulf connections, through the contemporary dynamics of movement, work, and trade, to the policy and legal frameworks that govern the corridor and the prospects that lie ahead. The aim was to understand

the present in a rounded way and to think carefully about equitable, context-specific policy that centres around the wellbeing of migrants — with a view to a shared publication that helps fill the knowledge gap in this area.

On the first day, sessions examined the political economy of Africa–Gulf investment and trade, patterns of African labour mobility to GCC states, migration infrastructures and networks, and the changing dynamics of work and gendered labour migration. On the second day participants focused on migrant enterprise and everyday life in the Gulf, educational mobility, governance and legal frameworks, migrant protection, and the future relationship between migration, trade, and development.

A total of 18 papers were presented by authors from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, France, and the UK. All papers were finalised in advance of the workshop and could therefore be discussed in-depth by assigned discussants and the other participants.

The publication of an edited volume is being prepared.

- GLMM organizes on average one workshop every year: Past GLMM Workshops.
- The workshop papers frequently result in joint publications: edited volumes or special issues of academic journals.
- The most recent volume: The Future of Migration to GCC Countries: Migrants' Aspirations, Labour Reforms, and Politics. Edited by Françoise De Bel-Air, Nasra Shah.
- The most recent special issue of an academic journal: Recent Labor and Migration Policy Reforms in the Gulf States: Winners and Losers. Edited by Nasra Shah and Françoise De Bel-Air.
- Other papers are published individually, often in academic journals.
- The most recent publication: Factors Affecting Future Mobility of South Asian Migrants in Saudi Arabia, co-authored by Areej Jamal, Nasra M. Shah, and Richa Shivatoki.

South-Asia - GCC Migration Corridors: Webinar and Hub

Webinar

- On 15 September, GLMM co-organised a webinar entitled: "Social Protection for Migrant Workers in the Gulf–South Asia Corridor: Priorities, Reforms and Ways Forward."

Focus

- Gulf countries host millions of South Asian migrant workers and social protection of migrant workers is important for countries on both sides of Gulf-South Asia corridor. Therefore, it is important to have a greater understanding about the overarching development and reform context in the Gulf and in the South Asian origin countries to identify shared social protection priorities, distinguishing issues requiring national solutions from those requiring bilateral or regional cooperation and strengthening engagement of South Asian and Gulf countries on portability, coverage, financing, and access to social protection benefits. Against this backdrop, the webinar contributed to understanding what South Asian countries can do nationally to improve social protection for migrant workers, where a collective South Asian position would add value, and what requires Gulf cooperation — by focusing on the following questions: What are the principal social protection gaps across the migration cycle and across the South Asia–Gulf migration corridor? How can South Asian origin countries develop common priorities for dialogue and negotiation with GCC states? And how do changes in the social protection context in the countries of destination translate into the adoption of new approaches in countries of origin?

Speakers

Panelists

- Mr. Jasim Alhamrani, Director of Strategic Planning and Communication, Executive Bureau of the Council of Ministers of Labour & Social Affairs in the GCC States, Bahrain

- Mr. Rohit Regmi, Director, Social Security Fund, Nepal
- Mr. Md. Saiful Haque Chowdhury, Additional Secretary, Planning & Development Wing, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Bangladesh
- Mr. K. Nikarilkanth, Senior Assistant Secretary, Foreign Employment Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism, Sri Lanka

Moderator

- Prof. Nasra Shah, Lahore School of Economics, Pakistan, and Scientific Director, Gulf Labour Markets, Migration and Population (GLMM) Programme

Master of Ceremonies

- Dr. Bilesha Weeraratne, Research Fellow and Head of Migration and Urbanization Policy Research at the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka

Hub

Partners

The webinar was the occasion to formally launch the Cross-Regional Knowledge Hub on Social Protection for Migrant Workers, a collaborative platform of six organisations/programmes:

- Gulf Labour Market, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme at the Gulf Research Center
- Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility, CESLAM, Nepal
- Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka, IPS, Sri Lanka
- International Institute on Migration and Development, IIMAD, India
- Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, RMMRU, Bangladesh
- Caritas Switzerland

Aim

- The aim of Cross-Regional Knowledge Hub is generating evidence, strengthening capacities, and fostering policy dialogue on the social protection of migrant workers among key stakeholders across the South Asia-Gulf labour migration corridor. It is supported by ILO STREAM.

Activities

- Cross-regional knowledge production, including a workshop; publications (research papers, policy briefs, factsheets; policy dialogues; and webinars.)

Recent Publications

- Mehmet Ali Soytas, GLMM Non-Resident Fellow: Demographics, Skills, and the Role of Expatriate Talent in Saudi Arabia's Labor Market: From Labor Substitution to Strategic Complementarity under Vision 2030, GLMM Policy Brief No. 36, September 2026.
- Françoise De Bel-Air: The Premium Residency Program in Saudi Arabia: History, Design, Acquisition Dynamics, and Holder Profile, GLMM Policy Brief No. 35.
- This is the list of all GLMM Policy Briefs and this is the list of all GLMM publications.

Data

- For more than a decade GLMM has gathered, analysed, and republished official data related to labour and migration from multiple sources of all six GCC states. The database contains more than 1,100 tables. Every week new data is added to the database.

Recently Published Data

- Saudi Arabia: Average monthly wages per paid employee in main employment by nationality (Saudi/non-Saudi), sex and education level (in SR) (Q4 2025)
- Saudi Arabia: Average monthly wages per paid employee in main employment by nationality (Saudi/non-Saudi), sex and aggregated age group (in SR) (Q4 2025)
- Saudi Arabia: Average monthly wages per paid employee in main employment by nationality

(Saudi/non-Saudi), sex and aggregated category of economic activities (in SR) (Q4 2025)

- Saudi Arabia: Labour Force Participation Rates by nationality (Saudi/non Saudi) and sex (Q1 2021-Q1 2026)
- Kuwait: Cumulated numbers of contravenors to the law on residency in section 20 (domestic workers), by nationality group (2015-2025)
- Kuwait: Holders of article 20 residence permits (domestic sector) by nationality group (2015-2025)
- Oman: End-of-year population by nationality (Omani/ non-Omani) and sex (2015-2025)
- Kuwait: Residency permit holders by group of countries of origin (2011-2025)
- Kuwait: Cumulated numbers of contravenors to the law on residency, by nationality group (2015-2025)
- Kuwait: Residency permits issued for the first time under article 24 (self sponsorship), by nationality group and sex of holder (2019-2024)
- Kuwait: Residency permits issued for the first time under article 23 (studies), by nationality group and sex of holder (2019-2024)
- Kuwait: Residency permits issued for the first time under article 22 (family reunion), by nationality group and sex of holder (2019-2024)

GCC Regional Tables

GLMM constructs unique GCC regional tables based exclusively on the official country data.

- GCC: Total populations in the six GCC states (mid-year figures, 2010-2024)
- GCC: Total population and percentage of nationals and non-nationals in GCC countries (national statistics, mid-2024)
- GCC: Total population and percentage of nationals and non-nationals in GCC countries, by sex (national statistics, mid-2024)
- GCC: Foreign populations in the six GCC states (mid-year figures, 2010-2024)
- GCC: National populations in the six GCC states (mid-year figures, 2010-2024)

For all GCC tables:

- https://gulfmigration.grc.net/glmm-database/demographic-and-economic-module/?search=1&cmct=GCC

All Country Tables

- **Bahrain:** https://gulfmigration.grc.net/glmm-database/demographic-and-economic-module/?search=1&cmct=Bahrain
- **Kuwait:** https://gulfmigration.grc.net/glmm-database/demographic-and-economic-module/?search=1&cmct=Kuwait
- **Oman:** https://gulfmigration.grc.net/glmm-database/demographic-and-economic-module/?search=1&cmct=Oman
- **Qatar:** https://gulfmigration.grc.net/glmm-database/demographic-and-economic-module/?search=1&cmct=Qatar
- **Saudi Arabia:** https://gulfmigration.grc.net/glmm-database/demographic-and-economic-module/?search=1&cmct=Saudi+Arabia
- **UAE:** https://gulfmigration.grc.net/glmm-database/demographic-and-economic-module/?search=1&cmct=United+Arab+Emirates

Contact

Mr. Imco Brouwer, GLMM Managing Director: imco.brouwer@grc.net.

Environmental Security and Sustainability Program

1 September 2026

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center coordinated and participated in the monthly telecall of members of the Science and Technology Major Group at UNEP. The call focused on preparation for the 13th Annual Subcommittee meeting in September 2026.

20 September 2026

Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program Director at the Gulf Research Center together with Ms. Manisha Gulati SQ Consult B.V. had an online discussion with Saudi Environment and Desertification Association on the EU-GCC Free Trade Agreement – the environmental pillar around desertification, water scarcity, marine pollution and climate change, as well as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), the European Union's environmental tool designed to put a fair price on carbon emissions for imported goods.



September 2026

During the month of September 2026, preparations were ongoing for the workshop on the book draft "Green Transformation in Saudi Arabia" planned to be published by the GRC towards the end of 2026.



Cultural & Media Program

مختبر الحوار الخليجي
Gulf Dialogue Lab

GRC PODCAST
بودكاست مركز الخليج للأبحاث

Publications

September 1, 2026



A cultural paper by Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the Cultural and Media Program at the Gulf Research Center, titled: "The Arabian Gulf: From Soft Power to Smart Power — Redefining Soft Power in the Gulf."

Read the full paper here.

September 1, 2026

An article titled **"Palestinian Division Is Structural... Not a Passing Event" by Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the Cultural and Media Program at the Gulf Research Center, published in Al Majalla.** Read the full article here.

September 8, 2026

An article titled "A Historical-Political Approach to the Current Situation" by Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the Cultural and Media Program at the Gulf Research Center, published in Al Majalla. Read the full article here

September 15, 2026

An article titled "Jumping Ship in the U.S. Elections" by Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the Cultural and Media Program at the Gulf Research Center, published in Al Majalla. Read the full article here.

September 16, 2026

An article titled "Houthi Practices Are More Than Just an Isolated Attack" by Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the Cultural and Media Program at the Gulf Research Center, published in Al Majalla. Read the full article here.

GRC Podcast

September 9, 2026



The Gulf Research Center Podcast hosted Professor Dr. Ismail Nouri Al-Rubaie in an episode of "Araa," discussing the cultural and social cost of wars in the Middle East and their impact on individuals, collective memory, trust, and social stability. Watch here.

September 20, 2026



The Gulf Research Center Podcast hosted H.E. Dr. Suha Al-Ali Bek, former Iraqi Minister of Education, in an episode of "Tafasil," discussing the state of education in the Arab world, the importance of meaningful education and its outcomes in building strong societies, as well as challenges related to educational awareness and formation, and the structural differences between ministries of education and higher education. Watch here.

September 1, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Young-Ki Yun, Deputy Director-General for African and Middle Eastern Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, and Mr. Byung-jun Moon, Advisor for Middle Eastern Affairs at the Ministry, along with their accompanying delegation, at the GRC's Riyadh office on September 1, 2026. The meeting included discussions on economic cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Korea, as well as areas of mutual interest.

September 3, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Morino Yasunari, Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's Riyadh office on September 3, 2026. During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on regional developments and discussed areas of mutual interest.

September 3, 2026

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Merete Juhl, Ambassador of Denmark to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's Riyadh office on September 3, 2026. During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on regional developments and discussed matters of mutual interest.



September 6, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Katerina Varvarigou, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 6, 2026. During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on regional developments and discussed areas of mutual interest.

September 6, 2026



Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels and Director of Research of the GRC spoke in a webinar

organized by the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA) and the Euro-Mediterranean and African Network for Economic Studies (EMANES), in collaboration with SecondMuse. The webinar was titled "The Economic Consequences of the Iran War for MENA and Africa: Geoeconomic Shocks, Regional Spillovers, and Pathways to Reconstruction." The session brought together leading experts from across economics, policy, and international development to assess the economic fallout of the Iran war and to explore pathways for regional recovery, reconstruction, and cooperation. Dr. Koch spoke on the exposure, risk, and strategic response of the GCC states.

September 7, 2026



Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in the online discussion, "The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement and What It Means for Regional and Global Security Architecture," held as part of the Global Town Hall 2026 Series in collaboration with the FPCI Middle Power Studies Network. Watch the full session here.

September 7, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in the Security and History Dialogue Conference 2026, held from September 6 to 8, 2026, in Riyadh. Dr. Sager's panel session was titled: "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and International Partnerships for Security and Development," on the second day of the conference.

The session was attended by Professor Abdulrahman Al-Rashed, former editor-in-chief of the newspaper "Asharq Al-Awsat" and the magazine "Al-Majalla," and former director general of Al Arabiya channel; Dr. Ibrahim Al-Muhanna, advisor to the Minister of Energy; and Dr. Joseph Keshishian, researcher in the field of international relations, while the session was moderated by Professor Taher Burqa, presenter at Al Arabiya channel. The session addressed the Kingdom's role in establishing international relations and partnerships since the era of King Abdulaziz, and the evolution of these partnerships across the eras of its kings, alongside their security and defense dimensions in confronting shared challenges, and its role in developing investments and economic transformations, and strengthening regional and international partnerships in a way that serves national interests and supports comprehensive development. Watch the session here.

September 8, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Yannick Reichenau, Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of Switzerland in Riyadh, at the GRC's Riyadh office. During the meeting, the two sides discussed regional developments and issues of mutual interest.

September 9, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), received H.E. José Rafael Espaillat, Ambassador-Rector of the Institute for Diplomatic and Consular Training (INESDYC) of the Dominican Republic, at the GRC headquarters in Riyadh on September 9, 2026.

H.E. Espaillat was accompanied by H.E. Andy Rodríguez Durán , Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, along with a delegation from INESDYC and the Embassy. The meeting focused on strengthening institutional and research cooperation, expanding dialogue on Gulf–Dominican Republic relations, and exploring opportunities to deepen engagement between the Gulf and Latin America and the Caribbean.

September 10, 2026

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Vipul, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 10, 2026. During the meeting, both sides discussed regional developments and issues of mutual interest.



September 10, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Maged Al-Madhaji, Co-founder and Chairperson of the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 10, 2026. During this meeting, both sides discussed areas of mutual interest and recent regional developments.

September 13, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Ahmad Farooq, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 13, 2026. During the meeting, both sides discussed regional developments and issues of mutual interest.

September 13, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Ms. Audrey Lesperres, Chargée d'Affaires at the Embassy of France in Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 13, 2026. During the meeting, the two sides discussed areas of mutual interest and recent regional developments.

September 14, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Stephen Hitchen, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GRC's office in Riyadh on September 14, 2026. During the meeting, both sides discussed regional developments and issues of mutual interest.

September 16, 2026



Dr. Abdualziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), delivered a lecture titled "Sources of Current Threats to Saudi National Security" as part of the Visiting Guests Program at King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz College of Leadership and Staff at the Ministry of the National Guard, at the college's headquarters in Riyadh.

September 16, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with H.E. Mr. Carlo Baldocci, Ambassador of Italy to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. During the meeting, both sides discussed regional developments and issues of mutual interest.

September 16, 2026



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Patrick de Vries from the European Institute of Peace. During this meeting, both sides discussed areas of mutual interest and recent regional developments.

September 19, 2026



Prof. Saleh Al-Khathlan, Senior Advisor at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker in the second GCC-US Think Tanks Strategic Dialogue workshop in Washington, DC. The workshop was organized by Derasat and the American Foreign Policy Council (AFPC) in coordination with the GCC General Secretariat. Speaking in Session 4, "Policy Recommendations: From Dialogue to Action, Institutionalizing the Partnership," Prof. Al-Khathlan joined officials and experts from GCC countries and the United States in discussing regional security arrangements in the post-war period, energy resilience, supply chain security, the use of economic tools amid global shifts, and the future of the GCC-US partnership. Participants also explored ways to strengthen ties between think tanks and policymakers through regular meetings, mechanisms to follow up on recommendations, and joint research to inform decision-making.

September 21-22, 2026



Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussles, participated in the 8th Edition of German-Arab Gulf Dialogue on Security and Cooperation held in Berlin, Germany. The event brought together political, diplomatic, business and research perspectives on security and cooperation in a changing geopolitical landscape. Dr. Koch, in collaboration with Christian Hanelt of the Bertelsmann Stiftung, co-chaired a workshop entitled "EU-GCC Partnership as an Engine for a Middle East-Gulf Process on Cooperation and Security". The workshop examined lessons from subregional cooperation, three EU-GCC tasks, protection, diplomacy and interconnectivity, and concrete projects that could be implemented together.

September 24, 2026

Dr. Christian Koch and Houda Barroug met with Giulio Gentile (Deputy Head of Unit MENA C2 (KSA, UAE and Yemen)), along with Mathilde Prilleux and Ramon Sanz Fuente (both International Relations Officers – KSA). Together they discussed energy, trade and education, and mutual expectations ahead of the EU-GCC Summit.

Access all the GRC's interviews on our YouTube channel here



On September 10, Dr. Abdulrazzaq Graaf, Senior Research Fellow at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), appeared on Algeria International Channel to discuss the wave of Houthi attacks targeting Saudi Arabia. Watch the full interview here: https://t.co/sJCdGArhpt



Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the Cultural Program at the Gulf Research Center, participated on Al Ekhbariya Radio's "Midday Program," providing an analysis of Saudi Arabia's participation in the BRICS Summit, on September 13, 2026. Watch here



Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the Cultural Program at the Gulf Research Center, participated in Husna Radio's "Sawtak Hurr" program, discussing the rapid transformations in the region, the future of the Middle East after October 7, and Saudi Arabia's role in these developments, on September 10, 2026. Watch here



On September 14, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), appeared on RT Arabic's Qusara Al-Qawl program in an episode titled "Iran's Second Front." Watch here: https://t.co/vKdonst6jg



On September 14, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), appeared on Asharq Bloomberg's *Al-Bu'd Al-Rabea* program in an episode titled "Threats to Navigation from the Strait of Hormuz to Bab Al-Mandab." Watch the full interview here: https://t.co/EsGIQ7MUPg



On September 15, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), spoke with Al Arabiya during its *Al-Rabia* news bulletin as part of its coverage of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to Egypt, discussing bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest. https://t.co/ekejEsmkjo



On September 15, Dr. John Sfakianakis, Chief Economist and Head of Economic Research at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), spoke with BBC News. Watch the full interview here: https://youtu.be/FuBCVanobW8



On September 18, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), appeared on BBC Arabic's *Nuqtat Hiwar* program to discuss Saudi Arabia's options following the U.S. position on Houthi threats and maritime security in the Bab Al-Mandab Strait. https://t.co/rGIU7vP7on



On September 18, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), appeared on Asharq Bloomberg's *Ala Al-Hudood* program in an episode titled "Yemen's Battles and Neighboring Countries' Options amid the Militarization of Strategic Straits." https://t.co/PuUVz2quPp



On September 19, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), appeared on Al Jazeera as part of the channel's special coverage of the latest developments in Yemen. https://t.co/dlphHqKxf4



On September 20, Dr. John Sfakianakis, Chief Economist and Head of Economic Research at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), spoke with BBC News. https://youtu.be/s4OyJKtqzEQ



Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the Cultural and Media Program at the Gulf Research Center, participated in a seminar titled "Features of the Saudi Renaissance: From the Founding to 2030," organized by the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts, on September 20, 2026.



On September 21, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), appeared on TRT Arabic's news bulletin to discuss the latest developments in the conflict in Yemen. https://t.co/bi1rVU2C5E



On September 28, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), appeared on Al Arabiya's *Sa'at Hiwar* program in an episode titled "Iraq Seeks U.S. Exemption for Iranian Flights from the Aviation Ban." https://t.co/ME654bhZeb



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