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**KUWAIT**

**EU  
GCC  
BUSINESS  
FORUM**

**DEBRIEF REPORT**



Funded by  
the European Union

**EU-GCC**

Dialogue on  
Economic  
Diversification II



وزارة الخارجية  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 دولة الكويت | State of Kuwait



**KDIPA**  
 هيئة تشجيع الاستثمار المباشر  
 KUWAIT DIRECT INVESTMENT PROMOTION AUTHORITY



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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE 9TH EU–GCC BUSINESS FORUM, held on November 5–6, 2025 at the Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre in Kuwait City, marked a major milestone in the deepening partnership between the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Held under the theme “Together for Shared Prosperity,” the Forum embodied the shared commitment of both regions to advance economic diversification, innovation, and sustainable growth. Hosted by Kuwait and organized through the EU–GCC Dialogue on Economic Diversification II project, funded by the European Union and managed by the European Commission’s Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), the event gathered government leaders, private-sector executives and institutional representatives from across Europe and the Gulf to chart new pathways for collaboration.

Held under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, the Forum opened with a keynote address in which His Highness reaffirmed Kuwait’s commitment to a transformative economic vision built on resilience and regional integration. Across its two days, the Forum featured a dynamic program of keynote addresses, high-level dialogues, and four thematic networking sessions, addressing the critical dimensions of EU–GCC cooperation. The discussions explored how both regions can unlock greater potential through enhanced trade and investment, digital transformation, sustainable infrastructure, and human capital development. Each session offered actionable insights and case studies that underscored the shared priorities of the EU and GCC: fostering innovation, enabling private-sector growth, and developing frameworks for long-term, inclusive prosperity.

Day one emphasized economic interconnectivity and investment resilience, exploring how policy alignment, trade facilitation, and cross-border partnerships can strengthen regional competitiveness. Participants exchanged perspectives on building more adaptive and diversified economies through closer institutional and corporate collaboration. The programme on first day also featured a high-level policy dialogue that set the tone for enhanced coordination in trade, finance and technology between Europe and the Gulf.

Day two shifted the focus toward the human and socio-economic dimensions of transformation. Discussions focused on how upskilling, entrepreneurship, and SME development serve as pillars of economic diversification, while new avenues for co-operation, highlighted emerging opportunities in transport, healthcare, tourism, education, creative industries and food security. Collectively, the sessions underscored that innovation and sustainability are no longer parallel ambitions but interconnected imperatives driving regional integration.

The Forum concluded with an engaging networking showroom that brought together public institutions, private enterprises and investors for direct B2B, G2B, and G2G exchanges, translating dialogue into tangible collaboration. This closing segment reinforced the Forum’s results-oriented ethos, translating strategic discussions into concrete partnerships.

With its forward-looking agenda and high-level participation, the 9th EU–GCC Business Forum, reaffirmed the strength and strategic relevance of EU–GCC cooperation. It demonstrated the value of sustained dialogue in aligning visions for a greener, more innovative and more interconnected future. As Kuwait concludes its GCC presidency, the Forum stands as a testament to a partnership defined by shared ambition and enduring commitment one poised to shape the next era of prosperity between Europe and the Gulf.





## TEAM LEADER OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Rade Glomazić

**A**s Team Leader of the EU-GCC Dialogue on Economic Diversification, I had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the remarkable outcomes of the 9th EU-GCC Business Forum. This event stands as a key milestone that marks a defining moment in our partnership, reinforcing a shared commitment to economic transformation, sustainability, and innovation.

I am both proud and humbled by the journey we undertook together to make this event a reality. Over the two days of the forum, I witnessed an extraordinary spirit of collaboration and goodwill filling the halls. This tangible energy and shared ambition reaffirmed my belief in the bright future of EU-GCC relations and the promise of what we can achieve together.

This landmark gathering's success was only possible thanks to the outstanding leadership and hospitality of our hosts in Kuwait. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Kuwait, especially to His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, the Prime Minister, for graciously patronizing and inaugurating the forum. Their support, along with the warm welcome from the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), set the tone for two days of productive dialogue.

I was deeply moved by the genuine warmth and eagerness our Kuwaiti counterparts showed. This exemplary hospitality made every participant feel at home and exemplified the spirit that underpins EU-GCC relations. We could not have asked for a more inspiring environment, one where voices from Europe and the Gulf came together as one community working "Together for Shared Prosperity."

I also sincerely thank the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretariat General for co-organizing the forum and energetically promoting it. The personal involvement and support of the GCC Secretariat General were instrumental in the event's success. In particular, the presence of HE Jasem Mohamed AlBudaiwi, the GCC Secretary-General, greatly contributed to making this forum a resounding success.

For both Europe and the Gulf, the forum was a dynamic platform to deepen cooperation across critical domains. We explored ways to strengthen trade and investment ties. We recognized the immense untapped potential beyond our already robust trade flows—two-way EU-GCC trade in goods reached EUR161.7 billion in 2024. We charted joint efforts in the digital economy, sharing strategies on digital transformation and artificial intelligence to drive innovation and efficiency in our societies.

Equally, we put a spotlight on empowering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and developing youth skills, knowing that entrepreneurship and education are the engines of sustainable growth. Importantly, we broadened our cooperation into new and exciting sectors. Together, we discussed accelerating the clean energy transition, modernizing transport and logistics links, enhancing healthcare collaboration, and even nurturing creative

industries as a bridge between our cultures. In each of these areas, the message was clear: by pooling our strengths and learning from each other, Europe and the GCC can innovate and grow faster together than we ever could apart.

One of the forum's most inspiring elements was its spirit of open dialogue bridging the public and private sectors. In Kuwait, the forum brought together country representatives, industry leaders, start-up founders, and young innovators who engaged in meaningful exchanges as true partners. This inclusive approach connecting government and business, Europe and the Gulf, established leaders and the next generation proved powerful in sparking fresh insights and actionable solutions. It underscored that our journey toward diversification and innovation must be a joint venture, with governments and businesses working hand-in-hand and with Europe and the Gulf contributing complementary strengths.

The forum was not a one-off event but part of a continuous process of engagement. Its outcomes will feed into official dialogues and inspire ongoing cooperation beyond these two days. Many new connections were forged and concrete initiatives launched, from partnership agreements and investment leads to ideas for joint task forces on key issues.

Beyond the official agreements, the personal relationships built through face-to-face interactions, the trust formed over candid discussions, networking coffees, and even informal dinners, will sustain our collaboration in the long run. The forum demonstrated the immense value of people-to-people ties and open public-private exchange in driving our partnership forward.

In closing, I want to emphasize that the 9th EU-GCC Business Forum was not just an event but a milestone in our ongoing journey toward shared prosperity. The friendship and common purpose we forged in Kuwait will continue to guide us as we move forward together. The spirit of "Together for Shared Prosperity" is more than a slogan; it is our guiding principle for the future of EU-GCC relations.

I am deeply grateful to all the participants and partners who contributed to this forum's success, from the distinguished keynote speakers and panellists to every entrepreneur, investor and young leader who lent their voice. Together, we have affirmed a vision of an EU-GCC partnership that is closer, more dynamic and truly transformative.

As we look to the future, I remain committed to carrying this momentum forward. We will continue this journey together, translating the insights and connections from Kuwait into tangible actions and new initiatives. I very much look forward to the next steps on our path, including future forums and to witnessing the continued growth of our friendship and cooperation.

Together, for shared prosperity, we will achieve more than ever before.

## OPENING CEREMONY

**H**eld under the patronage and in the presence of HH Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, the opening ceremony of the 9th EU-GCC Business Forum marked a defining moment in the evolving partnership between Europe and the Gulf. Gathering senior government officials, business leaders and institutional representatives, the ceremony set the tone for two days of high-level dialogue centred on “Together for Shared Prosperity.”





HH Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah  
 Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah,  
 Prime Minister,  
 Kuwait

In his keynote address, His Highness the Prime Minister reaffirmed Kuwait's vision of a diversified, future-ready economy grounded in innovation, sustainability and regional collaboration. He also highlighted the trade volume between GCC and EU states that exceeded EUR 150 billion annually. Drawing inspiration from Kuwait Vision 2035, he emphasized the nation's readiness to evolve, stating: "Our ambition is to lead change and adapt to it." This message not only highlighted Kuwait's commitment to modernizing its economic framework, but also reflected the country's broader dedication to peace, security and international cooperation.

His Highness underscored Kuwait's long-standing role as a convener of strategic dialogue, recalling past milestones such as hosting the third EU-GCC Forum in 2019 and the 29th EU, GCC Ministerial Meeting in October 2025, events that demonstrated the depth of the partnership and the shared resolve to address global challenges, including energy security, sustainability and geopolitical stability. He reaffirmed that relations between the EU and the GCC are "deep-rooted" and now stand as a model for international

cooperation aimed at accelerating economic diversification, promoting climate-friendly trade and driving innovation and digital transformation.

The Prime Minister noted that this collaborative momentum is clearly reflected in joint efforts across renewable energy, advanced technology, healthcare, food security and innovative industries fields, which he described as "strategic pillars of stability and openness in our two regions and the international community." His words resonated with the audience as both a national commitment and a regional call to action, inviting partners to deepen investment and cooperation in these vital sectors.

His presence, as both patron and keynote speaker, symbolized the importance the State of Kuwait attaches to building enduring partnerships that translate policy into tangible opportunity. By placing emphasis on openness, private-sector empowerment and the acceleration of economic diversification, His Highness reaffirmed Kuwait's determination to strengthen its role as a bridge between Europe and the Gulf, advancing a shared vision for long-term prosperity.





Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber  
Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah,  
Director General, Kuwait Direct  
Promotion Authority (KDIPA)

#### BIO

Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah is the Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and serves on the boards of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and the Kuwait Investment Authority. He also contributes to several national committees, including those focused on business environment reform, competitiveness, and international trade relations. Previously, he led the Kuwait Foreign Investment Bureau at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and held key roles across government and financial institutions, including the Central Bank of Kuwait. Meshaal holds a PhD from the University of Portsmouth, a master's from Kuwait Maastricht Business School, and a bachelor's in social sciences from Kuwait University.

Building on that vision, Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), highlighted the strategic importance of the forum as a platform for genuine engagement between the EU and the GCC. He described the gathering as one that “reflects the depth of distinguished relations between the European and Gulf groups and demonstrates strong bilateral and regional frameworks moving toward a strategic partnership based on mutual trust and shared interests.”

Sheikh Meshaal emphasized that the EU-GCC Business Forum is not merely an annual dialogue but a cornerstone for cultivating long-term cross-border synergies particularly in trade, innovation, technology transfer, and sustainable development. He underscored that over more than four decades, cooperation between the two regions has expanded to encompass economic growth, climate action and knowledge ex-

change, thereby contributing to a shared future shaped by peace, security and responsible stewardship.

His remarks further outlined how Kuwait, through KDIPA, is actively fostering an investment environment that encourages European expertise, supports technology-driven transformation and enables deeper private-sector engagement. He reiterated Kuwait's commitment to strengthening partnerships in promising sectors such as renewable energy, advanced technologies, logistics and other industries, vital to the Gulf's diversification goals.

By framing the forum as both a symbolic and practical bridge, Sheikh Meshaal reinforced Kuwait's role as a convening hub for international partnership and capacity building. He affirmed that joint investment is not limited to capital flows but extends to human development, innovation ecosystems and integrated economic cooperation that ultimately enhances shared prosperity for both regions.



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