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DRAFT REPORT

on the relations between the EU and Saudi Arabia
(2025/2082(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the relations between the EU and Saudi Arabia (2025/2082(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 205-222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
 - having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 18 May 2022 on a Strategic Partnership with the Gulf (JOIN(2022)0013), and to the Council conclusions of 20 June 2022 thereon,
 - having regard to the Council mandate for opening negotiations for individual Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPAs) with the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)) and respectively the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates,
 - having regard to the joint statement from the European Union-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit of 16 October 2024,
 - having regard to the recommendation for a Council Decision concerning new negotiating directives for a regional free trade agreement and for bilateral free trade agreements with the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and respectively the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates,
 - having regard to the fourth EU-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Human Rights Dialogue held in Riyadh on 20 December 2024,
 - having regard to the United Nations Group of Experts' Report of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2025/169),
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A10-0000/2025),
- A. whereas Saudi Arabia is a key bilateral and regional partner for the EU;
- B. whereas Saudi Arabia is the EU's 17th largest trading partner globally, and the EU is Saudi Arabia's largest foreign investor;
- C. whereas Saudi Arabia is expanding its role as a regional broker and international player;
- D. whereas Saudi Arabia is enhancing dialogue and cooperation with the EU on human rights;

EU-Saudi Arabia bilateral relations

1. Highlights the positive engagement between the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council during the EU-Gulf Cooperation Council summit; affirms that the EU aims to boost bilateral ties with each Gulf Cooperation Council partner through SPAs that would address the current lack of a legally binding framework for bilateral relations between the EU and Saudi Arabia, unlocking the potential for deeper and broader cooperation in areas such as security, trade, energy, climate, research, innovation, artificial intelligence, connectivity, digital governance, education, culture, research, youth and people-to-people contact;
2. Highlights Saudi Arabia's cooperation with the EU in the fields of foreign and security policy;
3. Welcomes the potential for further EU-Saudi Arabia economic collaboration in the area of sustainable energy, critical raw materials, information technology, and entrepreneurship, noting that economic cooperation between the EU and Saudi Arabia is the cornerstone of the bilateral relationship;
4. Reaffirms that the EU is committed to supporting Saudi Arabia's pursuit of socio-economic diversification and reform, including the promotion of sustainable development;
5. Reaffirms that the EU remains committed to advancing a safe, mutually beneficial visa-free travel arrangement with the five remaining GCC countries, so as to ensure equal treatment of them;

Saudi Arabia's foreign policy priorities and opportunities for the EU

6. Welcomes Saudi Arabia's growing importance as a diplomatic actor contributing to international stability, particularly in the context of Israel's military operation in Gaza as well as during recent developments in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, the Red Sea and Sudan;
7. Calls for stronger foreign and security cooperation in the light of regional escalations; highlights that both the joint communication on a Strategic Partnership with the Gulf and the future SPA have called for stronger cooperation in political and security fields;
8. Calls on Saudi Arabia to continue EU-Saudi Arabian cooperation on counterterrorism and prevention of radicalisation;
9. Acknowledges Saudi Arabia's efforts to encourage de-escalation in relation to Israel's military operation in Gaza, its support for humanitarian assistance, and its calls for a ceasefire and the release of hostages;
10. Commends Saudi Arabia's sustained engagement on Syria, including regional consultations aimed at stabilisation and post-conflict recovery; stresses the importance of preserving the territorial integrity of Syria;
11. Reaffirms the EU's support for Lebanon's political and socio-economic reconstruction and highlights the importance of EU-Saudi Arabian cooperation in implementing United

Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006), supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces, and promoting the disarmament of Hezbollah, while condemning Israel Defense Forces attacks;

12. Recognises Saudi Arabia's constructive approach amid the current regional tensions, through its path towards diplomatic normalisation with Iran, and highlights the shared EU-Saudi Arabian stance against Iranian proxies and the development of an Iranian nuclear programme;
13. Highlights the shared EU-Saudi Arabian priority of establishing lasting peace in Yemen, and commends Saudi Arabia's continued commitment to achieving an inclusive political solution in Yemen;
14. Welcomes the UN brokered Riyadh roadmap talks in January 2025, which yielded progress on Houthi disarmament timelines; notes that these remain contingent on Saudi Arabian economic assistance;
15. Stresses the EU's unwavering commitment to ensuring the protection of maritime routes and international navigational rights in the Red Sea; highlights Saudi Arabia's intelligence cooperation with EU Member States participating in EUNAVFOR Aspides;
16. Welcomes Saudi Arabia's involvement in hosting the Ukraine war ceasefire negotiations;
17. Notes Saudi Arabia's USD 600 billion commitment to invest in the United States, including a defence agreement and strategic cooperation on emerging technologies;
18. Recognises Saudi Arabia's role in multilateral cooperation, including its growing engagement in Africa, in particular the Sahel, and Asia;
19. Notes that Saudi Arabia has been formally invited to become a member of the BRICS group of countries;
20. Notes the strengthening of Saudi Arabian-Türkiye bilateral relations, particularly in security and defence fields;

Saudi Arabia's socio-economic transformation and opportunities for the EU

21. Welcomes Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030 plans, outlining meaningful socio-economic reform to modernise the country and its institutions, as well as to diversify the economy;
22. Calls for Saudi Arabia to reshape its energy landscape and move towards renewable energy and green hydrogen as part of its Vision 2030 plans; notes that the EU stands ready to collaborate with its Saudi Arabian counterparts on projects advancing the environmental goals of both regions;
23. Recognises that Saudi Arabia has made considerable progress in tackling its high youth unemployment rate, lowering it from 35.01 % in 2006 to 16 % by 2023; recommends that Saudi Arabia continue to prioritise this issue;

24. Highlights the significant progress Saudi Arabia has made regarding female empowerment, as female workforce participation has risen to 36 % and women have been granted the right to drive and to travel without male guardianship;
25. Notes that Saudi Arabia has launched a series of ambitious infrastructure projects ahead of it hosting EXPO 2030 and the FIFA World Cup 2034;
26. Recognises the opportunity for EU-Saudi Arabian collaboration on the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor Initiative, which is expected to lead investments in electricity cables, undersea telecommunications and data cables, as well as pipelines for green hydrogen;

Human rights

27. Calls for closer cooperation between the EU and Saudi Arabia on human rights; welcomes the EU-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Human Rights Dialogues led by the Human Rights Commission of Saudi Arabia and the European Commission, with the fourth Dialogue having been held in Riyadh in December 2024;
28. Acknowledges the notable social reforms implemented by Saudi Arabia, such as the New Civil Transaction Laws, advancements in women's empowerment, working on drafting a criminal code, the improvement of the Kafala migrant labour system and the implementation of new regulations for workers;
29. Recognises the growing participation of civil society in the kingdom, with over 5 400 registered associations and organisations, and calls for further measures to support and sustain this positive trend;
30. Acknowledges Saudi Arabia's Human Rights Strategy for the 2034 FIFA World Cup; reaffirms the EU's readiness to support ongoing human rights and labour reforms; calls for strengthened cooperation with the UN and the International Labour Organization on migrant workers' rights, particularly ahead of EXPO 2030 and the tournament;
31. Reaffirms the EU's principled commitment to work with Saudi Arabia towards the abolition of the death penalty;
32. Calls on Saudi Arabia to ratify all relevant international human rights conventions;

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33. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

This report comes at a pivotal moment for both the European Union and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As the Kingdom pursues an ambitious and far-reaching transformation under its Vision 2030 strategy, the European Parliament is enhancing its engagement by appointing, for the first time, a dedicated rapporteur for EU–Saudi relations. This reflects not only Saudi Arabia’s growing strategic importance—including as a leading member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)—but also the Parliament’s intention to play a more proactive role in shaping this evolving partnership.

Saudi Arabia is undergoing a complex and ambitious process of socio-economic reform, focused on modernising institutions, expanding social openness, and reducing dependence on oil. These changes present new opportunities for EU engagement, particularly in areas of shared interest such as economic diversification, innovation, climate action, education, and regional stability.

In a context of shifting geopolitical dynamics and heightened uncertainty, the EU must deepen its ties with key international actors, particularly those in the Gulf region. Saudi Arabia is increasingly asserting itself on the regional and global stage—not only in the fields of diplomacy and energy, but also through its growing involvement in peace efforts and multilateral cooperation. This report underlines the significant potential for convergence, particularly in advancing political stability and security across the broader Middle East.

Rather than offering an exhaustive overview of EU–Saudi relations, this report proposes a constructive roadmap for deepening and balancing our cooperation—politically, economically, and socially. It also underscores the importance of finalising a future Strategic Partnership Agreement to formalise and expand bilateral engagement.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms remain central to this relationship. The report acknowledges progress in areas such as women’s empowerment and civil society participation, while encouraging continued reform and greater alignment with international human rights standards.

Ultimately, the message is clear: the EU and Saudi Arabia share a strong mutual interest in working together. With mutual respect, open dialogue, and a pragmatic, forward-looking approach, this partnership can contribute meaningfully to addressing the complex challenges of today’s interconnected world.

ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS FROM WHOM THE RAPPOREUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT

Pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, the rapporteur declares that she received input from the following entities or persons in the preparation of the draft report:

Entity and/or person
Human Rights Commission

The list above is drawn up under the exclusive responsibility of the rapporteur.

Where natural persons are identified in the list by their name, by their function or by both, the rapporteur declares that she has submitted to the natural persons concerned the European Parliament's Data Protection Notice No 484 (<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/data-protect/index.do>), which sets out the conditions applicable to the processing of their personal data and the rights linked to that processing.