

# EURO-GULF MONITOR

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**EGIC**  
Euro-Gulf  
Information  
Centre

## WEEK IN BRIEF

1. The UAE will grant citizenship to foreign professionals, investors and their families for the first time.
2. Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia introduce further restrictions amid COVID-19 cases' spike.
3. Italian company Leonardo will provide cybersecurity services to Qatar.
4. Saudi Arabia launched the Artificial Intelligence Center for Energy.
5. Pope Francis, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and UN Secretary General celebrated the first International Day of Human Fraternity in an Abu Dhabi-hosted event.



## ROUND & ABOUT THE GULF

### KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Wednesday, 3 February–Bahrain and Canada held their first bilateral consultation meeting. The virtual conference between Bahrain's Foreign Ministry Undersecretary, Abdullah bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, and Canadian Assistant Deputy Minister for Europe, Arctic, Middle East and Maghreb, Ambassador Sandra McCardell, covered aspects of cooperation in regional peace and security.

### STATE OF KUWAIT

Wednesday, 3 February–Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia extended travel restriction measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 in light of an increase in cases in the region. Kuwait announced the suspension of entry for non-citizens for two weeks, while Oman extended the closure of its land borders. Saudi Arabia barred expatriates' entries from 20 countries and Qatar extended limitations on commercial activities.

### SULTANATE OF OMAN

Monday, 1 February–Thailand's state-owned oil company, PTT, purchased a 20% stake in Oman's gas Block 61 from the British oil and gas major, BP, for \$2.6 billion (USD). The Sultanate's Block 61 is the largest tight gas development in the region and it will remain operated by BP, which still holds a 40% stake.

### STATE OF QATAR

Wednesday, 3 February–The Italian aerospace, defence and security multinational company, Leonardo, will provide cybersecurity services to the Qatar Research Institute. A deal inked by Leonardo and the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development provisions the Italian company to supply its Cyber Range & Training platform.

### KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Monday, 1 February–Saudi Arabia launched the Artificial Intelligence Center for Energy, which will promote AI-driven innovation in the field of energy and develop the Kingdom's capabilities in terms of AI and energy strategies. The institution comes as a result of the country's wider strategy for AI capabilities' improvement and will be jointly managed by the Saudi Ministry of Energy and the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority.

### UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Saturday, 30 January–The UAE's cabinet announced it will grant citizenship to foreign investors and professionals, such as doctors, inventors, scientists, intellectuals, artists, as well as their children and spouses. The foreigners will be nominated by UAE officials and they will be allowed to retain their original citizenship and become dual citizens.



- Friday, 28 January–The Head of the EU Delegation to Kuwait and Qatar, Cristian Tudor, the Heads of Missions of the EU member states and Kuwait’s Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs, Walid Al-Khubaizi, discussed enhancing cooperation between Kuwait and the EU as well as its member states.



- Wednesday, 3 February–The Head of the EU Delegation to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman, Patrick Simonnet, met with the French Ambassador, Ludovic Pouille, at the French Residency in Riyadh. They discussed the European interests in the region and strategies to strengthen the relations between the EU and Saudi Arabia.

## KEY OFFICIAL VISITS



- Sunday, 31 January–Sudanese officials toured Qatar and Bahrain. In Qatar, Vice President of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of Sudan, General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, discussed bilateral cooperation with Qatar’s Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. In Bahrain, Sudan’s Minister-Designate for Finance and Economic Planning, Heba Mohammed Ali, met with the Kingdom’s Minister of Finance and National Economy, Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, discussing economic cooperation.

- Monday, 1 February–Saudi Arabia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) signed a cooperation agreement in investment, commerce, economy education, culture and other sectors. The agreement was signed in Kinshasa by Saudi Arabia’s Minister of State for African Affairs, Ahmed bin Abdul Aziz Kattan, and the DRC’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Marie Tumba Nzeza.



- Tuesday, 2 February–A Yemeni delegation of officials and scholars visited Riyadh, meeting with Saudi Arabia’s Islamic Affairs Minister, Abdullatif Al-Asheikh. Minister Al-Asheikh praised the Yemeni scholars’ activities in countering extremist propaganda and reiterated the Kingdom’s commitment to supporting Yemen against the Iranian-backed Houthi militias.

- Thursday, 4 February–The UAE’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, received Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister, Ayman Al-Safadi. They discussed regional security issues, Iraq and the Gulf stability, and preparations for the upcoming Arab Foreign Ministers meeting, to be held in Cairo on 8 February.



- Thursday, 4 February–Pope Francis, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb and Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, celebrated the first International Day of Human Fraternity in a virtual event hosted by Abu Dhabi. It celebrated the two-year anniversary of the signing of the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together and the recognition of 4 February as the International Day of Human Fraternity by the UN.

