

# EURO-GULF MONITOR

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## WEEK IN BRIEF

1. Oman closed borders for seven days amid spike in COVID-19 cases.
2. Saudi Arabia plans to reopen its embassy in Doha soon.
3. Cyprus' seeks to boost cooperation with the UAE and Saudi Arabia.
4. Qatar and Egypt officially resumed diplomatic relations.
5. Bahrain and the UAE were named US major security partners, King Hamad was awarded top US honour, the Legion of Merit.



## ROUND & ABOUT THE GULF

### KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Sunday, 17 January—The National Bank of Bahrain signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with Israel's two largest lenders, Bank Leumi Le-Israel and Bank Hapoalim, to strengthen economic cooperation.

Monday, 18 January—Bahrain's Crown Prince and Prime Minister the National Employment Program 2.0, which aims to create 25,000 jobs in 2021.

### STATE OF KUWAIT

Monday, 18 January—Kuwait's Emir Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah formally accepted the resignation of the country's Cabinet following a standoff between the parliament and the government over the questioning of the Prime Minister, Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah. The cabinet will maintain a caretaker role until the formation of a new one.

### SULTANATE OF OMAN

Monday, 18 January—Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al-Said appointed the CEO of Public Authority for Civil Aviation, Dr Mohammed Nasser Ali Al-Zaabi, as Secretary General at the Ministry of Defence with the rank of Minister, and appointed new leadership of the Sultan's Armed Forces, Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and National Defence College.

### STATE OF QATAR

Wednesday, 20 January—Qatar and Egypt signed two memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to officially resume diplomatic relations between the two countries. Sunday, 17 January—Saudi Arabia's embassy in Doha should reopen in the next few days, according to the Kingdom's Foreign Ministry.

### KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Tuesday, 19 January—Saudi Arabia's state-owned desalination company, Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC), and the Water Transmission and Technologies Company (WTTCO) signed an agreement to privatise management of water transports and storage systems and boost its sustainability. The move will create about \$16 billion (USD) investment opportunities for private companies in the future projects.

### UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Wednesday, 20 January—The UAE reportedly inked a letter of agreement with the United States to purchase 50 Lockheed Martin F-35 combat aircrafts and up to 18 General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper drones. Earlier in the week, the US earlier named Bahrain and the UAE 'major security partners.'



- Saturday, 16 January–The Head of the EU Delegation to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman, Patrick Simonnet, discussed the EU-GCC cooperation in energy transition, in an interview with the EU-GCC Clean Energy Technology Network. The Ambassador considered many topics, including the reduction of carbon emissions, the importance of integrating the energy system, the possibilities offered by digitalisation, and the COVID-19 pandemic's impact.



- Saturday, 16 January–The European Union welcomed the announcement by the President of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, on the organisation of legislative, presidential and National Council elections. The EU embraced this development as a stepping stone towards conflict resolution and regional stability.

## KEY OFFICIAL VISITS



- Sunday, 17 January–Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, met with Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ayman Safadi, in Riyadh. The discussion tackled developments in Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, Libya, the “Munich Group” meeting in Cairo, regional tensions with Iran and Turkey, the GCC Crisis resolution and bilateral cooperation.

- Monday, 18 January–Cyprus' Foreign Minister, Nikos Christodoulides, visited Abu Dhabi, where he met with his Emirati counterpart, Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, discussing the Cyprus issue, developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, COVID-19 pandemic, and UAE-Cyprus cooperation. On Tuesday, Christodoulides held talks with Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, in Riyadh.



- Tuesday, 19 January–The outgoing US President, Donald Trump, awarded Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa the Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander for his efforts in strengthening US-Bahraini relations.

- Thursday, 21 January–Afghanistan's Foreign Minister, Mohammad Hanif Atmar, met in Riyadh with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, during a three-day visit to the Kingdom. They discussed regional developments, trade, economic relations and the Afghan peace process.



- Thursday, 21 January–The UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, met in Paris with his French counterpart, Jean-Yves Le Drian. They discussed the UAE-France strategic partnership and reviewed aspects of regional security and stability. The meeting followed a phone call between Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and French President Emmanuel Macron earlier in the week.

- Friday, 22 January–Morocco's King Mohammed VI and Foreign Minister, Nasser Bourita, received the UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, to discuss boosting bilateral cooperation. Abdullah bin Zayed reaffirmed the UAE's full support for Morocco's sovereignty over the Western Sahara.



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About the Euro-Gulf Monitor: The Arabian Gulf is rapidly becoming a geopolitical pivot. As a result, it is important to understand the internal and international dynamics unfolding in the region and the countries that compose it. The Euro-Gulf Monitor includes a small, carefully selected, batch of the most important news and events unfolding in the Arab Gulf countries to help you map the region's trends and the dynamics of its relations with Europe, published weekly by the Euro-Gulf Information Centre.