

EURO-GULF MONITOR

13 - 18 December 2020

by Arnold Koka & Veronica Stigliani



EGIC
Euro-Gulf
Information
Centre

WEEK IN BRIEF

1. Palestinian President held talks with Qatar's Emir in Doha.
2. Bahrain and Qatar celebrated their National Days.
3. The EU and Saudi Arabia discussed cooperation in industry and economic diversification.
4. The UAE joined the EastMed Gas Forum as an observer.
5. Oman and Iran discussed economic cooperation and challenges to regional security.



ROUND & ABOUT THE GULF

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Sunday, 13 December–Bahrain's National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) approved the COVID-19 vaccine developed by China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) and started online registration process.

.Wednesday, 16 December–Bahrain celebrated its 49th National Day.

STATE OF KUWAIT

Thursday, 17 December–The Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) signed a \$106 million (USD) contract with the Greek gas grid operator, DESFA. The deal will allow the Greek company to run a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal for six years in the Al-Zour refinery project area, which is part of the country's Vision 2035 to develop industry.

SULTANATE OF OMAN

Monday, 14 December–Oman and Iran held the 7th session of their bilateral strategic consultation committee, co-chaired by Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, and Oman's Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs, Khalifa bin Ali Al-Harthy, in Muscat. They explored aspects of economic, commercial, cultural and scientific cooperation, and discussed international and regional challenges to security and stability.

STATE OF QATAR

Wednesday, 16 December–Qatar was awarded with the hosting of the 2030 Asian Games during a voting session of the Olympic Council of Asia, held in Riyadh. The session also assigned the 2034 hosting to Saudi Arabia.

Friday, 18 December–Qatar celebrated its National Day.

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Thursday, 17 December–Saudi Arabia established a new private water-management company, named Water Transmission and Technology Company (WTTCO). The WTTCO will manage the water distribution, storage and transmission in the Kingdom, as well as drive research and innovation in water technology. The move is part of the Kingdom's plan to privatise the agriculture and water sectors, in line with the Vision 2030.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Wednesday, 16 December–The UAE joined the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF), established by Egypt, Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Jordan, as an observer. The announcement came on the occasion of the meeting between Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, and Egypt's President, Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, in Cairo.



- Wednesday, 16 December–The Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) held a meeting in Vienna. The Secretary General of the European External Action Service, Helga Maria Schmid, chaired the Commission, which was attended by officers from Iran, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom to discuss how to preserve and implement the JCPOA.



- Thursday, 17 December–The Head of the EU Delegation to Saudi Arabia, Patrick Simonnet, met with the Saudi Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources, Bandar Alkhorayef, to discuss cooperation in industrial development and diversification of the Kingdom's economy.

KEY OFFICIAL VISITS



- Sunday, 13 December–Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, visited Rabat, where he met with his Moroccan counterpart, Nasser Bourita. They discussed regional developments and security issues. Bahrain's Foreign Minister highlighted the Kingdom's support for Moroccan sovereignty and security, particularly in light of Bahrain's recent decision to inaugurate a consulate in Laayoune, in the disputed Western Sahara.

- Sunday, 13 December–Palestine's President, Mahmoud Abbas, met with Qatar's Emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, in Doha. They discussed recent developments in Palestine and the region, with Qatar's Emir expressing his country's support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the provisions of the Arab Peace Initiative.



- Monday, 14 December–The UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, met with Russian Minister of Trade and Industry, Denis Valentinovich Manturov, in Moscow. They discussed collaboration in artificial intelligence, healthcare, food security, technology and science.

- Wednesday, 16 December–Saudi Minister of State for African Affairs, Ahmed Al-Kattan, toured a number of African countries, meeting with their respective officials and discussing international developments and cooperation opportunities. The Saudi Minister visited: Chad, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Madagascar and the Republic of Congo.



- Wednesday, 16 December–Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince, Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, met with Egyptian President, Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi, in Cairo. They discussed recent developments in Syria, Libya, Yemen and Palestine as well as security challenges in the Red Sea and membership in the EastMed Gas Forum.

