



TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2025)0326

Relations between the EU and Saudi Arabia

European Parliament resolution of 16 December 2025 on 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 its previous resolutions on Saudi Arabia, in particular those of 25 October 2018 on the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul¹, of 11 February 2021 on the humanitarian and political situation in Yemen² and of 8 July 2021 on the death penalty in Saudi Arabia, notably the cases of Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish and Abdullah al-Howaiti³,
- 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 first EU-GCC summit of 16 October 2024,
- having regard to the joint statement from the 29th Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting between the GCC and the EU of 6 October 2025,

¹ OJ C 345, 16.10.2020, p. 67.

² OJ C 465, 17.11.2021, p. 126.

³ OJ C 99, 1.3.2022, p. 185.

- 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 State of the United Arab Emirates (COM(2025)0194),
 - having regard to the cooperation arrangement between the European External Action Service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, signed on 3 October 2021,
 - having regard to the fourth EU-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Human Rights Dialogue, held in Riyadh on 20 December 2024,
 - having regard to the EU global human rights sanctions regime, established in December 2020,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, adopted in 2004 and revised in 2008,
 - having regard to the report of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names of 8 April 2025 on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2025/169/CRP.169),
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 18 December 1979,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A10-0230/2025),
- A. whereas Saudi Arabia is a key bilateral and regional partner for the EU; whereas it is important to deepen this cooperation towards a strategic partnership that aims to strengthen bilateral relations and promote cooperation in various sectors, including defence, culture and innovation, but above all energy;
- 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, over the last decade, Saudi Arabia and China have deepened their ties in the framework of Saudi Arabia's 'Vision 2030' project, and Saudi Arabia has become the largest recipient of China's Belt and Road Initiative investments, including investments in strategic infrastructure such as ports and digital networks; whereas China has been the main purchaser of Saudi crude oil since 2019; whereas Saudi Arabia and China enhanced cooperation in the areas of foreign policy, security, energy, trade and technology through the

establishment of a High-Level Joint Committee (HLJC), as well as subcommittees, in 2016;

- D. whereas Saudi Arabia is strengthening its relations with India, notably through the project entitled the 'India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor' (IMEC), which aims to improve connectivity between Asia and Europe through the Arabian peninsula;
- E. whereas Saudi Arabia is further consolidating its status as a trusted regional mediator and key global actor, and it is crucial that it does so in full adherence to and promotion of human rights and international law;
- F. whereas there is an ongoing case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (*South Africa v Israel*), filed by South Africa on 29 December 2023;
- G. whereas Saudi Arabia is enhancing dialogue and cooperation with the EU on human rights;
- H. whereas promoting respect for human rights and international law in foreign policy, including trade, is a treaty obligation for the EU, enshrined in Articles 3 and 21 of the Treaty on European Union;
- I. whereas the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has, in its October 2024 findings on Saudi Arabia, expressed concerns regarding entrenched discriminatory practices, harassment of female activists and the broader impact of punitive measures, including the use of the death penalty;
- J. whereas the next EU-GCC summit, set to take place in Riyadh in 2026, will be key to further broadening the scope of EU-Saudi Arabian relations and enhancing cooperation on crucial issues of mutual interest;

EU-Saudi Arabia bilateral relations

1. Highlights the positive engagement between the EU and the GCC, as two of the leading actors in the enlarged Mediterranean, during the first EU-GCC summit in 2024; affirms that the EU aims to boost bilateral ties with each GCC country 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 areas of deeper and broader cooperation, such as foreign and security policy, justice and law enforcement, trade and investment, energy and climate, digital transformation, environment, research and innovation, artificial intelligence, connectivity, digital governance, education, culture, research, youth and people-to-people contact, and for securing human rights and labour rights reforms in GCC countries;

2. Welcomes the alignment and cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the EU in the field of foreign and security policy;
3. Underlines 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; calls for increased EU-Saudi Arabian cooperation in these areas; supports Saudi Arabia's compliance with EU legislation on due diligence when engaging in economic or business deals involving companies owned by or affiliated with Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund;
4. Stresses that deepening EU-Saudi Arabian cooperation in energy and trade should enhance the EU's strategic autonomy by diversifying, in the short term, reliable energy supply sources; underlines that while Saudi Arabia remains a key global actor in fossil energy markets, it has also embarked on a path of diversification and sustainability, with investments in renewable energy, notably large-scale solar and hydrogen projects; notes that Saudi Arabia now ranks among the world's top 10 energy storage markets, further advancing its leadership in renewable energy; highlights that harnessing Saudi Arabia's vast solar energy potential, together with the EU's advanced renewable technologies, can enable joint initiatives in green hydrogen, sustainable fuels and next-generation energy infrastructure;
5. Reaffirms that the EU is committed to supporting Saudi Arabia's pursuit of socio-economic diversification and reform, including the promotion of sustainable development;
6. 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, which could be assessed in the context of the new EU visa strategy; notes the significant economic importance of Saudi Arabian tourists for the EU Member States, particularly in supporting key sectors such as hospitality, retail and cultural industries; underlines that Saudi citizens do not present a source of irregular migration pressure⁴, and therefore invites the Commission and the Member States to consider the introduction of a Schengen visa waiver once the cascade is granted to facilitate tourism, enhance people-to-people exchanges, and further strengthen economic and cultural ties between the EU and Saudi Arabia;

⁴ Commission Implementing Decision of 22 April 2024 establishing adapted rules on the issuing of multiple-entry visas to Saudi nationals residing in Saudi Arabia and applying in Saudi Arabia for short-stay visas and repealing Commission Implementing Decision C(2022)8007 (C(2024)2689).

7. Calls for the EU to further facilitate regulatory cooperation, which will aid Saudi Arabia's efforts to establish rules and procedures for successful energy diversification and socio-economic reform; encourages stronger partnerships between EU and Saudi Arabian educational and research entities, including via programmes such as Erasmus Mundus and Horizon Europe; stresses the importance of creating the necessary conditions for increased student mobility; highlights how enhancing exchange opportunities for young people will significantly contribute to consolidating the relationship between the EU, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region as a whole;

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

8. Stresses Saudi Arabia's growing importance as a diplomatic actor and its significant contributions to regional and global stability, particularly in the context of Israel's military operations in Gaza, as well as with regard to recent developments in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, the Red Sea and Sudan;
9. 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 political and security cooperation; stresses that such cooperation must be based on a shared commitment to respect international law, including human rights, international humanitarian law and the UN Charter; expresses its support for the Council's July 2025 decision authorising the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to commence negotiations on the establishment of an SPA with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; recognises that this initiative represents a pivotal opportunity to advance the EU's strategic interests, foster regional stability, and enhance cooperation in the areas of energy and security; calls for strong and active engagement by both parties throughout the negotiation process, with a view to ensuring its swift and timely conclusion; stresses that the EU's enhanced cooperation with Saudi Arabia should also serve to strengthen shared commitments to peace and stability, and to safeguard the multilateral rules-based system;
10. Highlights the important diplomatic role of Saudi Arabia, notably in supporting de-escalation in Yemen, strengthening maritime security in the Red Sea, hosting talks on Ukraine and facilitating dialogue on Sudan, thereby contributing constructively to regional and international stability;
11. Calls on Saudi Arabia to continue EU-Saudi Arabian cooperation on counterterrorism and the prevention of radicalisation, which must be conducted in line with international human rights standards; stresses

the importance of far-reaching EU-Saudi Arabia alignment in these fields;

12. Acknowledges Saudi Arabia's efforts to encourage de-escalation in relation to Israel's military operations in Gaza; recalls its position expressed in its resolution of 11 September 2025 on Gaza at breaking point: EU action to combat famine, the urgent need to release hostages and move towards a two-state solution⁵, and welcomes the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the two-state solution of 29 July 2025, and its endorsement by the UN General Assembly on 12 September 2025;
13. Acknowledges the efforts made by Saudi Arabia and certain other Arab States to normalise diplomatic relations with Israel under the 2020 Abraham Accords; calls for the EU to support initiatives aimed at building broad regional and international backing for a better future in Arab-Israeli relations within the EU framework of the accepted two-state solution, in order to promote regional stability;
14. Commends Saudi Arabia's substantial diplomatic and financial outreach to Syria, including through regional consultations, as well as broader stabilisation and reconstruction efforts; calls on Saudi Arabia and its partners in the region to assist the transitional Syrian Government in establishing a durable and inclusive political and security architecture; stresses the importance of preserving Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the participation and protection of Syria's minorities; calls for enhanced cooperation between the EU and Saudi Arabia to work towards a peaceful and inclusive transition in Syria and to protect Christians and all communities in Syria, guaranteeing their safety and religious freedom, as well as the protection of their cultural heritage;
15. Reaffirms the EU's support for Lebanon's political and socio-economic reconstruction and highlights the importance of EU-Saudi Arabian cooperation in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006), supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces; welcomes the efforts by the Lebanese Government and calls for Hezbollah's disarmament; reiterates the importance for all the countries of the region to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while calling on all parties to safeguard the peacekeepers of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL);
16. Recognises Saudi Arabia's constructive role amid current regional tensions, increased cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and gradual diplomatic normalisation with Iran; highlights EU-Saudi Arabian alignment in containing Iranian

⁵ Texts adopted, P10_TA(2025)0199.

proxies and halting the further development of Iran's nuclear programme;

17. 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; calls on Saudi Arabia to support an independent international investigative mechanism into violations of international humanitarian law in Yemen between 2015 and 2022; encourages an increase in EU and Saudi Arabian humanitarian aid to Yemen, and joint efforts by both parties to counteract the targeting of aid workers;
18. Welcomes the UN-brokered talks held in Riyadh in January 2025 for establishing a roadmap for inclusive peace in Yemen, which yielded progress on Houthi disarmament timelines; notes that these remain contingent on Saudi Arabian economic assistance;
19. 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 commitment to maritime security and calls for closer political and intelligence cooperation with the EU's Naval Force Operation Aspides, and with EU Member States more broadly;
20. Welcomes Saudi Arabia's involvement in hosting the Ukraine war ceasefire negotiations; urges Saudi Arabia to cooperate more closely with its partners in supporting sanctions against the Russian Federation and to take measures to help put an end to the activities of the Russian shadow fleet;
21. Notes Saudi Arabia's USD 600 billion commitment to invest in the United States, including a defence agreement and strategic cooperation on emerging technologies;
22. Recognises Saudi Arabia's role in fostering multilateral cooperation, including through its growing engagement in Africa, in particular the Sahel, and in Asia; calls for closer EU-Saudi Arabian coordination on energy cooperation, cross-regional infrastructure development, capacity building, human capital development, financial instruments and investment mechanisms across the African continent; stresses the importance of integrating Saudi Arabia-led projects with EU frameworks, including the Global Gateway initiative;
23. Notes that Saudi Arabia has been formally invited to become a member of the BRICS group of countries; notes that Saudi Arabia's outreach to BRICS reflects a trend towards diversified alliances; calls for the EU to engage constructively with Saudi Arabia in multilateral forums to protect mutual trade and investment interests;
24. Notes the strengthening of bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, particularly in the fields of security and defence; calls

on Saudi Arabia to use that relationship to persuade Türkiye to make a constructive contribution to the Middle East peace process by recognising Hamas as a terrorist organisation and ending political, economic and logistical support;

25. Welcomes Saudi Arabia's consistent position vis-à-vis its classification of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation, and calls for the EU and its Member States to follow suit and recognise the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation;

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

26. Welcomes Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030 plans, outlining meaningful socio-economic reform to modernise the country and its institutions, and to diversify the economy;
27. Calls for Saudi Arabia to reshape its energy landscape and move towards renewable energy and green hydrogen as part of its Vision 2030 plans; calls on Saudi Arabia to adhere to its commitments under the Paris Agreement and in accordance with UN expert opinion; notes that the EU stands ready to collaborate with its Saudi Arabian counterparts on projects advancing the environmental goals of both regions; highlights the commitment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the energy transition, recalling its pledge to reach net zero by 2060 and to produce 50 % of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030; welcomes, in this context, Saudi Arabia's flagship project to produce four million tonnes of clean hydrogen annually by 2030;
28. Underlines Saudi Arabia's role as an increasingly important player in mineral supply chains and its efforts to align with international best practices; stresses that broadening the scope of EU-Saudi Arabian cooperation in this realm will be key to further consolidating the EU's de-risking strategy in this regard, and its quest to diversify its raw material supply;
29. Recognises that Saudi Arabia has made progress in tackling its high youth unemployment rate, lowering it from 35,01 % in 2006 to 16 % in 2023; recommends that Saudi Arabia continue to prioritise this issue;
30. Welcomes the approach by Saudi Arabian authorities in adopting more tolerance and moving away from restrictive religious policies; notes the direct link between tolerance and sustainable economic growth, underlining that openness and inclusiveness foster conditions for innovation, investment and social progress; commends the positive curriculum reforms carried out in Saudi Arabia, including, notably, the removal of discriminatory religious content, while encouraging further progress in this regard; encourages Saudi Arabia to continue these reforms;

31. Highlights the significant progress Saudi Arabia has made regarding women's participation in the workforce, which has risen to 36 %, and the fact that women have been granted the right to drive and to travel without male guardianship; underlines that female labour-force participation in Saudi Arabia has more than doubled since 2017; notes that Saudi Arabian women now own 45 % of small and medium-sized enterprises and 17 % of all enterprises; considers that these developments reflect the impact of legal reforms introduced since 2018, including the lifting of the driving ban⁶, the adoption of an anti-harassment law, and new personal status regulations raising the minimum marriage age to 18 and strengthening women's autonomy; highlights these achievements and encourages the continuation of reforms aimed at further advancing women's rights and participation in public life, with women currently accounting for 41 % of the civil service – including senior diplomatic posts – 20 % of the membership of the Shura Council and the first Arab Muslim woman to travel to space; notes that, in spite of the progress, challenges remain, including regarding the Personal Status Law and inequality between men and women in marriage, divorce, child custody, inheritance and property rights;
32. Notes that Saudi Arabia has launched a series of ambitious infrastructure projects ahead of its hosting of EXPO 2030 and the 2034 FIFA World Cup; relies on the capacity of the Saudi Arabian Government to guarantee workers' rights to free association, and stresses that concerns remain regarding the treatment and rights of workers, and about the death rate of migrants in workplace-related accidents in Saudi Arabia; acknowledges the reforms introduced under Saudi Arabia's Labour Reform Initiative, while calling on Saudi Arabia to ensure the full implementation of the 2025 abolishment of the *Kafala* sponsorship system and to guarantee workers' rights to strike and engage in collective bargaining; expects Saudi Arabia to seize the opportunity presented by the 2034 FIFA World Cup and to have continued implementing reforms by then; urges Saudi Arabia to comply with EU legislation on due diligence and monitoring of hiring companies to ensure they cover all the costs and fees related to the recruitment of workers, and to introduce measures for the reimbursement of illegal recruitment fees paid by workers;
33. Recognises the opportunities presented and the converging interests served by EU-Saudi Arabia collaboration within the EU-GCC strategic partnership and through the EU's Global Gateway initiative on IMEC, which is expected to lead to investments in electricity cables, undersea telecommunications and data cables, as well as pipelines for green hydrogen; assesses its potential to connect the EU through multimodal transport links; takes note of the

⁶ World Economic Forum, 'Saudi women are now legally allowed to drive', 25 June 2018.

participation of the United States; calls strongly for IMEC's financing gap to be addressed through EU, US and Gulf investments, and the promotion of sustainable infrastructure development; emphasises the strategic importance of IMEC as a transformative driver of regional connectivity, economic integration and geopolitical cooperation; notes the potential to broaden collaboration on strategic digital infrastructure, including diversified and secure data routes linking the Gulf and Europe, with the shared objective of enhancing Europe's digital resilience, data security and connectivity with Asia and Africa; recognises the ongoing efforts by the European Chamber of Commerce in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (ECCCKSA) to foster collaboration between European companies and Saudi Arabia on transport and logistics infrastructure, in compliance with EU due diligence laws;

Human rights

34. 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 EU Special Representative for Human Rights, with the fourth Human Rights Dialogue having been held in Riyadh in December 2024; notes that the discussions covered a wide range of human rights issues, including women's rights and the rights of vulnerable groups, the rule of law, the right to a fair trial, capital punishment, freedoms of expression, assembly and association, human trafficking, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as bilateral EU-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia cooperation and activities in multilateral human rights forums; underlines that human rights dialogues provide a crucial platform for exchanging perspectives on international human rights and strengthening multilateral cooperation, and stresses that this and all other human rights dialogues the EU holds should aim to secure concrete, measurable, time-bound human rights progress, including human rights reforms, halting abusive policies, ensuring accountability for abuses and releasing unjustly imprisoned individuals; calls for the establishment of a structured EU monitoring mechanism with clear benchmarks and timelines, including follow-up measures to encourage further progress on human rights reforms; urges the EU and its Member States to agree human rights conditions mutually with Saudi Arabia during the negotiations of a bilateral partnership agreement, including but not limited to Saudi Arabia's ratification of core human rights and labour rights conventions, as well as the release of unjustly imprisoned individuals;
35. Acknowledges the social reforms implemented by Saudi Arabia, such as the new Civil Transaction Law, progress in women's empowerment, work on drafting a criminal code, the reform of the *Kafala* migrant labour sponsorship system and the implementation of new labour regulations; notes, however, that Saudi Arabia's legal

system faces challenges, due to the absence of a codified criminal law and its reliance on broadly defined legislation, in ensuring that certain rights are not subject to criminalisation;

36. Recognises the growing participation of civil society in Saudi Arabia, with over 5 400 registered associations and organisations, and calls for further measures to support and sustain this positive trend; expresses its concern over the increase in the arrests of activists, civil society campaigners, intellectuals and human rights defenders exercising their right, in accordance with international human rights law, to freedom of expression, both online and offline; encourages Saudi Arabia to review its definition of terrorism, in line with international standards; calls for the immediate release of individuals detained for the peaceful exercise of their rights, specifically key activists, human rights defenders, peaceful critics, academics and clerics, and calls for travel bans to be lifted from those who have been released; recalls that Parliament awarded its 2015 Sakharov Prize to Saudi Arabian blogger Raif Badawi; urges Saudi Arabia to extend access and country visits to a broader range of human rights organisations;
37. Acknowledges Saudi Arabia's human rights strategy for the 2034 FIFA World Cup; reaffirms the EU's readiness to support Saudi Arabia's ongoing human rights reforms, labour reforms and legal reforms; calls for strengthened cooperation with the UN and the International Labour Organization on migrant workers' rights, in pursuing further comprehensive and inclusive labour reforms in line with international standards, particularly ahead of EXPO 2030 and the 2034 World Cup, in order to ensure that all migrant worker deaths and accidents, regardless of perceived cause, time and place, are properly investigated, and that families of deceased workers receive fair and timely compensation;
38. Reaffirms the EU's commitment to the abolition of the death penalty under any circumstance, and reaffirms the EU's principled commitment to work with Saudi Arabia to this end; expresses its concern over the escalation of executions in Saudi Arabia, which reached the unprecedented number of more than 345 in 2024; calls on Saudi Arabia to establish a moratorium on executions; condemns the continued use of the death penalty for non-lethal offences, particularly drug-related crimes – thereby constituting a violation of international human rights law, which limits the application of the death penalty to only the 'most serious crimes' – and the fact that over half of all executions in 2025 have been of foreign nationals, often following trials that failed to meet international fair trial standards; calls for the decriminalisation of same-sex sexual activity;
39. Deplores the ongoing detention of individuals sentenced to death for offences committed when they were children, and calls on the Saudi Arabian authorities to overturn these death sentences, in line with

Saudi Arabia's obligations under international law and its April 2020 royal decree; calls on Saudi Arabia to immediately and unconditionally release all individuals detained for peacefully exercising their human rights;

40. Calls on Saudi Arabia to ratify all core international human rights and labour rights conventions; encourages Saudi Arabia to ensure that all current and new legislation, including the penal code, comply with international human rights standards and underlines the importance of close cooperation with the UN and independent civil society organisations, in this regard;

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41. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Shura Council; calls for this resolution to be translated into Arabic.