

EU-GCC Business Forum 2025 Program

Kuwait

5-6 Nov 2025

Background:

EU-GCC Economic Partnership: The EU and GCC share a strong economic partnership, with the EU among the GCC's key trading and investment partners. Both sides are focused on economic diversification, fostering growth in new sectors such as technology, innovation, and infrastructure.

High-level EU-GCC engagements, notably the inaugural Leaders' Summit in October 2024, reinforced mutual ambitions for closer trade, investment, digital connectivity, and economic modernisation. Taking place in Kuwait under the banner "EU-GCC Business Forum: Together in a New Era for Partnership," this 9th Forum, scheduled for November 5 and 6, 2025, builds upon this momentum and aligns with Kuwait's role as host of the 29th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting.

Significance of Kuwait as Host: Hosting the Forum aligns with Kuwait's Vision 2035, emphasising private sector expansion, infrastructure advancement, and knowledge-based economy initiatives. The event will highlight Gulf successes in diversification and foster new EU-GCC partnerships, utilising Kuwait's strategic location, long-standing role in the GCC integration process and regional trade position. It ensures active local and regional stakeholder engagement, reinforcing Kuwait's integral role in the EU-GCC strategic partnership. Additionally, Kuwait holds a significant role as it has assumed the rotating GCC Presidency in 2025.

Objectives:

The Forum agenda reflects extensive stakeholder consultations with GCC governments, businesses, financial institutions, and international organisations, emphasising:

1. **Digital Trade and Connectivity:** Accelerating digital transformation and port modernisation to streamline trade and improve business conditions.
2. **Trade Facilitation and Regulatory Reforms:** Enhancing customs processes, public procurement, and reducing barriers to support a favourable business environment.
3. **Investment and SME Support:** Facilitating focused interactions between Gulf investors and European businesses, particularly in technology, education, and real estate, alongside improved SME access to finance and markets.
4. **Sectoral Collaboration:** Prioritizing partnerships in Agri-tech for food security, healthcare innovations, education models, tourism, and creative industries development.
5. **Cleantech:** Focusing on clean transport, energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, and technological advancements to modernise urban living.
6. **Youth and Women Empowerment:** Promoting greater support and mentorship for youth-led startups, women entrepreneurs, and facilitating generational transitions within family-owned businesses.

Organizers:

From the EU:

- European Commission (FPI; DG MENA; DG TRADE)

- EU-GCC Economic Diversification Project

From the Gulf Cooperation Council:

- The Secretariat General of Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.
- Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Kuwait's Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA)

Guests & Participants:

VIP from the GCC:

- 1- Prime Minister of Kuwait, HH Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah
- 2- Ministers of each of the GCC member states.
- 3- His Excellency Mr Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
- 4- Board of The Federation of GCC Chambers (FGCCC).

VIP from the EU:

- 1- EU Commissioner for Trade Mr Maros Sefcovic
- 2- Special Representative for Gulf Region Mr Luigi Di Maio
- 3- VP of the European Investment Bank Mr Ioannis Tsakiris

Other

- 1- International Organisations (UNDP, IMF, World Bank, OECD)

Public:

- 1- Organisations that support the private sector in GCC & EU.
- 2- Private Sector GCC & EU.
- 3- The Media

Date & Location:

5 and 6 November 2025

Kuwait City - Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center

Host & Sponsors:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kuwait (VIP Accommodation and transportation, the Forum hall and related, registration services and logistics).

Agenda:

Day 1		
09:00-09:30	- Welcome coffee - Receiving VIP Guests	Organized by Host
09:30-10:00	- Opening ceremony (both forum and exhibition) The moderator announces the opening of the forum	Organized by the host 1- invitation. 2- Accommodation.

	<u>Welcome speeches (5 min each):</u> 1- Minister representing Kuwait. 2- EU Commissioner 3- Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) 4- Minister representing other countries (optional) Group VIP Photo	3- Reception according to protocol.
10:00-10:45	High Level Plenary Forum "EU-GCC Economic Outlook" – High level speakers from the EU and GCC.	Tasks: 1- Selection topics. 2- Coordinate with VIP guest to join to session. 3- Select moderator of sessions. By: 1- Host. 2- EU.
11:00-11:45	Session 1: "Trade & Investment"	Tasks: 4- Selection of speakers (3 GCC + 3 EU). 5- Select moderator of sessions. By: 1- Host. 2- EU. 3- GCCSG.
12:00-12:45	Session 2: "Digital Economy & AI"	
12:45-13:30	Lunch	
13:30-14:15	Session 3: "Businesses, SMEs & Skills"	
14:25-15:10	Session 4: New Avenues of Cooperation	Organized by: 1- Host. 2- EU. 3- EU member state Chambers of Commerce and Business Councils, GCC Chambers of Commerce
09:30-17:00	Showroom - (B2B)(G2B)(G2G) meetings and side events	
To be determined	High level dinner (is it the day before, the 4 th or the same day of the forum, the 5 th).	Organized by Host.

Day 2		
09:30-17:00	Showroom – B2B / G2B / G2G Meetings & Side Events Continuous bilateral and multilateral meetings between EU and GCC businesses, chambers of commerce, and investment authorities. Six dedicated rooms available, each fully equipped for hybrid/online participation and accommodating up to 50 participants for larger group discussions.	1- Host. 2- EU. EU member state Chambers of Commerce and Business Councils, GCC Chambers of Commerce

10:00-11:30	Investment Session I – “Investment Facilitation and Market Access” Dialogue between EU businesses and GCC investment promotion authorities (MISA, KDIPA, ADIA, QIA...).	1- Host. 2- EU. 3- EU member state Chambers of Commerce and Business Councils, GCC Chambers of Commerce
11:45-13:15	Investment Session II – “Direct Investment and Co-Investment Opportunities” Panel with GCC sovereign wealth funds, state holding companies, and EU investors/EIB.	1- Host. 2- EU. 3- EU member state Chambers of Commerce and Business Councils, GCC Chambers of Commerce
16:00-17:00	Presentation of the Forum outcomes and recommendations: Forum related MoUs and Agreements Exchange Ceremony (G-B & B-B MoUs)	4- Host. 5- EU. 1. EU member state Chambers of Commerce and Business Councils, GCC Chambers of Commerce

Outcomes:

- 1- Official Forum Pledge.
- 2- Strengthened Strategic Alignment: Reinforcing EU-GCC economic cooperation by advancing commitments made under the EU-GCC Summit 2024, the Joint Action Programme, and other frameworks.
- 3- Policy Recommendations & Forum Communiqué: Drafting and adoption of a Forum Communiqué with concrete recommendations for policymakers, reflecting business perspectives and promoting reforms.
- 4- Business Deals and Partnerships: Announcement of MoUs, agreements, or investments arising from B2B and B2G meetings during the Forum.
- 5- Launch of Initiatives/Working Groups: Establishing joint initiatives, working groups, or innovation hubs to follow up on Forum themes.
- 6- Enhanced Networks and Contacts: Expanding connections among EU and GCC businesses, investors, chambers of commerce, and industry associations.
- 7- Media and Visibility Outcomes: Coverage in international and regional press, social media campaigns, and visibility for the EU-GCC partnership.
- 8- Forum Report and Knowledge Products: Publication of a comprehensive Forum report, policy briefs, and case studies highlighting outcomes and lessons learned.