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GCC-EU 13th JOINT COUNCIL AND MINISTERIAL MEETING
Doha, Qatar, 3 March 2003

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The thirteenth session of the Joint Council and Ministerial meeting between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council was held in Doha, Qatar on 3 March 2003.

The GCC delegation was led by H.E. Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jaber Al Thani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar and President of the GCC Ministerial Council. The GCC Secretariat was represented by H.E. Abdulrahman Hamad Al Attiyah, Secretary General. The EU delegation was led by Mr Georgios Papandreou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece and President of the Council of the European Union. The European Commission was represented by Mr Fernando Valenzuela, Deputy Director General. The EU Council Secretariat was represented by Deputy Director General, Mr Anastassios Vikas.

2. The meeting took place in a friendly and constructive atmosphere. In preparation of this meeting, EU and GCC officials had met in Brussels on 28 and 29 January in the Joint Cooperation Committee and for a Political Dialogue meeting respectively.
3. Opening of the European Commission Delegation in Riyadh
The GCC and the EU took note of ongoing contacts regarding the opening of the European Commission Delegation in Riyadh and noted with satisfaction that a GCC delegation will be having meetings in Brussels with EC officials within the next few weeks in order to further discuss this issue. The EU side noted that the establishment of the Commission Delegation would indeed enable an acceleration of ongoing Free Trade Area Negotiations.

4. Implementation of the Cooperation Agreement and Free Trade Agreement negotiations
The Joint Council received a report from the Joint Cooperation Committee held in Brussels on 28 January 2003 and reiterated its view that trade, investment and cooperation constituted the foundations on which to develop and improve EU-GCC economic relations. The Joint Council noted with satisfaction progress achieved in the implementation of the cooperation agreement and in the negotiations of the free trade area. It welcomed the objective to focus cooperation on increasing dialogue and common understanding, in particular in economic matters. The Joint Council welcomed the agreement reached at the Joint Committee to continue the reflection in order to identify the best ways to move this shared objective forward. The Joint Council noted in particular the importance of intensifying cooperation in the field of energy through the energy experts' meeting and the ongoing cooperation for the promotion of hydrocarbon technology transfers. The Joint Council took note of ongoing work on investment and welcomed the recommendation of the Investment Working Group to promote reciprocal investments.

Regarding the free trade area negotiations, the Joint Council recalled that it had agreed in Granada in February 2002 to hold negotiation rounds at an intensive pace. It noted with satisfaction that five negotiation rounds had taken place in the course of the year, over which good progress was achieved, in particular regarding regulatory elements. The Joint Council noted that a new negotiating round is to take place on 4-5 March in Doha, just after the Joint Council meeting. It welcomed progress obtained so far and agreed that negotiations should proceed steadily to its conclusion by removing obstacles not yet overcome and by covering all remaining sectors, including non-trade elements.
5. **Recent developments in the GCC and the EU**
   The Joint Council welcomed the entry into force of the GCC Customs Union on 1 January 2003. It heard an EU report on achievements in the EU’s enlargement process and on its experiences with the introduction of the Euro, and it welcomed these developments.

6. **Political questions of common interest**
   The GCC and the EU reviewed a series of international and regional political issues of mutual interest and had an exchange of views on developments in the two regions with a view to supporting and enhancing regional peace, security and stability, which remain key shared foreign policy objectives. The GCC and the EU reiterated their determination to further develop this political dialogue in order to seek common solutions to common problems facing them.

6.1. **Regional issues**

6.1.1. **Iraq**
   The GCC and the EU stressed that the way the unfolding of the Iraqi crisis will be handled will have an important impact on the world in the next decades and underlined their determination to deal effectively with the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

   Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the United Nations remaining at the centre of the international order. They recognised that the primary responsibility for dealing with Iraqi disarmament lies with the Security Council and pledged their full support to the Council in discharging its responsibilities.

   The GCC and the EU stressed that their objective for Iraq remains full and effective disarmament in accordance with the relevant UNSC resolutions, in particular resolution 1441, and that they want to achieve this peacefully. It is clear that this is what the people both in the EU and in the GCC want.
War is not inevitable. Force should be used only as a last resort. It is for the Iraqi regime to end this crisis by complying with the demands of the Security Council.

The GCC and the EU reiterated their full support for the ongoing work of the UN inspectors. They must be given the time and resources that the UN Security Council believes they need. However, inspections cannot continue indefinitely in the absence of full Iraqi cooperation. This must include the provision of all the additional and specific information on the issues that have been raised in the inspectors' reports.

Baghdad should have no illusions: it must disarm and cooperate immediately and fully. Iraq has a final opportunity to resolve the crisis peacefully. The Iraqi regime alone will be responsible for the consequences if it continues to flout the will of the international community and does not take this last chance.

The GCC and the EU recognised that the unity and firmness of the international community, as expressed inter alia in the unanimous adoption of resolution 1441, have been essential in obtaining the return of the inspectors.

The EU emphasized that it will work with the Arab countries and the Arab League and encourage them, separately and jointly, to bring home to Saddam Hussein the extreme danger of miscalculation of the situation and the need for full compliance with resolution 1441. The GCC welcomed the EU’s readiness to work with the Arab countries and the Arab League in that context.

Both sides underlined their concern at continuing uncertainty over Kuwaiti and other countries' missing persons and prisoners of war, held by Iraq since the Gulf war. They demanded that Iraq meet its clear obligation under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 1284, to resume cooperation with the Tripartite Commission and to extend all necessary cooperation to the International Committee of the Red Cross, including the provision of detailed information about missing persons and prisoners of war to reach an immediate and permanent solution to the issue, and to return all stolen Kuwaiti property.
The GCC and the EU reaffirmed their commitment to the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Kuwait as well as other countries in the region, including Iraq, within their internationally recognised boundaries. In this context, they insisted that statements by Iraqi officials questioning the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Kuwait should be avoided, in the interests of regional stability.

The United Arab Emirates presented and informed about the initiative of H.H. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Alnahayan, President of the United Arab Emirates, towards Iraq, and it was noted.

6.1.2. The Middle East
The GCC and the EU stressed that peace in the Middle East is an imperative. They called upon the Israeli and Palestinian peoples to break the endless cycle of violence, which brings so much suffering to the civil population on both sides.

The GCC and the EU recognized Israel’s legitimate security concerns and Palestinian legitimate rights to a viable Palestinian state, living peacefully side by side with Israel and its neighbours, all within secure borders, and stressed their support to the Palestinian efforts to take forward the reform process.

Violence and confrontation must give way to negotiations and compromise. The international community, including the parties, shares a common vision of two States, Israel and an independent, viable, sovereign, and democratic Palestine, living side by side in peace and security on the basis of the 1967 borders. The GCC and the EU recalled that the aim of all efforts remains reaching a just, comprehensive and lasting peace settlement in the Middle East, including Syria and Lebanon, based on the relevant UNSC Resolutions, the principles of the Madrid Conference, the principle "land for peace", Oslo and subsequent agreements and taking into account of the initiative of His Highness Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, endorsed by the Arab League Summit in Beirut in 2002. The GCC and the EU recalled the importance of this initiative.
The GCC and the EU stressed the need to move ahead with the work which has been carried out in the framework of the Middle East Quartet. The roadmap endorsed at the meeting in Washington on 20 December 2002 by all four participants in the Quartet and which sets clear timelines for the establishment of a Palestinian State by 2005 must be implemented. Both parties will have to meet their obligations. The implementation of the roadmap must be based on parallel progress in the security, political and economic fields and be closely monitored by the Quartet through an appropriate monitoring mechanism.

One of the key elements to success will be Palestinian reform. Conditions on the ground must be normalised so that free, fair and open elections can be held, as proposed in the roadmap. The EU and the GCC welcomed President Arafat’s decision to appoint an interim Palestinian Prime Minister. Substantial efforts will have to be made concerning security. The EU and the GCC therefore very much appreciated the Egyptian efforts regarding this crucial issue. Some progress is being made e.g. in the area of economic and financial reforms and the work on the new constitution has been carried forward speedily. But clear progress is needed in other areas too.

The GCC and the EU were alarmed at the continuing illegal settlement activities, which threaten to render the two-State solution physically impossible to implement. The expansion of settlements and related construction violates international law, inflames an already volatile situation, and reinforces the fear of Palestinians that Israel is not genuinely committed to ending the occupation. It is an obstacle to peace. The GCC and the EU urged the Government of Israel to reverse its settlement policy in accordance with international law and relevant UNSC resolutions and as a first step to immediately apply a full and effective freeze on all settlement activities. They called for an end to further land confiscation for the construction of the so-called security fence.

Decisive steps must be taken to reverse the sharply deteriorating humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza, which is making life increasingly intolerable for ordinary Palestinians and fuelling extremism. Humanitarian access and the security of humanitarian personnel and their installations must be guaranteed.
With the aim of supporting the reforms in the Palestinian territories, the EU and the GCC will continue their financial support to the Palestinian Authority with clear objectives and conditions. They call on other international donors to join this engagement also with a view to coherent efforts for reconstruction. Israel for its part must ensure the monthly transfers of Palestinian tax revenues.

6.1.3. Iran
The GCC and the EU agreed on the importance of continuing to encourage and support the reform process in Iran. In this respect, they welcomed the opening of negotiations between the EU and Iran on a Trade and Cooperation Agreement and an Agreement on Political Dialogue and Counter-terrorism. They underlined the need for Iran to play a constructive role on the regional and international scene.

Both sides expressed concern at the lack of progress towards resolution of the territorial conflict between the United Arab Emirates and Iran over Abu Musa and the Tunbs Islands. They reiterated their support for a peaceful solution to the conflict in accordance with international law, either through direct negotiations or by referring the issue to the International Court of Justice.

6.2. Global issues
6.2.1. Terrorism
The GCC and the EU reiterated their strong and unequivocal condemnation of all forms of terrorism, whatever their origin, cause or motives. They underlined that terrorism was an evil, which did not have any place in any society. The GCC and the EU formally rejected as both dangerous and unfounded any equating of terrorism with any civilisation, culture or religion. They emphasised that the fight against terrorism, in full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, was an absolute priority and must be given the highest attention, both in international fora and at national level. They underlined the great importance of fighting the financing of terrorism, notably by preventing terrorist groups from obtaining and misappropriating funds. The EU and the GCC underlined the importance of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1373 and of working with the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), both nationally and as regional bodies.
In this context, they looked forward to the 6 March meeting between the CTC and regional organisations. The GCC and the EU stressed that co-operation on the fight against terrorism must be strengthened. They took note of the intention of the European Commission and EU Member States to conduct preliminary meetings at expert level with GCC Member States to assess the feasibility of concrete co-operation, and were looking forward to receiving a report to this end.

6.2.2. Human rights
The GCC and the EU recalled the commitment of all states, as expressed at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and inter-related. Both sides reiterated their continued commitment to the promotion and protection of all human rights. They recognized their diversities and expressed their commitment to promote the values which they all share. The GCC and the EU emphasised the importance of respect and tolerance among people and called on all their members to fight any kind of extremism and to foster better understanding between religions and cultures. They welcomed the ongoing work within the GCC to establish a Human Rights Round Table and expressed the hope that this Round Table, once established, would facilitate dialogue between the GCC and the EU on human rights issues.

6.2.3. Weapons of mass destruction
The GCC and the EU reaffirmed their determination to support all efforts to establish an effectively verifiable zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including their delivery systems, in the Middle East and the Gulf Region. Such weapons represent a serious threat to peace, security and development.
The GCC and the EU called upon all members of the international community to cooperate to stem the proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, including in the Middle East and the Gulf region. They called upon all countries not yet party to relevant treaties, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Conventions on biological and chemical weapons, to sign and ratify them as soon as possible. Furthermore they encouraged all states in the region that have not yet done so to subscribe to the Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation.

7. The GCC and the EU exchanged views on the UNDP Report on human development in Arab countries and took note of its content.

8. It was agreed that the 14th meeting of the Joint Council would be held in the EU in 2004.