

THE EU-GCC COOPERATION ON
GREEN TRANSITION PROJECT



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EVENT SUMMARY REPORT

December 2025

ROUNDTABLE CONSULTATION WITH EUROPEAN & SAUDI COMPANIES

On the occasion of the visit of **H.E. Ms. Dubravka Šuica**
European Commissioner for the Mediterranean

EVENT REFERENCE

Event: EU–KSA Roundtable Consultation

Date: 9 December 2025

Location: Radisson Blu Hotel & Residence Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter

Format: Closed-door roundtable consultation

Organized by: EU–GCC Cooperation on Green Transition Project

Under the auspices of: Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

In collaboration with: European Chamber of Commerce in Saudi Arabia (ECCKSA)

Occasion: Official visit of H.E. Ms. Dubravka Šuica, European Commissioner for the Mediterranean

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EU–KSA Roundtable Consultation, held on 9 December 2025 in Riyadh, convened senior representatives from European and Saudi companies alongside public-sector stakeholders to share with the EU Commissioner their views on strengthening EU–KSA economic cooperation in priority sectors linked to sustainability, innovation, and long-term industrial transformation.

Organized under the auspices of the Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by the EU–GCC Cooperation on Green Transition Project, in collaboration with the European Chamber of Commerce in Saudi Arabia (ECCKSA), the roundtable took place on the occasion of the official visit of **H.E. Ms. Dubravka Šuica**, European Commissioner for the Mediterranean.

The consultation provided a focused, closed-door platform for private-sector representatives to engage directly with the European Union and the visiting Commissioner, share practical market insights, and highlight considerations relevant to future EU–KSA cooperation.

Discussions reflected strong alignment between EU priorities and Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 objectives, particularly in areas related to clean energy, sustainable infrastructure, industrial diversification, innovation, and skills development. Participants emphasized the importance of predictable and transparent regulatory frameworks, effective implementation mechanisms, and continued public–private dialogue to support long-term investment and partnership building.

The roundtable underscored the central role of the private sector in translating strategic ambitions into tangible projects and outcomes. Participants also highlighted the value of structured EU–KSA consultation formats that enable direct engagement between policymakers and businesses, support knowledge exchange, and help identify concrete avenues for cooperation.

The insights gathered during the roundtable will feed into ongoing reflections on EU–KSA engagement and inform future dialogue formats, initiatives, and cooperation frameworks between the European Union and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



Opening Remarks

H.E. Christophe Farnaud, Ambassador of the European Union to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman

In his opening remarks, H.E. Mr. Christophe Farnaud set the strategic context for the roundtable by highlighting the profound transformation underway in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its growing relevance for European partners.

He underlined that Saudi Arabia is experiencing one of the most ambitious economic and societal transformations globally, driven by Vision 2030 and wide-ranging reforms across energy, industry, infrastructure, and innovation. These changes, he noted, are reshaping the Kingdom's economic model and opening new avenues for cooperation with international partners, including the European Union.

Ambassador Farnaud emphasized that the EU views Saudi Arabia as a key strategic partner in the region, particularly in areas where long-term objectives increasingly align — such as sustainable development, clean energy deployment, industrial diversification, and technological innovation. He stressed that the EU's engagement with Saudi Arabia is evolving beyond traditional trade relations toward deeper, more structured cooperation across value chains.

He also reflected on the significance of hosting the European Commissioner for the Mediterranean in Riyadh, noting that the Commissioner's portfolio reflects the EU's renewed attention to its neighboring regions and the interconnected nature of economic, energy, and geopolitical developments across the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Gulf.

In closing, he highlighted the importance of dialogue formats that allow businesses to speak directly with policymakers, emphasizing that private-sector insights are essential for shaping realistic, forward-looking cooperation frameworks between the EU and Saudi Arabia.



H.E. Ms. Dubravka Šuica **European Commissioner for the Mediterranean**

In her keynote intervention, H.E. Ms. Dubravka Šuica outlined the European Union's vision for strengthened engagement with Saudi Arabia and the wider region, grounded in long-term partnership, economic resilience, and shared strategic interests.

She highlighted that her portfolio reflects a broader EU commitment to reinforcing ties with neighboring regions through cooperation that supports stability, sustainable growth, and mutual prosperity. In this context, she underlined the importance of engaging with Gulf partners, including Saudi Arabia, given their increasing role in global energy markets, industrial development, and regional connectivity.

The Commissioner emphasized that the EU's approach prioritizes partnerships that go beyond transactional relationships, focusing instead on long-term value creation, industrial cooperation, and innovation. She noted that achieving this requires strong collaboration between public authorities and the private sector, as businesses are central to translating policy ambitions into tangible investments and projects.

She further stressed the importance of predictable regulatory environments, mutual understanding of market frameworks, and continuous dialogue to build trust and enable cross-border cooperation. In this regard, she encouraged participants to share concrete experiences and recommendations, noting that such consultations provide critical input for shaping future EU engagement and policy reflection.

The Commissioner also highlighted that sustainability and competitiveness must go hand in hand, underscoring the need for cooperation models that support economic growth while addressing climate and environmental objectives.

She concluded by reaffirming the EU's commitment to maintaining an open, constructive dialogue with Saudi stakeholders and by thanking participants for their willingness to contribute openly and substantively to the discussion.



Mr. Marco Arcelli
Chief Executive Officer, ACWA Power

In his intervention, Mr. Marco Arcelli provided a private-sector perspective on large-scale energy investment and long-term partnership models in Saudi Arabia, drawing on ACWA Power's extensive experience in developing, financing, and operating infrastructure projects across the Kingdom and internationally.

He highlighted Saudi Arabia's transformation into a global hub for renewable energy and clean infrastructure, noting that the scale, ambition, and pace of projects under Vision 2030 require strong, trusted partnerships between public authorities, international investors, and industrial players.

Mr. Arcelli emphasized the importance of stable and predictable regulatory frameworks to enable long-term investment, particularly for capital-intensive projects with multi-decade lifecycles. He underlined that regulatory clarity and consistency are essential for mobilizing international finance and scaling clean energy deployment.

He also pointed to the growing role of innovation and technology in reducing costs, improving efficiency, and enabling the integration of renewable energy at scale. In this context, he highlighted the importance of cross-border cooperation, knowledge exchange, and alignment between international standards and local market requirements.

Drawing on ACWA Power's engagement with European partners, Mr. Arcelli underlined the value of EU-Saudi collaboration in advancing clean energy solutions, strengthening energy security, and supporting broader industrial development objectives.

He concluded by emphasizing that long-term success depends on partnerships built on trust, shared objectives, and a clear understanding of mutual benefits, noting that dialogue platforms such as this roundtable play a critical role in aligning public policy and private-sector investment.



Open Floor Discussion

Private-Sector Perspectives and Exchange

The open floor discussion formed the core of the roundtable, enabling a candid exchange between European and Saudi private-sector representatives and the European Union.

Participants highlighted the significant opportunities emerging from Saudi Arabia's ongoing reforms, particularly in clean energy, circular economy solutions, water management, sustainable infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing. European companies noted strong demand for high-quality technologies and expertise, while Saudi participants emphasized the Kingdom's interest in partnerships that deliver long-term value creation.

A key theme was the importance of predictable and transparent regulatory frameworks to support long-term investment decisions. Participants acknowledged progress achieved under Vision 2030 reforms while emphasizing the need for continued clarity on procedures, standards, and implementation timelines.

Discussions also focused on the need to move from strategic alignment to concrete implementation. Participants highlighted the value of structured project pipelines, clearer procurement pathways, and mechanisms that facilitate matchmaking between European and Saudi stakeholders.

Skills development and capacity building emerged as cross-cutting priorities, with participants stressing that sustainable partnerships must combine technology deployment with training, knowledge transfer, and workforce development.

Cross-Cutting Themes and Key Takeaways

Several common themes emerged across the discussion:

- Strong alignment between EU priorities and Saudi Vision 2030 objectives
- The central role of the private sector in delivering sustainable economic transformation
- The importance of regulatory clarity and predictability for long-term investment
- Growing interest in partnership models combining European expertise with local capacity
- Clear support for continued, structured EU–KSA dialogue formats



Conclusions and Way Forward

The EU–KSA Roundtable Consultation confirmed strong mutual interest in deepening economic cooperation in support of sustainability, innovation, and long-term industrial transformation.

Discussions demonstrated that both European and Saudi stakeholders recognize the strategic value of closer engagement and the importance of translating shared ambitions into tangible projects and outcomes.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to continued dialogue and welcomed further opportunities for structured engagement between the European Union and the private sector in Saudi Arabia.

The event concluded with an informal reception, allowing participants to continue exchanges and strengthen professional connections.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



Arab News — Talks held on opportunities for sustainable EU-Saudi business cooperation.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

THE EU-GCC COOPERATION ON GREEN TRANSITION PROJECT



Launched in August 2023, this project funded by the European Union marks a significant milestone in the long partnership between the European Union (EU) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). By addressing critical global challenges such as climate change and sustainable development, the project builds upon the EU-GCC Cooperation Agreement Document signed in 1989. The Joint Action Programme for 2022-2027 endorsed in February 2022 outlines the strategic framework for cooperation, emphasizing the need to join forces in addressing climate change and make progress on green transition. This project reflects the shared commitment to leveraging EU expertise to deepen cooperation and engagement, promote green policies and technologies, and create a conducive business environment for collaboration among energy-related and green tech companies in the Gulf.

KEY OBJECTIVES

The project aims to strengthen political and technical relationships at regional and bilateral levels by:

- Deepening engagement towards green transition and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Promoting the uptake of green transition policies and technologies by the GCC countries.
- Facilitating a conducive business environment between EU and GCC green tech companies in the Gulf region.

IMPACT

- Enhanced knowledge exchange on climate action and green transition.
- Raised awareness on climate change, sustainable practices and circular economy.
- Strengthened network for collaboration in green solutions and energy transition.
- Proactive EU Climate Diplomacy in the region.

STAKEHOLDERS

- State and non-state institutions, business community, & environmental NGOs.
- Researchers, academia, youth groups, & media outlets.
- EU and GCC businesses, particularly SMEs.
- EU Member States present in the GCC.

FOCUS AREAS



GREEN TRANSITION

Promote transformative change for green transition policies & practices within the GCC.



NET ZERO CARBON

Implement solutions for reducing carbon emissions in industrial & public sectors.



HYDROGEN MARKET

Support the development of a renewable hydrogen market in the Gulf region.



CLEAN-TECH SOLUTIONS

Foster innovations in renewable energy technologies & clean-tech industries.



CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Strengthen resilience & adaptive capacities to climate-related hazards.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Launch initiatives to preserve biodiversity & natural habitats, including marine protection.



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Encourage the adoption of sustainable waste management & resource efficiency.



SUSTAINABLE FINANCE

Engage financial institutions in channelling investment & finance in support of green transition.



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