EU – GCC DIALOGUE ON ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION PHASE II

A Project funded by the European Union

10. ACTIVITY REPORT

Official Launch of the European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain

A project implemented by DAI in consortium with AHK and ICCS

DAI

ICCS

AHK German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce
المجلس الألماني الإماراتي المشترك للصناعة و التجارة

EU-GCC Dialogue on Economic Diversification
A project funded by the European Union

Activity Report

Official Launch of the European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain

14 October 2026

I. Summary

	Description
Theme	Official Launch of the European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain (ECBH)
Purpose	To launch the European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain and provide an opportunity to start attracting members and give awareness of the Chamber to the business and diplomatic community
Date and time	14 October 2026, 19:00 Bahrain time
Venue	German Ambassador's Residence in Saar.
Organiser	EU-GCC Dialogue on Economic Diversification
In collaboration with	Germany Embassy in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman and the European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain
Main Target Audience	Bahrain government authorities, EU and Bahrain institutions and regulatory bodies, EU and Bahrain business community, and experts.
Number of Participants	189 guests and 13 journalists

II. Performance Reporting

1. Event Delivery

The European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain (ECBH) officially celebrated its launch on 14 October 2026 at a reception jointly hosted by the German Ambassador to Bahrain, H.E. Mr. Henning Simon, and the EU Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, H.E. Christophe Farnaud, at the German Ambassador's Residence in Saar.

The reception was honoured by the presence of **H.E. Mr. Abdullah Fakhro, Minister of Industry and Commerce of the Kingdom of Bahrain**, and **H.E. Mr. Luigi Di Maio, European Union Special Representative for the Gulf**, alongside the Ambassadors of Cyprus, Italy, France and Germany, senior government officials and representatives of Bahraini institutions and the business community.

The event brought together **189 guests and 13 journalists**, in addition to protocol officers and members of the accompanying official delegation, marking an important milestone in strengthening economic relations between Bahrain and Europe.

Established with the support of the European Union, ECBH aims to strengthen trade and investment relations between Europe and Bahrain. The Chamber will provide a dedicated platform for European companies operating in or seeking to enter the Bahraini market, while also supporting Bahraini businesses interested in exploring opportunities across the EU's 27 Member States.

The event was largely covered in the local press and various high level event participants and speakers posted on their social media accounts about the successful launch event and expressed their excitement for the newly established ECBH. Annex 2 includes examples of the press and social media coverage.

Speakers	Role	Background
H.E. Mr. Henning Simon	German Ambassador to Bahrain	Present Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Kingdom of Bahrain since 2025
H.E. Mr. Luigi Di Maio	EU Special Representative for the Gulf	EU Special Representative for the Gulf Region since June 1, 2023. Aim is to strengthen strategic partnerships, regional stability, trade, and security cooperation between the EU and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.
H.E. Mr. Christophe Farnaud	EU Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman.	As of September 1, 2023 EU Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Non-resident to Bahrain and Oman.
H.E. Mr. Abdulla Fakhro	Minister of Industry and Commerce, Bahrain	A Bahraini businessman and politician currently serving as Minister of Industry and Commerce of Bahrain since November 21, 2022.
Mr. Nawaf Alzayani	Chairman of ECBH	A prominent business leader and executive in Bahrain.

1.1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Time	**7:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**
Activity	**Guest Arrival & Registration**

The Launch event started with a welcome reception that included networking refreshments and informal introductions.

Time	**7:30 p.m. – 7:35 p.m.**
Speaker	**Welcome Address H.E. Henning Simon**

The welcome address was given by H.E. Henning Simon, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Kingdom of Bahrain. His speech focused on the importance of European-Bahraini economic relations and the significance of establishing the ECBH. He described the launch as "a strong signal of Europe's commitment to Bahrain as a partner for business and investment." He expressed confidence that the Chamber would help turn ideas into partnerships and strengthen

business cooperation between Bahrain and Europe.

1.2 Address by H.E Christophe Farnaud

Time	**7:35 p.m. – 7:40 p.m**
Speaker	**Address by H.E. Christophe Farnaud**

The address by H.E. Christophe Farnaud, Ambassador of the European Union to the Kingdom of Bahrain focused on the EU-Bahrain economic partnership, the European business community's role in Bahrain as well as support for enhanced commercial cooperation.

Ambassador Farnaud emphasised the potential of EU–Bahrain economic relations: "The EU-Bahrain trade and investment relationship has great potential Bahrain being one of the most open economies in the Middle East and acting as a hub for many EU businesses active in the Gulf. The European Union has been supporting the European Chambers across the world as we see great value in them presenting a unified EU business voice on key issues that we can benefit from and take into account in our intergovernmental contacts. The Chamber in Bahrain is the second in the Gulf after the foundation of the European Chamber of Commerce in Saudi Arabia over two years ago and shows the importance the EU places on fostering our bilateral relations."

1.3 Address by H.E Luigi Di Maio

Time	**7:40 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.**
Speaker	**Address by H. E. Luigi Di Maio**

The address by H.E. Mr. Luigi Di Maio, EU Special Representative for the Gulf, highlighted the importance of the Chamber in the context of current regional challenges: "The founding of the Chamber comes at a time of significant security challenges to the Gulf region. I am deeply convinced that the European Chamber of Commerce will play an important role, not only in rising up to the current and future joint challenges but also in providing opportunities to EU and Bahraini economies. It is just another key step to make our alliance stronger than ever."

1.4 Address by H.E Abdullah Fakhro

Time	**7:40 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.**
Speaker	**Address by H. E. Abdullah Fakhro**

The address by H.E. Mr. Abdullah Fakhro, Minister of Industry and Commerce Bahrain, highlighted the longstanding business relations between Bahrain and EU countries and the growing cooperation in recent years. He emphasised the importance of strengthening trade, investment, partnerships and joint ventures, particularly in light of current global uncertainties and supply chain challenges.

1.5 Founding Address by Mr Nawaf K. Alzayni

Time	**7:45 p.m. – 7:50 p.m.**
Speaker	**Address by Mr. Nawaf K. Alzayni**

The Founding Address Mr. Nawaf K. Alzayni, Chairman, European Chamber of Commerce Bahrain (ECBH) addressed the vision and mission of ECBH, strategic objectives and membership value proposition as well as future cooperation with Bahraini and European stakeholders.

Mr. Nawaf K. Alzayni welcomed the establishment of the Chamber: "The establishment of the European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain represents an important opportunity to further strengthen business relations between Europe and Bahrain. Our ambition is to create a practical platform that connects companies, encourages new partnerships and supports the growth of European business activities in Bahrain. We look forward to working closely with our members, Bahraini institutions and European partners to achieve these objectives."

2. Launch Moment

Time	**8:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.**
Speaker	**Commemorative Launch Moment and Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony**

The speeches were followed by a Commemorative Launch Moment and Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony including:

- Official launch announcement
- Ribbon-cutting ceremony
- Group photograph
- Media photo opportunity

3. Networking Reception

Time	**8:20 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.**
Speaker	**Networking Reception**

The official part of the ECBH launch was followed by a Networking Reception that included a cocktail reception, a buffet dinner and networking among guests, diplomatic representatives, business leaders and members.

During the Networking Reception, 12 companies signed a Letter of Intention to join the ECBH as members. The LoIs were signed at the stage and photos were also taken of the signings.

4. Press release following the event

Further, for the press release, Ms. Sherine Fakoussa, General Manager of ECBH, outlined the Chamber's priorities:

"Our focus is on turning the Chamber's network into tangible opportunities and real value for businesses. Partnerships will be at the heart of how we work. By collaborating closely with existing chambers, business organizations and key stakeholders in Bahrain and across Europe, we want to build on existing strengths, expertise and networks. We want to support European companies in establishing and expanding their activities in Bahrain, while also helping Bahraini companies explore opportunities across the EU's 27 Member States. Through business introductions, targeted market insights and sector-focused dialogue, we aim to bring the right people together, create meaningful connections and open new opportunities for businesses on both sides."

Following its launch, ECBH will focus on expanding its membership, developing business services and strengthening partnerships with the EU Delegation, European embassies, Bahraini institutions and European business networks. Planned activities include business introductions, market insights, networking opportunities and sector-focused discussions to support trade, investment and business cooperation.

The establishment of ECBH represents another step in strengthening the European business presence in the Gulf and complements the wider objectives of the EU–GCC Dialogue on Economic Diversification project.

Annexes

Annex 2: Media Coverage Report

Official Launch of the European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain
The launch of the European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain (ECBH) received coverage through print, online and social media channels. The coverage documented in Annex 1 includes Gulf Daily News newspaper articles, an article on the GDN Online website, and Instagram posts published by @gdnonline and Akhbar Al Khaleej (@aak_news).
Bahrain's Ministry of Industry and Commerce also published an official Instagram post through @moicbahrain, with text in Arabic and English. The materials include newspaper reports, photographs of the launch and ribbon-cutting ceremony, and video coverage. The following report brings together selected original English-language passages covering the event and the Chamber's role and priorities.

1. Gulf Daily News - Print coverage

Gulf Daily News covered the launch in its 15 October 2026 edition, with reports by Stanley Szecowka on the front page and in the Business section. The front-page headline, "Perfect timing for EU Chamber", appeared alongside a photograph of the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The report covered the launch, the participating officials and the Chamber's role, drawing on statements from speakers at the event.

The Business section carried a further article on page 15 under the headline "Bahrain 'can become hub for EU businesses'". Accompanied by a group photograph, it focused on EU-Bahrain business relations and included comments from the EU Ambassador and the Chamber's leadership about its objectives, services and future activities.



Business

gdnonline.com
News...all day

Hilal Technology honoured at Dell summit

Bapco praises important role of engineers

Bahrain 'can become hub for EU businesses'

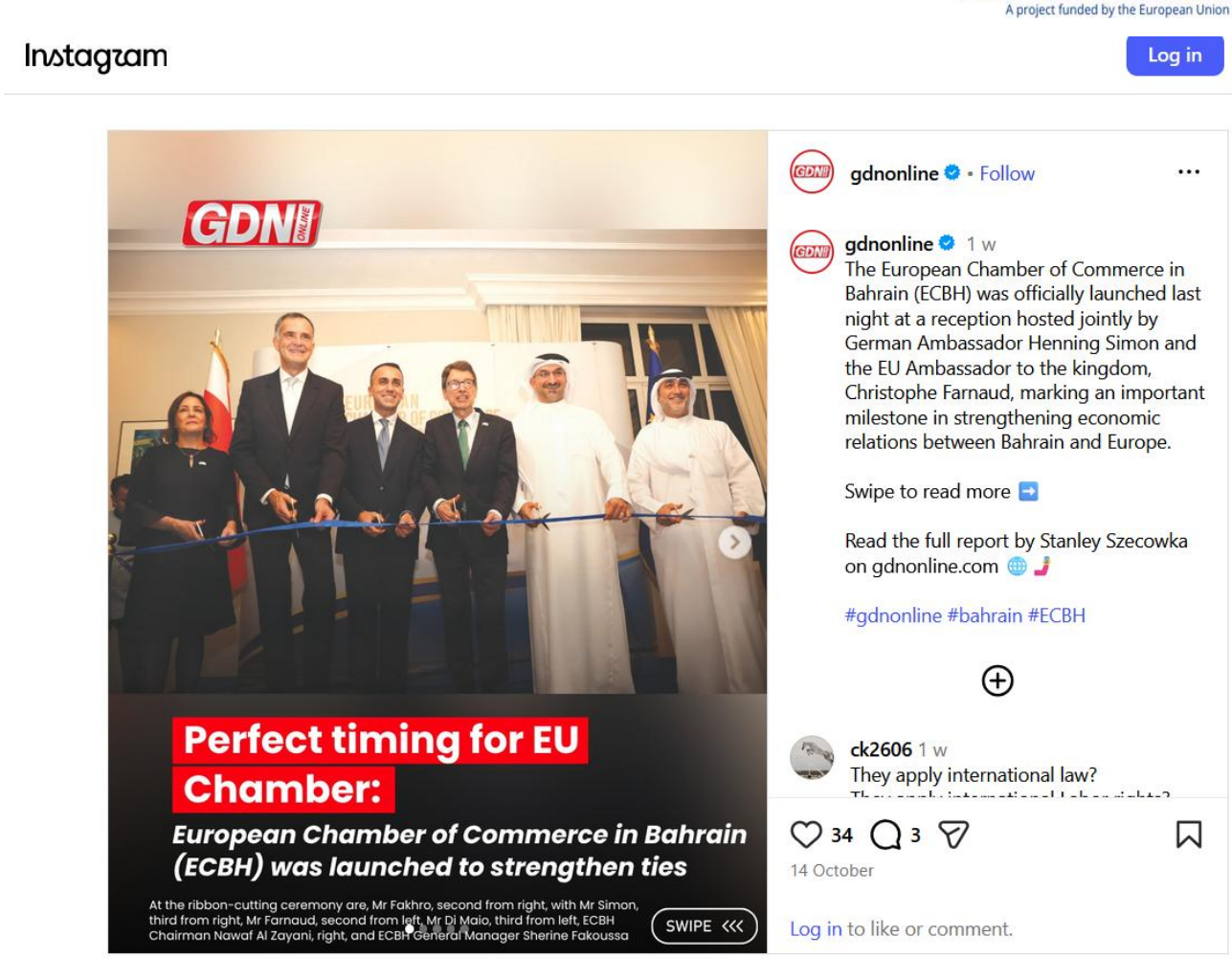
Call for robust GCC-China ties



2. GDNI online

GDN Online covered the launch through its Instagram account, @gdnonline. The post, shown with the date 14 October, featured a photograph of the ribbon-cutting ceremony and the headline “Perfect timing for EU Chamber”. It directed readers to the full report by Stanley Szecowka on gdnonline.com, linking the social media coverage to the outlet’s website. The post also used the hashtags #gdnonline, #bahrain and #ECBH.

Post was liked 34 times and commented 3 times.



3. GDN Online - Website coverage

GDN Online published "Bahrain 'can become hub for EU businesses'" on its website, with Stanley Szecowka's byline and the date 15 October 2026. The screenshot in Annex 1 shows the article in the Bahrain Business category, accompanied by a photograph of the Industry and Commerce Minister with EU officials and other attendees. The headline and photograph correspond to the coverage in the newspaper's Business section.

GDN ONLINE
Keeping your loved ones safe
"Salama" Family Plans cover everything from checkups to emergencies
Sign In / Dashboard
MEDIA SPONSORS
Al Haddad Motors
NORTHSTAR TELECOM
HOME NEWS BUSINESS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT TECH TALK HEALTH MOTORING OMG! OPINION ADVERTORIAL EPAPER CLASSIFIEDS VIDEOS
GDN life
Our Bahrain ..Our Life
SPORT

Bahrain 'can become hub for EU businesses'

Bahrain Business

By Stanley Szecowka Thu, 15 Oct 2026



Industry and Commerce Minister Abdulla bin Adel Fakhro with EU officials and dignitaries at the event

The EU ambassador to Bahrain Christophe Farnaud believes the EU-Bahrain trade and investment relationship 'has great potential Bahrain being one of the most open economies in the Middle East and acting as a hub for many EU businesses active in the Gulf'. He was co-hosting the official launch of the European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain (ECBH) last night at a reception hosted jointly by the German ambassador in Bahrain,

4. Akhbar Al Khaleej - Instagram coverage

Includes two Instagram posts from Akhbar Al Khaleej's account, @aak_news, both displaying the date 14 October. The first combined photographs of the ribbon-cutting ceremony and assembled guests with an Arabic caption and an Arabic headline announcing the Chamber's launch.
The second post presented video coverage, with the screenshot showing an interview at the event. It also included an Arabic caption and an on-screen headline about the launch. The two posts documented the event through both photographs and video.

Instagram

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aak_news • Follow

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كتبت- زينب إسماعيل
تصوير- عبدالأمير السلاطنة

انطلقت أعمال الغرفة التجارية الأوروبية رسمياً اليوم الثلاثاء (١٤ أكتوبر ٢٠٢٦) في البحرين بحضور عبدالله بن عادل فخرو وزير الصناعة والتجارة، إلى جانب جمع غفير من السفراء والدبلوماسيين والمسؤولين ورجال الأعمال.. ويأتي تأسيس ثاني شريك تجاري في منطقة الخليج العربي من بعد إطلاق أول غرفة تجارية أوروبية في المنطقة في الرياض في العام ٢٠٢٤ بهدف تعزيز الشراكة الاقتصادية بين دول الاتحاد الأوروبي والبحرين. كما تعتبر المملكة من بين 60 دولة في العالم التي تؤسس على أرضها هذا الكيان الاقتصادي.
وأشار كريستوف فارنو، سفير الاتحاد الأوروبي لدى المملكة العربية السعودية ومملكة البحرين وسلطنة عمان إلى أن إطلاق الغرفة التجارية الأوروبية في البحرين يمثل محطة ذات أهمية لتعزيز الثقة والشراكة بين البحرين والاتحاد الأوروبي، مشيراً إلى أن دعم الحكومة البحرينية

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14 October

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Original audio

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إطلاق غرفة التجارة الأوروبية في البحرين

تقرير - زينب إسماعيل
تصوير- محمد الساري
انطلقت أعمال الغرفة التجارية الأوروبية رسمياً اليوم الثلاثاء (١٤ أكتوبر ٢٠٢٦) في البحرين بحضور عبدالله بن عادل فخرو وزير الصناعة والتجارة، إلى جانب جمع غفير من السفراء والدبلوماسيين والمسؤولين ورجال الأعمال.. ويأتي تأسيس ثاني شريك تجاري في منطقة الخليج العربي من بعد إطلاق أول غرفة تجارية أوروبية في المنطقة في الرياض في العام ٢٠٢٤ بهدف تعزيز الشراكة الاقتصادية بين دول الاتحاد الأوروبي والبحرين. كما تعتبر المملكة من بين 60 دولة في العالم التي تؤسس على أرضها هذا الكيان الاقتصادي.

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14 October

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5. Ministry of Industry and Commerce - Official Instagram coverage

Bahrain's Ministry of Industry and Commerce published an official post through @moicbahrain, shown with the date 14 October. The post featured a group photograph and captions in Arabic and English.

Its coverage focused on the Minister's participation in the launch reception and identified the EU and German ambassadors attending the event. This was an official institutional announcement, separate from the newspaper and media-outlet coverage.



6. News of Bahrain - Instagram account

On Instagram account @newsofbahrain posted on October 17th a video about the opening "Bahrain is opening new doors for businesses across Europe." "The newly launched European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain"

It gathered 108 likes and 1 comment

https://www.instagram.com/reel/DemZ4zTEvnp/

Instagram

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Bahrain is opening new doors for businesses across Europe.

The newly launched European Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain aims to connect local companies with businesses across the EU's 27 member states, creating opportunities for investment, partnerships and access to new markets.
@germanyinbahrain
#NewsofBahrain #News #Bahrain #NOBDigital

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❤️❤️india❤️❤️
1 like Reply

108 1

October 17

Log in to like or comment.