

Gulf-Asia Cooperation: Prospects, Challenges and Implications for Europe

Publication Roll-out

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Bahrain Center for Strategic, International & Energy Studies (DERASAT)

The past decade has witnessed a significant strengthening of ties between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and key Asian countries. This burgeoning relationship spans multiple dimensions - economic, political, and cultural - rooted in mutual interests and strategic priorities.

Concurrently, Europe has also cultivated deeper relations with Asia. The European Union (EU) maintains comprehensive partnerships with major Asian powers, particularly South Korea, India, and Japan. These relationships have taken on renewed significance in light of recent global developments: the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Europe's resulting energy crisis, the ongoing transformation of the global order, and escalating United States-China tensions. These factors have underscored the critical importance of enhanced EU-Asia collaboration, especially within the GCC region.

This discussion brings together experts who have examined these complex relationships through various lenses. Their analysis addresses several crucial questions:

- How have Gulf-Asia relations evolved, and what implications does this hold for European engagement in the region?
- What opportunities and challenges does strengthening Gulf-Asia cooperation present for Europe's vision of open strategic autonomy and initiatives like the EU's Global Gateway?
- How can Europe effectively leverage and contribute to Gulf states' third-party partnerships?
- Given their strategic geographic position, how can Gulf states facilitate Asian connectivity projects while ensuring European interests are served?
- Do the GCC's relationships with Asia and Europe operate as complementary or substitutionary forces, and what are the implications for future regional cooperation and global strategic partnerships?

Agenda

10:45 - 11:00	Arrival
	Welcoming Remarks
11:00 - 11:15	Dr Hamad Ebrahim Al-Abdulla Executive Director of DERASAT Philipp Dienstbier Director of the Regional Programme Gulf States, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)
11:15-12:15	Publication Discussion <u>Speakers:</u> Dr Shigeto Kondo Senior Researcher at the JIME Center of the Institute of Energy Economics Dr Omar Al Ubaidly Director of Research, Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (DERASAT) Philipp Dienstbier Director of the Regional Programme Gulf States, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) <u>Moderator</u> Marah Jamous Project Manager at the Regional Programme Gulf States, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)
12:15-13:00	Lunch

All Information may be subject to change

Biographies of Speakers/Moderators



Philipp Dienstbier

Since 2023, Mr Philipp Dienstbier has been Director of the Regional Programme Gulf States of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), based in Amman, Jordan. His work at KAS also started at the Regional Programme, where he worked from 2016 to 2018 as a research fellow. The programme focuses its project work on the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Yemen. It also observes current affairs in Iran. From 2018 to 2022, Philipp worked at the KAS headquarters in Berlin. Most recently, he was Policy Advisor for Transatlantic Relations in the Department International and Security Affairs and, prior to that, Desk Officer in the Department Europe/North America. Before joining KAS, Philipp was a research associate at the Global Public Policy Institute in Berlin. He also gained experience at the United Nations, the Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of the German armed forces, and in the energy sector. Philipp holds a double master's degree (M.Sc. International Political Economy and M.A. International Security) from the London School of Economics and Political Science and from Sciences Po Paris. He completed his undergraduate degree in the Netherlands at Maastricht University and in the United States at University of California, Berkeley majoring in international relations and economics.



Dr Omar Al Ubaydli

Dr Omar Al Ubaydli is the Director of Research at the [Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies](#) (DERASAT). He previously worked as an Assistant Professor of Economics at George Mason University (USA), as well as being a member of Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell's Joint Advisory Board of Economists. In the economics domain, his primary research interests are political economy, behavioural/experimental economics, the economics of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, and the economics of science. He has numerous peer-reviewed publications in international journals, and my research has been covered in mainstream media outlets, such as the Economist magazine and the Newsweek blog. Dr Al-Ubaydli has earned a BA in economics from the University of Cambridge, and a MA and PhD in economics from the University of Chicago.



Dr Shigeto Kondo

Dr Shigeto Kondo is a senior researcher at the JIME Center, the Institute of Energy Economics, Japan (IEEJ). He is an expert on the political economy of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Arab states, and Japan's relations with these countries. He obtained his Ph.D. at Keio University in Tokyo, focusing on Saudi Arabia's foreign policies. He was seconded to the King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC) in Saudi Arabia in 2022 where he contributed a paper on

Saudi-Japanese cooperation in climate change. The articles he wrote include The Implications of the Energy Transition on Asian Powers and the GCC: From the Perspectives of Japan and Saudi Arabia in Adel Abdel Ghafar and Abdullah Baabood eds, *Asia in the GCC: A New Strategic Partner?* (Middle East Council on Global Affairs, July 2023).



Marah Jamous

Marah Jamous has been a project manager at the Regional Programme Gulf States of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) since May 2023. Prior to her role at KAS, she was a researcher at the West Asia-North Africa Institute in Jordan under the Chairmanship of His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal, working within the Human Security (Economic Growth) pillar. Her research mainly focused on voluntary and involuntary labour migration flows into Jordan, with a particular emphasis on policies to promote refugees' self-sufficiency

and inclusion in host labour markets. Marah completed her undergraduate degree in Political Science from the University of Jordan.