

ЗРОЗУМІТИ СУТЬ ВІДНОСИН МІЖ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИМ СОЮЗОМ ТА РАДОЮ СПІВРОБІТНИЦТВА ДЕРЖАВ ПЕРСЬКОЇ ЗАТОКИ І ПЕРЕДБАЧИТИ МАЙБУТНЄ

Ясін Їлдірім

Університет Чанкері Каратекін
ORCID: 0000-0001-8926-3517
yasinyildirim@karatekin.edu.tr

Рабіа Юзюмджю

Університет Чанкері Каратекін
ORCID: 0000-0002-9861-7636
rabiauzumcu@karatekin.edu.tr

(статтю надіслано – 10.02.2021 р., статтю прийнято до друку – 27.04.2021 р.)

© Їлдірім Я., Юзюмджю Р., 2021

Історія європейсько-арабських відносин насичена неспокійними, трагічними, напруженими, але також оптимістичними подіями. Протягом століть народи Європи та Близького Сходу жили разом і взаємодіяли, торгуючи, домовляючись та завойовуючи одне одного. Однак ми бачимо, що постійно розвиваються норми міжнародного права, дипломатії та загальної поваги, тому співпраця та партнерство є основними принципами сучасних відносин між європейськими країнами та країнами Перської затоки. Цих принципів дотримуються дві регіональні організації, а саме: Європейський Союз та Рада співробітництва країн Перської затоки, які мають унікальні інституційні характеристики.

За останні три десятиліття ці дві організації зробили багато для налагодження взаємовигідних економічних зв'язків, практикували дуже цінну комерційну взаємодію та досягли значного поступу у політичній сфері.

Втім ще не час говорити про повне порозуміння та гармонію у відносинах. Через багато перешкод дві організації не змогли скористатися всіма можливостями для повноцінного співробітництва. Тому характер двосторонніх відносин між Європою та країнами Перської затоки набув надзвичайно ексцентричної та дивної форми, яка є одночасно потужною та конкретною, а також слабкою й ненадійною. Тим не менше, незважаючи на всі недоліки та перешкоди, можна передбачити більш позитивні наслідки такої співпраці та бути оптимістичним щодо майбутнього стану співпраці між європейськими країнами та країнами Перської затоки. Тому в цій статті проаналізовані відносини між ними на інституціональному рівні в контексті позитивних та негативних наслідків міжнародного співробітництва на основі правових договорів та інших офіційних документів.

Ключові слова: ЄС, Рада співробітництва держав Перської затоки, двосторонні відносини, міжрегіональне співробітництво, торгівля.

UNDERSTANDING THE TRUE NATURE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION & THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL, AND PREDICTING TOMORROW

Yasin Yildirim

Çankiri Karatekin University
ORCID: 0000-0001-8926-3517
yasinyildirim@karatekin.edu.tr

Rabia Üzümçü

Çankiri Karatekin University
ORCID: 0000-0002-9861-7636
rabiauzumcu@karatekin.edu.tr

History of Euro-Arab relations is full of with troubled, tragic, stressed but also optimistic and sanguine occasions. Through the ages, people of the Europe and the Middle East have lived together and interacted, by

trading, negotiating, and conquering each other. Within the framework of constantly developing international law, diplomacy and universal respect rules, however, the spirit of cooperation and partnership has started to be lived and strengthened between two civilizations. In this sense, two regional organizations, the European Union, and the Gulf Cooperation Council are coming forward with their unique institutional characteristics. In last 3 decades, these two organizations succeeded many remarkable missions, created highly profitable economic relations, practiced very valuable commercial interacts, and harvested significant acquisitions from each other's political, and economic backgrounds.

However, mentioning about the creation of a complete alliance is impossible. Due to many obstacles and even sometimes due to preferential choices; the two actors could/did not unlock their potentials for a fully-fledged cooperation and collaboration processes. Therefore, the nature of the bilateral relations between Europe and Gulf has taken a highly eccentric and strange shape which is both powerful and concrete, and also weak and intangible. Nonetheless, despite of all drawbacks and unknown points; it is possible to anticipate more positive and brighter implications in the future and to be optimistic about the tomorrow of the relations between the parties, because of the necessity of comprehensive cooperation. In this paper, the relations between parties will be analysed with their positive and negative aspects under the context international cooperation by focusing legal treaties between them and other platforms that parties met.

Key Words: *EU, GCC, Bilateral Relations, Interregional Cooperation, Commerce.*

Introduction

The first traces of European-Arab relations go back to ages ago. People of the Europe and Middle East and North Africa («MENA») have lived together for centuries and interacted, by trading, negotiating, and conquering each other, as Mr Claude Cheysson, former European Commissioner, stressed Commission of The European Communities (1978). Therefore, bilateral relations between Europeans and Arabs have been of extraordinary importance for the World through the ages and will likely continue to be important at the future.

Besides, when the current and existing challenges, problems, risks and threats and finally opportunities that may significantly benefit the parties, are taken into consideration, it is reached out that the dialogue, relations and interaction between Europeans and Arabs will be on much more significant position than ever. The increasing institutional-degree cooperation, collaboration and assistance processes amongst individual European and Arab countries and also two major regional organizations, the European Union («EU») and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf («GCC» or «the Council») can be seen as the most concrete examples of a such significance.

For this reason, understanding the true nature of the relationship between the GCC and the EU, exploring the answer/s of some research questions such as «*What is the normative value of strengthened relationship between the EU and the GCC?*», «*How can parties benefit from such a cooperation?*» or «*How did bilateral relations evolved throughout the decade?*» and predicting the future of these two powerful organizational actors' affairs, present a great importance.

A. Understanding the Past and the Present of Relations between the EU and the GCC: «Failures, Successes, Opportunities»

A1. The Past of Relations and Theoretical Conceptualization

The first concrete contact between the EU and the GCC took place just after the birth of the GCC. As elucidated by Kostadinova (2013); the first step for a closer and more powerful collaboration was taken by the GCC and directed parties to hold a ministerial degree meeting in 1985. After 3 years of this meeting, on 15th of June, 1988, the European Economic Community and the GCC signed the Cooperation Agreement¹ («Agreement») which entered into force on 1st of January, 1990 to strengthen the newly-established relations and take a new and common position in the rapidly changing World at the complex times of 1980s. With the signing of this agreement; the parties basically agreed and decided to strengthen their relations², to broaden and consolidate their economic and technical cooperation³, to take steps for the mutual protection of investments⁴, to accord each other most-favoured-nation treatment in commercial issues⁵, to create a joint council and gather once year⁶.

At this point, it would be useful to analyse the signing of the Agreement in theoretical context. As two major political units entered a comprehensive cooperation, they targeted absolute gains rather than relative gains, aimed to increase general welfare and intended to escalate common prosperity via a legal instrument, it is possible to remark that there was and still is a neoliberal kind of relationship between parties (Meiser, 2017). Since neoliberalism is a modernist and reformist form of international relations theory that defends international political and economic openings,

¹ The full version of the Agreement is available on <https://ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/prepareCreateTreatiesWorkspace/treatiesGeneralData.do?step=0&redirect=true&treatyId=232>

² Cooperation Agreement, Article 1/1-a.

³ Cooperation Agreement, Article 1/1-b.

⁴ Cooperation Agreement, Article 7.

⁵ Cooperation Agreement, Article 11/3.

⁶ Cooperation Agreement, Article 12.

collaborations between different political units, and rejects conservative attitudes, the place of European-Arab relations in neoliberal environment get more and more evident (Davies, 2014). Neoliberalism targets optimum economic performance, technical and scientific progress and distributional justice for all domestic and external actors in a relationship (Kotz, 2002). Correspondingly, since both parties defined an objective to reach aforementioned targets via legal instruments, projects and events such as joint ministerial councils, the neoliberal aspect of the European-Arab relationship comes to the fore⁷.

As the most prominent reflection of the Agreement and cooperation in neoliberal sense, two parties have been holding Joint Council Meetings («JCM») composed of the foreign ministers of both sides in every year, since 1990 (GCC, 2021b). In these JCMs, the parties determined the agenda items according to the conditions and requirements of that day and drew road maps accordingly. As instance, at the latest and 29th meeting that was held in June 2020, which realized in online platform due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the parties discussed the pandemic's economic, political and social impacts, new alternatives to promote trade and investment, and to restart of free trade negotiations and new cooperation possibilities in the areas of energy, scientific research, innovation, environment, combating terrorism and cybersecurity (GCC, 2020). It is possible to remark that, when the volatile, rapidly changing and complex structure of the global and regional political and economic conjecture are taken into consideration, such existence and continuity of JCMs rise as the signs of stability and prepotency of European-Gulf relations.

⁷Except the neoliberalism, it is also possible to evaluate the European-Arab relations in the English School perspective. Inasmuch as, the English School purports that there is an anarchic international system in the world *-in neorealist sense-* where there is no mighty, esteemed and powerful global hegemon that could control relations amongst states; but states and political units, seek both coexistence and a level of order sufficient to pursue some joint projects such as world economy, human rights, big science, global environmental management, safety, and security as members of a virtual international society (Buzan, 2015). Besides, since both the EU and the GCC are targeting to access certain common acquisitions in a complex, stressful and anarchic atmosphere under a cooperative and collaborative framework, the doctrines of the English School are also acceptable in this case. Nevertheless, this dilemma would not create so much difference since the English School is being evaluated as the combination of realism/neorealism and liberalism/neoliberalism (Holzer, 2003). As the English School and its one of three key concepts, the international society are carrying some key terms from the both theories such as balance of power, great powers, diplomacy, law and cooperation; the relations between the EU and the GCC can be conceptualized within both the English School and neoliberalism.

Another positive reflection of European-Gulf partnership is the adoption of the Joint Action Program/Joint Action Plan («JAP»). In 2010, during the 20th session of the JCM in Luxembourg City, parties decided to create the JAP for a three year period between 2010 and 2013, to cover a distance to fulfil the tasks of the Cooperation Agreement, in 14 different fields including economic-financial-monetary cooperation, energy, transportation, combating terrorist financing, and protection of intellectual property rights (Kalicka-Mikolajczyk, 2016).

However, despite of its great potential and promises, the JAP can be qualified as «*relatively*» successful process since it has limited positive. In affirmative meaning, as Alazawi (2016) described, the formal facet of the relationship between the parties was stimulated since it gave way to a comprehensive collaboration process. Supportively, Giardullo (2012) remarked that the JAP has fostered many common projects such as the establishment of Erasmus Mundus scholarships for the exchange of students with Gulf universities, the organization of «*GCC Cultural Days*» in different European cities, and the holding of «*EU cultural Days*» first time in Riyadh. Additionally, Bianco (2014) stressed that the JAP paved a new way for a truly strategic partnership, and finally, Kostadinova (2013) purported that the JAP added another concrete layer to the European-Gulf relations particularly in the fields of clean energy, science and technology.

Nonetheless, there are many failures about the JAP, as well. Firstly, the JAP was not renewed after 2013; secondly, since the JAP was a detailed but scarcely operational list of areas of cooperation ranging from many various fields, it negatively affected the consistency and reality of collaboration fields (Ghafar & Colombo, 2020). Correspondingly, Koch (2014): very truly summarized the key factors of failure and disappointment of the JAP and the reason of non-renewal, as insufficient common interests, institutional incongruities, normative differences, a negative preference for bilateralism over multilateralism in more significant fields. Nevertheless, it is a clear fact that, despite of all its drawbacks, the process that started with the JAP has an exceptional place and massive mark in the history of European-Gulf Relations.

The failures were whereas also officially accepted by the EU. As officially put forward by Commission of the European Communities' itself (1995), the successes and progresses derive from the Cooperation Agreement and processes in last 30 years, have been limited; and multilateral framework of the EU-GCC relations remained stuck while geopolitical realities in the MENA have been evolving dramatically (Ghafar & Colombo, 2020). Moreover, with the collapse of Free Trade

Agreement («FTA»), limited success of the bilateral relations and the Cooperation Agreement were precisely highlighted (European Commission 2020a). Even negotiations regarding the finalization of a FTA between parties have been launched, suspended and re-activated for several times since 1990; no material progress could be acquired and finally in 2008, the GCC decisively suspended all ongoing negotiations.

At this point, the reasons that motivated the GCC to suspend negotiations and caused the EU's unwillingness to pursue the process are needed to be deeply investigated for understanding the negative and weak aspects of the nature of the EU-GCC affairs. In this sense, Kostadinova's (2013), Ghafar & Colombo's (2020) and Ayadi's (2010) findings can be envisioned as appropriate causes:

I. Legal Structures of the Parties: While the EU is a sui generis entity with supranational power which is neither a federation nor confederation, the GCC is just an intergovernmental institution amongst the members (Luciani & Schumacher, 2004; Hazak, 2012). Such a difference causes internal technical problems to coordinate and fully cooperate.

II. Human Rights Violations in the Gulf: Human rights and fundamental legal values are taking a great place on the agenda and genetic code of the EU. However, Gulf nations are being harshly criticized by human right advocates for their deficiencies such as repression of free speech, woman rights, imprisonment of journalists and legal status of refugees (Amnesty International, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2014; European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, 2021). This divergence is also causing to congestion of relations in other fields (Nonneman, 2006).

III. Lobbying Activities of Interest Groups: As denoted by Colombo & Committeri (2013), due to intense lobbying on the part of the Association of Petroleum Producers and other business groups in Europe that has actively stood against trade liberalisation and opposed to preparation of the FTA; European governments and EU bodies had to blocked duty-free access for petrochemicals from the Gulf and put more barriers on other fields of cooperation; since, the regime for import regarding the Gulf oil would directly influence the interests and profit margins of European business spheres.

IV. The EU's Lacks on Military Power: Security is the top concern of Gulf nations and most of them⁸ are very vulnerable to external military threats due to their small populations and relatively weak armies. Thus, they are in absolute need of a foreign partner's assistance and

protection; and this foreign partner is the United States of America for decades («USA»). Since there is no European army that could help the GCC, the USA has remained the most capable security guarantor and the EU remained felt behind in this race (Echague, 2007).

V. Reluctance of Gulf Nations on Deeper Cooperation: The GCC countries are some of the richest and most affluent countries in the World; and this situation gives them ability of executing a more independent policy unlike the other nations in the MENA. In short, they do not see themselves as weak or feeble in front of the EU (Youngs, 2009; Lacroix, 2012).

Additionally, as Khader (2013) put forward, other several reasons such as the different natures of the EU and the GCC⁹, the reluctance of some countries in the EU to Europeanize their traditional ties with the Gulf nations, the EU's concern to not antagonize the USA and so on, also contributed these failures.

However, drawing a pessimistic or a dark picture regarding the present and the future of the EU-GCC relations by considering on aforementioned reasons will not be a righteous act, at all. Despite of all drawbacks and problems, the EU-GCC relations' positive aspects and optimistic features on the future are also highly material and normative value of bilateral relations are remarkable.

A2. The Present of Relations

Economic, commercial and financial cooperation and issues comprise the most powerful aspects of the EU-GCC relations. As reported by European Commission (2020a); i) the GCC region represents a great importance in commerce on the eye of the EU as the region is the 4th largest export market of the Europe, ii) EU-GCC total trade in goods in 2017 reached to €143.7 billion, iii) European exports to the GCC countries were quite diverse iv) as the GCC countries have abundant sources of oil, gas and minerals, imported products from the Gulf are mainly mineral fuels and mining products and chemicals, v) despite of growing Chinese, Indian and Japanese interests toward to the region, the EU achieved to be the 1st trading partner for the GCC in 2018 and 2019, vi) bilateral trade in service sector has also been increasing and reached to approximately €50 billion in recent years. EU services exports are roundly twice as much as those of the GCC.

However, the commercial relations between parties are not limited to those certain areas and cannot be fully explained by classical statistics. The football industry, for instance, is another field where the European and Gulf countries are cooperating. To focus

⁸ Saudi and Emirati armies are relatively stronger than other Gulf nations.

⁹ The EU has been economy-driven organization, while the GCC has been a security-motivated one due to fragile balances in the MENA.

on details, in last 2 decades (Sleightholm, 2018); many football clubs in Europe such as *Málaga CF*, *Girona FC SAD* and *Paris-Saint Germain FC* are –*totally or partly*– purchased, and currently being managed by Saudi, Qatari and Emirati state-owned companies, governmental agencies, members of royal families and politicians such as Emirati deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan or Qatar Investment Authority. As European governments giving permission to those purchasing processes and billion-EUR worth investments both parties are diversifying their cooperation areas and strengthening their eco-political ties.

However, since good aspects of the EU-GCC relations are mainly related to commerce and monetary issues; some positive marks on politics, energy and security are not absent, at all. For instance, as explained by Khader (2013); the GCC nations are the Arab countries which are more affluent and free-from-ideologies, and the Council is the only literally functioning regional organization in the whole MENA¹⁰. For this reason, the GCC is posing as more convenient partner whom can be negotiated in the MENA. Therefore, on many political and legal issues such as stabilization of the Republic of Iraq, the resolution of Arab-Israeli conflict by referencing two-state solution, the EU and the GCC have taken joint positions.

Additionally, the GCC countries are of overwhelming importance for the energy supply and energy security of Europe. Therefore, to prevent any attack or hijackings in the Gulf of Aden and East African coastline during the marine transportation of fossil fuels from the Gulf to Europe, the «*EU Naval Force Somalia*» initiated the «*Operation Atalanta*» and under this operation the EU is still cooperating with the GCC to establish a GCC Counterpiracy Force, to provide expertise on how sea-lane communications can be protected and on many other issues (Ronzitti, 2013).

Nevertheless, the negative aspects of European-Gulf relations on the fields except the economy, investment and commerce, are outweighing aforementioned limitedly positive features. Firstly, since the EU is an economy-driven organization and the GCC is a security-motivated organization, two major political units are not sharing identical concerns regarding the overall security of the MENA.

As highlighted by Trulsson (2010) and Rüländ (2006), the relationship between parties with regard to general safety and strategic importance of the MENA has developed very slowly in last 30 years. Even though

parties reached common grounds in several security-related areas; methods, motivations, and priorities of them are quite different.

For instance, while the GCC members are more uncompanionable to the Tehran government and are targeting to advance their security interests, the EU has been wishing to de-escalate tensions between the Gulf nations and Islamic Republic of Iran («Iran»), to suppress regional rivalries through dialogue and to lift or chasten sanctions on Iran or to promote lasting stability (Bianco, 2020). Additionally, regarding the Arab Spring; while the GCC, stood against the revolutions and collaborated with existing regimes; the EU adopted more moderate attitude to protests and newly established countries, demonstrated a commitment to international diplomacy and even liaised with some new players in the region, such as the Transitional National Council in the State of Libya (Balfour, 2012). By considering those, it is possible to state that this political *status quo* will not be changed as long as the EU will be stayed as just a strong economic and civilian actor but not a powerful policy player like the USA. However, a hybrid modelling is also an option for the EU, as Beijing government has become a hybrid pioneer actor in both economy-finance, and policy-security in the MENA (Fulton, 2019).

Moreover, the law and legal cooperation is another failed/unsatisfied field of cooperation between the parties. As a particular case; although the EU and the GCC agreed to improve and protect intellectual property rights and patenting processes by exchanging experience and views, establishing legal and technical cooperation and combating against any kind of violations of the rules of international legal instruments such as Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights («TRIPS») during the JAP process; there are still many distances to be covered. In details; all members of the EU and the GCC are signatories of TRIPS and therefore they are obliged to create minimum legal standards of protection of intellectual property rights. Addedly, all parties of TRIPS, including Gulf countries, are legally compelled to execute stringent border controls that will help in the prevention and detection of illegal goods (ICC, 2013). However, despite the implementation of border measures in the EU; the Gulf countries are quite incapable of fulfilling these requirements. As put forward by Alfadhel (2015), Gulf governments are awarding highly little attention to border controls and legal technicalities that predicted in TRIPS which causes the circulation of counterfeited, forged or fake goods in the MENA. Gulf countries' such inadequacy and reluctance causes European companies to lose billions of Euros. Therefore, legal cooperation and collaboration rise as another field that has to be improved between parties.

¹⁰ The existence and activities of League of Arab States, another organization in the MENA, is highly slight due to its disunity, poor governance, lack of collectivist approach and representing autocratic regimes than Arab people (Masters & Sergie, 2020).

Thirdly, energy/renewable energy, protection of environment and scientific advancement are other fields the remained unsatisfied. Energy is a key element of EU relations with the GCC (European Commission, 2020b). The GCC nations are amongst the World's leading carbons sources producers and exporters to Europe and rest of the World and therefore effective and healthy production processes of oil and gas are presenting a major significance for European markets (Doukas et al., 2013). On the other hand, the EU presents great importance for the GCC as well with its technical strengths, marketing processes and economic power. Therefore, it is understood that, as Baabood (2003) also pointed out, there is strong energy interdependence between the two regions. For this, the efforts for the creation of European-Gulf cooperation on energy, environment and science had been initiated for decades (Papadopoulou, et al., 2011). However, for the EU, transportation of carbon sources to Europe and fulfilling the energy needs of the continent, are not only concerns; for Brussels, protection of environment, promotion of renewable energy sources, and scientifically improvement of carbon sources' production processes from drilling to refining also matters since the Green Theory was born.

Regarding Brussels' concerns, there are some challenges and differences of opinion between parties (Flamos et al., 2010). To focus on details; while the civil society organizations, think-tanks and environmentalist groups in Europe highly dominant on the adoption of green policies, regulations; GCC countries, on the other hand, are highly reluctant in terms of adopting green politics and promoting renewable sources. Until now, except the UAE in some degree, the Gulf nations have adopted different priorities as increasing oil prices in global markets in order to protect their export stats, and they still have a kind of *wait-and-see* approach in energy and environment sectors (Al-Sarihi, 2019; Cochrane, 2020; ITA, 2020; IRENA, 2019). Such a political/strategical congestion remains as another obstacle on the path of deeper cooperation.

Nonetheless, as Yahyazadeh (2020) clarified, GCC members slowly started to focus on renewable energy targets for increasing their profit margins in global energy sector and diversifying their energy sources. In such a new process, it is likely that, both the EU and the GCC can find convenient collaboration platforms. It can be purported that while Gulf countries can benefit from the EU by exchanging experiences and acquiescing policies; the European spheres can secure their energy needs, acquire cheap and healthier energy sources and find a new field for expanding into the MENA. Such collaboration means having mutual monetary, industrial, scientific and political acquisitions for both parties in the future.

The existence of the EU-GCC Clean Energy Technology Network which aims to stimulate collaboration in the area of clean energy technologies, strategies and policies such as promoting alternative energy sources, strengthening energy efficiency, producing clean natural gas, can be evaluated as another clear indication of ongoing European-Gulf energy cooperation (EUGCC CET Network, 2021).

B. The Future of Relations and Recommendations

From the perspective of the GCC, its relationship with the EU has never been a priority due to some certain reasons such as prioritization of relationships with the USA, bureaucratic and legal inefficiencies and lack of internal cohesion within the Council. Besides, until now, most of the parts of bilateral relations have been on economic, commercial and financial issues rather than politics or security. In other words, as Khader (2013) stressed, «... *EU-GCC relations have been shy and shallow, in spite of the €...billions of total trade...*».

Nonetheless, as also remarked by Koch (2020), at today's complex, volatile and even *anarchic* global order where there is no mighty, powerful and hegemonic power to control, shape and conduct relations amongst states, international organizations, civil societies, masses of people and even transnational corporations; every single actor and political unit has only one rational and realistic way to choose for surviving, continuing to exist, living in an environment of certain degree of peace, safety, security and welfare is on, avoiding any kind of conflicts and escalations that would be catastrophic detrimental and damaging to all sides, terminating all common threats, problems and issues, and prevailing cooler heads: «*Cooperating and Collaborating in Neoliberal Sense*».

Correspondingly, when some key determiner factors such as radical changes on the USA-led liberal international order's relationship with the Europe, the MENA and rest of the World, increased Chinese and Indian assertiveness to the MENA, the creation of «*One Belt One Road Project*», worsening situations in Syrian, Yemeni and Libyan civil wars, the *–almost–* collapse of Iranian Nuclear Deal, increased Iranian aggression against the KSA and UAE in the region, increasing environmental problems and usage of carbon sources in excessive rates, global refugee problems, continuing reflections and stresses of the Arab Spring, shaping the new political/diplomatic order in the MENA that started with peace agreements between Arabian nations and Tel Aviv government and so on, it is being understood that, there is a clear and urgent need to revitalize the existing EU-GCC relations and create an environment of collaboration (Ghafar & Colombo, 2020). Due to all

these reasons, it is seen that, the EU can become a very precious ally for the GCC nations, and the GCC, can also become a convenient, modern, reliable and affluent regional partner for the EU.

In this wise, for the renaissance of the European-Gulf affairs in aforementioned fields and more, there are some tasks that have to be fulfilled by parties as soon as possible, such as i) re-identifying their priorities before creating a new strategic partnership, interpreting them according to their common interests and concerns, acting accordingly and promoting trust at the same sense, ii) sharing a common or at least close diplomatic, economic and political vision, and formulating common approaches and strategies, iii) not underestimating the influence that could be brought to table, despite of drawbacks and obstacles, iv) restarting and finalizing FTA talks, v) activating and utilizing necessary diplomatic channels such as JCM, vi) acknowledging diplomatic roles that KSA or UAE can play in regional politics, in favour of both parties, vii) and finally constantly reassessing and revising partnership tools to adapt the new conditions.

Besides, in European perspective, as stressed by Baabood and Edwards (2007), the EU should also stop treating the Gulf region as the US backyard and evaluate Gulf nations as independent who have specific gravities in international politics. Additionally, the EU has to assist in ensuring security and stability in the region by all means (Baabood, 2003). In exchange of it, the GCC should respect the diplomatic, legal and economic affluence and strength. Finally, as also recommended by Charfi (2017), adopting a realistic approach based on common benefits and problems and realizing all tasks above in a realistic and rationalistic manner is the key for a concrete success.

Concluding Remarks

The nominal value of strengthened, intense and powerful relations between the EU-GCC is undisputed. However, expecting a true, real and concrete success on bilateral relations is highly controversial; but overcoming all of these controversial issues and existing problems is possible by fulfilling all tasks above, and understanding the fact that both parties need each other, since both the EU and the GCC will be more powerful and influential when they plan, cooperate and act, together.

For this reason, as very truly represented by Koch and Stenberg (2010), there is a definite, clear and certain necessity for the parties to coordinate more closely and to promote a common agenda in terms of politics, economy, law, commerce and energy. With a more ordered balanced and sustainable environment for a closer and reliable cooperation, both parties can repel common

challenges and maximize their gains in international relations.

Despite of every single obstacle and drawback in the past, it is contemplated that both parties, can and must strengthen their relations and canalize them into a more secure and harmonized base to gain bilateral interests and acquisitions in neoliberal manner. In this way, a new era in the hundreds of years of European-Arab affairs can be opened and parties can find a very convenient platform to continue their existences, to cope with common problems and to maximize their economic, political and social acquisitions.

ЛІТЕРАТУРА/REFERENCES

Alazawi, H. (2016). Cooperation and obstacles between EU & GCC. *Acta Scientifica Academiae Ostroviensis. Sectio A, Nauki Humanistyczne, Społeczne i Techniczne*, 7(1), 264–276.

Alfadhel, L. (2015). TRIPS and the Rise of Counterfeiting: A Comparative Examination of Trademark Protection and Border Measures in the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council. *Trade, Law and Development*, 7(2), 388–411.

Al-Sarihi, A. (2019, November 18). *Renewable Energy in the Gulf Arab States*. Retrieved December 23, 2020, from Center for Contemporary Arab Studies: <https://ccas.georgetown.edu/2019/11/18/renewable-energy-in-the-gulf-arab-states>

Amnesty International. (2018, December 7). *Human Rights in the Gulf under Renewed Scrutiny Ahead of GCC Summit*. Retrieved December 27, 2020, from Amnesty International: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/12/human-rights-in-the-gulf-under-renewed-scrutiny-ahead-of-gcc-summit/>

Ayadi, R. (2010). *Relations between EU & Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries*. European Parliament. Brussels: Directorate-General for External Policies.

Baabood, A. (2003). Dynamics and Determinants of the GCC States' Foreign Policy, with Special Reference to the EU. *The Review of International Affairs*, 3(2), 254–282.

Baabood, A., & Edwards, G. (2007). Reinforcing Ambivalence: The Interaction of Gulf States and the European Union. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 12(4), 537–554.

Balfour, R. (2012). *EU Conditionality after the Arab Spring*. Barcelona: European Institute of the Mediterranean.

Bianco, C. (2014). *EU-GCC Cooperation in an Era of Socio-Economic Challenges*. Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali. Retrieved April 7, 2021, from http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/Sharaka_RP_08.pdf

Bianco, C. (2020, December 10). *Gulf of difference: How Europe Can Get the Gulf Monarchies to Pursue Peace with Iran*. Retrieved April 9, 2021, from European Council on Foreign Relations: <https://ecfr.eu/publication/gulf-of-difference-how-europe-can-get-the-gulf-monarchies-to-pursue-peace-with-iran/>

Buzan, B. (2015). The English School: A Neglected Approach to International Security Studies. *Security Dialogue*, 46(2), 126–143.

Charfi, M. (2017). The European Parliament and the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries: Between Interests and Values. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 22(4), 493–512.

Cochrane, P. (2020, October 30). *Renewable Energy: What Does It Mean for Oil-dominated Middle East?* Retrieved

- December 23, 2020, from Middle East Eye: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/renewable-energy-oil-middle-east>
- Colombo, S., & Committeri, C. (2013). Need to Rethink the EU-GCC Strategic Relation. *Sharaka Conceptual Paper, 1*, 1–26.
- Commission of The European Communities. (1978). *The European Community and The Arab World*. Brussels: Information Directorate-General. Retrieved November 7, 2020, from http://aei.pitt.edu/7824/1/31735055281335_1.pdfhttp://aei.pitt.edu/7824/1/31735055281335_1.pdf
- Commission of the European Communities. (1995). *Improving Relations Between the European Union and the Countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)*. Brussels: European Communities.
- Davies, W. (2014). Neoliberalism: A Bibliographic Review. *Theory, Culture & Society, 31*(7/8), 309–317.
- Doukas, H., Flamos, A., Marinakis, V., & Assadi, M. (2013). EU-GCC Cooperation for Natural Gas: Prospects and Challenges. *International Journal of Energy Sector Management, 7*(2), 194–222.
- Echague, A. (2007). *The European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council*. FRIDE.
- EUGCC CET Network. (2021). *Scope of Work and Stakeholders*. (EU-GCC Clean Energy Technology Network). Retrieved April 10, 2021, from EU-GCC Clean Energy Technology Network: <https://www.eugcc-cleanenergy.net/scope-of-work-stakeholders>
- European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights. (2021). *EU-Gulf Monitor: EU Institutions on the Respect for Human Rights in GCC Countries*. Retrieved January 8, 2021, from European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vRSGcT_QERQIHuecXo31zxs2n2iNJIJrMH2NqTVdDSuHjgFd_GShDsAPsaNR9W-jaF48f-ZQXuR_WBMW/pub_html?gid=762548760&single=true
- European Commission. (2020, May 5). *Countries and Regions - Gulf Region*. Retrieved November 15, 2020, from European Commission: <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/regions/gulf-region/>
- European Commission. (2020, April 17). *Gulf Cooperation Council*. Retrieved April 10, 2021, from European Commission: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/international-cooperation/international-organisations-and-initiatives/gulf-cooperation-council_en#eu-gcc-energy-expert-group
- Flamos, A., Ergazakis, K., Moissis, D., Doukas, H., & Psarras, J. (2010). The challenge of a EU-GCC Clean Energy Network. *International Journal of Global Energy Issues, 33*(3/4), 176–188.
- Fulton, J. (2019, September 18). *China Is Becoming a Major Player in the Middle East*. Retrieved April 8, 2021, from BRINK News: <https://www.brinknews.com/china-is-becoming-a-major-player-in-the-middle-east/>
- GCC. (2020, June 25). *The 29th Meeting of the Joint Cooperation Committee between the GCC and the European Union*. Retrieved April 7, 2021, from Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Secretariat General: <https://www.gcc-sg.org/en-us/MediaCenter/NewsCooperation/News/Pages/news2020-6-25-4.aspx>
- GCC. (2021). *Regional Cooperation and Economic Relations with other Countries and Groupings*. Retrieved April 6, 2021, from Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Secretariat General: <https://www.gcc-sg.org/en-us/CooperationAndAchievements/Achievements/RegionalCooperationandEconomicRelationswithotherCountriesandGroupings/Pages/NegotiationswiththeEU.aspx>
- Ghaffar, A. A., & Colombo, S. (2020, March). EU-GCC Relations: The Path towards a New Relationship. *Regional Programme Gulf States - Policy Report, 2*.
- Giardullo, C. (2012). *The Gulf Cooperation Council as a New Regional Power: Time for the EU to Propose a Strategic Partnership*. Bruges: United Nations University.
- Hazak, G. (2012). The European Union - A Federation or a Confederation. *Baltic Journal of European Studies, 2*(1), 43–64.
- Holzer, M. (2003). *The English School / International Society*. Retrieved April 7, 2021, from GRIN Verlag: <https://www.grin.com/document/108039>
- Human Rights Watch. (2014). *Abuse and Exploitation of Female Migrant Domestic Workers in the United Arab Emirates*. Washington DC: Human Rights Watch.
- ICC. (2013). *Controlling The Zone: Balancing Facilitation And Control to Combat Illicit Trade in the World's Free Trade Zones*. Paris: International Chamber of Commerce. Retrieved April 11, 2021, from <https://iccwbo.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2016/11/Combating-illicit-trade-in-FTZs-1.pdf>
- IRENA. (2019). *Renewable Energy Market Analysis: GCC 2019*. Abu Dhabi: International Renewable Energy Agency.
- ITA. (2020, September 12). *United Arab Emirates - Country Commercial Guide*. Retrieved December 22, 2020, from International Trade Administration: <https://www.trade.gov/knowledge-product/united-arab-emirates-renewable-energy#:~:text=The%20UAE%20launched%20a%20national,6%25%20nuclear%20by%202020>
- Kalicka-Mikolajczyk, A. (2016). Towards a New Comprehensive Partnership - Economic and Trade Relations between the Gulf Cooperation Council and the European Union. *Wroclaw Review of Law, Administration & Economics, 5*(2), 18–39.
- Khader, B. (2013). *The European Union and the Arab World: from the Rome Treaty to the Arab Spring*. Barcelona: European Institute of the Mediterranean.
- Koch, C. (2014). *Constructing a Viable EU-GCC Partnership*. Kuwait City: Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States & The London School of Economics. Retrieved April 6, 2021, from <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/55282/1/Constructing-a-viable-U-GCC-relationship.pdf>
- Koch, C. (2020). *Towards a Regional Security Mechanism in the Gulf Region*. Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.
- Koch, C., & Stenberg, L. (2010). *The EU and the GCC Challenges and Prospects under the Swedish EU Presidency*. Dubai, United Arab Emirates: Gulf Research Center.
- Kostadinova, V. (2013). *What is the Status of the EU-GCC Relationship? GRC Gulf Papers*. Retrieved December 22, 2020, from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/167338/EU-GCC_9227.pdf
- Kotz, D. (2002, Summer). Globalization and Neoliberalism. *Rethinking Marxism, 12*(2), 64–79.

Lacroix, S. (2012). *Sheikhs and Politicians: Inside the Egyptian Salafism*. Doha: Brookings Doha Center.

Luciani, G., & Schumacher, T. (2004). Relations Between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council, Past Record and Promises for the Future. *GRC Research Papers*.

Masters, J., & Sergie, M. A. (2020, February 19). *The Arab League*. Retrieved November 6, 2020, from The Council on Foreign Relations: <https://www.cfr.org/background/Arab-League>

Meiser, J. (2017). Liberalism. In S. McGlinchey, R. Walters, & C. Scheinplug, *International Relations Theory* (pp. 22–26). Bristol: E-International Relations Publishing.

Nonneman, G. (2006). EU-GCC Relations: Dynamics, Patterns and Perspectives. *The International Spectator*, 59–74.

Papadopoulou, A., Doukas, H., Karakosta, C., Makarouni, I., Ferroukhi, R., Luciani, G., & Psarras, J. (2011). Tools and Mechanisms Fostering EU-GCC Cooperation on Energy. *World Renewable Energy Congress* (pp. 2308–2315). Linköping: University Electronic Press, Linköping.

Ronzitti, N. (2013). *Maritime Security: Challenges and Opportunities for EU-GCC Cooperation*. Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali.

Rüland, J. (2006). Interregionalism – An Unfinished Agenda. In H. Hänggi, R. Roloff, & J. Rüland, *Interregionalism and International Relations* (p. 295). Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon.

Sleightholm, M. (2018, November 14). *Middle East Ownership in European Football*. Retrieved January 11, 2021, from Sport Industry Insider: <http://www.sportindustryseries.com/sports-industry-insider/middle-east-ownership-in-european-football/>

Trulsson, Å. (2010). *The EU's Interregional Relationship with the GCC - An Assessment of the Current Cooperation*. Lund: Lund University. Retrieved April 9, 2021, from <https://lup.lub.lu.se/student-papers/search/publication/1653148>

Yahyazadeh, H. (2020). Renewable Energy Communities in the Law of EU, GCC Countries and Iran. *Journal of Fundamentals of Renewable Energy and Applications*, 10(6), 1–7. Retrieved April 11, 2021, from <https://www.longdom.org/open-access/renewable-energy-communities-in-the-law-of-eu-gcc-countries-and-iran.pdf>

Youngs, R. (2009). *Impasse in Euro-gulf Relations*. FRIDE.