

ENGULFED IN THE GULF?

On A Search for Europe's Future Role in A Turbulent Region

WEDNESDAY 25 – THURSDAY 26 November 2020
Protestant Academy Loccum

The Gulf is a region in turmoil that faces numerous challenges. For Europe this region is crucial. Located in its closer vicinity, all negative developments and trends that the Gulf region sees are felt with only slight delays in Europe. It was often said that Europe is only at the sideline when it comes to the Gulf and that only the big powers such as the United States have a say in the region. However, the nuclear deal with Iran which EU member states helped to negotiate since 2003 onward, shows that Europe could play a positive role in the region and that it has stakes in the game if it only accepts the challenge of thinking and acting strategically in a joint way.

The purpose of this conference is to elaborate on Europe's future role in the Gulf region and about which policy fields the EU and its member states could address in the upcoming years to contribute to a more stable, peaceful, and prosperous region.

You are cordially welcomed to join!

Organizational Remarks

Due to the current COVID-19 crisis, this conference will be held in a **hybrid format** meaning that speakers and participants have the chance to contribute to the discussion either by actually traveling to Loccum or by taking advantage of a video link that will provide you digital access to the discussion.

Since our event is held in a spacious conference compound on the country-side in Northern Germany and since we are implementing a strict scheme on **hygienic and social distancing rules**, we are very well equipped to hold physical events and cordially invite all speakers and participants who wish to travel to Loccum.

Due to the international character of this event, the entire conference will be held in **English**. We are sorry to inform you that we will provide no German translation.

While most parts of the conference are open for the wider public, the **idea workshop** at the second conference day will be exclusively held under the **Chatham House Rule** and will be accessible only for the assigned speakers and those participants who be present here in Loccum.

This is a preview program and as such may be subject to change.

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THIS CONFERENCE IS FUNDED BY:



Corvinus-Stiftung

DAY 1

WEDNESDAY 25 November 2020

14:00 ARRIVAL, REGISTRATION & WELCOME COFFEE

14:45 WORDS OF WELCOME

Thomas MÜLLER-FÄRBER, Program Director International Affairs, Protestant Academy Loccum

15:00 **FORESIGHT PANEL | Exploring the Future of a Complex Region – How the Gulf Might Look Like in 2030?**

It is indisputable that the future trajectory of the Gulf region is marked by numerous challenges – such as ongoing geopolitical competition, strenuous relationships between states and their citizens, shifting socioeconomic patterns, and political discourses rendered difficult due to the introduction of radical thoughts and ideologies. However, unlike conventional wisdom dominant in the West, the Gulf region is not in full chaos. Looking at aspects such as the rich and diverse culture, economic potentials, and enthusiasm for change, it is also possible to draw a less gloomy picture of the region's future. By applying different angles, it is the purpose of this introductory panel to briefly elaborate on the major drivers that shape the future of this complex region and thereby provide food for thoughts for the following discussion.

HOW MIGHT THE GULF REGION LOOK LIKE IN 2030 WHEN LOOKING UPON ITS...

... SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATE

Eckart WOERTZ, Director, Institute for Middle East Studies, GIGA (German Institute for Global and Area) Hamburg, (confirmed)

... POWER RELATIONS

Elisabeth MARTEU, Associate, Middle East Research Programme, (IISS) and former Political Adviser on Middle East Affairs at the General Directorate for International Relations and Strategy of the French Ministry of Defence, Paris (invited)

... DISPOSITION OF STATES SOCIETIES

Simon MABON, Professor for Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University and author of the recent book "Houses Built on Sand: Sovereignty, Violence and Revolution in the Middle East", Lancaster (confirmed)

--- Followed by discussion ---

16:30 COFFEE, TEA & COOKIES

16:45 **PLENARY DISCUSSION | Europe in the Gulf - Mapping a Complex Inter-Regional Relationship**

The links between the Gulf region and Europe are diverse, old, and complex. Europe has a shared turbulent history with the region. Located in close vicinity, Europe has a set of strategic interests when it comes to the Gulf – stretching from stable economic relations to non-proliferation policy. In addition, the European view on the region is not free of misperception. It is often said that the public discourse about the region is sometimes shaped by false cultural representations. The purpose of this panel discussion is to survey the relationship between Europe and the Gulf region.

THE PAST – What Are Key Takeaways from the History of Europe's Involvement in the Gulf Region?

Anoush EHTESHAMI, Professor of International Relations in the School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University (confirmed)

INTERESTS & DESIRES – What Are the Goals of Europe's Current Policy towards the Region?

Gabriel Munuera VINALS, Head of Division Arabian Peninsula and Iraq, European Action Service, Brussels (confirmed)

(MIS)PERCEPTIONS – Walking on Edward Said's Trail and Exploring Europe's (Mis)Understandings of the Region

Susanne KOELBL, Journalist, Foreign Correspondent at Der Spiegel and Author of the Book "Behind the Kingdom's Veil", Hamburg (confirmed)

--- followed by plenary discussion ---

18:00

COFFEE, TEA & COOKIES

18:15

1st INTERVIEW ROUND | How Is Europe Perceived by the Region?

In the view from the region, what are the major features of Europe's relation with the Gulf in the past? What will be the most likely trajectory of Europe's engagement with the region in the upcoming years? What would be a promising role for Europe to play in the region in the future? What are foreseeable roadblocks hampering the development of such a role? Etc.

IMPULSES FROM ...

TEHRAN ...

Nasser HADIAN, Professor of International Relations at the University of Tehran (invited)

JEDDAH ...

Abdulaziz SAGER, chairman and founder of the Gulf Research Center (invited)

19:15

DINNER

20:15

2nd INTERVIEW ROUND | Evaluating the Outcome of the US Presidential Elections in Terms of Washington's Future Policy Towards the Gulf

How will the outcome of the upcoming US Presidential elections affect Washington's policy towards the Gulf Region? What consequences will this have for Europe?

Elisa CATALANO EWERS, Adjunct Senior Fellow, Middle East Security Program at the Center for a New American Security and former Director for Middle East and North Africa at the National Security Council, Washington D.C. (invited)

--- followed by discussion ---

21:15

FINALE AND COME-TOGETHER

DAY 2
THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2020

8:45 BREAKFAST

9:30 **3rd INTERVIEW ROUND | Perspectives from Israel on Europe's Policy Towards the Gulf**

The Gulf region was always crucial to Israel. However, with the recent peace deal with the UAE and Bahrain, Israel becomes even more engaged with the region. How is Israel's perspective on Europe's policy towards the Gulf?

Amos GILAD, Maj. General (ret.) and former Head for Policy and Political-Military Affairs Israeli Ministry of Defense, Tel Aviv (invited)

10:15 **IDEA WORKSHOP – Policy Fields for Europe's Engagement with the Gulf Region?**

The purpose of this workshop is to identify innovative ideas to provide Europe with a more prominent role in the Gulf region. How to achieve a better and more intrusive relationship with the region? In four hybrid roundtable discussions, we will discuss policy fields that appear promising in that regard – namely arms control and proliferation; economic cooperation on new technology; dispute regulation, dialogue and de-escalation; and the future engagement with the civil society of the region.

The roundtable discussions will take place in a hybrid format – meaning that some speakers will participate online via video link while others will actually be present in Loccum.

Unlike the other parts of the conference, the hybrid roundtable discussion will be held under the Chatham House Rule.

Room A **HYBRID ROUNDTABLE I | Arms Control and Nonproliferation Policy at the Gulf Region**

Despite all recent setbacks, Europe has put considerable effort into keeping the JCPOA alive. It is assumed that the outcome of the upcoming US Presidential elections will have a huge impact on the future destiny of the nuclear deal with Iran. In light of the election results, Europe will have to find an appropriate strategy to continue its non-proliferation strategy in the Gulf region. Apart from the focus on the JCPOA, this will require to widen the scope of its regional non-proliferation policy towards the Gulf and take additional actors as well as other aspects – such as cyber or missile technology proliferation – into great account in the future.

Kayhan BARZEGAR, Director of the Institute for Middle East Strategic Studies (IMESS), Tehran (invited)

Katharina LACK, Head of IAEA and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Unit, German Foreign Office, Berlin (confirmed)

Corentin BRUSTLEIN, Research Fellow, Director, Security Studies Center, IFRI (French Institute of International Affairs), Paris (invited)

Sanam VAKIL, Deputy Director and Senior Research Fellow, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House, London (invited)

Delphine HOURNAU-POUËZAT, Head of Division, Disarmament and Nuclear Nonproliferation, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Paris (invited)

Azadeh ZAMIRIRAD, Deputy Head of the Middle East and Africa Division at the German Institute for International and Security (SWP), Berlin (confirmed)

Moderation: t.b.c.

Room M

HYBRID ROUNDTABLE II | Smarter Economic Links – Could New Technology and Digital Industry Lead to a More Cooperative Relationship between Europe and the Gulf?

The Gulf region was in terms of trade and economic cooperation always a crucial partner for Europe. But the economic landscape will be reshaped considerable in the upcoming years. At some point in the future, we will see accelerated decarbonization of this region. Referring to start-up scene, which is already vibrant in parts of the region, there is high hope that new technologies, AI, and digital industry might fill the gap and become a key pillar in the changing economic landscape of the region. What needs to be done to realize these plans and what are the implications for the future of the regional economies, as well as for education, employment, and social coherence? How realistic is this technological enthusiasm and what are its possible flip-sides? Will a changing technological landscape lead to more intra-regional cooperation and closer ties with Europe? Etc.

Ayad AL-ANI, Professor for Change Management and Consulting at the School of Public Leadership at the University Stellenbosch and the University Basel, Member of the Einstein Center Digital Future (ECDF), Vienna/Berlin (confirmed)

Nader KABBANI, Director of Research at the Booking Doha Center and Senior Fellow for Global Economy and Development, Doha (confirmed)

Zahraa KAREEM, Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, The Station, Baghdad (confirmed)

Fatima ALSEBAIE, Analyst, Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies, Riffa (confirmed)

Dalia SAMRA-ROHTE, Delegate of German Industry & Commerce for Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Yemen, German-Saudi Arabian Liaison Office for Economic Affairs (GESALO), Riyadh (confirmed)

Sandor SZELEKOVSKY, Directorate General for Trade of the European Commission, Brussels (confirmed)

Moderation: t.b.c.

12:15

4th INTERVIEW ROUND | Perspectives from Extra-Regional Powers on the EU's Policy towards the Region

Russia and Turkey play an important role in the Gulf region. In recent years both have invested political capital in the region and have build alliance networks on the ground that provide them with influence on the future development of the region. The purpose of this 4th interview round is to elaborate on the question how the EU's policy towards the Gulf region is perceived in Moscow and Ankara?

IMPULSES FROM ...

MOSCOW ...

Irina ZVIAGELSKAYA, Head of Center for the Middle East Studies at IMEMO and Professor of the Oriental Studies Department of the MGIMO University, Moscow (invited)

ANKARA ...

Galip DALAY, Richard Weizäcker Fellow at the Bosch Foundation and non-resident fellow at the Brookings Doha Center, Berlin (confirmed)

13:00

LUNCH

14:00

IDEA WORKSHOP CONTINUES

Room A

HYBRID ROUNDTABLE III | Bridging Divides – Is there Room For De-escalation, Dialogue and a More Security Cooperation in the Gulf Region?

In recent years it seems that power competition in the Gulf region has increased further. Mistrust, antagonistic relations and rivalry is seen not only with regard to Saudi Arabia and Iran but also between the Gulf States and extra-regional powers. Stability is primarily managed by a balance of power approach due to the lack of a functioning framework to address security-related issues. In this third

hybrid roundtable discussion, we aim to explore the chance for dispute resolution in the Gulf region. Is there room for de-escalation, dialogue and a more cooperative security architecture for the region?

Cinzia BIANCO, Senior Analyst at the Gulf State Analytics and Visiting Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), Berlin (confirmed)

Bruno SCHOLL, Head of Iran Task Force, European External Action Service (EEAS), Brussels (invited)

Justin MEYERS, Associate Director, Al Amana Center for Trust and Peace, Muscat (confirmed)

Randa SLIM, Senior Fellow and Director of Conflict Resolution and Track II Dialogues Program, Middle East Institute (MEI), Washington D.C. (invited)

Michael OHNMACHT, Head of Division, Middle East and Arabian Peninsula, German Foreign Office, Berlin (confirmed)

Adnan TABATABAI, Executive Director, Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient (CARPO), Bonn (confirmed)

Henry ROME, Senior Analyst, Middle East & North Africa, Eurasia Group, Washington D.C. (invited)

Moderation: t.b.c.

Room M

HYBRID ROUNDTABLE IV | States and People – The Situation of the Civil Society in the Gulf Region and Europe’s Current and Future Ways of Engagement

The events of the Arab Uprisings around the year 2011, have shown that the civil society in the region could be a crucial factor of change and transformation. However, since the days of the Arabellion, the situation for civil participation and expression have rather deteriorated then improved. The region seems to be caught in a transitional stage where the relation between states and their citizens are about to be redefined. In this constellation, Europe appears to be torn between the stability paradigm which stimulates close cooperation with the states of the region and its institutions and the desire to support civil society and its yearning for dignity, economic wellbeing and participation. Is there a way out of this quandary?

Natalie AMIRI, International ARD Correspondent, former Head of the ARD Bureau in Tehran, and Anchorwoman of Weltspiegel (invited)

Lyn MAALOUF, Middle East Research Director, Amnesty International, Beirut (invited)

Thomas DEMMELHUBER, Professor of Middle East Politics and Society at the Friedrich-Alexander-University of Erlangen-Nürnberg (confirmed)

Sarah RINALDI, Head, Middle East and Central Asia, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), European Commission, Brussels (invited)

Amaney JAMAL, Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics at Princeton University and Member of the Steering Committee of the Arab Barometer, Princeton (invited)

Larbi SADIKI, Professor of Arab Democratization, Department of International Affairs, Qatar University and non-resident Fellow at the Brookings Doha Center, Doha (confirmed)

Moderation: t.b.c.

16:00

GOODBYE COFFEE & CAKE

16:45

DEPARTURE | Shuttle Service to Wunstorf Train Station & Hannover Airport (HAJ)

DIGITAL CONCLUDING ROUND
FRIDAY, 4 December, 6 p.m. (MESZ)

18:00

EUROPE ENGULFED IN THE GULF?

How Shall Europe's Future Engagement with a Region in Turmoil Look Like?

Apart from presenting the findings stemming out of the hybrid roundtable discussions, held on the second conference day in Loccum (see 26 November), the purpose of this concluding panel is to elaborate on how Europe's policy towards the Gulf region shall evolve in the future.

Hannah NEUMANN, Member of the European Parliament (Greens/EFA), Chair of the Delegation for the Relations with the Arab Peninsula, Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights and member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Subcommittee on Security and Defence Policy, Brussels/Berlin (invited)

Niels ANNEN, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office and Member of the German Parliament (Social Democrats), Berlin/Hamburg (invited)

Michel DUCLOS, Special Advisor at the Institute Montaigne, Former French Ambassador, and Founding Member of the Baghdad Policy Club, Paris (invited)

Moderation: *Thomas MÜLLER-FÄRBER*, Protestant Academy Loccum

--- followed by discussion ---

19:30

End of discussion

FORMAT:

Conferences at the Protestant Academy Loccum provide forums for open-minded discussions on urgent and pressing issues. They endeavor to establish dialogues between actors from different fields and backgrounds with the intention to provide impetus to "think out of the box".

VENUE:

The village of Loccum (about 3000 inhabitants) is part of the small rural town Rehburg-Loccum. It is situated about 50 kilometers west of Hannover in Lower Saxony/Germany, and about 10 kilometers west of the "Steinhuder Meer", the largest lake in Northwestern Germany. Loccum is famous for its medieval Cistercian monastery, and the Protestant Academy as a place for highly regarded conferences and seminars of public interest.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE:

Loccum is located 50 kilometers west of Hanover in Lower Saxony, Germany. The nearest airport is Hanover (HAJ). The nearest train stations are in Wunstorf, Stadthagen, Minden and Nienburg. Detailed travel directions will be sent to all registered participants. For speakers who will not participate digitally but wish to travel to Loccum, we provide a shuttle service to the airport or one of the train stations in our vicinity.

SHUTTLE BUS:

(Please book a seat in advance!): Wednesday, 25 November, departing in Wunstorf train station at 13:20 (please follow the station exit marked "ZOB"). Thursday, 26 November, arriving in Wunstorf at approx. 17:30 p.m.

ACCOMMODATION & FEE

Participants who are not listed as speakers are welcomed to lodge at the conference venue (<http://www.tagungsstaette-loccum.de/>). For a two-night stay including all meals (breakfast, lunch, cake, dinner) we charge **190 Euro**.

Conference fees are to be paid in cash at the check-in or transferred in advance to: Kirchliche Verwaltungsstelle, IBAN DE36 5206 0410 0000 0060 50, Evangelische Bank eG Kassel, SWIFT/BIC GENODEF1EK1. When choosing transferal, please include your name and the reference number **14493**.

REGISTRATION:

Please register with name, email, address, institution/organization by e-mail to Miriam Kamber (Miriam.Kamber@evlka.de). Registrations will be confirmed by email. Should you need to cancel, please contact us as soon as possible. **Cancellations after 16 November 2020 will cause compensation of 25 % of the fee.**

COVID-19 REGULATIONS

The conference is strictly following the hygiene guidelines. In particular we have cut the number of participants in order to allow at all circumstances the required social distancing rules (Further information are available at [Robert Koch Institute](#)). Since our conference compound is spacious and located at the rural and sparsely populated countryside of Northern Germany, we are well prepared to hold this conference even under the current situation of the COVID-19 crisis. <https://www.loccum.de/aktuelles/aktualisierte-massnahmen-der-akademie-zum-infektionsschutz/>

ONLINE PARTICIPATION

For all those of you who wish to participate via online link, please indicate so during the registration process. Once we are moving closer to the event, we will provide you with the access key for the video link in due time.

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