

The EU and the Gulf after the Arab Spring: Strategic Partners?

A roundtable debate organised by FRIDE and the Brookings Doha Center, with the kind support of the European Commission through the FP7 GR:EEN Project

Doha, 6 September 2012

Brookings Doha Center, Saha 43, Bldg. 63, West Bay, Doha, Qatar

Programme

09:30h **Opening remarks**

Salman Shaikh, Director, Brookings Doha Center

Richard Youngs, Director General, FRIDE

09:45h **Session 1: Geopolitical challenges after the 'Arab Spring'**

How have the 2011 democratic uprisings and the ensuing changes of government shifted the balance of power in the region? What is the impact of the 'Arab Spring' on existing geopolitical challenges? Which new challenges and opportunities has it triggered?

Moderator: **Salman Shaikh**, Director, Brookings Doha Center

Introduction: **Emile Hokayem**, Senior Fellow for Middle East Security, International Institute for Strategic Studies

Kayhan Barzegar, Director, Institute for Middle East Strategic Studies, Tehran

Sultan Al-Qassemi, Commentator on Arab Affairs

11:15h **Coffee break**

11:30h **Session 2: Political reform and domestic drivers of foreign policy**

What is the state of 'political reform' in the GCC countries? What are the links between domestic attitudes in these states and their foreign policy, now that foreign policy is becoming less insulated from public opinion?

Moderator: **Shadi Hamid**, Director of Research, Brookings Doha Center

Introduction: **Gerd Nonneman**, Dean, Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service
Justin Gengler, Research Associate, Qatar University

13.00h **Lunch**

14:30h **Session 3:The EU and the Gulf: elements of strategic partnership**

As the region's power center is moving to the Gulf, the European Parliament has underlined the need for the EU to broaden and deepen its relations with the GCC countries. Which are the elements of common interest such a strategic partnership could build on? How could deeper EU-Gulf ties help to strengthen security, prosperity and democratic governance in the region?

Moderator : **Kristina Kausch**, Senior Researcher, FRIDE

Introduction: **Christian Koch**, Director, Gulf Research Center Foundation
Richard Youngs, Director General, FRIDE

16:00h **Concluding remarks**

Salman Shaikh, Director, Brookings Doha Center

16:30h **End of the roundtable**