

# Kingdom, EU bond 'multi-dimensional'

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The Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat) hosted a discussion panel titled 'EU-Bahrain: A Multi-Dimensional Partnership', yesterday to discuss further enhancing relations between the Kingdom and the European Union.

The event coincides with the first anniversary of the signing of the Cooperation Arrangement between Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European External Action Service signed on 10 February 2021, which provides an institutional framework for political dialogue and cooperation in areas such as trade, research, and innovation, clean energy, and renewables.

Panelists included Patrick Simonnet, EU Ambassador to KSA, Bahrain and Oman, and Ahmed Al Qarainees, Chief of European Affairs at the Bahrain Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as Dr Andrea Cozzi, Managing Director of Eni in Bahrain and Rim Jalali, Executive Director of the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bahrain (FCCIB).

The audience included MoFA staff, representatives from other organisations, and Derasat researchers. Discussions covered major economic, cultural, and environmental, and opportunities to enhance cooperation and further develop mutual interests.

Dr Hamad Ebrahim Al Abdulla, Derasat Executive Director, said, "The Kingdom of Bahrain views the European Union as a distinguished regional organization and a model for integration and complementarity; one that the Kingdom ensures it develops its relations with bilaterally or holistically."

Dr Al Abdulla pointed to estimations that indicated a commercial exchange worth 2.5 billion Euros between Bahrain and



A panel discussion in progress at the Derasat event

the EU until the end of 2021, in addition to the numerous European companies operating in Bahrain, and European expertise found in the Kingdom's public and private sectors.

Derasat's Executive Director referred to the increased frequency of exchange visits between both sides in the past few years, ensuring how keen they are on developing their relations based on the largely entwined interests, as confirmed by regional challenges, especially the COVID pandemic.

He said that energy security and climate change are additional challenges, and all of them require an extended mutual dialog to coordinate the efforts in countering these challenges.

EU Ambassador Patrick Simonnet said, "Cooperation with the Kingdom of Bahrain is multi-dimensional given its importance as an EU partner."

He also stated that signing the 2021 Cooperation Agreement was a significant step in developing multi-sector relations, including economic and commercial diversification, research and innovation, human rights, clean energy, and renewable energy sources – a field in which



the EU is at the global forefront.

He pointed to the EU's work on enhancing individual relations through the exchange of students and researchers.

Bahrain MoFA's European Affairs Chief Ahmed Ebrahim Al Qarainees affirmed the need for strengthened bilateral relations with the EU in all areas.

He described the relations as rapidly growing in economic, educational, environmental, and parliamentary aspects, due to the focus by the Kingdom's wise leadership on cooperating with the EU in more constructive aspects.

He said that such meetings are crucial in setting the frameworks for cooperation, based on previous achievements to increase Bahrain-EU partnerships.

Dr Andrea Cozzi, Managing Director of Eni in Bahrain and Lebanon, and Deputy Managing Director and Head of Geoscience in Eni UAE, said that Eni, the Italian oil company, entered Bahrain in 2019, and is seeking opportunities for hydrocarbon excavation, renewables, and liquefied natural gas (LNG).

He added that Eni also pursues supply initiatives, carbon circular economy, managing water and soil, waste recycling, and advancing the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and Bahrain's Vision 2030, as well as contributing to Bahrain's future energy needs in a more efficient and sustainable way.

Rim Jalali, Executive Director of the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bahrain (FCCIB), one of the most active foreign business organizations in the Kingdom, said, "I am delighted to discuss the dynamic French business presence in the Kingdom, in banking, retail, hospitality, and industry; all reflecting how keen numerous French corporations indeed are in making Bahrain their regional base, a trend that can grow in the post-COVID environment."

## BDF Commander-in-Chief receives Finance Minister



Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa received Finance and National Economy Minister Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa. The meeting discussed ways of cooperation between the BDF and the ministry.

## iGA discusses major improvements to 'Tawasul' application



Al Qaed with Darwish

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Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA) Chief Executive Mohammed Ali Al Qaed met with the Chief of Customer Services at the authority, Ali Darwish, who presented his suggested improvements to the 'Tawasul' app, a centralised channel through which the public may communicate with government entities.

Darwish was a finalist in the recently concluded fourth edition of the Government Innovation Competition (Fikra).

Al Qaed highlighted the importance of the 'Fikra' competition, which was launched following the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Min-

ister, for encouraging innovation towards further developing government workstreams.

He affirmed that the competition promotes creativity in the public sector, in line with the principles of sustainability, competitiveness and fairness, as outlined in Bahrain Economic Vision 2030.

Al Qaed said the Tawasul app promotes transparency by streamlining direct communication between beneficiaries and government entities.

He directed the iGA team to set an implementation plan for the idea to submit to the Minister of Interior, Lieutenant General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, and affirmed the authority's commitment to implement initiatives that improve government services.

## Glorious occasion

# Dana Mall IWD celebration focuses on women's sports and intellect

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On International Women's Day (IWD) yesterday, Dana Mall was abuzz with the bright and snappy assertiveness of some truly amazing women in Bahrain.

The celebrations kicked off with a thought-provoking coffee morning panel discussion titled #breakthebias.

Moderated by well-known journalist Raji Unnikrishnan, the panel included Saira Ranj, Shaikha Nasser Saad Al Zowayed, Dana Zubari, Tanmayi Mohan, Anita Menon, Rohini Sunderam, Tanima CK, May Awadah, Sharmila Shet, Sarah Alsammak, Sebahat Isik and Hanan Alatawi who shared their take on work-life balance, self care and financial independence.

The spirit of supporting and cheering women achievers continued with a training session for women by the Bahrain Tennis



A taekwondo lesson, physical fitness and sports, and yoga class

Federation, a yoga class and a taekwondo lesson to introduce women to joys of physical fitness and sports.

"We believe that International Women's Day is a great way to remember and thank all the women in our lives, our community and in the world for their contribution to making the world a better place, a nur-

ture space and for bringing so much innovation, creativity, professionalism and caring to our lives," said Lulu Group Director, Juzer Rupawala, "Our event message this year focused on women's decision-making and also on the strides they have taken in sports and fitness and all sectors. We wish all women in Bahrain the very best."



The spacious and refurbished Dana Mall is fast becoming a family shopping destination with the added attraction of a large and state-of-the-art children's play area, Fabyland. The anchor store Lulu Hyper-market is the flagship of the popular retail giant and the largest in Bahrain.