

DECLARATION

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE SHURA (CONSULTATIVE) COUNCIL AND THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN AND THE GROUP OF THE EUROPEAN PEOPLES'S PARTY (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS) AND EUROPEAN DEMOCRATS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

**26TH – 27TH NOVEMBER 2005
MANAMA – BAHRAIN**

1. The first Dialogue meeting between the Parliamentary Delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats, hosted by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain, took place in Manama from 26th – 27th November 2005
2. Participants expressed their gratitude to His Majesty Sheikh Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, for permitting the dialogue to take place in the Kingdom. Members of the Parliamentary Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats expressed their appreciation to the parliamentarians in the Shura Council and the Chamber of Deputies of the Kingdom of Bahrain.
3. Participants recognized that Judaism, Christianity and Islam had been nurtured in the Middle East, from where these faiths had played a key part in shaping world history.
4. Members of the Group recalled the role of Arab Christians in building up Arab-Islamic civilization, while regretting the disadvantage of Europeans in appreciating that civilization through ignorance of the Arab language.

Members of the Parliamentary Delegation recalled the role of Arab Muslims in building up European civilization.

5. Participants recognized that the peoples of Europe and the Islamic world, from Morocco to Iran, were near neighbours and that they had an opportunity to cooperate for human progress.
6. In a materialist and secular environment, participants recognized their shared responsibility in maintaining that which is sacred in life. In this spirit they saw a new historical and geographical framework for the development of relations between the peoples of the Gulf and of the European Union, which this dialogue is intended to serve.
7. They were convinced that Muslims and Christians had to be prepared to accommodate one another with respect in the other's society, in order to adapt to one another and to work harmoniously with one another.
8. Arab and European peoples were therefore being called upon to acknowledge, preserve, promote and value the spiritual, moral and cultural treasures of the other. Participants viewed this approach as propitious for writing a new history between Arab and European peoples, for whom this dialogue meeting was a new beginning, spurred on by consciousness of the past.
9. Participants were determined to monitor policy in their respective parliaments in the fight against terrorism, while ensuring optimal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They underlined the crucial importance of countering the financing of terrorism and of measures taken to this end. They affirmed the importance of ensuring universal adherence, to and full implementation of,, all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, the United Nations Conventions on Terrorism and related protocols, in particular, UNSCR 1373 and 1526, and the special recommendations on terrorist financing of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering. They called on the Security authorities of the GCC States and of the European Union to systematize their cooperation in order to put an end to terrorism.
10. Participants addressed the following themes: -
 - I. Civil Society Today and Tomorrow
 - *Historical Development of parliamentary Democracy in Bahrain*

- *Value based politics in the European Union*
- *Islam in a world of many faiths and none*

II. Faith in People

- *Understanding Others – Stereotyping and Misconceptions, Religious Freedom, Pluralism and Truth*
- *Christian and Muslim as Citizens of Pluralistic Democratic States – A Christian Dialogical Perspective*

III. The Regional Economic and political Situation

- *Economic and Political Reform, Security and Trade*
- *Common Ground for Future Partnership*

CONCLUSION

1. Participants affirmed their determination to create conditions in which Muslims and Christians could freely express and associate for their respective faiths in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance.
2. Participants insisted that the spiritual life of members of society was a strength from which the whole of society could benefit.
3. Participants were determined to put in place a framework of relations between the Arab and European peoples. They therefore agreed that constructive dialogue leading to practical cooperation should be maintained.
4. Participants welcomed progress in negotiations for a EU-GCC Free Trade Agreement and called for early conclusion of negotiations.
5. In respect of the Faith of the People, participants agreed the following:
 - that parliamentarians in the Gulf Cooperation Council and in the European Parliament should exchange visits at the level of parliamentary group leaders from the Arab world;
 - that young people should be given the opportunity to gain experience of the European institutions, through stages or short term employment, and that young Europeans should be encouraged to seek opportunities for experience in the GCC institutions;

- that young Arab people should be prepared for their European experience through the teaching of European history and geography, which would enable Christians to recognize themselves in what Arab students learn about them;
- similarly, young Europeans should be prepared for their encounter with Arab people through the teaching of Arab history and geography so that Arabs in general and Muslim Arabs in particular can recognize themselves in what Europeans learn about them; and
- that Muslim philosophers and Christian Democrat ideologists should meet within the framework of future dialogue meetings, preparing the Common Ground for Future Partnership.

6. In respect of the Faith of the People, participants agreed as follows:

- that the EU-GCC Cooperation Agreement should be expanded to include exchanges of information on the development of civil society according to Islamic norms, distance learning, scholastic and academic exchanges i.e., distance learning, scholastic and academic exchanges i.e. exchange for the benefit of secondary as well as tertiary educational sectors, and that future dialogue should review the methods and practice of this proposal;
- that a new EU-GCC Cooperation Agreement for Science, Technology, Medicine and the Environment should be developed giving an additional dimension to the Framework Regulation for Research and Technological Development, and that specialists should be invited to future dialogue meetings to highlight priority needs and aims;
- that leaders of small and medium sized enterprises should be given a voice in future dialogue meetings; and
- that a Free Trade Agreement had to embrace financial services and the mutual right of establishment.

7. In respect of the GCC-EU Partnership, participants agreed that:

- on the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to urge an end to violence and terrorism in all its forms and resumption of the ceasefire embracing all parties and groups on both sides, to call again for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace – based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1515 and other aspirations of both parties, and including Lebanon and Syria, to call for negotiated two-State solution agreed between the parties which

would result in a viable, contiguous, sovereign and independent Palestinian State existing side by side in peace with Israel, living within recognized and secure borders, and to urge the European Commission to take necessary and timely initiatives for food and medical aid, especially medical equipment for the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories; and

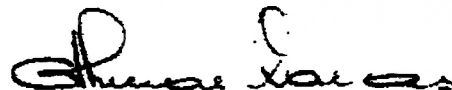
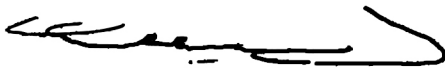
- to deepen cooperation on terrorism and security at regional, national and local levels by ensuring the proper contacts between the various institutions of the Gulf Cooperation Council, NATO, EUROPOL and European National Anti-Terrorist and Security Services, and to review progress at the next dialogue meeting.
8. Participants were determined that their annual dialogue should be a stimulus to mutual understanding among Arab and European peoples, and a vehicle for promoting their spiritual and material progress, in an environment of stability.
 9. The Parliamentary delegation of the Shura Council and the Chamber of Deputies of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Group recommended that a second round of the Dialogue should be held again in 2007 and the participation should be expanded to include representatives from the states of Gulf Cooperation Council.

The Arabic and English language texts enjoy equal validity, and the English language shall serve as a reference document for interpretation.

Approved and signed 27 November 2005 in Manama

Head of Parliamentary Delegation
Of the Kingdom of Bahrain

Head of Parliamentary Delegation
of the EPP-ED Group



Mansoor Mohammed Al-Arayedh

Othmar Karas