

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002087/24
to the Council
Per Clausen (The Left)
(16 October 2024)**

Subject: Lack of human rights content at the EU-Gulf Cooperation Council summit

On 16 October 2024, the then European Council President, Charles Michel, co-hosted the first ever EU-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit ⁽¹⁾ in Brussels with the Emir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

The European Council website lists the following six main topics for discussion:

1. common key global challenges;
2. economic cooperation, including trade and investment;
3. energy;
4. sustainability and climate;
5. connectivity;
6. people-to-people contacts.

None of these relates to one of the major issues with regard to the GCC countries, namely the grave human rights situation. Can the Council therefore answer the following:

1. Was the European Council informed of, and had it agreed to, the main topics of discussion before the summit?
2. What was the reasoning behind not having human rights dialogue at the top of the list of main topics?
3. Was the issue of EU citizens being held as political prisoners in GCC countries, such as the case of Danish citizen Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, raised at all during the summit?

Submitted: 16.10.2024

**Reply
(7 April 2025)**

The promotion and protection of human rights are at the core of the EU's engagement with third states and among the key objectives of its external action.

In order to put human rights at the core of its action, the EU has developed a broad range of legal and policy instruments, including the Guidelines on Human Rights Dialogues ⁽¹⁾ adopted in 2021, which serve as guiding reference.

Human Rights Dialogues are one of the main means of implementation of the EU external human rights policy as outlined in the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council 'Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024' ⁽²⁾, which has been extended to 2027 ⁽³⁾.

In line with the Lisbon Treaty and the role of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Art. 27(2) TEU ⁽⁴⁾), the EEAS leads these dialogues.

¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2024/10/16/>.

⁽¹⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6279-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

⁽²⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7029-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

⁽³⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9508-2024-INIT/en/pdf>

⁽⁴⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/teu_2016/art_27/oj/eng

Human rights dialogues are embedded in the overall political relationship with third states. As set out in the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council ‘A Strategic Partnership with the Gulf’⁽⁵⁾ and the relevant Council conclusions⁽⁶⁾, the promotion and protection of human rights remains at the core of EU's engagement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its Member States.

The EU conducts regular Human Rights Dialogues with the Members States of the GCC and discusses human rights issues as part of the political engagement with them.

The priorities set out in the action plan on Human Rights and Democracy guide those discussions. When relevant, individual cases are raised during the dialogues.

⁽⁵⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/joint-communication-%E2%80%9Cstrategic-partnership-gulf%E2%80%9D_en

⁽⁶⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10038-2022-INIT/en/pdf>