

Saudi Arabia in Focus

The monthly update from the Saudi Embassy in Brussels



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In this issue

- > Saudi Arabia's counter-terrorism support in Sahel
- > Palestinian issue of high concern for KSA
- > Saudi Arabia determined to address corruption
- > Saudi overwhelming support for Crown Prince
- > UNESCO recognises traditional decoration art
- > Digital transformation
- > Rehabilitation of Child Soldiers from Yemen
- > Saudi female diplomats active role
- > Saudi Business leaders in Brussels for Vision 2030

From the ambassador

The implementation process of reforms articulated under the ambitious programme Vision 2030, continues with speed and boldness, opening new opportunities for the Saudis and our international partners. The wide range of initiatives being taken under the impulse of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman have definitely gained the support of an overwhelming majority of Saudis and being generally welcome beyond our national borders. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has continued to be committed, and often leading, new diplomatic and humanitarian aid initiatives towards relief, peace, stability and security against terrorism, within and beyond the Gulf region .



Ambassador Abdulrahman S. Alahmed



Saudi Arabia is the largest supporter of G5 SAHEL coalition to counter-terrorism in the region

Minister of Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir announced that Saudi Arabia will provide 100 million euros to support a new joint force to combat terrorism in the Sahel countries.

Addressing the G5 Sahel Summit hosted in Paris by French President Macron, Al-Jubeir reaffirmed the Kingdom's active role in fighting terrorism and extremism, notably in Africa.

participation of the G5 countries, namely Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad, and more than twenty leaders from the EU institutions, from Europe, Africa and other international partners.

All participants warmly welcomed Saudi's pledge and its continuous bold commitment to stop terrorists, also on this front.

Palestinian issue of high concern for KSA

The meeting involved the Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir represented the Kingdom at the Council of the Arab League in Cairo last 10 December, that examined US President announcement to relocate the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and recognize Jerusalem as Israeli capital.

"The firm position of my country on the Palestinian issue places it in the priority of its foreign policy", stated Minister Al-Jubeir. Saudi Arabia had presented a peace initiative laying out a roadmap towards a final solution to all issues of the conflict, within

the framework of a two state solution, to reach the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with all relevant outstanding international resolutions.

Echoing the broad international consensus against US decision, Minister Al-Jubeir indicated that "any US declaration on Jerusalem prior to reaching a final settlement will harm the peace negotiations and make them more complicated".

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"Corruption undermines societies and prevents their development and growth. Saudi Arabia is determined to confront it."

*King Salman at the Shoura Council
13th December 2017*

**SAUDIS
OVERHELMING
SUPPORT FOR
CROWN PRINCE
MOHAMMED
BIN
SALMAN**



KSrelief Continues Rehabilitation of Child Soldiers in Ma'rib and 'Amran

King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre is continuing its Child Soldiers Rehabilitation Project.

The Child Soldiers Rehabilitation Project, which provides multi-level assistance for children who were recruited by Houthi militias for use in the armed conflict is entering in its 2nd phase.

The community rehabilitation centre in Ma'rib area will provide psychological, social, cultural and sports rehabilitation for forty children.

In addition, the former child soldiers and their families will receive educational support to help them re-enter school and reintegrate into their communities. During the first stage of the program, another forty children in Ma'rib and Al Jawf received the same support.



The Yemeni government estimates that , more than 20,000 children have been recruited by Houthi militias to fight in their ranks.



Saudi Tourist Visas

The Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) has issued the first license to a travel agency to issue tourist and educational visas. This is the easiest way for foreigners to visit Asir region, famous for its traditional interior wall decoration – recently added by UNESCO to the intangible world heritage list.

By decision of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH), all travel agencies in Jeddah can now provide a variety of services to visitors including the sale, purchase and issuance of travel tickets inside and outside the Kingdom through various means of transport, and to market tourist trips provided by the tour organizers in addition to handling tourist and educational visas.

Saudi Arabia Goes Digital Empowering Citizens

Saudi Arabia is developing an app allowing citizens to rate government services and offering a platform to benchmark them internationally

Hussam Al-Madani, acting director general of the Saudi National Center for the Measurement of the Performance of Public Agencies (CMPPA), announced that Saudi citizens will soon have the opportunity to rate government services online via an app. The app, which is to be launched in 2018, will help to measure the performance of public and semi-official agencies and convey public complaints and suggestions directly to relevant officials. The digital service will allow also to be informed about the follow up given to the messages received by different authorities.

In addition, a digital platform to benchmark Saudi government services internationally in comparison with more than 200 other countries will soon to be launched.

The platform would give an overview of the performance of Saudi Arabia based on more than 250 international measurement indicators, through 12 measurement axes, and would also represent a reference for international classifications. This tool will help decision-makers to make the right choices based on performance reports and provide a stable basis to benchmark the performances of the administration.

Al-Qatt Al-Asiri house decoration recognised by UNESCO



The twelfth session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage which met in Korea from 4-9 December decided to include Al-Qatt Al-Asiri, a traditionally female interior wall decoration, on the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

It is a spontaneous art technique still being used, mostly by women in the Asir community, that involves decorating the interior walls of their houses, specifically rooms for visiting guests. Observation and practice are the key methods for transmitting the traditional skills from one generation to the next. Local communities, NGOs and individuals all play a key role in safeguarding, promoting and transmitting the related knowledge and skills associated with this form of art.



Saudi female diplomats active role worldwide



Manal Radwan, Counselor at Saudi Arabia's Mission to UN



Ghadah Hafiz, Third Secretary at Saudi Arabia's Embassy in Brussels

Women rights are significantly improving in Saudi Arabia, benefiting the society and the Kingdom as a whole.

One of the best examples is the diplomatic service, where Saudi women were first accepted almost a decade ago and are now increasingly appointed to important missions around the world.

“The tasks assigned to female staff are not any different from those assigned to their male colleagues. The standard is not gender, but competence, specialization and skill”, explains Manal Al-Otaibi, first secretary at the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Statistics show that of all the female employees active at the ministry 115 are based at its headquarters in Riyadh and its branches throughout the Kingdom and 185 are working abroad.

“The Kingdom is keen to enhance the role of Saudi women and enable them to carry out their responsibilities. Hence, Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 — with its emphasis on women’s pivotal role in the future of the Kingdom — aims to proactively create greater engagement of women and more ways to activate their leadership roles”, confirms Ambassador Osama Nugali, official spokesperson and director of media at the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Saudi Business Leaders presents in Brussels the opportunities offered for trade and investments by Vision 2030



Cinemas in Saudi Arabia

Saudi cinema theatres will be allowed to operate again in the country, with first cinemas expected to open in March 2018. In line with Vision 2030, the aim is to increase Saudi household spending on cultural and entertainment activities from 2.9% currently to 6% by 2030.

They said...

“The decision to hire women 10 years ago has had an undeniable favourable impact on DHL’s activities in Saudi Arabia”

Faysal Elhajjami, DHL Saudi Arabia Country General Manager

“It’s a radical change. I feel that we have broken a barrier that existed in Saudi Arabia.”

Randa al-Sheikh, Broadcaster at Radio Jeddah, commenting on the first female-only concert in Saudi Arabia performed by Balqee Fathi

In Brief

The European Union is Saudi Arabia’s first trading partner

The European Parliament research department recently published a study which shows that the EU is Saudi Arabia’s first trading partner in goods, with 16.3 % of Saudi Arabia’s global trade.

Saudi Arabia is the EU’s 15th trading partner in goods, with an EU market share of 1.5 %.

The trade balance is positive for the EU as a result of the cooperation within the framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The EU exports a wide range of goods and services to the whole region. Around 50% of the good the EU exports to the GCC countries are machinery and tooling, including power generation plants, railway locomotives, aircrafts, electrical machinery and mechanical appliances. Approximately 70 % of all EU imports from the GCC consist of fuels and their derivatives.

Saudi Arabia has also important trade relationships in the defence industry with a rising number of EU Member States, most notably UK, France, Germany, Italy, Croatia and Belgium.



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