

## Saudi-EU relations - current impediments and future prospects

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The Honorary Research Associate and Visiting Lecturer, Dr Valentina Kostadinova, was invited to give a presentation at the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies during her field trip to Saudi Arabia.

A look at the current state of the Saudi-EU relations shows that it is still in its infancy despite a history of links between Saudi Arabia and many of the Union's member states, shared interests in various areas and a considerable increase in the EU foreign policy prerogatives in the last two decades. This poses the question why is this the case, why are Saudi-EU relations not developed better and are there any alternatives that may render better results? **The presentation aimed to answer these questions.**

**Firstly, it examined in detail one particular factor influencing the Saudi-EU relationship**, the way the EU conducts its external policy. It looked into the main features of the EU external policy as conceptualised by leading European Studies scholars and correlated these with the Union's practice – Treaty provisions for foreign policy, tools used for the achievement of the stated aims, some outcomes of EU's policies towards Eastern Europe and the Arab world. Building on these, it was summarised why the current EU approach has not been conducive to the development of a closer relationship.

**Secondly, the issues of possible alternatives to the current EU approach** and the desirability of closer engagement with Saudi Arabia were considered before concluding with an open question to the public of how Saudi Arabia should reciprocate if the EU shows signs of making an effort to accommodate better Saudi Arabia.

**The presentation was followed by a lively question and answer session that allowed exchange of views not only on the open question raised by the presenter but also on issues that the audience wanted to raise.**