

## **Saudi foreign minister calls for more GCC-EU cooperation**

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Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal, who opened the 17th Session of the Joint GCC-EU Ministerial Council called for better cooperation between the GCC and EU in the interest of both sides.

The minister highlighted the importance of the meeting, "which is taking place under the current extremely delicate political situation prompting more coordination between the two sides." He cited the strong economic links between the EU and GCC states, "which led to the framework accord, which was concluded between the two sides in 1988, paving the way for the creation of this council." He blamed the Arab-Israeli conflict for much of the tension now prevailing in the area and for the "failure of the peace process." He called for a comprehensive peace accord based on the Arab peace initiative, as outlined in the Arab Summit, which convened in Beirut in 2002.

"This initiative is a historic opportunity, which should not be wasted," Prince Saud said.

He also called for rebuilding Iraqi institutions on the basis of a national principle and for ending the current sectarian violence in that country urging the Iraqi government to do more for that purpose.

Turning to the Iranian nuclear issue, he called on the international community to adopt peaceful means in dealing with it.