

## Local

# Kuwait a voice of wisdom, force for peace: Mogherini

## 'European Union, Kuwait work side by side to overcome regional challenges'

**BRUSSELS:** European Union High Representative Federica Mogherini yesterday lauded Kuwait as a 'voice of wisdom' and a 'force for peace' in these difficult times for the region. "And this is what has made us natural partners. This new European Delegation is first and foremost a sign of how close the European Union and Kuwait have become. By opening our new delegation, we want to strengthen our relation with Kuwait even further, as part of our engagement in this region," she said in an interview ahead of her visit to Kuwait to open an EU embassy there. "You have taken up the role of the mediator and the peace builder, and this required a lot of courage. We appreciate the constructive role Kuwait is playing within the Gulf Cooperation Council through its continuous mediation at the highest level. Your country has worked and is working to end the war in Yemen, and you have demonstrated your commitment to multilateralism as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2018-2019," she said.

The EU's foreign policy chief noted that on each one of these challenges - from the war in Yemen to tensions in the Gulf - the European Union and Kuwait have been working side by side. "Together we co-chaired the conference for the reconstruction of Iraq, we contributed to saving UNRWA in its funding crisis, and we have been among the strongest supporters of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, or of children in Yemen," she said. The highly-respectable EU High Representative recalled that three years ago we signed a cooperation arrangement between our foreign services. "And now, by establishing a full diplomatic presence in Kuwait City, we are opening a new chapter in our partnership. The aim is

to further strengthen our political dialogue as well as our economic cooperation, in particular in support of Kuwait's 'Vision 2035,'" she stressed. "Our cooperation already focuses on energy, trade and investment, security and counterterrorism, and we are working on extending our dialogue to other fields, in particular education, research and innovation. The new delegation will also aim to build bridges between the Kuwaiti society and European citizens," she stated.

### EU's third delegation

Mogherini pointed out that this is the EU's third delegation in the GCC countries, following those in Saudi Arabia and in the United Arab Emirates. "So this is also a mes-



### EU opens new delegation in Kuwait

sage to the whole region: the European Union cares about the Middle East and the Gulf. We care about peace, security and human development in this part of the world, because we are neighbors. It is essential to invest in our ties, and to explore every opportunity for cooperation when our interests and values converge," she stressed. Referring to relations between the EU and the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), she said the partnership between the two blocs is one of the oldest in the region, and cooperation has continued whenever

possible, in spite of all the tensions within the Council. "We believe that regional cooperation is crucial to prevent new escalations and to address controversies in a peaceful way. We have learnt it through decades of European cooperation, which ended centuries of wars on our continent," she said.

"The polarization generated by divisions within the GCC affects negatively the situation in the region and beyond. This is why we continue to support negotiated solutions in the Gulf. As soon as Kuwait started its mediation, we threw all our political support behind your work to create a breathing space for regional detente," said the EU High Representative. "I was in Kuwait already in the summer of 2017, to meet His Highness the Amir and discuss how we could be of help. And we will continue to support your role as a mediator and a voice of wisdom in the region," she said. Commenting on EU-Arab ties, she said "Europeans and Arabs are more than just neighbors. We share so much history and culture. The Mediterranean Sea has always connected our people more than it divided us. We share the same space: whatever happens in the Arab world has an impact on Europe, and vice versa."

"The European Union is among the top investors in the Arab world, and we are the main trade partner. Our young people share many of the same aspirations - to better opportunities, to better jobs, to finding their place in our societies. I have always believed that Euro-Arab cooperation holds the key to address these common challenges. Together we can better address the crises in our region. Together we can create the opportunities for human growth that our people are asking for," said Mogherini. "Our region stands at a crossroads - between more conflict, and the possibility of reconciliation. If



Federica Mogherini

you think of Syria, Yemen, Israel and Palestine, Libya - all crises that could evolve either way, depending on our individual and collective response," she said.

### More cooperative dynamics

"As I see glimmers of hope, power confrontation in the Middle East and North Africa could bring new violence and new suffering to our region. Rising tensions in the Gulf could trigger a new arms race. Confrontation among regional powers is spreading: I think for instance of the Horn of Africa. It is urgent to invest all our energies in preventing new escalations, and in planting the seeds for a more cooperative regional dynamics," said Mogherini. "And for doing so, Europe needs to engage further with the Arab world. This is what we have tried to do in these years. No one has invested as much

as we did to address our region's humanitarian emergencies, from Syria to Yemen. We have supported UN-led peace talks all across the region," she said.

Mogherini noted that the EU has accompanied Tunisia on its transition to democracy, hosted three Syria Conferences, created the Quartet for Libya, and we have been unwavering in supporting a two-state solution for Palestine and Israel. "This year we held the first-ever summit between the EU and the League of Arab States. The Arab region was the only one with which the European Union never had a summit before - and this was a huge paradox. We have a duty to cooperate, to address the crises of our times and to fulfill our citizens' aspirations. To me, this should be the natural trajectory of our partnership. And I am glad that we have found in Kuwait such a close partner and friend," added Mogherini. —KUNA



In this file photo, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends the opening ceremony of the 8th Ministerial Meeting of China-Arab States Cooperation Forum.

## Head-of-state diplomacy guides China-Kuwait relations to new development

**KUWAIT:** The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Kuwait Li Minggang released the following statement on the occasion of the first anniversary of the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to China.

In July 2018, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah paid a state visit to China and attended the opening ceremony of the 8th Ministerial Meeting of China-Arab States Cooperation Forum at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping. This is the seventh time that His Highness visited China, and also the first time he visited China in nine years, which has played an important role in reviewing the China-Kuwait relations in the past and paving the way for the future.

During the visit, President Xi held talks with His Highness the Amir. The two leaders agreed to establish strategic partnership between the two countries, and reached important consensus on enhancing pragmatic cooperation in various fields and witnessed the signing of several documents of bilateral cooperation. As the head-of-state diplomacy has always been an important driving force for the rapid development of the relations between the two countries, the talks between President Xi and His Highness the Amir have charted a plan and direction for the development of the China-Kuwait relations in the new era, have opened new horizons for both countries, like a beacon which guides and ensures the development of the bilateral relations in terms of depth from a higher level and leads the bilateral cooperation in building the 'belt and the road' to more outcomes.

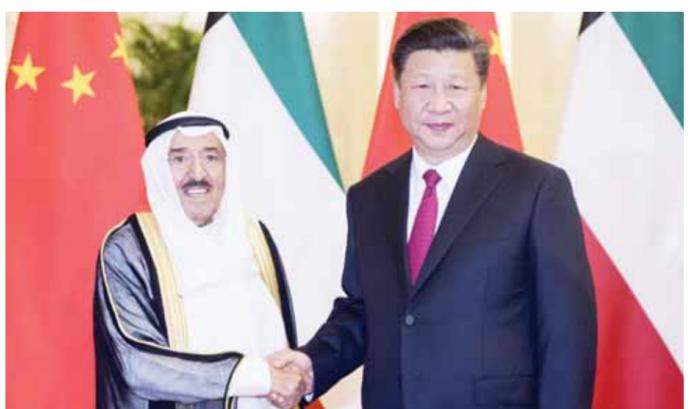
During the past year after the visit, both the Chinese and the Kuwaiti sides consider

the implementation of the consensus of the two countries' leaders as a primary goal of promoting the bilateral relations. President Xi and His Highness the Amir exchanged many messages, stressing the need to further strengthen the synergy between the development strategies of the two countries and to deepen pragmatic cooperation. In December last year, the envoy of His Highness the Amir, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visited China and discussed with the Chinese side in particular the ways to implement the results of His Highness's visit to China. The Kuwaiti Council of Ministers established a special committee to follow up the implementation process. In February this year, Vice Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China Ning Jizhe visited Kuwait and chaired the first meeting of the Steering Committee for China-Kuwait Cooperation in the construction of 'Silk City and the Five Islands,' where they exchanged in-depth views mainly on China-Kuwait cooperation in the construction of the 'Belt and Road' and 'Silk City and the Five Islands.' During the second session of the 'Belt and Road' Forum for International Cooperation held in April this year, the Kuwaiti side signed memorandums of understanding with the China Development Bank and the China Association of City Planning, reflecting a new development achieved by the two countries in pragmatic cooperation under the framework of jointly building the 'Belt and Road.' In addition, the relevant authorities of both sides are actively working on the implementation of the other cooperation documents signed during the visit of His Highness the Amir concerning economy, trade, investment, smart city

and other fields, pushing forward the cooperation in a stable manner.

Reviewing of the development of the China-Kuwait relations in the past one year shows that the bilateral cooperation in various fields has succeeded in achieving remarkable results, including the continuous deepening of mutual political trust between the two countries, and the constant support of the fundamental interests of both sides as well as in international forums. In addition, the two sides have not stopped expanding their cooperation in the areas of energy, infrastructure, finance, trade, investment and others. In 2018, bilateral trade between China and Kuwait had totaled 18.7 billion dollars, with an increase of 55.1 percent from the previous year. China remains Kuwait's largest source of imports, and second largest export destination and Kuwait's largest trading partner in non-oil fields. Kuwait is China's ninth largest oil exporter. China imported 23.21 million tons of crude oil from Kuwait, with an increase of 27.2 percent year-on-year, with a total value of \$ 11.9 billion dollars with an increase of 68.48 percent year-on-year. By the end of 2018, the total number of projects that Chinese companies in Kuwait was 120 worth almost 21.5 billion dollars. In the conditions of harsh nature, Chinese builders, with their hard work and outstanding skills, are offering Kuwaiti society the exceptional competence inherent in 'Built by China' and making great contributions to advancing Kuwait's development.

In order to bring the two peoples closer together, we have worked together with the local Kuwaiti authorities to send many Chinese cultural delegations to visit Kuwait for culture exchange, enhanced mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of the two countries.



His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

At present, the work to complete the establishment of the Chinese Culture Center is under way on a regular basis, and the two governments are intensively coordinating on mutual visa procedures to achieve the facilitation of exchange visits between the two peoples. We hope that our Kuwaiti friends will be able to feel and know China more deeply and become a witness, participant and beneficiary of friendship and cooperation between China and Kuwait.

The friendly exchange between China and Kuwait has always been a model for exchange between China and other countries in the region. With the growing instability and ambiguity in international relations and the current situation in the region, the stable and right development of China-Kuwait strategic partnership has

not only been a new driving force in promoting peace and development in the region, but also provided new energy to shape a community of shared future for China and all Arab countries and advance the reform of the global administrative system and build a community of shared future for mankind. In the future, we will work harder together with the Kuwaiti side to implement the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, further strengthen the strategic partnership between China and Kuwait and push forward pragmatic cooperation in all fields under the framework of cooperation in building the 'Belt and Road,' in order to achieve more results and bring more benefits to the two countries and peoples and jointly write a new chapter of friendship and cooperation.