



**GLOBAL
STRATALOGUES**

EVENT REPORT

French Ministry of Economy and Finance
Paris, June 17 & 18, 2025



**MINISTÈRE
DE L'ÉCONOMIE,
DES FINANCES
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Introductory Note

Vision Golfe Summit 2025 marked a decisive evolution in France–Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) relations, shifting the dialogue from ambition to execution. Convened in Paris on 17–18 June 2025, the Summit brought together over 1,200 participants, including ministers, senior officials, CEOs, investors, and innovators, to advance a shared agenda focused on delivery, co-investment, and long-term resilience.

What distinguished this edition of Vision Golfe was its maturity. The conversations no longer revolved around intent alone, but around implementation: how capital is deployed, how policy frameworks are aligned, how innovation ecosystems are connected, and how talent is mobilised across borders. The tone was pragmatic, forward-looking, and anchored in long-term partnership rather than transactional engagement.

Importantly, the discussions extended well beyond economics. Health, education, innovation, sport, culture, and social impact featured prominently, reflecting a shared understanding that sustainable growth is inseparable from societal well-being. This holistic perspective has become a defining characteristic of Franco-Gulf cooperation and mirrors the broader evolution of global economic diplomacy.



Introductory Note

Business collaboration remains one of the most effective bridges between regions, cultures, and systems. **Vision Golfe 2025** demonstrated this clearly. Over two days in Paris, France and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries came together not merely to exchange perspectives, but to translate ambition into action and move decisively from dialogue to delivery.

At Vision Golfe trust is built, assumptions are challenged, and future pathways are clarified. In a period marked by geopolitical uncertainty and economic transition, the ability of France and the Gulf states to convene constructively, candidly, and ambitiously is both reassuring and strategically significant.

This report captures the substance of those discussions, the priorities articulated by leaders on both sides, and the frameworks emerging to guide the next phase of cooperation. It is intended not as a retrospective, but as a reference point for what comes next.



Executive Summary

Across ten thematic roundtables and multiple keynote sessions, discussions revealed a mature partnership built on mutual trust and aligned strategic priorities. Rather than a traditional supplier–consumer dynamic, France and the GCC now operate increasingly as co-developers across energy transition, digital infrastructure, healthcare innovation, education, transport connectivity, agribusiness, luxury, and sports-driven tourism.

The Summit underscored the strategic role of people-to-people exchange. Education partnerships, healthcare co-innovation, and cultural collaboration were repeatedly cited as foundations of durable economic cooperation. The cumulative message was clear: long-term competitiveness and stability depend on integrated approaches that combine economic performance with societal impact.

A defining feature of Vision Golfe 2025 was its implementation focus. Participants examined how capital is mobilised, how policy frameworks are aligned, and how institutions collaborate to deliver complex, multi-year projects. Particular attention was given to sustainability, artificial intelligence, human capital, and logistics corridors such as the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), all of which were framed as structural enablers of future growth.

Vision Golfe 2025 concluded with a strong sense of continuity. The partnerships advanced in Paris are not one-off initiatives but components of an evolving France–GCC strategic platform. As global economic and geopolitical conditions continue to shift, the Summit reaffirmed that structured, trust-based cooperation between France and the Gulf represents a powerful mechanism for navigating uncertainty and delivering sustainable prosperity.



Introduction



The French Ministry of Economy and Finance in Paris hosted the Vision Golfe 2025. The two-day forum, held under the patronage of President Emmanuel Macron brought together more than 1,200 participants – including around 550 senior delegates from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. This third edition of the annual France-GCC business forum convened government representatives, business leaders, and decision-makers to accelerate deals, launch initiatives, and shape a shared economic future. Over two intensive days, the summit featured 10 thematic panels and 8 keynote sessions covering a broad range of strategic areas. From energy and infrastructure to AI and education, the agenda reflected the full spectrum of Franco-Gulf cooperation under the summit's theme: "From Bold Visions to Concrete Impact: A New Era of Cooperation." High-level support was evident – five government ministers from France and the GCC were in attendance, among 80+ speakers, alongside leaders of sovereign wealth funds, multinational companies, and startups. In total, more than 2,000 formal and informal meetings took place and over 70 partner organizations lent their support, solidifying Vision Golfe's role as a premier platform for France-GCC economic collaboration.

Vision Golfe 2025 by the Numbers:

- 1,200+ participants (including 550 from GCC countries) attended the forum
- 5 ministers (from France, Qatar, UAE, and others) and 80+ expert speakers led the discussions
- 10 thematic roundtables and 8 keynote addresses spanned sectors from energy to education
- 2,000+ B2B meetings and networking exchanges were held, including a special "French Night" networking gala on the Seine River
- €21 billion in total trade between France and the GCC in 2024, supported by 17,000 French exporters to the Gulf
- France reaffirmed its rank as #1 destination for foreign direct investment in Europe (for the 6th consecutive year) – underscored during the forum as a sign of stability and opportunity for Gulf partners

2025 Program

Gulf countries are no longer seen merely as import markets or energy suppliers; they are now key investors and innovators on the global stage. Likewise, GCC speakers highlighted France as a gateway to European markets and a critical partner in diversifying their economies. The event's broad agenda mirrored this two-way partnership.

Ten strategic themes of cooperation explored across sectors:

- **Energy Transition** – Accelerating the shift to clean energy and sustainable practices
- **AI and Innovation** – Fostering cutting-edge technology partnerships and the digital economy
- **Healthcare** – Enhancing medical cooperation, public health initiatives, and healthtech solutions
- **Education & Talent** – Developing skills, knowledge exchange programs, and youth empowerment
- **Agri-Food & Food Security** – Ensuring sustainable food supply and agrotech innovation
- **Smart Infrastructure & Construction** – Building resilient cities and advanced infrastructure
- **Luxury & Retail** – Expanding high-end markets and enriching consumer experiences
- **Sports & Tourism** – Leveraging major events and tourism for economic and cultural growth
- **Mobility & Transport** – Improving connectivity via land, air, and sea, including smart mobility
- **Investment Access** – Facilitating market access and a favorable investment environment for bilateral growth

Conference Sessions:

- **Keynote:** Advancing Strategic Partnerships: Strengthening Economic Ties Between Qatar, the GCC, and France
- **Panel:** Blueprints for 2030, Accelerating Visions 5 Years Ahead
- **Panel:** AI: Technology and Innovation Fueling New Horizons
- **Panel:** Innovating for Sustainability: Managing Water, Waste & Energy in the Gulf
- **Keynote:** Building the Future of Health in Saudi Arabia
- **Panel:** Routes of Growth: Expanding Transport Connections Between France and the GCC
- **Panel:** Agribusiness Excellence: French Innovations Shaping the GCC Market
- **Panel:** Healing Lives Together: Franco-GCC Tech-Driven Healthcare
- **Panel:** Beyond the Game: Economic Impacts of Sports & Tourism
- **Keynote:** Succeeding in France and the GCC Market: Strategies & Insights
- **Panel:** Timeless Luxury, Smart Retail
- **Panel:** Shaping Tomorrow's Minds: Education Partnerships



Keynote Presentations



H.E. Eric Lombard, French Minister of Economy



H.E. Ahmed Al Sayed, Minister of Commerce and Industry of State of Qatar



H.E. Laurent Saint-Martin, Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and French



H.E. Dr. Nouf Suliman Alnumair, Secretary General of the Ministerial Committee



H.E. Shaima Saleh AlHusseini, Managing Director, Saudi Sports for All Federation



H.E. Didier Boulogne, Deputy CEO, Business France (Export Division)



Executive Summary

Deepening Economic Ties and Investment Partnerships

The Vision Golfe summit underscored a new era in France-GCC economic relations, marked by deeper trade ties and mutual investment. In 2024, total trade between France and the Gulf reached €21 billion, a figure boosted by a growing network of 17,000 French exporters doing business in GCC markets. This momentum was palpable at the 2025 forum. Laurent Saint-Martin, France’s Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade, opened the conference by highlighting the “pivotal moment” in the bilateral partnership. He stressed that the event served as a reminder of both the strength of current bonds and the vast untapped potential ahead. “This summit comes at a pivotal moment, one that calls for a strong reminder to the world of the strength of our existing bonds, and above all, of what still lies ahead for us to accomplish together. Vision Golfe serves as a showcase of our respective strengths,” Saint-Martin stated. His sentiment set an optimistic tone: France and the Gulf countries are not starting from scratch, but rather building on a solid foundation of friendship and commerce.

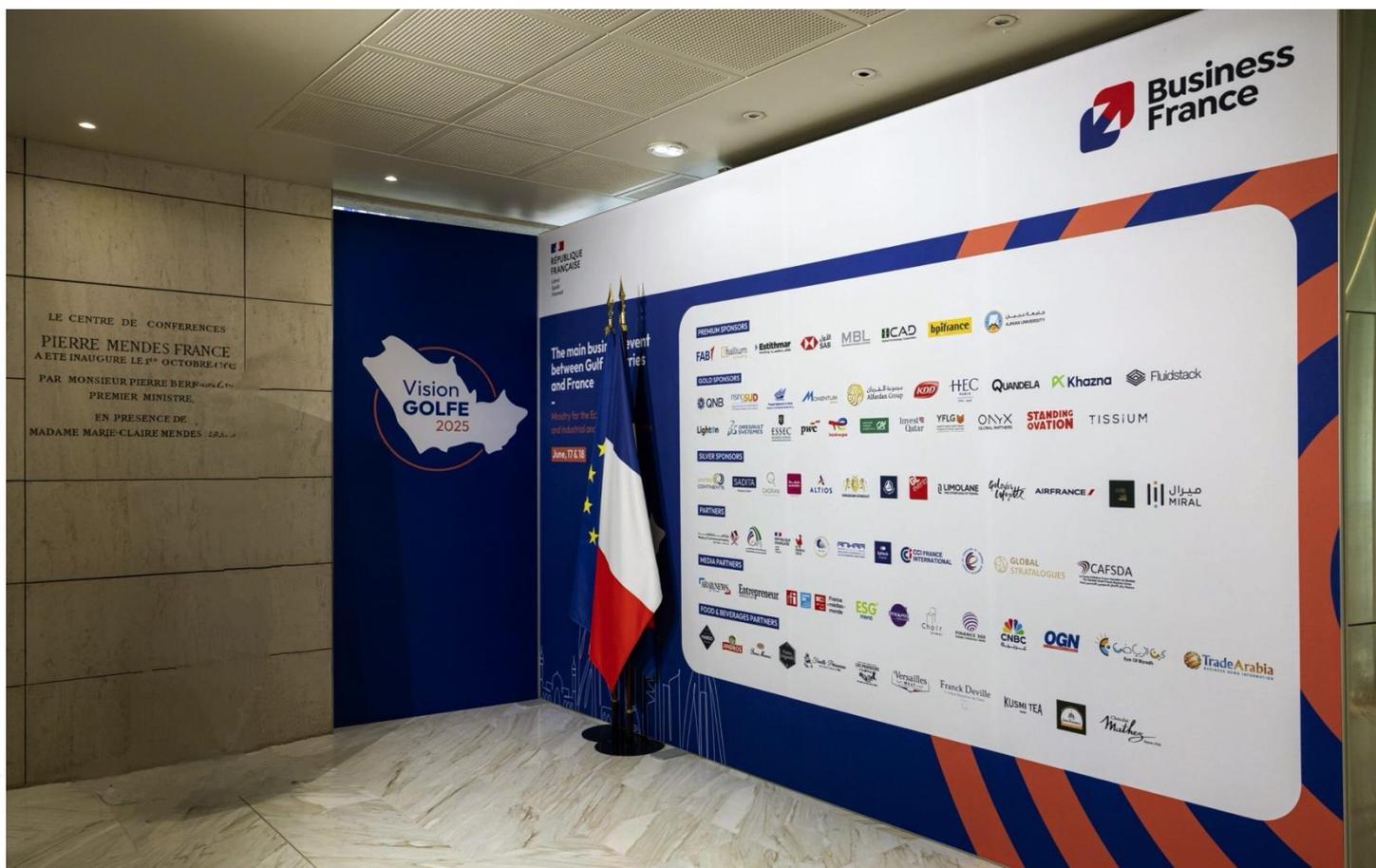
Gulf representatives echoed the commitment to expanding trade and investment linkages. “Economic and trade cooperation is a cornerstone of the Qatari-French partnership,” affirmed H.E. Ahmad Al-Sayed, Qatar’s Minister of State for Foreign Trade Affairs. Al-Sayed noted that over the past five years, Qatar-France bilateral trade had reached approximately €11 billion, and that “the Qatari market is home to hundreds of French companies across multiple sectors, including TotalEnergies and Thales”. These figures illustrate the depth of engagement already in play – from energy to aerospace – and signal strong confidence on both sides. Other officials pointed out similar success stories: French firms are active across the GCC, while Gulf investors have increasingly turned to France as a key destination, whether in real estate, tech startups, or infrastructure projects. This two-way flow of capital and commerce was a recurring theme throughout the summit.



Executive Summary

Several announcements and initiatives highlighted how France is positioning itself as a strategic gateway for Gulf investment into Europe. With France holding the title of Europe's top foreign investment destination for six years running, the forum emphasized leveraging that status for mutual benefit. In panel discussions, experts encouraged Gulf sovereign wealth funds and businesses to use France as a springboard to continental markets, capitalizing on France's stability and innovation ecosystem. French speakers, in turn, expressed readiness to support the GCC's ambitious economic diversification plans. Opportunities for co-investment were spotlighted in sectors like renewable energy, sustainable cities, and advanced manufacturing, aligning with both France's France 2030 strategy and Gulf nations' Vision 2030 development plans.

Perhaps most importantly, a spirit of trust and long-term partnership prevailed. "We move forward on the basis of trust and mutual respect with our GCC partners," remarked Didier Boulogne, Deputy CEO of Business France, in acknowledging the forum's collaborative atmosphere. Deals and contracts are crucial, but speakers emphasized that trust is the real currency of enduring partnerships. Both sides signaled that France-GCC relations are no longer purely transactional; they are evolving into a broader alliance where business ties reinforce diplomatic and cultural understanding. This convergence of interests was succinctly captured by one French participant who noted that the Gulf countries are now seen as producers and innovators, not just consumers – and that France, as an innovation hub and investor, is a natural partner in this journey. The economic narrative of Vision Golfe 2025 was thus one of shared growth: two regions reframing their relationship from buyer-seller to co-creators of a sustainable future.



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Executive Summary

A Three-Pillar Framework for France-GCC Cooperation

If Day 1 of the summit focused on celebrating current ties, Day 2 looked firmly to the future. France’s Minister of Economy, Finance, and Industrial & Digital Sovereignty, Éric Lombard, used his keynote to chart a strategic roadmap for the next chapter of France-GCC cooperation. Lombard hailed the forum as “a great success” due to the presence of top economic and political leaders from both regions. He reminded attendees that France’s engagement with the Gulf is not new – referencing “25 years of active engagement with the region” and longstanding friendships with GCC leaders – but he made clear that the relationship is now entering a new phase defined by common aspirations. To guide this phase, Lombard outlined a three-pillar vision for partnership, aligning France’s priorities with those of the Gulf:

Sustainability and Energy Transition: Lombard applauded the Gulf’s “considerable efforts” on renewable energy and highlighted the landmark COP28 climate summit hosted by the UAE as a catalyst. France, he noted, is similarly committed – investing half of a €54 billion community development budget in green initiatives. “We must work together to promote renewable energies, reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and develop innovative technologies for a greener future,” Lombard urged, calling sustainability a shared imperative for Europe and the Middle East.

Economic Diversification: Echoing GCC national visions, France stands ready to support the Gulf’s ambitious transition away from oil-centric economies. Lombard pointed to sectors like health tech, sustainable agriculture, smart mobility, and the knowledge economy as natural areas of synergy for French and Gulf expertise. Whether it’s developing world-class healthcare systems or modernizing transport and logistics, these are domains where French innovation and Gulf investment can combine to mutual advantage. The underlying message was that diversification isn’t a Gulf challenge alone – it’s a joint opportunity to create new industries and jobs across both regions.

Technological Innovation and AI: Positioning France as a European leader in artificial intelligence and advanced tech, Lombard emphasized the country’s strengths: a thriving startup scene, top-tier tech talent, and strong digital infrastructure. He cited recent successes, noting that over €100 billion in private investments were announced at France’s “AI for Humanity” summit earlier in the year – a testament to France’s tech momentum. The Gulf, for its part, has made AI and digital transformation national priorities. By partnering in areas like AI research, fintech, and smart cities, France and GCC countries can accelerate innovation and set common standards. In Lombard’s words, “technological innovation is a domain where our collaboration can truly excel, marrying French expertise with Gulf ambition.”

Lombard’s strategic framework was well-received, as it neatly aligns with the focus areas the summit had been exploring. It also underscored France’s commitment to being a long-term partner in the region’s transformation. Notably, Lombard did not shy away from the broader geopolitical context. He reiterated France’s dedication to stability in the Middle East, mentioning efforts to advocate for peace amid ongoing regional conflicts. Business and economic dialogue, he suggested, can be forces for stability in turbulent times – a view that resonated strongly given current events. “We have been advocating for peace... and we are advocating for de-escalation,” he said, extending sympathy to those affected by crises and implying that economic cooperation can help weave the social fabric that underpins peace.

“I am convinced that the development of business relationships is a factor of peace and stability.”

— Éric Lombard, French Minister of Economy & Finance



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Executive Summary

Lombard struck a confident tone about the France-GCC partnership's future, blending realism with optimism. He acknowledged challenges – from climate change to regional tensions – but maintained that shared challenges only strengthen the case for working together.

By the end of Day 2, many attendees cited Lombard's three pillars as a key takeaway of the forum. The idea that sustainability, diversification, and innovation form a common agenda provided a clear strategic direction moving forward.

Participants from the Gulf side welcomed France's proactive stance. Several Gulf speakers noted that France's emphasis on green growth and tech entrepreneurship mirrors their own national plans, making collaboration that much easier. As discussions moved into sector-specific breakouts, Lombard's pillars served as a unifying reference point, ensuring that conversations about energy, infrastructure, or digital economy all tied back to a bigger picture. In sum, the summit's strategic discourse confirmed that Paris and the Gulf capitals see eye-to-eye on the grand vision: a partnership that not only boosts economic growth but also contributes to a more stable, innovative, and sustainable region.





Routes of Growth: Enhancing Transport and Connectivity

India–Middle East–Europe Corridor (IMEC) linking Europe and the Gulf.

Strengthening physical connectivity between the Gulf and Europe was another prominent topic. In the panel “Routes of Growth: Expanding Transport Connections Between France and the GCC,” speakers examined ambitious plans to reconfigure global trade routes and improve regional mobility. Moderated by **Oscar Wendel**, Chairman of Global Stratalogues, the session featured **G rard Mestrallet** (French Presidential Envoy for the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor), **Herv  Martel** (CEO of the Port of Marseille-Fos), **Hamed Mehdipoor** (Co-founder & Chief Innovation Officer of Ankaa, Oman), **C dric Virciglio** (Strategy Director at Haropa Port, France), **Turki Al-Subaihi** (CEO of Public Transportation, SAPTCO, Saudi Arabia), and **Abdulla Al Ashram** (former CEO and board advisor at Emirates Post Group, UAE). They focused on a transformative vision: the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) – a 21st-century “silk road” connecting Mumbai to Europe via the Arabian Peninsula – and related transport innovations.

C dric Virciglio and **Abdulla Al Ashram** provided complementary views on the soft infrastructure needed for these transport corridors. Virciglio noted that ports and logistics operators must operate as integrated digital platforms rather than isolated nodes, sharing data on shipments to optimize the entire chain. He cited how during crises like the Suez Canal blockage, ports that had digital interoperability managed better – a lesson informing IMEC’s design. Al Ashram, drawing from the UAE’s logistics experience, stressed the importance of the “last mile” and customer expectations in the e-commerce era. “You can have world-class ports, but if you don’t solve the last mile, the customer experience fails. Consumers want it now – not tomorrow,” he said. Emirates Post’s expansion of rapid parcel networks (the “7X” initiative in the UAE) shows the GCC’s commitment to end-to-end logistics solutions. Both speakers agreed that digitization, real-time tracking, AI for route optimization, and security (blockchain verification)

Hamed Mehdipoor provided a visionary angle on using technology to make transport corridors smarter. His company in Oman is piloting IoT sensors on trucks, AI-driven supply chain management, and blockchain-based customs clearance – aiming to turn a traditional highway into a “sensing network” that can track carbon footprints, predict delays, and dynamically reroute shipments. “We want to plug every node – from ports to trucks to warehouses – into a unified data spine

Routes of Growth: Enhancing Transport and Connectivity

India–Middle East–Europe Corridor (IMEC) linking Europe and the Gulf.

At its core, IMEC is conceived as a multimodal trade corridor integrating shipping, rail, roads, and digital infrastructure. Gérard Mestrallet described it as “not just a trade corridor – it’s a strategy for growth, peace, and resilience”. The corridor, endorsed by India, GCC states, the EU, and the US in late 2023, reflects a shift toward routing global commerce through safer, more stable pathways, reducing reliance on traditional chokepoints and volatile regions. Initially envisioned as a route from India by sea to the Gulf, overland across Saudi Arabia, then by sea from the Red Sea to Europe, IMEC is being adapted to geopolitical realities – for instance, exploring maritime links via Suez or transshipment through Mediterranean ports if needed

On the Gulf side, Turki Al-Subaihi explained that Saudi Arabia’s internal infrastructure plans under Vision 2030 dovetail almost 90% with IMEC’s requirements. Saudi Arabia is investing in 70,000 km of new roads and an expanded rail network, including a flagship east-west “land bridge” railway from the Arabian Gulf to the Red Sea. “You can reroute a ship, but not a rail network... these land links are essential,” Al-Subaihi remarked, emphasizing the Kingdom’s generational commitment to logistics infrastructure. He also mentioned pioneering projects like NEOM’s futuristic port and hydrogen-powered transit systems, signaling that GCC countries aim not only to improve connectivity but to do so with cutting-edge, green technology.

Hervé Martel highlighted how France is gearing up to be IMEC’s European anchor. The Port of Marseille-Fos – historically an oil hub – is reinventing itself as a multi-energy, multimodal logistics center. Martel noted the port’s expansion of container capacity, creation of green logistics zones, and installation of two new submarine cable landing stations that will soon make Marseille Europe’s 5th-largest data hub. In tandem, they are preparing for the future of fuels: refitting pipelines and terminals for hydrogen, synthetic fuels, and even CO2 transport for sequestration. “This isn’t just a transition. It’s a structural redefinition,” Martel said, underlining Marseille’s commitment to being a high-tech gateway for Gulf trade.

The transport and connectivity panel outlined a bold vision: linking Asia, the Middle East, and Europe through smarter, greener, and more secure infrastructure. France and the GCC stand as natural partners — France contributing expertise in rail, ports, and aerospace; the Gulf offering strategic geography, significant capital deployment, and agility in execution. The IMEC corridor promises increased trade flows, joint infrastructure investments, and greater strategic autonomy. As Mestrallet emphasized, it is about “reprogramming trade” for the 21st century — embedding redundancy, intelligence, and trust into the architecture of globalization. Both regions are positioned not merely to adapt to shifting trade dynamics, but to shape the next generation of mobility solutions.

Panel Speakers: Routes of Growth

01.

Oscar Wendel

(Moderator) – Chairman, Global Stratalogues. With expertise in Gulf business trends, he guided the discussion on trade corridors and infrastructure finance.

03.

Hervé Martel

Chairman and CEO, Port of Marseille-Fos (France). A leader in European port management, Martel is overseeing Marseille's evolution into a smart, green port. He shared plans for capacity expansion and new energy infrastructure to support Euro-Gulf trade.

05.

Cédric Virciglio

Director of International & European Affairs, Haropa Port (France). He works on strategy for France's northern ports (Le Havre–Rouen–Paris). Virciglio discussed port digitalization and how interoperability across ports can reduce delays and costs.

07.

Abdulla Al Ashram

Senior Advisor and former CEO, Emirates Post Group (UAE). With decades in postal and logistics services, he offered insight on last-mile delivery and the GCC's role as a historic East-West bridge, now updated for the digital age.

02.

Gérard Mestrallet

Special Envoy for IMEC on behalf of the French President. Former CEO of Engie and a veteran of large infrastructure projects, he is coordinating France's role in the India–Middle East–Europe Corridor.

04.

Hamed Mehdipoor

Co-founder & Chief Innovation Officer, Ankaa (Oman). An entrepreneur focusing on digital logistics, he is implementing AI and IoT solutions for supply chains. He contributed ideas on tech-driven efficiency and making IMEC a "smart corridor".

06.

Turki Al-Subaihi

CEO of Public Transportation, SAPTCO (Saudi Arabia). Responsible for Saudi Arabia's bus and transport services, he is also involved in the Kingdom's wider logistics strategy. He highlighted Saudi infrastructure projects aligned with IMEC and innovations in public transit.





Innovation and Talent: Investing in the Future

Innovation emerged as a driving force at Vision Golfe 2025, woven through nearly every panel. Both French and GCC participants stressed that tomorrow's economic success will hinge on technology and human capital. From artificial intelligence to entrepreneurship, the summit showcased a meeting of minds on how to foster innovation through collaboration. French officials highlighted initiatives like the new "France Innovation Hub" launched in the UAE – an effort to link French startups with Gulf markets – while Gulf speakers pointed to joint research centers and incubators as fertile ground for partnership. A standout example of educational collaboration is the recently announced partnership between École Polytechnique (France) and Mohamed Bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (UAE), which will establish a "France Lab" at MBZUAI to co-develop AI solutions. This initiative, building on a memorandum from the previous year, was frequently cited as a model: it leverages France's academic excellence and the UAE's commitment to AI to benefit both sides. Such efforts underscore how France and the GCC are co-investing in knowledge economies for the long run.

Across many sessions, the issue of talent – how to develop it, attract it, and retain it – was a recurring refrain. In fact, a dedicated panel on education and human capital was introduced for the first time at this year's summit. Speakers noted that 70% of the GCC population is under 35, a demographic dynamo that could either propel growth or, if neglected, pose challenges. Gulf representatives described strategies to equip their youth with future-ready skills, often in partnership with French institutions. For instance, new exchange programs are bringing Gulf students to leading French universities and Grande écoles, while French technical institutes are setting up campuses and training centers in Gulf states. These moves aim to create a pipeline of skilled professionals who understand both cultures and can operate comfortably in Franco-Gulf ventures.

Innovation and Talent: Investing in the Future

Pascal Cagni, France’s Ambassador for International Investment, provided a private sector angle on talent. He argued that attracting top global talent requires creating innovation-friendly environments. Cagni highlighted France’s expanding tech hubs and R&D incentives, and suggested GCC countries and France could coordinate talent initiatives – such as reciprocal startup visas or joint innovation challenges – to encourage entrepreneurs to spend time in each other’s markets. On the Gulf side, officials from Saudi Arabia and the UAE spoke about their Vision 2030 agendas placing heavy emphasis on education reform, digital literacy, and women’s participation in the workforce. They lauded France’s expertise in vocational training and STEM education, noting that French institutions like INSEAD and Sorbonne University are already active in the Middle East, adding to local capacity.

Concrete outcomes in the talent domain were also reported. The forum saw announcements of new French language programs in Gulf schools to deepen cultural ties, as well as internship exchanges for young professionals. In one noteworthy discussion, panelists explored the idea of a “Franco-Gulf Talent Alliance” – a framework to recognize qualifications and facilitate mobility for skilled workers between the regions. While still at a conceptual stage, it reflects the forward-thinking spirit of Vision Golfe. The underlying recognition is that infrastructure and capital alone do not guarantee progress; investing in people is paramount. As one speaker quipped, “We can sign all the MOUs we want, but without the right people to implement projects, nothing moves.” By the summit’s end, there was broad agreement that nurturing a new generation of innovators, engineers, doctors, and creatives – fluent in both French and Arabic, in both Western and Eastern business norms – will be the cornerstone of the France-GCC alliance moving forward.



Healthcare & Wellbeing: a Shared Priority

“Demand is accelerating, driven by aging populations, chronic diseases, and rising costs. By 2027, medical costs are expected to grow 7–8% annually.”

- H.E. Dr. Nouf Alnumair, Secretary General of Saudi Arabia’s Ministerial Committee of Health in All Policies

With the world emerging from the pandemic amid rising healthcare demands, public health and human development have become central pillars of Franco-Gulf cooperation. Both sides stressed that health is not only a social imperative but also a strategic and economic priority. H.E. Dr. Nouf Alnumair, Secretary General of Saudi Arabia’s Ministerial Committee of Health in All Policies, highlighted mounting pressures on healthcare systems. “Demand is accelerating, driven by aging populations, chronic diseases, and rising costs. By 2027, medical costs are expected to grow 7–8% annually,” she noted, underscoring the urgency of innovation. Saudi Arabia, she explained, views health “as a value to protect and a foundation to build on,” rather than merely a fiscal burden.

The Kingdom’s sweeping reforms depend heavily on international partnerships, particularly with France, known for its advanced medical systems. “France leads in public health innovation through research and digital solutions, while Saudi Arabia brings scale and an integrated ecosystem to drive reform,” Dr. Alnumair said, emphasizing their complementary strengths.



Healthcare & Well-being: a Shared Priority

French participants welcomed this alignment. Healthcare companies, hospitals, and biotech and medtech startups presented solutions from telemedicine platforms to AI-driven diagnostics tailored to Middle Eastern markets. Gulf officials showed interest in French expertise in insurance systems, hospital management, and medical training. A key outcome was the proposed France-GCC HealthTech Network, connecting entrepreneurs, researchers, and providers to pilot technologies such as remote monitoring and AI-assisted radiology. Regulators from France and the UAE also exchanged views on safely integrating digital health tools through strong standards and approval frameworks.

Discussions extended to well-being and quality of life. Gulf representatives outlined efforts to combat lifestyle diseases, drawing on France's preventive care model. Qatar's delegates described collaboration with French consultants on diabetes prevention and mental health programs adapted to local contexts. Medical tourism and professional exchanges were also explored, including partnerships for specialized treatment and joint research on regional health challenges.

A recurring theme was "health in all policies," embedding health considerations across sectors from urban planning to education. This holistic approach reinforced the economic case: healthier populations are more productive, and cost control supports sustainable growth. By the summit's close, healthcare was firmly positioned alongside trade and defense as a core pillar of the France-Gulf partnership, with both sides committed to aligning economic progress with human well-being.





Beyond the Game: Sports, Tourism and Social Impact

“We are not just building a better Saudi Arabia, we are building a healthier, happier Saudi Arabia.”
— Shaima Saleh AlHusseini, Managing Director, Saudi Sports for All Federation

One of the most dynamic discussions at Vision Golfe 2025 focused on sports and tourism – sectors increasingly recognized as economic drivers and instruments of soft power. The roundtable, “Beyond the Game: Economic Impacts of Sports and Tourism,” examined how major events and cultural exchange support diversification strategies in the Gulf. Moderated by Richard Barnes, Editor-in-Chief of SA-FE, the session gathered leaders from sports, tourism, and event management. Barnes emphasized their unifying power: international events, he argued, reshape perceptions and bridge cultures, citing Paris 2024 and Qatar’s 2022 FIFA World Cup as examples of economic impact coupled with global image transformation.

Saudi Arabia’s strategy featured prominently through Shaima Saleh AlHusseini, Managing Director of the Saudi Sports for All Federation. She described sport as a vehicle for social transformation aligned with Vision 2030. “Sport is transforming my country. It unites. It builds communities. It empowers,” she stated. In six years, Saudi Arabia’s physical activity rate rose from 13% to 60%, with women’s participation increasing by over 150%. Leadership within the federation is now more than 60% female, reflecting broader societal change. For AlHusseini, success is measured not only in medals, but in improved public health, inclusion, and economic opportunity.

Panelists expanded the discussion to regional and international cooperation. UAE representatives highlighted destinations such as Yas Island and Dubai’s Expo legacy, where sports and entertainment drive year-round tourism. French participants underscored France’s expertise in heritage conservation, hospitality, and event management, positioning it as a natural partner for Gulf ambitions. Cultural exchange was a recurring theme: Gulf investments in French sports clubs, French exhibitions in Abu Dhabi, and growing two-way tourism flows illustrate deepening ties.

The session framed sports and tourism as a “third dimension” of diplomacy, complementing political and economic relations by fostering people-to-people connections. The 2022 World Cup in Qatar, which drew large numbers of French visitors, exemplified how such events build familiarity and goodwill. Vision Golfe’s inclusion of this theme signaled a shared understanding that social and cultural initiatives are integral to long-term partnership. The concluding message was clear: sport and tourism are not peripheral activities, but engines of diversification and durable bridges between France and the Gulf.



Building Bridges for a Shared Future



As Vision Golfe 2025 came to a close, the prevailing sentiment was one of confidence and camaraderie. Over forty-eight hours in Paris, discussions that began as ideas had evolved into concrete proposals, and many delegates left with not just business cards, but blueprints for collaboration. In their closing addresses, summit leaders stressed that the end of this conference is truly the beginning of the next phase of work. Ludovic Pouille, Director for Economic Diplomacy at France's Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, delivered a powerful concluding speech that encapsulated the forum's spirit. "This dialogue is not only economic: it's strategic, human, and forward-looking. Together, we are building the conditions for shared resilience and long-term prosperity," Pouille affirmed, drawing appreciative nods from the audience. His words underscored a key lesson of Vision Golfe 2025: that the France-GCC relationship now extends well beyond trade contracts, into the realm of enduring strategic alliance.



Looking ahead, participants identified clear follow-up actions to maintain the summit's momentum. These include forming working groups to monitor progress in the three pillar areas (energy transition, diversification, innovation), scheduling technical missions and ministerial visits for 2026, and utilizing platforms like Global Stratalogues to continue the candid dialogues initiated in Paris. There was also talk of institutionalizing the Vision Golfe forum itself – potentially establishing a permanent secretariat or annual report to track outcomes, ensuring that the ambitious ideas discussed do indeed translate into "concrete impact." French and Gulf stakeholders alike appear determined that Vision Golfe will not be a talk shop but a catalyst for measurable projects, from joint investments to policy reforms.



Crucially, the tone of the forum reinforced mutual respect and equality. As one Gulf CEO remarked in a side conversation, "It's no longer a buyer-seller dynamic. We're sitting at the same table, designing projects together." France's role as a gateway to Europe and the Gulf's role as an engine of the broader Middle East are now seen as complementary. The forum highlighted that France and the GCC are building the future together – and that future starts now. Initiatives like co-developing green hydrogen facilities, exchanging digital innovation expertise, or co-hosting cultural exhibitions are already on the horizon for the coming year.



Perhaps the most profound achievement of Vision Golfe 2025 was intangible: it solidified a sense of community between two regions historically separated by geography but increasingly united by common goals. As Oscar Wendel of Global Stratalogues noted in his remarks, economic dialogue can build bridges where politics sometimes cannot. By the forum's end, those bridges were not just theoretical – they were visible in the handshake agreements, the collaborative mood, and the shared vision articulated by leaders. In one of the final moments of the summit, a French official and a Gulf counterpart jointly announced an upcoming "France-GCC Innovation Year" initiative, symbolically highlighting their commitment to a shared journey in 2025 and beyond.



In summary, Vision Golfe 2025 succeeded in reframing the France-Gulf partnership for a new era. It demonstrated that bold visions, when backed by trust and teamwork, can indeed lead to concrete impact. The challenge now is to keep this momentum. With the relationships strengthened and new ideas in the pipeline, both France and its Gulf partners are poised to turn the dialogue in Paris into deliverables on the ground. As the hall emptied and delegates mingled one last time under the flags of France and the GCC, one could sense a collective optimism – that by continuing to build bridges, these nations will not only achieve their economic ambitions but also contribute to a more interconnected, stable, and prosperous world. The work continues, but the path is clear: forward,.

SUMMARY

01

Vision Golfe 2025 concluded with a strong sense of momentum and shared responsibility. Across all sessions, one message was consistent: the France–GCC relationship has entered a new phase—one defined by co-creation, mutual investment, and long-term strategic alignment.

02

The forum reaffirmed that trust is now firmly established. What follows is execution. Whether in energy transition, advanced technologies, healthcare, talent development, or cultural exchange, the emphasis has clearly shifted from aspiration to implementation. This transition is both timely and necessary.

03

Several themes emerged with particular clarity. First, economic resilience and diversification are no longer abstract objectives; they are being operationalised through concrete projects, policy coordination, and capital deployment. Second, innovation—especially in AI, digital infrastructure, and health technologies—has become a shared strategic priority, not a competitive arena. Third, people remain at the centre of this partnership: talent mobility, education, inclusion, and public well-being are now integral to the economic agenda.

04

Equally important were the informal exchanges—the bilateral conversations, the working meetings, and the relationships strengthened outside the conference hall. These interactions often shape outcomes more decisively than formal announcements, and they reflect the depth of engagement now characterising France–GCC relations.

About Business France



Organised by **Business France**, the **Vision Golfe Summit** reflects the agency's central mandate: advancing France's international economic footprint through trade promotion, investment attraction, and strategic partnership development. As the national agency supporting the internationalisation of the French economy, Business France facilitates exports by French companies, attracts foreign direct investment into France, and coordinates public-private initiatives that strengthen bilateral commercial ecosystems. Operating under the authority of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty, the agency combines diplomatic reach with sectoral expertise across industry, technology, sustainability, healthcare, infrastructure, and consumer markets. Through Vision Golfe, Business France positions itself not merely as an event organiser, but as an architect of long-term France-GCC economic integration, convening sovereign stakeholders, institutional investors, and corporate leaders to translate political alignment into tangible commercial outcomes.



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