

Executive Learning

World Diplomacy Program

An intensive 5-module leadership course:

13 - 17 APRIL, 2026

Geneva, Switzerland



Introduction to Program

The Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) and the Geneva Graduate Institute (IHEID) Executive Education Department focus on delivering high-level executive education and leadership programs to equip participants with practical policy skills. Its flagship initiative, the **World Diplomacy Program**, consists of five intensive modules held over one week, addressing key regional security, economic, and political challenges.

The program will enhance leadership capabilities and strategic understanding of mid-level professionals engaged with critical global issues. It is specifically designed for government officials and diplomats seeking to enrich their professional knowledge and expertise.

The **World Diplomacy Program** takes place in Geneva, Switzerland. This ideal location lies in the heart of Europe, allowing access to a host of governments and international organizations.

Focus

The program has a targeted focus on the following key areas:

Diplomacy and Negotiation

Political Change and Transition

Security and Mediation in Conflict

Economics & Future of Trade

The different modules will foster valuable exchanges between leading scholars in their respective fields and senior officials from both the public and private sectors. In a time of profound global transformation across all areas of the policy agenda, the program offers participants invaluable insights into the key issues shaping contemporary international relations



Diplomacy and Negotiation Module:



- Foundations of Diplomacy in a Changing World
- Negotiation Techniques and Key Principles
- Cross-Cultural Communication in Negotiation
- Strategic Negotiation and Beyond
- The Role of Mediations in Global Conflicts

Political Change and Transition:



- Strategic Vision and Global Foresight
- Effective Leadership in a Contemporary Global Context
- Policy Adaptation and Strategic Flexibility
- Crisis Management and Decision-Making Under Pressure

Mediation in Conflict Zone Module:



- State and Non-State Mediators: Roles and Capabilities
- Power Asymmetries and Tactical Leverage
- Communication Strategies and Confidence-Building Measures
- Navigating Great Power Competition in Mediation Settings
- Post-Conflict Stabilization and Peacebuilding

Security



- From Traditional to Non-Traditional Threats
- Threat Perceptions and Strategic Doctrines
- Military Capabilities and Defence Strategies
- The Future of Warfare: Weapons & Technologies



- Global Trade Dynamics: Trends and Disruptions
- Economic Diplomacy in Practice
- Trade negotiations and bilateral/multilateral trade agreements
- Investment promotion and protection treaties
- Inter-agency coordination and crisis response



Objectives

The World Diplomacy Program responds to the urgent need to understand each of these spheres in themselves and in connection to each other. The specific objectives include:

To improve the knowledge of mid-level professionals sitting at the crucial intersection of politics, defense and economics about global developments and their impact on state and society

To discuss and analyze current, previous as well as anticipated critical political, economic and security- related issues concerning global developments

To create a unique learning environment by inviting senior scholars and practitioners from a number of different fields in an interactive atmosphere of debate

To enable participants and experts to exchange their ideas and broaden their network of relevant professionals



Photo Source: [Kremlin](#) (2024)

Concept and Aim

In today's interconnected world, the boundaries between security, politics, and economics are increasingly blurred. Challenges such as armed conflict, economic instability, and human rights concerns demand integrated responses, where leaders must transcend traditional silos and engage across disciplines and geographies.

The global security landscape is undergoing profound transformation. Emerging and hybrid threats—ranging from terrorism and extremist networks to cyberattacks, disinformation, non-state actors, and transnational crime—are no longer isolated events but part of a broader, interconnected system of instability. In the Gulf region, these dynamics are particularly pronounced given the region's strategic importance and its exposure to regional tensions, fragile neighboring states, and external power rivalries.

While the state remains central in international relations, security has become decentralized, multifaceted, and increasingly shaped by non-traditional actors. For Gulf states, this means developing adaptive national security strategies that account for both hard power threats and soft power vulnerabilities, including energy insecurity, border instability, and the risks posed by climate-related disruptions.

At the political level, globalization continues to alter the role of the state, challenging long-standing governance structures and raising questions about sovereignty, legitimacy, and regional influence. In the Gulf, evolving political dynamics—shaped by youth populations, economic diversification, and heightened geopolitical competition—require diplomacy that is agile, strategic, and grounded in regional realities.

Mediation and dialogue are now critical tools in managing conflict, particularly in the Gulf's wider neighborhood, from Yemen and Iraq to Syria and Sudan. Regional actors, including Gulf states, are increasingly stepping into leadership roles to mediate disputes and stabilize volatile environments. This shift highlights the growing importance of Gulf-led diplomacy and the potential for locally driven solutions.

On the economic front, the future of trade and global markets is being reshaped by shifts in energy, technology, and labor. The Gulf's economic diversification strategies—underpinned by Vision 2030-type frameworks—seek to re-balance reliance on hydrocarbons, attract investment, and integrate into global trade systems. At the same time, the region must navigate disruptions in supply chains, labor mobility, and technological change.

Crucially, the global economic order is under strain. From the 2008 financial crisis to ongoing energy market volatility and a contested global development agenda, questions persist around equity, resilience, and fair distribution of wealth. For the Gulf, this creates both challenges and opportunities: to assert economic leadership, leverage strategic geographic positioning, and contribute meaningfully to global economic governance.

Against this backdrop, this program explores how diplomacy, negotiation, and mediation intersect with the evolving political and security landscape in the Gulf and beyond—while also considering the economic futures being forged in this time of global transition.



Target Audience

This course is designed for professionals from the government and private sector who are navigating today's complex global environment. It equips participants with the analytical tools and strategic insight needed to address interconnected political, security, and economic challenges. Ideal participants include senior officials from Ministries of Defense, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Economy, and members of National Security Councils; representatives from Chambers of Commerce; and experts from government-affiliated security and policy think tanks.

Methodology

The course employs an immersive and interactive teaching approach that combines expert-led lectures, case studies, group-based problem-solving, participant-driven panels, and hands-on simulation exercises.

Participants benefit from a dynamic mix of academic rigor and real-world experience: sessions are led by a blend of resident faculty, field practitioners, and international experts who bring both policy and operational perspectives to the table.

The Organizers

The World Diplomacy Program is jointly organized by the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Geneva Graduate Institute (IHEID) Executive Education Department

The Gulf Research Center

The Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) was established in 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland, under the Swiss Civil Code relating to foundations. The GRCF aims to facilitate research on the Gulf, promote academic excellence both in and about the Gulf region, and ensure objective and comprehensive information and analysis about a vital part of the world. As an independent think tank, the GRC Foundation has been recognized as one of the leading institutions in the Middle East and within a short period of time it has become one of the leading organizations providing insights and perspectives from the Gulf region. It has been part of the Think Tank Leader's Forum of the World Economic Forum. The GRCF acts to coordinate all Gulf Research Center research efforts and has successfully completed numerous projects including work with the European Commission on EU-GCC relations, with various organs of the United Nations System and with the International Development Research Council, Canada. One of the key focus of the GRCF's work is the changing geopolitics of the Middle East with a particular focus on the foreign and security policies of the GCC states, Gulf security issues, and efforts to establish a regional security system.



The Geneva Graduate Institute (IHEID) Executive Education Department

The Geneva Graduate Institute is a higher education institution and a pioneer in the exploration of global issues. Through our core missions – academic research, teaching, expertise and forum activities – we produce and share knowledge on international relations, development issues, global challenges and governance.

Located in the heart of International Geneva, a centre of global governance, we build on scientific excellence and transdisciplinarity to foster critical and creative thinking on the major challenges of our time. By engaging with international organisations, NGOs, governments and private sector actors, we participate in global discussions on the future of multilateralism and prepare a generation of engaged and responsible decision-makers for leadership in a radically uncertain world.

Application and Costs

To apply for the program, a completed online application form must be submitted to the Gulf Research Center. The online form can be accessed **here**. Prospective candidates are encouraged to apply online. Only complete applications will be considered.

The fee for the **World Diplomacy Program** is CHF 5000

The tuition price includes participation in all the sessions of the program, all necessary conference materials, the conference reader, as well as lunches for the entire week and dinners on selected evenings.

The fee does not include travel expenses to and from Geneva nor hotel accommodations. Preferential rates at the Intercontinental Hotel in Geneva are available.

Payment of the conference fee is due in full prior to the start of the program



For further information

Dr. Christian Koch

Director of Research

The Gulf Research Center Foundation

Geneva, Switzerland

ckoch@grc.net

Dr. Oskar Ziemelis

Director of GRCF

The Gulf Research Center Foundation

Geneva, Switzerland

oskar@grc.net

Sofia Mueller

Programme Manager - Executive Education

Geneva Graduate Institute

Geneva, Switzerland

sofia.mueller@graduateinstitute.ch

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