



Building an IMEC Energy Platform Beyond Hormuz: Gulf-Mediterranean Routes and the Future of Regional Resilience

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Summary

- The disruption of the Strait of Hormuz in 2026 exposed a structural weakness at the heart of the global energy system. The world is heavily dependent on a narrow set of vulnerable maritime chokepoints, and when one of them comes under pressure, the effects move quickly across shipping, insurance, prices, production, and political stability.
- The crisis showed that energy security depends not only on how much oil and gas is produced, but also on holistic systems that influence our ability to move, store and redirect energy through resilient and diversified infrastructure.
- This Insight argues that the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) should be expanded beyond its original transport focus to include an energy dimension.
- A Gulf-Mediterranean energy platform linking Gulf production, bypass pipelines, storage infrastructure, Israeli transit capacity, and Mediterranean export routes would reduce dependence on Hormuz while strengthening resilience between the Gulf and Europe.
- The crisis also showed that bypass pipelines alone are insufficient. Alternative lines, storage sites and export facilities were themselves exposed to attack, reinforcing the need for protected and geographically diversified storage outside the Gulf.
- Within such a framework, IMEC can serve as a strategic platform connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, providing transit, storage and direct access to European markets.
- The UAE is well placed to convene a regional initiative of this kind, given its infrastructure reach, diplomatic flexibility and working relationships across the IMEC space.
- Such a corridor would do more than diversify supply for Europe after the rupture with Russian energy. It would support a wider strategic shift in which the Gulf matters not only as a supplier, but also as a partner in resilience, infrastructure and coordination.
- For Gulf producers, additional routes and storage options would reduce exposure to disruption and strengthen their role in shaping the regional energy environment.

- An energy IMEC would benefit other Asian players, including India, Japan and South Korea, by adding flexibility, buffers and coordination to a system otherwise highly exposed to Gulf disruption.
- Such infrastructure could also support reconstruction efforts in conflict-affected areas, including Gaza, by linking local energy needs to a wider regional system.
- The Insight recommends that the most practical way to move this agenda from concept to policy is to begin with a pilot. Regional actors should:
 - » establish an IMEC Energy Working Group;
 - » launch a joint feasibility and risk-mapping process;
 - » advance a model built around the use of existing Israeli storage and transshipment capacity for Gulf-origin crude or refined products; and
 - » link this to Mediterranean export routes serving Europe.
- If developed thus, the Insight concludes that an IMEC energy platform could become an effective additional layer of regional resilience.

The Issue

The disruption of the Strait of Hormuz in early 2026 demonstrated how exposed the global energy system remains to a single maritime chokepoint. Roughly one-fifth of the world's oil consumption passes through the Strait each day. When that corridor is threatened, even briefly, the effects ripple immediately through shipping routes, insurance markets and global energy prices.¹

The deeper lesson is straightforward energy security is determined not only by how much oil is produced, but also by the flexibility to deliver it to the point of demand. That flexibility depends on the infrastructure that moves, stores and redirects energy across regions. Additionally, the ability to protect, maintain, and sustain this infrastructure is paramount to ensuring that any shocks are absorbed, and they do not cascade into energy, water and industrial production.

The question, therefore, is not simply how much oil the Gulf produces, but also how reliable the routes that carry that oil to global markets are. This is where the evolving concept of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) becomes strategically relevant. Initially presented as a transport corridor linking India, the Gulf, Israel, and Europe, IMEC increasingly represents something broader: a framework for connecting infrastructure systems across regions.

The Hormuz disruption suggests that energy should become a central component of the IMEC framework. A system linking Gulf production, Mediterranean export routes and alternative transit infrastructure could reduce dependence on a single chokepoint while strengthening energy flows and cooperation between the Gulf and Europe. Such infrastructure could also support reconstruction efforts in conflict-affected areas, including Gaza, by linking local energy needs to a wider regional system.

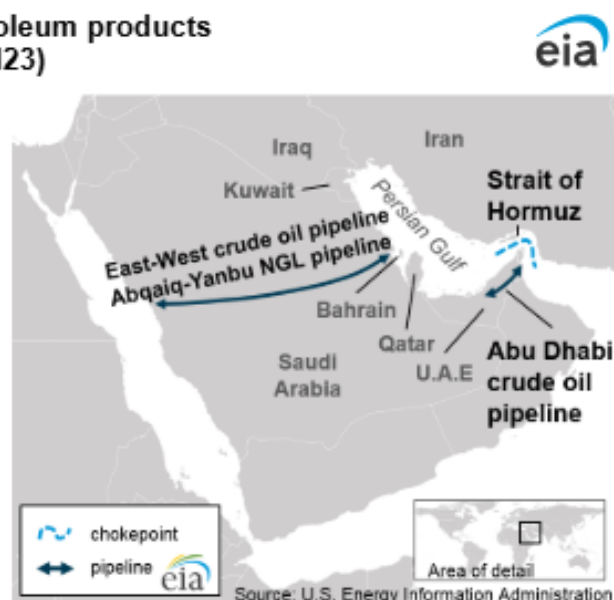
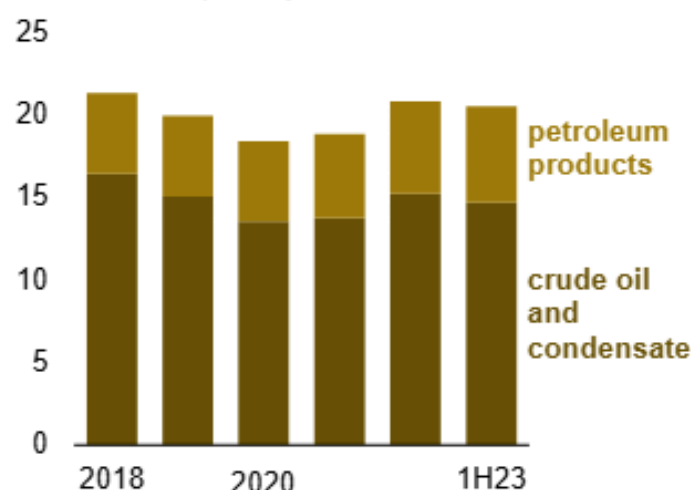
Expanding IMEC into an energy platform offers a practical way to reduce exposure to chokepoint disruption by creating additional transit routes, storage capacity and stronger links between Gulf producers and European markets. More specifically, it points to the need for additional storage and transit nodes outside the immediate Gulf basin, in locations that combine distance from major chokepoints, meaningful protection and direct access to major consumer markets.

Current State of Play

The disruption of the Strait of Hormuz revealed how quickly global energy flows can be destabilised by regional conflict. Even short interruptions to transit through the Strait immediately affect tanker movements, insurance premiums and energy security calculations in Europe and Asia.

The Hormuz crisis was not a surprise. This worst-case scenario had been on the table for years. Yet when disruption came, the ability to respond remained limited. Of the roughly 20 million barrels per day removed from the market, only around 7 million barrels could be redirected through bypass routes. These included the Habshan-Fujairah pipeline, with a capacity of around 1.5 million barrels per day; Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline from Abqaiq to Yanbu, with nominal capacity of around 7 million barrels per day; and the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline, which in theory can carry up to 1.6 million barrels per day.²

Annual volumes of crude oil, condensate and petroleum products transported through the Strait of Hormuz (2018–1H23)



In practice, however, only the Fujairah route appears to have operated above nominal levels, reportedly reaching around 1.8 million barrels per day, likely using stored crude. The Saudi line exported closer to 5 million barrels per day, since part of its capacity serves domestic consumption. The Ceyhan route, despite its strategic importance for Iraqi exports, was carrying only around 250,000 barrels per day because of earlier political disruptions. The result was that roughly 13 million barrels per day remained unavailable to the market without the use of strategic reserves.³

Figure 1: Middle East oil pipelines and flows



Source: J.P. Morgan Commodities Research

The cost of insufficient alternatives was even greater than the headline export gap suggested. Reduced export capacity quickly translated into production cuts inside producing states because of storage constraints. Iraq, for example, reportedly reduced production from around 4.3 million barrels per day before the war to roughly 1.6 million. Kuwait, which lacked meaningful redundancy and faced its own storage limitations, reportedly cut output from 2.6 million barrels per day to around 1.2 million.⁴

But the problem was not only the shortage of bypass routes. During the war, Iran also targeted energy infrastructure in ways that suggested a deliberate effort to maximise disruption. Strikes on refining facilities, particularly in Bahrain, Kuwait and, to some extent, the UAE, were aimed not only at hurting local populations but also at creating downstream pressure on key consumers of refined products, especially in Europe. By April 2026, concerns had already emerged about the vulnerability of Europe's jet fuel supply.⁵

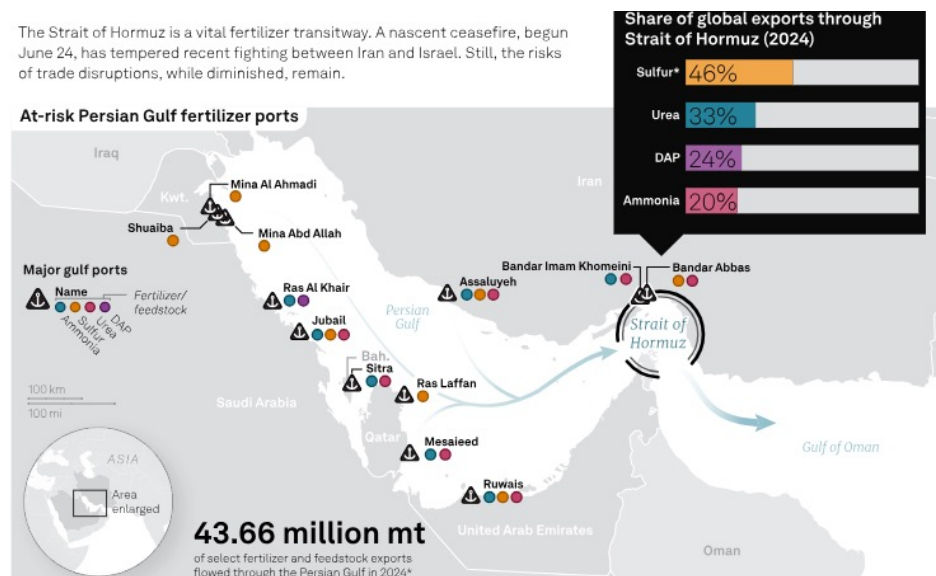
Attacks on bypass infrastructure during the war also exposed the vulnerability of the alternatives themselves. Strikes on storage facilities in Fujairah in early March 2026, together with damage to Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline that temporarily removed around 700,000 barrels per day,⁶ showed that bypass routes cannot be treated as a sufficient answer on their own.

The same was true of Oman. Part of the storage infrastructure in Salalah was hit in March 2026, despite Oman's role as the main mediator in talks with Iran before the war.⁷ Kuwait's wartime approach pointed in the opposite direction.⁸ By holding part of its storage outside the Gulf, it was able to continue selling some of its oil during the war, and at higher prices.

The lesson was clear. It is not enough to expand the carrying capacity of pipelines that bypass Hormuz, build new ones and improve protection for existing lines; the region also needs storage facilities located further from Hormuz that can serve Gulf producers during crises and provide immediate backup in both crude and refined products. Therefore, it is important to consider that an IMEC energy platform should be designed around key tenants of protected redundancy.

A disruption in energy exports through Hormuz does not only affect oil prices. It also produces wider chain effects across multiple sectors and hits weaker economies hardest. Gulf oil and gas underpin not only transport and heating, but also petrochemicals, fertilisers, plastics, solvents, cleaning products, textiles, tyres, pharmaceuticals, and electronics components. Sulphur derived from oil and gas is also critical for sulphuric acid production, which in turn is essential for advanced industry, including semiconductors and green technologies.⁹

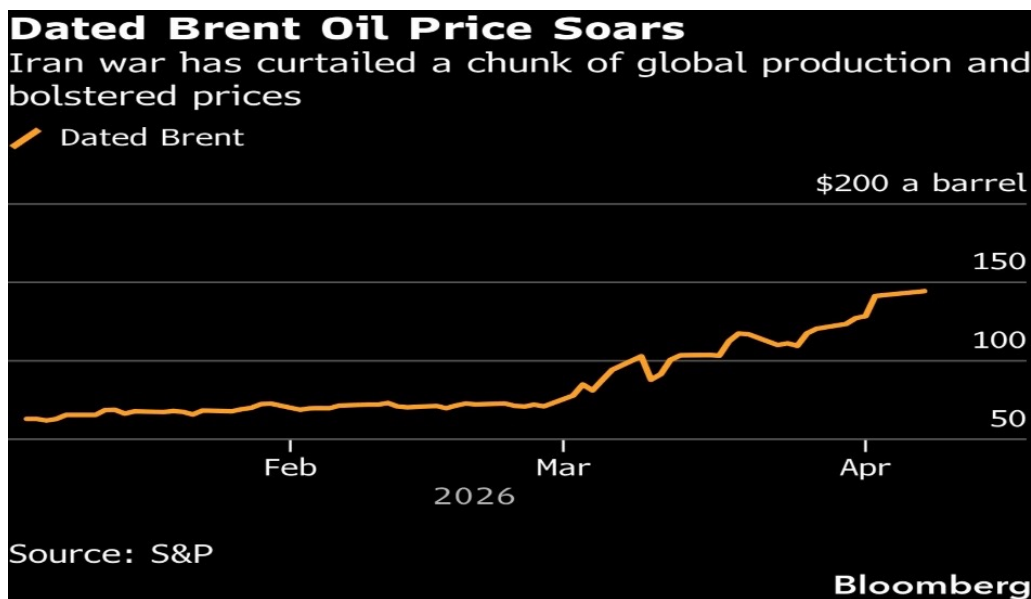
The Hormuz crisis therefore exposed not only the vulnerability of energy-importing states, but also the dependence of poorer and politically fragile economies on stable Gulf energy flows. Morocco, for example, holds a dominant share of global phosphate reserves but depends on sulphur imports, mostly from the Gulf, for fertiliser production.¹⁰ Egypt is particularly exposed because of its dependence on imported energy and fertilisers. Rising fertiliser costs place additional strain on subsidy systems, especially bread subsidies, and increase social and fiscal pressure.¹¹ Tunisia is similarly vulnerable because of fiscal weakness and import dependence. In such cases, higher energy and fertiliser prices risk shifting from being economic problems to political ones.¹²



Source: S&P Global

Asia was also hit in ways that went well beyond headline oil prices. In India, rising cooking gas prices quickly fed into daily life and industrial production, with reports of migrant workers leaving manufacturing hubs and early signs of labour shortages. In China, higher energy import costs contributed to a sharp narrowing of the trade surplus. In Japan, the effects were visible both in consumer costs and industrial supply chains, including significantly higher long-haul airfares and temporary disruptions in manufacturing that is dependent on petroleum-derived feedstocks such as naphtha. This reinforced the wider lesson of the crisis: a prolonged Gulf energy shock does not remain confined to fuel markets. It spills into manufacturing, transport, trade balances, and the cost of everyday life across Asia.¹³

Although some bypass infrastructure exists, it covers only part of total export capacity, leaving global energy flows highly exposed to disruptions in a single location. That uncertainty was reflected in the speed and scale of the price shock. Before the crisis, benchmark Brent traded at around \$65-70 per barrel. It rose to roughly \$119 per barrel at the height of the disruption. Certain crude benchmarks traded significantly higher, with Dated Brent reportedly approaching \$144 and Oman-linked spot prices reaching a disturbing \$171 per barrel. The result was a sharp rise in fuel prices, including in the United States, where gasoline moved well above \$4 per gallon and triggered visible public frustration. In weaker economies, the burden was even heavier.¹⁴

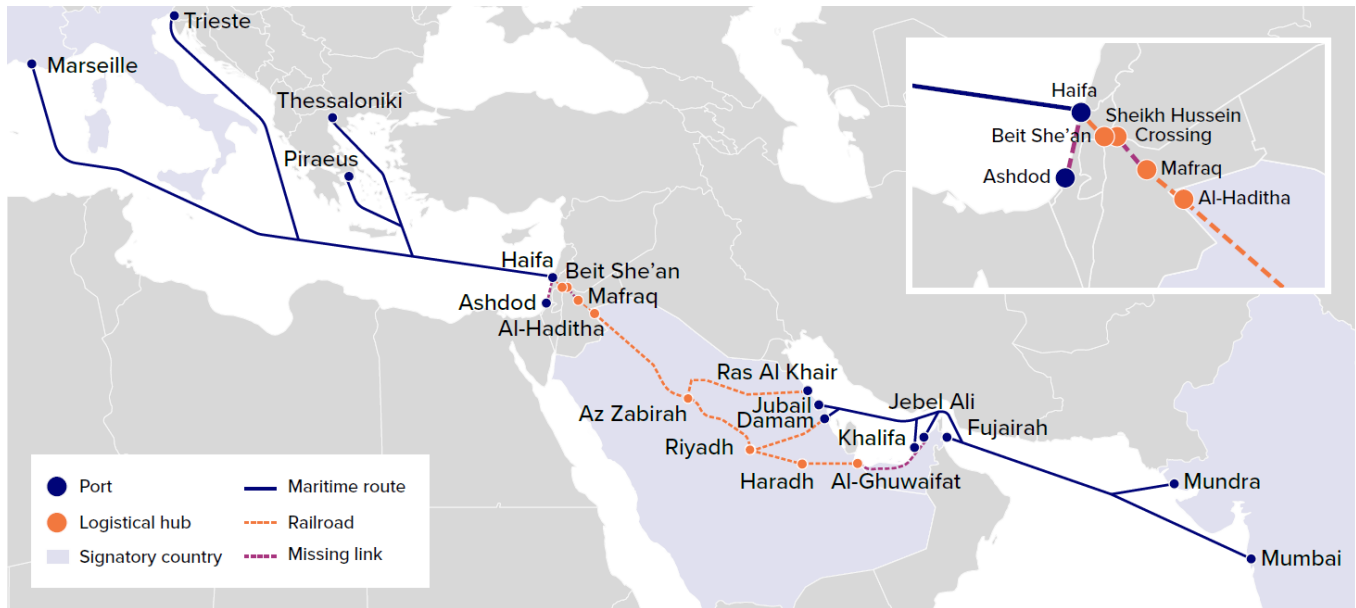


For Europe, the implications are clear. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, European energy policy has emphasised diversification of supply sources. Yet diversification of supply alone does not solve the problem if transportation routes remain vulnerable.

Europe's energy insecurity is not new. Declining North Sea production, repeated disruptions to Russian gas flows, the failure of alternative pipeline visions, the collapse of Libyan production after the Arab uprisings, and the tightening of Gulf energy ties with East Asia have all narrowed Europe's room for manoeuvre. The war in Ukraine then added sanctions-related constraints on access to Russian oil and gas. Taken together, these trends reinforce the need for Europe to develop greater flexibility through closer access to nearby energy sources and routes, particularly those connected to the Mediterranean. Energy security therefore increasingly depends on diversified infrastructure: multiple transit routes, secure storage facilities and cross-regional systems capable of absorbing disruption.¹⁵

Beyond Infrastructure: IMEC Energy Platform

When IMEC was announced in 2023, the initiative focused primarily on transport infrastructure linking India to Europe through the Gulf and Israel. The goal was to shorten transit times and strengthen economic integration across three regions. But the logic of IMEC extends beyond railways and ports. In a region marked by political uncertainty and periodic conflict, cooperation is more likely to advance through layered initiatives rather than a single corridor dependent on stable political conditions.¹⁶



Source: Atlantic Council

Energy infrastructure is the next logical step. An IMEC energy platform could link Gulf production, alternative export routes, Mediterranean transit infrastructure, and European demand. The goal is not to replace existing maritime routes through Hormuz but to complement them with additional pathways through which energy can move between regions. The more diversified these pathways become, the less vulnerable the system is to disruption at any single point.

The application of a multi-layered IMEC approach offers numerous energy-based alternatives. It may begin with the movement of hydrocarbons alongside their byproducts and could be extended to encompass electricity interconnections.

IMEC should now be understood not simply as a transport corridor, but as part of a wider resilience architecture. What is at stake is not simply faster movement of goods, but the creation of mechanisms that can absorb shocks, redirect flows and preserve continuity under pressure.¹⁷ This also gives IMEC a clearer Asian dimension. India remains the principal Asian pillar of the corridor, but the relevance of an energy IMEC extends beyond India.

The Hormuz crisis showed that Gulf disruption rapidly spills into Asian manufacturing, trade balances, aviation, and household costs. An energy IMEC should therefore not be understood as only a Gulf-Mediterranean mechanism. It should be seen as part of a broader Asia-Middle East-Europe resilience architecture in which India is a core participant with other Asian partners, including Japan and South Korea, who have a growing interest in the diversification of routes, storage and infrastructure coordination.¹⁸

For Asian partners, the value lies not only in the physical movement of energy, but also in the flexibility of the wider system. An energy IMEC would not eliminate Asian exposure to Gulf instability, but it could make that exposure more manageable by adding options, buffers and coordination. By diversifying export pathways, expanding storage beyond the Gulf and creating additional transshipment points, it would reduce the degree to which a single chokepoint disruption immediately cascades across Asian markets. In that sense, the corridor's energy dimension is also a resilience mechanism for Asia.

Energy connectivity can also open the door to a broader idea of regional cooperation. It offers a practical model for solving regional problems collectively and maximising the gains from multilateral coordination rather than relying only on bilateral arrangements. Energy cooperation creates redundancy and shortens routes, but it can also support the movement of other goods whose value depends on speed and reliability, such as food.

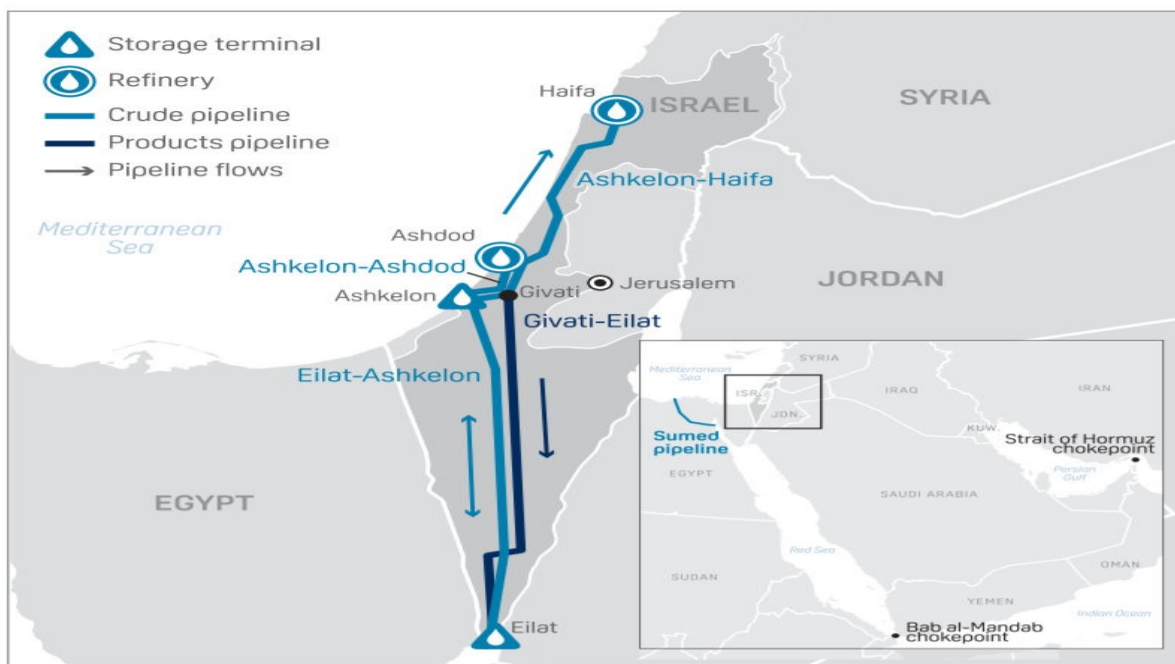
For that reason, IMEC should be seen as systemic rather than narrowly logistical. The logic extends beyond energy itself. Regional storage hubs, whether for oil, fuel products or even selected food supplies, could help states manage shortages caused by war, natural disasters or sudden price spikes. The same logic applies to other regional challenges that require practical cooperation rather than grand political breakthroughs.

Storage infrastructure could, in turn, function as part of a wider IMEC architecture that expands the role of existing global hubs such as Fujairah, Singapore and Rotterdam through secondary regional hubs. The point is to create a distributed model of storage and transshipment: additional nodes that can be supplied in normal times and used in emergencies to buy time, stabilise flows and reduce vulnerability.

Israel as a Node

Within such a system, Israel can perform three practical functions. First, Israel can serve as a transit bridge linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean through existing pipeline infrastructure connecting Eilat and Ashkelon. A 42-inch bi-directional flow Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline infrastructure serves as a critical ‘Plug n’ Play’ junction within the Europe-Asia Economic Corridor (Mediterranean-Red Sea). This route allows shipments entering the Red Sea to move quickly to Mediterranean export terminals. More importantly, it provides something the region lacks in a crisis: an additional protected east-west land bridge between Gulf-linked energy flows and European-facing maritime.¹⁹

EAPC'S EUROPE-ASIA CRUDE ROUTE



Source: S&P Global Platts, EAPC

Second, Israel can function as a storage hub. During periods of regional instability, storage facilities located outside the immediate Gulf basin become particularly valuable. Mediterranean storage capacity allows producers and traders to maintain supply buffers even when infrastructure closer to conflict zones becomes vulnerable. Here, Israel's advanced defensive capabilities and resilience of strategic infrastructure become important assets.

Third, Israel provides direct access to Mediterranean shipping routes serving European markets. From Mediterranean terminals, energy shipments can move rapidly toward Southern Europe and into the broader European distribution system. This becomes even more important in a scenario in which Bab al-Mandab and the Suez Canal face logistical overload or broader regional disruption.

Historically, Israel's geography has made it relevant to Gulf-to-Mediterranean energy thinking. Today, that relevance is reinforced by additional factors: its own emergence as a gas exporter with growing energy expertise and its technological capabilities in infrastructure protection, maritime systems and energy security. Together, these features position Israel not simply as a transit route but as a strategic node within a wider regional energy system.

UAE as a Strategic Platform

Importantly, a Gulf-Mediterranean route through the IMEC framework does not require entirely new export infrastructure from the Gulf. Several pipelines already reduce dependence on the Strait of Hormuz and could form part of a diversified system.

Saudi Arabia operates the East-West pipeline linking its eastern oil facilities to the Red Sea port of Yanbu, allowing exports to bypass Hormuz entirely. The UAE has also developed the Habshan-Fujairah pipeline, enabling crude exports from its production fields to move directly to the Gulf of Oman outside the Strait.²⁰



The fact that the Fujairah route remained operational at or near peak output despite attacks during the war is instructive. It demonstrates both the value of rapid response and the continued importance of redundancy. At the same time, it also reinforces the need for additional routes and storage centres that can ease pressure on existing bypass infrastructure when crisis escalates.²¹

In practice, oil being exported through these bypass routes and reaching the Red Sea could be transferred through a Red Sea-Mediterranean corridor via Israel. Connecting Gulf bypass infrastructure to such a corridor would add another layer of diversification. Instead of relying only on maritime routes, producers would gain access to a hybrid system combining pipelines, storage hubs and multiple export ports.

To be effective, such an initiative would need to be launched as a regional effort rather than a national initiative. The UAE is well positioned to convene such a discussion. Over the past decade, the UAE has increasingly positioned itself as a regional connector linking Asia, the Middle East and Europe through trade, logistics and infrastructure initiatives. Its ports, investment networks and diplomatic ties give it the ability to bring together a wide range of actors.²²

That flexibility was visible even during the war. The UAE's ability to maintain active ties with global players, including China, alongside its strong relationships with European partners and trusted standing in East Asia, including with countries such as Japan and South Korea, reinforces its value as a bridging actor. Combined with its financial capacity and practical experience in logistics and infrastructure, this makes the UAE a particularly credible platform for launching such an initiative.²³

Equally important, the UAE maintains working relationships with key partners across the IMEC space, including India, Israel, Gulf producers, and European states. This makes it a natural platform for discussions that might otherwise be politically sensitive. Therefore, an IMEC Energy Working Group, hosted by the UAE, could bring together Gulf producers, Israel, India, and European partners to explore how existing infrastructure across the region could be integrated into a more robust energy system.²⁴

UAE to accelerate oil pipeline project to bypass Hormuz

The UAE is fast-tracking the construction of a new pipeline, which will double the export capacity through Fujairah, in the east, to bypass the Strait of Hormuz. The West-East Pipeline project to “meet global demands” is expected to be operational by 2027. This will add to the Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline, a 380 km pipeline which runs from Habshan, an oil and gas field in the southwestern area of Abu Dhabi, to the port of Fujairah – which came under attack during the war and ceasefire. The pipeline, which became operational in 2012, has the capacity of about 1.5 million bpd.²⁵

Strategic Implications for Europe, Asia and the Middle East

For Europe, a Gulf-Mediterranean corridor would do more than support diversification after the disruption of Russian energy imports. It would fit into a broader geopolitical repositioning already underway. Over the past two decades, Europe’s energy model has been repeatedly shaken: first by declining domestic production, then by repeated disruptions linked to Russia and Libya, and finally by the strategic consequences of the war in Ukraine. The result is that Europe is no longer dealing with a temporary energy problem, but with a more structural question of how to secure access, flexibility and resilience in a more fragmented international system.²⁶

In that context, the Gulf is becoming more important to Europe not only because of the volume of energy it can supply, but also because of its role in the wider infrastructure of energy security. What matters now is not only production, but also the combination of production, logistics, storage, shipping access, and political reliability. Europe’s relationship with Gulf producers is therefore shifting from a primarily transactional one to a more strategic one. Gulf states are no longer relevant only as exporters. They are becoming essential actors in Europe’s effort to build a more resilient energy architecture stretching from the Gulf to the Mediterranean.²⁷

This shift also reflects a more complex European relationship with the United States. Washington remains Europe’s main strategic partner and the central external security actor in the broader region. But the last several years have made clear that Europe cannot assume that American power alone will absorb the costs of protecting global energy flows indefinitely, nor that US strategic priorities will always align with Europe’s economic vulnerabilities and timetable. The lesson for Europe is not strategic separation from the United States, but a greater operational capacity of its own, especially in areas where infrastructure, trade and energy resilience intersect.

In that sense, closer engagement with Gulf partners and practical participation in corridor-based systems such as IMEC are not alternatives to the transatlantic relationship. They are part of Europe’s adaptation to a world in which American guarantees remain essential but no longer remove the need for regional and cross-regional hedging.²⁸

A Gulf-Mediterranean corridor would therefore serve Europe on several levels at once. It would provide additional routing flexibility in times of crisis; create greater storage depth closer to European markets; strengthen the strategic relevance of the Eastern Mediterranean in Europe’s energy planning; and help anchor a more durable European role in a region where energy, connectivity and political influence are increasingly intertwined.²⁹

For Gulf producers, additional transit options would likewise reduce reliance on a single maritime chokepoint and provide greater flexibility during periods of geopolitical tension. But the significance goes beyond commercial insurance; for Gulf states, participation in a wider Gulf-Mediterranean system would strengthen their role as architects of regional resilience rather than simply suppliers exposed to disruption. It would allow them to shape the strategic environment around their exports, not simply respond to it.

The implications also extend eastward. For Asian partners, an energy IMEC would add resilience to a system that remains highly exposed to disruption in the Gulf. For India, the value is direct: as both a core IMEC participant and a major energy consumer, it has a clear interest in a wider infrastructure architecture that reduces the strategic and economic consequences of Gulf instability.

For Japan and South Korea, the value is different, but still significant. Both depend heavily on stable Gulf energy flows and on petrochemical and industrial supply chains that regional crises can disrupt. A more diversified Gulf-to-global infrastructure system would not remove those vulnerabilities, but could reduce the severity of future shocks by improving flexibility in routing, storage and emergency redirection.³⁰

An energy IMEC would also help shift Asian partners from being passive recipients of disruption to participants in a wider framework of resilience planning. Through storage arrangements, risk mapping, pilot projects, and infrastructure coordination, Asian stakeholders could become part of a cross-regional mechanism that plans for disruption rather than merely reacting to it. The Asian dimension of energy IMEC is not limited to supply security. It is also about embedding key Asian economies in a more resilient and better coordinated regional system.

In this way, the value of an energy IMEC lies not only in moving energy more flexibly, but also in creating shared stakes in continuity across Europe, the Gulf and Asia.

Conclusion

The disruption of the Strait of Hormuz illustrates how exposed the global energy system remains to chokepoint disruptions.

In the coming years, regional cooperation will increasingly revolve around infrastructure: the pipelines, ports, storage sites, and transit routes that allow energy to move reliably between producers and consumers.

Expanding IMEC into an energy platform offers a practical way to make that system less brittle and more flexible. By linking Gulf production, diversified transit routes, storage capacity, and Mediterranean distribution networks, the region can reduce vulnerability to future disruptions.

Within such a framework, Israel's geographic position allows it to function as a bridge between the Gulf and Europe. Convened through a regional initiative led by actors such as the UAE, and advanced through a pilot phase, an IMEC energy platform could turn a moment of crisis into an opportunity to reshape how energy moves across the region.

Thus, the Hormuz disruption may mark the beginning of a broader shift from an energy system defined by chokepoints to one organised around diversified, distributed and more resilient regional infrastructure.

Recommendations

- **Institutional Steps** – Regional partners should establish an IMEC Energy Working Group with a clear political and technical mandate. This should not be a narrow expert forum, but a structured mechanism bringing together key governments and infrastructure actors from the Gulf, Israel, Europe, and, where relevant, India. Its first task should be to map existing infrastructure across the Gulf, Israel and the Mediterranean, including pipelines, terminals, storage facilities, refinery linkages, shipping routes, and bottlenecks. But beyond mapping, the group should also identify strategic gaps: where additional redundancy is needed, which facilities are most vulnerable, and where new protected storage and transshipment nodes would create the greatest added value. The UAE would be well placed to host or convene such a mechanism, given its diplomatic reach, logistical expertise and credibility across the relevant geographies.
- **Feasibility and System Design** – Governments should commission a joint feasibility process focused not only on whether such a corridor is technically possible, but also on what kind of system should be built. This assessment should examine the technical, financial, environmental, regulatory, and security implications of linking Gulf export infrastructure with Israeli transit capacity and Mediterranean distribution routes. It should include scenarios of partial disruption, prolonged conflict and simultaneous pressure on multiple chokepoints, including Hormuz, Bab al-Mandab and the Suez Canal. It should also examine commercial models: who finances new storage, how usage rights are structured, what incentives are needed for private-sector participation, and how insurance and risk-sharing can be organised.
- **Pilot Phase: From Concept to Operation** – The initiative should move quickly from study to implementation through a clearly defined pilot phase. Rather than waiting for a full regional redesign, partners should launch a practical demonstration project built around an existing and usable corridor segment. The most plausible starting point is a pilot linking Gulf-origin crude or refined products to existing Israeli

storage and transshipment capacity, and from there to Mediterranean export routes serving Europe. This should be framed as a practical first step rather than the final model for the whole corridor. Its purpose would be to test whether an IMEC energy platform can function in practice under real commercial and strategic conditions. A pilot of this kind would allow participating actors to assess storage use, handling capacity, customs and regulatory requirements, insurance arrangements, commercial viability, security coordination, and the speed at which energy products can be redirected during disruption. Just as importantly, it would also show whether the corridor can deliver practical resilience before larger investments are made.

- **European Engagement** – Europe should treat participation in such an initiative as part of its wider strategic adaptation rather than as a narrow energy measure. European governments, together with the European Commission where relevant, should examine how a Gulf-Mediterranean corridor can be linked to broader European priorities: energy security, industrial resilience, Eastern Mediterranean connectivity, and long-term diversification away from overdependence on vulnerable routes. This would require more active European engagement with Gulf infrastructure strategies and a willingness to support corridor-related projects politically, financially and diplomatically. Europe does not need to lead such an initiative, but it does need to be present early if it wants to shape its design and secure its benefits.
- **Long-Term Expansion** – An IMEC energy platform should be framed not as a substitute for existing routes or a narrowly bilateral arrangement, but as an additional layer of resilience within a wider system. That means designing it in a way that can later expand into related areas such as digital monitoring, infrastructure protection, electricity interconnection, and selected support for reconstruction and stabilisation in adjacent arenas. The more such a platform is understood as a mechanism for practical regional resilience, rather than a single transport line, the more politically sustainable it is likely to be.

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