## Regional conference on judicial cooperation in the MENA region launched in Bahrain

**Manama, 22 March 2022 -** The EU Global Facility on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (EU GF-AML/CFT) on Tuesday kicked off a regional conference on judicial cooperation in the MENA region, in collaboration with the Siracusa International Institute for criminal justice and human rights.

Held under the title **‘Strengthening Judicial Cooperation in the MENA Region: Judges and Prosecutors at the Forefront of the Fight against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing’**, the three-day event is witnessing the participation of 70 representatives from 18 countries of the MENA region.

*“We are delighted to be here today with such great attendance. It is with pleasure that we see the level of dedication to judicial cooperation, a topic at the heart of the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing,”* said EU Global Facility Team Leader David Hotte in his welcoming remarks.

*“It is particularly impressive to witness participants from so many countries committed to the deepening of collaborative measures to ensure the due recovery of proceeds from organised crime and terrorist activities,”* he added, thanking the Kingdom of Bahrain and all representatives for their attendance.

For his part, Jean-François Thony, President of the Siracusa Institute,highlighted the importance of the event, stating: *‘‘this conference is one-of its kind. Indeed, seeing judges and prosecutors from so many countries gathered in one room to cooperate on AML/CFT is unique, especially in this region.* *Too often we forget the importance of judges and prosecutors in the AML/CFT process but not today.”*

*“International collaboration of this level is of particular importance for the Siracusa Institute, which is at the forefront of the fight against organised crime in the Mediterranean and has made of the improvement of criminal justice systems one of its core missions.”*

The conference is part of a series of activities organised by the EU GF-AML/CFT and the Siracusa Institute aimed at strengthening international judicial co-operation and the efficient application of existing MLA standards and international instruments by judges and prosecutors.

**In a video message, Regional Counsellor on counterterrorism and security at the EU Delegation to Bahrain, Philippe Cormier, stated *“this conference is an illustration of the fast and strong development of our common ambition*** *to develop and deepen judicial cooperation in the MENA region and work to facilitate judicial cooperation with the EU, in a result oriented way.”*

*“Today, with this EU-MENA conference on judicial cooperation, our common interest is to extend the level of trust developed between EU Member States to the judicial relation we have between EU and MENA Member States,”* he added.

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**About the EU GF-AML/CFT:** Funded by the European Commission since 2017, the EU GF-AML/CFT aims to support third countries in their efforts to prevent money laundering and cut off access to funding for individual terrorists and terrorist organisations. Financed by the Commission’s Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), the project is implemented by Expertise France, in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and the Northern Ireland Cooperation Overseas.