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Regional Conference on

**Strengthening Judicial Cooperation in the MENA Region:
Judges and Prosecutors at the Forefront of the Fight against
Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing**

Manama, Bahrain

22 – 24 March 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS



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(We), The participants of the Regional Conference on the Judicial Co-operation in the MENA Region: Judges and Prosecutors at the Forefront of Fight Against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing held in Manama on 22-24 March 2022:

Commend the joint efforts of the Office of the Attorney General of the Kingdom of Bahrain, EU Global AML/CFT Facility and the Siracusa International Institute of Criminal Law and Human Rights in the organisation of the timely, useful and productive Regional Conference;

Appreciate and value the interest and engagement of the representatives of all the (MENAFATF) states who attended/participated at this international event/gathering;

Took note of the summary, by the Attorney General of Bahrain, of the discussions and respective recommendations voiced during the Conference;

Agreed to meet in similar format during the last quarter of the year 2022 to ensure the adequate follow up to the abovementioned recommendations, based on the conference report to be prepared and distributed by the Siracusa International Institute, the EU Global AML/CFT Facility and the Attorney General of Bahrain.



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1. Capacity building and experience sharing activities should be organized on targeted topics identified as priorities during this Regional Conference to further deepen the analysis of the major challenges on AML/CFT in the Region. Activities should be implemented at the national and regional level.
2. Participants underline the importance of sharing national and regional experience concerning the improvement of domestic capabilities of beneficial ownership registers, making sure that they exist and are constantly updated
3. Participants underline the importance of using existing international instruments as a regular basis for judicial cooperation to ensure efficiency efficient prosecution, sentencing and adjudicating
4. A special judicial and prosecutorial unit should be established at Regional level to, inter alia, promote an informal network of judges and prosecutors and serve as a liaison between judicial authorities to foster and speed up mutual cooperation in criminal matters
5. The existence/establishment of Specialized divisions within Prosecution Office targeting money laundering and terrorist financing cases is a useful tool to improve efficiency in investigating and prosecuting AML/CFT cases at the national and regional level
6. A repository of best practices in investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating ML/FT cases should be developed.
7. Research and develop of a legal analysis of the issue of RBP in the Region to alleviate the burden of proof in full respect of fundamental rights (Fair trial and presumption of innocence).
8. Specific efforts to develop effective judicial cooperation in the Mena Region to enable swift mutual legal cooperation among countries in freezing, seizing and confiscating criminal assets built on the experience and innovative solutions developed such as the European Union including EUROJUST, European Investigative Orders, European



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Confiscation Orders or European Warrant of Arrests.

9. Best practices including existing international and regional tools should be made available to judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers, to support their work in dealing with challenges hindering instruments of international cooperation in criminal matters.
10. Criminal justice authorities should consider seeking informal assistance before making a formal MLA request.
11. Working groups at the national level should be created, to identify the major challenges and potential solutions in investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating AML/CTF cases.
12. FIUs should reach out regularly to members of the Judiciary and to prosecutors to explain their role and increase cooperation and exchange of information. FIUs should not be used as an investigation tool but a support in analysing and gathering financial information, criminal investigations being the responsibility of law enforcement agencies. Prosecutors should inform regularly the FIU about the follow up given to STRs.
13. Criminal Justice authorities should strive to build a widespread culture of confiscation among all stakeholders, including communicating the benefits of asset recovery and the mechanisms for confiscation available to law enforcement to ensure that such measures are taken in all major cases of acquisitive crime. Such communication should extend to all law enforcements agencies, policy makers, the private sector and the general public to build support for the effective implementation of the framework.
14. Awareness and capacity building activities on virtual assets tracing, identification, freezing and recovery should be organized
15. The establishment of dedicated contact points in the Region with Eurojust and, when possible, the conclusion of international agreements should be explored.



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