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UfM Regional Workshop on Digital Trade and E-Commerce in the MENA Region / 19 October 2026

Union for the Mediterranean
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الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط

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Agenda

Regional Workshop on Digital Trade and E-Commerce in the MENA Region

Working Towards Regional Collaboration and Harmonization to Support Cross-Border Digital Trade and E-Commerce

Focus on the digital trade regulatory framework as well as on tools and solutions facilitating digital trade

08:30 – 09:00	**Welcome and registration** Moderation: Natascha Walker
09:00 – 09:15	**Opening session** Welcome remarks, UfM Secretariat, Ms. Marwa Farghali, Senior Economic Advisor Welcome remarks, Delegation of the European Union to Egypt, Mr. Giacomo Bogo, Programme Manager Investments, Digital Transformation and Development Finance Welcome remarks, Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade, Senior official (tbc)
9:15 – 9:30	**Setting the Scene: Objectives and Expected Outcomes** This opening session introduces the regional project and sets the tone of the workshop by outlining its overall objectives and expected outputs. It also highlights how the discussions link to the regional programme "Digital Trade and E-Commerce in the MENA Region" - especially its objectives of promoting the approximation of legal and regulatory frameworks, enhancing regional interoperability of digital tools, and strengthening regional dialogue and peer learning. It ensures all participants share a common understanding of the purpose and structure of the workshop. **Speaker:** Mr. Edouard Descôtis, GIZ, Regional Programme "Digital Trade and E-Commerce in the MENA Region"

9:30 – 9:45	Group Photo
9:45 – 10:00	Check-in and Framing by Moderator The participants get to know the digital facilitation tool, and get engaged in a discussion with three leading questions
10:00 – 10:30	Overview of the Regulatory Landscape and Gaps in Cross-Border Digital Trade and E-Commerce in the MENA Region This session provides an overview of the current legal and regulatory frameworks affecting cross-border digital trade in the region, highlighting key areas of convergence and divergence between countries, as well as international and EU approaches. It establishes a shared baseline of knowledge to inform discussions, with the objective of building a common understanding of regional challenges arising from regulatory fragmentation affecting cross-border digital trade and e-commerce. Speakers: • Mr. Vladimir Abramytchev, International consultant • Ms. Mena Hassan, World Trade Organization
10:30 – 11:30	Session 1: Identifying Potentials for Cross-Border Digital Trade and E-Commerce Participants work in groups (one group per country) to identify what can be improved to support cross-border digital trade and e-commerce in their country. The focus is on the regulatory framework and technical solutions (e.g. inconsistent rules with trading partners, lack of mutual recognition on trade documents or electronic signatures, regulatory gaps, lack of interoperability). Methodology: • Participants work in country groups (one group per participating country). • Guided brainstorming to identify regulatory, legal and operational barriers affecting cross-border transactions.

	• Prioritization of the most critical challenges based on their impact and feasibility of addressing them.
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 – 13:00	**Session 2: Presentation of Country Priorities and Identification of Common Themes** Building on the outcomes of Session 1, each country group will present its priority areas for strengthening cross-border digital trade and e-commerce. Through a facilitated plenary discussion, the moderator will cluster the identified priorities into common themes, highlighting areas of convergence for collaboration, regulatory harmonization / approximation. Methodology: • Each country group presents its priority challenges and opportunities (5 minutes per group). • The moderator captures and clusters common priorities and recurring challenges.
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	**Session 3: Deepening Priority Themes and Exploring Regional Activities** Building on the priorities identified in the Session 2, participants will form thematic working groups around the 4-6 priority challenges (topics) that emerged from the plenary discussion. Rather than working in country groups, participants will join the topic that is most relevant to their expertise or interest. Each group will analyse the selected theme in greater depth, explore opportunities for regulatory alignment, interoperability, mutual recognition, peer learning, etc. The outcomes of each group discussion will be presented in the plenary. Methodology: • Each group analyses the selected theme from a regional perspective, drawing on the experiences of different countries. • Discussions are guided by a facilitator and a set of guiding questions.

	• Rapporteurs present the group's key findings and recommendations.
15:15 – 15:45	Coffee Break
15:45– 16:30	**Session 4: From Priorities to Action: Defining Support Needs and Future Activities** Building on the outcomes of the thematic discussions, participants will continue working in the same groups to define the conditions required to advance each priority area. Groups will identify the type of support, expertise, and resources needed to address the identified challenges and translate them into action-oriented recommendations. The discussion will focus on possible next steps, potential actors involved, and opportunities for regional collaboration and future initiatives. Methodology: • Thematic groups (same as in Session 3) to identify what is needed from the regional programme and from other stakeholders to address the priority topics and advance regional collaboration. • Each group defines key next steps, including potential actions, responsible stakeholders and possible collaboration mechanisms.
16:30 – 16:45	**Conclusions and Way Forward** Take away and next steps for the Regional Programme "Digital Trade and E-Commerce in the MENA Region" Ms. Susanne Hartmann, GIZ, Head of Programme Take-aways for the next day UfM Economic Forum's discussions Mr. Mohammed Elrazzaz, UfM, Head of Sector.
16:45 – 17:00	**Feedback and Closing**

Venue: Hilton Cairo Grand Nile