

19-22 OCTOBER 2026 UfM ECONOMIC FORUM CAIRO, EGYPT



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AGENDA

UfM Economic Forum

Promoting Investment Facilitation as Enabler of Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Cairo, Egypt – 20 October 2026

Forum moderator: Mrs. Natasha Walker

Tuesday, 20 October 2026	
08:00 – 08:30	Welcome and Registration
08:30- 09:45	Opening Session Welcome remarks Mariam Diallo, Senior Deputy Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean. H.E. Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst, Head of European Union Delegation to Egypt and the League of Arab States. H.E. Ambassador Jürgen Schulz, Ambassador of Germany to Egypt
09:45 – 10:00	Group Photo
10:00 – 11:15	Session I: Building a Competitive Investment Environment This session will examine the policy and regulatory reforms required to strengthen investor confidence and improve the business climate across the UfM region in a way that would enable the region to move higher up the investment attractiveness curve. Discussions will focus on enhancing transparency, administrative efficiency, and institutional coordination to facilitate sustainable and cross-border investment flows. Thematic focus areas include: ○ Regulatory transparency and streamlined investment procedures. ○ Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement (IFDA) and implications for the region.



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	- Trade facilitation, customs cooperation, and simplification of Rules of Origin (PEM Convention). - Regulatory convergence and regional economic integration - Exploring synergies between Digital Trade, Trade in Services, and logistics efficiency. - Strategic sectors for sustainable and inclusive investment. Scene Setter Mercedes Bonet, Deputy Head of Unit (DG TRADE), Southern neighbours, Middle East, Türkiye, Russia, Belarus and Central Asia, European Commission SPEAKERS Dr. Ahmed Ghoneim, Professor of Economics, CEO, Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM). Bashar Seifi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of National Economy of Palestine. Maren Diale-Schellschmidt, CEO, German-Arab Chamber of Industry and Commerce (AHK Egypt). Philippe Dessoy, General Manager of BESIX Group, President at Arab-Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce. Majlinda Bregu, Commissioner of WHO Europe's Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health, Former Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). Mohammed Makki, Policy Expert, COSV Group.
11:15 – 12:00	Networking Coffee Break
12:15 – 13:30	Session II: Unlocking Regional Investment Opportunities and Strategic Value Chains This session will explore how the Euro-Mediterranean region can unlock investment opportunities and build stronger, more integrated ICT value chains. The panelists will discuss investment priorities, regional cooperation, digital infrastructure, emerging technologies, and the policy and financing conditions needed to attract capital. The discussion will also examine how strategic partnerships, renewable energy investments, and cross-border infrastructure initiatives can



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strengthen competitiveness can strengthen competitiveness, innovation, digital resilience, sustainable growth, and regional connectivity inclusive growth across the UfM region

Thematic focus areas include:

- Where do you see the most significant untapped investment opportunities in the ICT sector across the UfM region, and what would it take to turn these opportunities into scalable, bankable projects?
- How can UfM countries strengthen regional ICT value chains (from digital infrastructure and cloud services to semiconductors, cybersecurity, AI, and digital platforms) and capture more value locally?
- What policy, regulatory, and investment barriers are currently limiting greater cross-border ICT investment in the region, and which reforms could have the greatest impact?
- How can public and private investors leverage the complementary strengths of Northern and Southern Mediterranean economies to build integrated regional technology ecosystems rather than isolated national markets?
- What role should strategic partnerships, development finance institutions, and blended-finance instruments play in mobilising private capital for ICT infrastructure and innovation in emerging markets across the UfM region?
- Looking ahead to 2030, which technologies and strategic value chains should the region prioritize to strengthen digital sovereignty, competitiveness, job creation, and resilience?
- How can renewable energy and cross-border infrastructure initiatives, particularly the Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy and Clean Tech Initiative (T-MED), help mobilise investment, strengthen regional integration and accelerate sustainable growth across the Euro-Mediterranean region?

SPEAKERS

- **Dr. Gehan Saleh**, Senior Economic Advisor and former Advisor to the Prime Minister of Egypt.
- **Huda Alwahidi**, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Economy of Palestine.



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	○ Kristof Symons, Former CEO, Orange Business International; Board Member, Ethernetics. ○ Mohamed Abdelrahman, CEO, Telecom Egypt Datacenter RDH. ○ Katerina Wolfova, Head of Unit, Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (MENA), European Commission. ○ Emrah SAZAK, Board Member, ALCOMET AD.
13:30 – 15:00	Networking Lunch
15:00 – 16:15	Session III: Strengthening Private Sector Engagement in Investment Promotion This session will focus on further engaging the private sector in investment promotion across the UfM region through win-win modalities. Panelists will exchange experiences, identify common challenges and opportunities, and explore practical approaches to fostering sustainable investment partnerships that support economic growth, innovation, and regional cooperation. Thematic focus areas include: ○ Grey areas and bottlenecks facing investors that are not always on the radar of the regulators and the policy makers. ○ What are the regional economic sectors that offer both high ROI and feature high potential for job creation, and what would it take to scale them further. ○ what instruments and mechanisms could favor a higher private sector engagement through de-risking investments and facilitating access to markets. ○ How can investment climate reforms contribute to improving the overall competitiveness of the UfM region vis-à-vis other regions. ○ Practical cases of mechanisms enabled public-private dialogue and turned recommendations into concrete follow-up actions. Scene Setter Marwa Farghali, Senior Economic Advisor, Union for the Mediterranean SPEAKERS



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	- Abdullah Çerekçi, Chief Strategy Officer at Kale Holding, and former Chairman of Outbound Investments Business Council at DEIK - Foreign Economic Relations Board. - Fatima Lasiri, Secretary General, Moroccan Exporters Association – ASMEX. - Tarek El Kady, Founder and Chairman, Investors of the Mediterranean. - Ahmed Zairi, Founder, AlphaYaz Advisory. - Conor Finegan, Senior Consultant, FDI Center. - Anela Karahasan, Senior Associate, Chamber of Economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
16:15 – 17:00	Wrap-up and conclusion Closing remarks Meltem Büyükkarakaş, Deputy Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean



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