

1. December, 2010

Report from 1st Working Group meeting in the ARAB-EU business facilitation network in Casablanca, Morocco, November 24-25, 2010

Participants: *Algeria: Forum des Chefs des Entreprises (FCE), Lebanon: Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI), Morocco: Confédération Générale des Entreprises du Maroc (CGEM), Syria: Damascus Chamber of Industry (DCI), Tunisia: Union Tunésienne de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de l'Artisanat (UTICA), Libya: Libyan Businessmen Council (LBC), Egypt: Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI), Denmark: Confederation Of Danish Industry (DI).*

Absent: *Jordan: Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI),*

First Working Group Meeting

On November 24 and 25, 2010, members from the participation organisations in the ARAB-EU Business facilitation network meet to discuss issues of common interest. The participants were divided into two working groups and discussed two overall topics: 1) Access to the EU Market in the agro industry and 2) Non tariff barriers within the greater Arab free trade agreement. In addition to the discussions in the working groups, several presentations were given in plenum. One presentation described the objectives and rationale behind the network, another presentation gave an introduction to the organisation and international activities of DI as well as a presentation was given on how to conduct policy advocacy in a regional and international context. All presentations are up-loaded on the homepage of the network at www.AE-Network.com.

After two intense working days with lengthy discussions, both working groups were able to develop an issue brief outlining the main intervention area for the working groups well as a detailed work plan for the coming months. Both issue briefs are attached and uploaded on the homepage.

A general conclusion at the meeting was that the issues discussed were large and complex, but that it was very useful to exchange viewpoints between the different business organisations, and to work on a common position in the region in order to change and develop the regional business environment. It was also noted, that the issues discussed were not exhaustive of the challenges in the regional and other issues would be dealt with in the following years of the network.

Next meeting

The working groups will meet again in Damascus, Syria on March 16 and 17, 2011 to continue the discussions and develop draft policy position papers on the issues discussed in Casablanca.

A draft Agenda will be circulated mid January and Confirmation from participants to attend will be required beginning of February in order to book hotel and flights well in advance.

Thank you for your continued support

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Project Manager