



CO-CHAIRS' STATEMENT
29th EGMONT GROUP OF FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNITS PLENARY

The **29th annual Egmont Group (EG) Plenary** took place from **July 3 - 7, 2023**, in **Abu Dhabi, UAE**. **Xolisile Khanyile**, EG Chair and Head of the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) of South Africa, and **Ali Faisal Ba'Alawi**, Head of the United Arab Emirates Financial Intelligence Unit (UAEFIU), chaired the meeting.

This year's event included **533** delegates (12 observers and one international partner) who gathered to improve global collaboration and effectiveness through the annual thematic discussion. During the event, 41 Memorandums of Understanding were signed.

On July 5th, the Egmont Group reached a strategic milestone when the Heads of Financial Intelligence Units (HoFIU) approved the move to a modern, collaborative IT infrastructure, the **new Egmont Secure Web system**.

The 2023 **EG Plenary Thematic Discussion** highlighted the **Use of Advanced IT Technologies by FIUs to Enhance their Operations**, including the use of privacy-enhancing technologies, the use of artificial intelligence, the use of blockchain technology and creative collaboration models to enhance FIU operations, FIUs' intelligence production output and engagement (domestically and internationally), and strategic effectiveness.

Amendment to Core Egmont Group Document:

The HoFIU reached an out-of-session consensus to amend one of its core documents by endorsing the ***Glossary of Key Egmont Group Terminology*** and to include it as an annex to the ***Egmont Group Principles for Information Exchange***,¹ which as stated in FATF's Interpretive Note 13 to Recommendation 29 for Financial Intelligence Units, set out important guidance concerning the role and functions of FIUs, and the mechanisms for exchanging information between FIUs.

The following projects also received final HoFIU endorsement:

- Abuse of Virtual Assets for Terrorist Financing Purposes,

¹ FATF (2012-2023), International Standards on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism & Proliferation, FATF, Paris, France, www.fatf-gafi.org/recommendations.html

"13. Countries should ensure that the FIU has regard to the Egmont Group Statement of Purpose and its Principles for Information Exchange Between Financial Intelligence Units for Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Cases (these documents set out important guidance concerning the role and functions of FIUs, and the mechanisms for exchanging information between FIUs). The FIU should apply for membership in the Egmont Group."

- Detecting Trade-Based Money Laundering and Misuse of Corporate Structures,
- Phase II of the FIUs' Capabilities and Involvement in the Fight Against Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism Financing (XRWTF), and
- Use of Open Source in FIUs' Operational & Strategic analysis.

Other **highlights** of the 29th Egmont Plenary:

- Many delegates participated in a **BECA Workshop** and **three Operational Training** sessions, including *OTS for FIU analysts on tracing virtual assets, open-source intelligence for financial analysis and investigation, and modern slavery*.
- The HoFIU adopted a **performance monitoring mechanism** for the 2022-2027 EG strategic plan to monitor the implementation progress of the four thematic areas of action set for the organization during this interval.

The organization selected **May bint Mohamed AlKhalifa**, Chief Executive of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Financial Intelligence National Center, as the new **EG Vice-Chair** for a two-year term, ending after the 2025 EG Plenary. May will join Xolisile Khanyile and Elzbieta Franków-Jaśkiewicz on our organization's leadership team.

Throughout the week, the organization also finalized several selection procedures for additional **EG leadership** roles for a two-year term ending after the 2025 EG Plenary, including:

- The **Information Exchange Working Group (IEWG)** selected **Sarah Paquet**, HoFIU Canada, for a second mandate as WG Chair
- The **Membership Support and Compliance Working Group (MSCWG)** selected **Fuad Aliyev**, FIU Azerbaijan, as WG Chair
- The **Training and Technical Assistance Working Group (TATWG)** selected **Neila Fathalla**, FIU Tunisia, as WG Vice Chair
- The **Americas Regional Group** selected as Regional Representatives **Jorge Marroquín**, HoFIU Guatemala, in April 2023 and during this Plenary, **RJ Berry**, HoFIU Cayman Islands.
- The **Asia and Pacific** Regional Group selected **Nuralia Rahim**, HoFIU Brunei Darussalam, as Regional Representative
- The **Europe I** Regional Group selected **Toms Platācis**, acting HoFIU Latvia, as Regional Representative.
- The **Europe II** Regional Group selected **Oxana Gisca** from FIU Moldova as Regional Representative
- The **Middle East and Northern Africa** Regional Group selected **May bint Mohamed AlKhalifa**, HoFIU Bahrain, for a second mandate as Regional Representative
- Following the decision of the HoFIU to approve the new **ESW General Governance Model**, **Hennie Verbeek-Kusters**, HoFIU the Netherlands, was appointed as Interim ESW Representative and will serve on the EC until the HoFIU selects the 'regular' ESW Board.

The EG now boasts **170 members** following the decision of the HoFIUs to accept the FIUs from **Lao PDR, Lesotho, Iraq**, and **Zimbabwe** as members of the organization.

The **Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (PPATK)** was voted as this year's **Best Egmont Case Award (BECA)** recipient with a case that earned recognition due to the volume, case complexity, innovative financial intelligence methods and the developed international cooperation network. Honourable mention goes to 2023 BECA runner-up TRACFIN (FIU France) for their successful case contribution.

The EG would like to express appreciation to its Observers and International Partners for their continuous support and cooperation, including the valuable updates from the European Commission, IMF, and the International Association of Prosecutors shared during their meeting.

The EG thanks the UAEFIU for extending a warm welcome as hosts of the 29th EG Plenary in Abu Dhabi. The EG appreciates the time and effort invested in planning the event and is pleased with the success achieved this year. Congratulations to the Head of UAEFIU, Ali Faisal Ba'Alawi, and his team for organizing a successful event!

Abu Dhabi, UAE
July 7, 2023

Further EG information and a list of 170 EG member FIUs can be found at egmontgroup.org.