

PRESS RELEASE

MENA FCCG Celebrates 10 Years of Collective Action at Anniversary Gala in Bahrain

A milestone evening honors a decade of trust, collaboration and shared commitment to strengthening financial integrity across the Middle East and North Africa

Manama, Bahrain – 11 November 2026 – The MENA Financial Crime Compliance Group (MENA FCCG) celebrated its 10th Anniversary with a commemorative Gala Dinner at Ninive Restaurant, Raffles Al Areen Palace, Bahrain, bringing together distinguished leaders from the public and private sectors, member institutions, strategic partners, international collaborators and friends who have contributed to the Group's journey over the past decade.

Hosted by Bank ABC and jointly sponsored by Bank ABC, Arab Bank and MENA FCCG, the celebration marked a symbolic return to Bahrain, where the Group held its inaugural Plenary Meeting in 2016.

Ten years later, the anniversary provided an opportunity not only to recognize the Group's achievements, but also to reflect on the relationships, shared values and collective commitment that have sustained its development.

Celebrating a Decade of Shared Purpose

Bushra AlHaddad, MENA FCCG member representing Bank ABC, served as Master of Ceremonies for the evening, warmly welcoming distinguished guests and reflecting on the significance of returning to Bahrain, where the Group held its inaugural Plenary Meeting in 2016.

Opening remarks were delivered by **AbdelKhalig Shaib**, Chief Legal & Corporate Affairs Officer and Board Secretary of Bank ABC Group, who reaffirmed the institution's longstanding support for the MENA FCCG as one of its founding members.



AbdelKhalig Shaib delivering the Host Institution's opening remarks

Shaib highlighted the importance of institutional leadership and sustained cooperation in protecting the integrity of financial systems, recognizing that financial crime challenges cannot be addressed effectively by individual institutions acting alone.

He also acknowledged the contributions of the Group's member institutions, Chair **Dr. Wissam H. Fattouh**, Advisory Committee members and regional and international collaborators, together with the vision and leadership of its Founder and Deputy Chair, **Michael Matossian**.

Looking ahead, Shaib reaffirmed Bank ABC's commitment to supporting the MENA FCCG and advancing its shared responsibility to strengthen financial integrity and the societies it serves.

A Founder's Reflection: Beyond Compliance, Toward Trust

A defining moment of the evening was the Founder's Anniversary Reflection, delivered by Michael Matossian, Chief Compliance Officer of Arab Bank and Founder and Deputy Chair of MENA FCCG.

Reflecting on the Group's origins in 2016, Matossian recalled the conviction that brought its founding institutions together: financial crime transcends borders, and no institution can confront it alone.

Over the past decade, the MENA FCCG has advanced practical guidance, professional education, compliance tools, emerging-risk awareness and dialogue among financial institutions, regulators, law enforcement, international organizations and academia.

Yet Matossian emphasized that the Group's most enduring achievement extends beyond its individual initiatives and publications.

"Collective action is not simply about what we accomplish together. It is about what we become together."

His reflections highlighted four commitments that have shaped the Group's journey: shared purpose, continuous learning, the courage to address difficult challenges, and accountability for translating intentions into measurable action. He also emphasized that the ultimate purpose of financial crime compliance extends beyond regulatory obligations to building and sustaining trust.

"Compliance is not the destination. Trust is."

This philosophy, he explained, begins with personal transformation, extends to stronger institutions and ultimately creates the foundation for collective impact.

The Founder's message challenged members and collaborators to view the anniversary not as the completion of a journey, but as a renewed responsibility to continue learning, improving and bringing more institutions and individuals into the Group's shared mission.

Read Michael Matossian's Full Founder's Anniversary Reflection.

Unveiling "A Decade of Collective Action: 2016–2026"

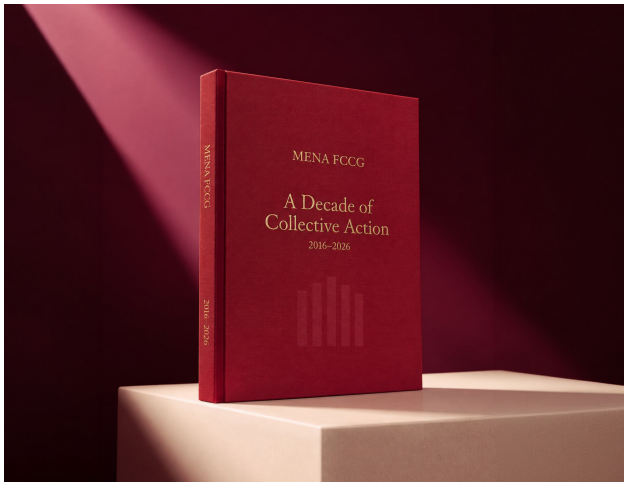
The evening featured the presentation of a specially commissioned commemorative book, **"A Decade of Collective Action: 2016–2026,"** documenting the MENA FCCG's origins, evolution, achievements and aspirations for the future.

Presented personally by Matossian during his anniversary reflection, the publication recognizes the individuals and institutions whose contributions helped transform an initial vision into a sustained regional initiative.

The book chronicles the Group's founding principles, governance, strategic alliances, professional education initiatives, practical guidance and growing international engagement.

A particularly meaningful section, "Voices of the Decade," brings together personal reflections and testimonials from distinguished leaders, members, collaborators and friends, offering perspectives on the Group's contribution and the enduring value of collective action.

Commemorative copies were presented to guests as a lasting reminder of the shared journey and the responsibility to build upon its foundations. More than a record of the past, "A Decade of Collective Action: 2016–2026" stands as an enduring legacy of the people, institutions, and shared commitments that have shaped the MENA FCCG's first decade — and an inspiration for generations to come.



A Decade of Collective Action: 2016–2026 — the commemorative anniversary book

Click on the book cover to explore the full commemorative edition.

Looking Ahead: A Second Decade of Collective Action

The anniversary celebration also marked the beginning of a new chapter for the MENA FCCG.

As the Group enters its second decade, its commitment remains anchored in strengthening professional capabilities, encouraging meaningful cooperation between public and private institutions, and translating collective knowledge into practical outcomes.

The following day's 10th Anniversary Plenary Meeting brought together distinguished regional and international leaders to examine evolving financial crime threats, geopolitical and sanctions risks, virtual asset misuse, artificial intelligence and opportunities for stronger regional cooperation.

The Gala concluded with a message from the Founder that captured both the significance of the first decade and the responsibility shared by those who will shape the next:

"The first decade belongs to all of us. And together, we shape a second decade of collective action."



Michael Matossian presenting the commemorative book during the Founder's Anniversary Reflection

About MENA FCCG

Established in Bahrain in 2016, the MENA Financial Crime Compliance Group is a voluntary, industry-led initiative bringing together leading financial institutions from across the Middle East and North Africa.

The Group promotes collective action against financial crime through professional development, practical guidance, information sharing, institutional collaboration and engagement with regional and international stakeholders.

Its mission is to strengthen financial integrity, support effective compliance and contribute to a more trusted and resilient financial environment.

Working Together, We Are Making a Difference.