

## “Promoting private sector development and investment in Morocco” – December 8, 2017

### Conference proceedings



On December 8, 2017, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has organised, together with Bank al-Maghrib and the Confédération Générale des Entreprises du Maroc (CGEM), a high-level conference to discuss barriers and opportunities for private sector development and investment in Rabat, Morocco. The discussion was underpinned by the key messages of the report [“What's holding back the private sector in MENA?”](#), a joint publication by the EIB, the World Bank

Group and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

At the opening of the conference, EIB Vice-President Román Escolano highlighted that Morocco is an important partner for the European Union and the EIB. By providing long-term finance for sustainable projects, the EIB supports economic development in the region and fosters inclusive growth. He highlighted the EIB’s newly launched Economic Resilience Initiative (ERI), which will allow the EIB to provide EUR 4.5 billion for additional projects, brings EIB support for the region to up to EUR 14 billion for the period 2014-2020. The ERI will also allow the blending of funds from the donor community with EIB financing to target critical investments in the region.

Abderrahim Bouazza, Director General of Bank Al-Maghrib argued that creating an environment conducive to private sector development and investment is essential for economic growth and this requires a detailed understanding of the determinants of



investment decisions. Continued efforts are needed to improve the business environment and reduce informality.



Hakim Marrakchi, Vice-President of CGEM, stressed that many firms in Morocco export or are foreign-owned, reflecting the country's political stability and its capacity to attract foreign investors. Moreover, he highlighted that the share of firms in Morocco that innovate is fairly high. At the same time, he called for further efforts to strengthen the business environment and provide high quality infrastructure, also to support the

digitalisation of the economy.

The conference brought together high level officials, representatives of international organisations and business leaders. The discussions showed that Morocco has a comparatively dynamic, efficient and competitive private sector. However, further efforts are needed to stimulate private sector activity by strengthening access to finance for all companies that wish to invest in viable projects. The financial system needs to better support small innovative businesses and should not only focus on a small number of large companies. Moreover, more investment in education and the development of skills of young people is needed to help them better integrate into the labour market and find quality jobs. The discussion also suggested that entrepreneurship, digitalisation and e-governance can turn into powerful engines for private sector development in Morocco.