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## CONFERENCE INVITATION

### **The path forward: which role for the EU in the Middle East WMD Free Zone Project?**

The Vocal Europe Team is delighted to invite you to an expert talk with the aim to discuss the EU role in the Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone initiative, by outlining the main opportunities and challenges ahead.

Since the first Iranian-Egyptian proposal for the establishment of a Free Zone in the Middle East, the European Union has always endorsed and supported the initiative. In fact, the neighboring Middle East and North Africa region represents a priority for the EU, specifically from a security perspective, considering not only the geographical proximity but also the close relations with this region.

Furthermore, the wider Middle East is a conflict prone region, characterized by structural instability and frequent crises. Therefore, the process towards the establishment of a Free Zone has always been complex and rich in obstacles. Moreover, in this geopolitical scenario, the security perceptions of Middle Eastern countries represent a crucial element, which needs to be properly considered in order to foster arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament in the MENA region.

For these reasons, during the conference it will be interesting to address the debate around the well-known dilemma *peace or disarmament first?*, by elaborating possible paths for a constructive dialogue in the region, while defining the way forward for a significant EU contribution in this regard. Thus, the main aim of the talk will be to propose renewed ideas and perspectives for the EU engagement in the Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone establishment process, towards security and peace in the region and beyond.

In light of your renowned expertise, we would be delighted to hear your distinguished opinion on the matter.

We would like to receive a confirmation of your attendance by replying to the invitation e-mail.

**Date:** Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022, 14h00-15h30 CET

**Venue:** Online

## **The Program**

**14h00**

### **Welcoming and Introductory Remarks**

**Adelaide Rabino**, Policy Researcher, Vocal Europe (Moderator)

**14h15**

### **Expert Perspectives**

**Marc Finaud**, Senior Advisor and Associate Fellow, Geneva Centre for Security Policy

**Chen Zak Kane**, ME WMDFZ Project Lead, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

**Tomisha Bino**, ME WMDFZ Project Researcher, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

**15h15**

### **Q&A Session**

**15h30**

### **Final Remarks**

**The Program could still be enriched with further guests.**