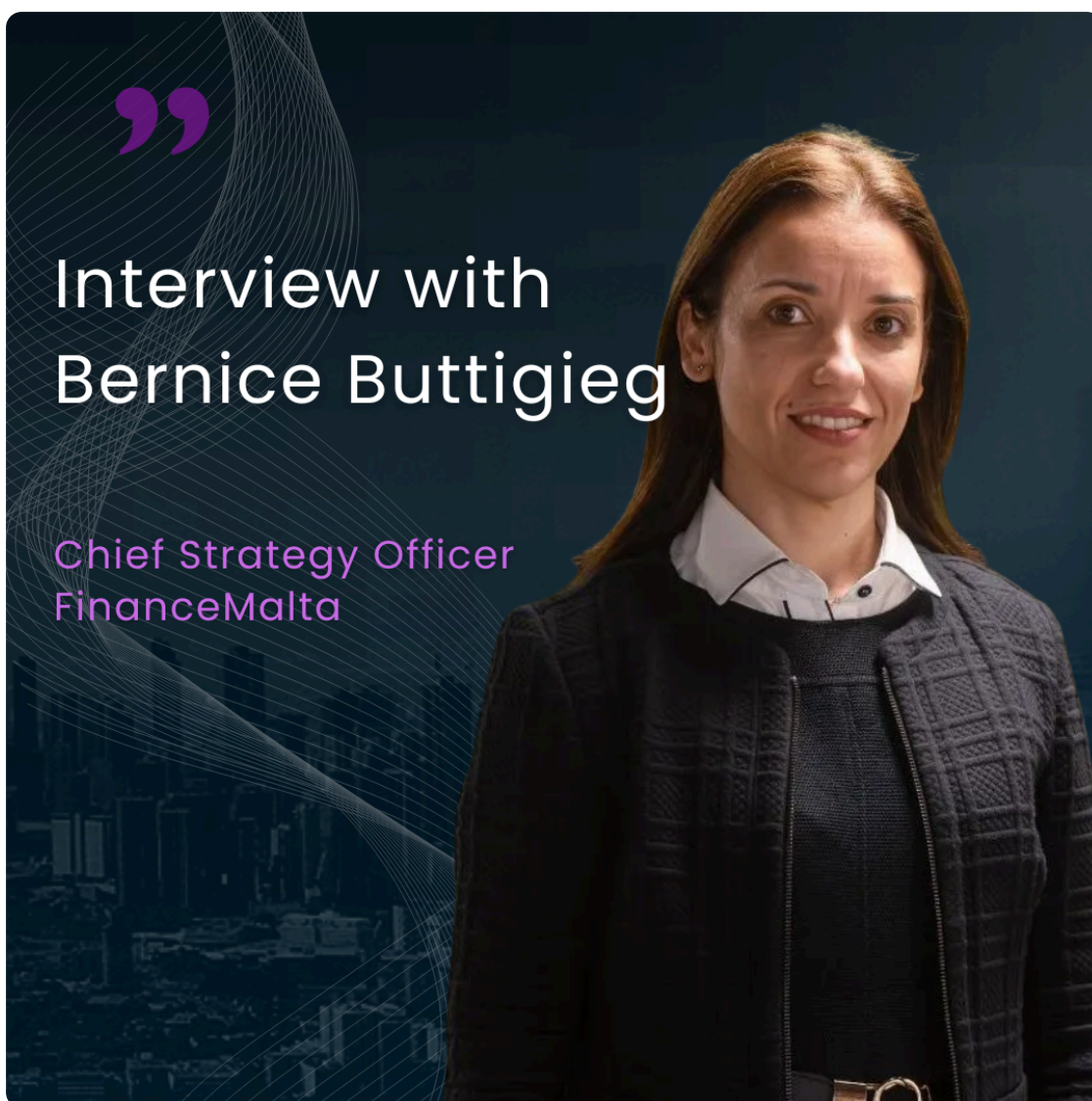




Newsletter December 2025

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VOICES



[Bernice Buttigieg](#) discusses [FinanceMalta](#)'s efforts to strengthen Malta's reputation as a trusted and innovative financial services center, while supporting the international growth of its members.

What have been the fundamental actions and key developments of FinanceMalta over the past years? And what is Finance Malta's ambition for the coming years?

Over the past years, [FinanceMalta](#)'s primary focus has been to strengthen Malta's brand and reputation as a trusted, innovative financial services center. We have also worked closely with our members to support their internationalization efforts, coordinating targeted promotional activities, strengthening Malta's visibility in priority markets, and creating more opportunities for industry operators to connect globally.

Looking ahead, we will continue building on this foundation by deepening our research work and collaborating with stakeholders to strengthen Malta's human capital requirements for the sector. Our future initiatives will remain closely aligned with the [Malta Financial Services Advisory Council](#) (MFSAC) Strategy and its "5 Ss" framework - Speed, Standards, Simplification, Specialization and Sustainability - with a refreshed version of the strategy currently in the pipeline. At the same time, our efforts will support Government's broader long-term [Vision 2050](#), which places financial services as a key driver of sustainable economic growth.

In this context, we will intensify targeted promotion, cultivate new strategic partnerships, and proactively invite international delegations to Malta so they can experience first-hand the jurisdiction's strengths, resilience, and forward-looking ecosystem.

The World Alliance Board Meeting and EGM will be held in Malta in March 2025. How does FinanceMalta position itself as a World Alliance member, and how do you view this gathering of the Alliance's members?

As an active World Alliance member, FinanceMalta positions itself as a collaborative, forward-looking financial center that is deeply committed to knowledge-sharing, innovation, and the joint development of sustainable solutions with its international counterparts. Membership in the World Alliance allows us to engage directly with leading financial centers around the world, exchanging best practices, learning from diverse regulatory and operational experiences, and contributing to initiatives that enhance the global competitiveness, resilience, and innovation capacity of financial markets. We see our participation as both a responsibility and an opportunity to represent Malta's dynamic financial services ecosystem while also bringing back insights that can benefit our local market.

Hosting the World Alliance in Malta is a privilege. We view these gatherings not only as forums for dialogue and cooperation but also as platforms to showcase Malta's strengths as a reliable, innovative, and well-regulated financial center. They provide an unparalleled chance to deepen relationships with our peers, explore potential partnerships, and collaboratively address emerging global trends. Moreover, these meetings enable FinanceMalta to actively contribute to shaping the Alliance's agenda, reinforcing Malta's voice in discussions that impact the future direction of financial centers worldwide. Ultimately, we see these events as important milestones to both celebrate achievements and drive forward the collective growth and resilience of the international financial community.

OPINIONS



Opinion by Thomas Krantz

WAIFC's Advisor to the
Managing Director



[Thomas Krantz](#) believes that the World Alliance members' 2025 event programs reveal key themes such as fintech, green finance, crypto, inclusion, and the essential values of trust and fairness in financial markets.

Krantz highlights the diversity of approaches across global financial centers, from local to international levels. Particular attention is given to regional forums like Astana's focus on Islamic and green finance, Stuttgart's innovative financing for SMEs, and Casablanca's role as a bridge between Africa and Europe. Other notable discussions include Hong Kong's fintech growth, Dubai's future financial cities, and Abu Dhabi's focus on capital networks and innovation. Krantz emphasizes the ongoing evolution of financial centers adapting to global economic and technological challenges while reinforcing local strengths.

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Opinion by Thomas Krantz

WAIFC's Advisor to the
Managing Director



[Thomas Krantz](#) argues that Kazakhstan's approach to green finance is strongly shaped by geography, history, and enduring ecological legacies such as the Aral Sea disaster and nuclear testing at Semipalatinsk.

These experiences, in Krantz's view, highlight the urgency of embedding environmental responsibility into long-term economic development. Krantz notes that Kazakhstan's green finance market has expanded through green bonds and loans supported by multilateral institutions, with the [Astana International Financial Centre](#) playing a central role in promoting standards and market development. Green finance is described as supporting renewable energy, clean transport, sustainable land use, and social infrastructure under a national taxonomy. Krantz also emphasizes persistent challenges, including higher issuance costs, reporting complexity, and greenwashing risks, while suggesting that Kazakhstan's cultural heritage may reinforce a deeper commitment to environmental stewardship.

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Opinion by Jochen Biedermann

Managing Director
World Alliance of International
Financial Centers



Dr. [Jochen Biedermann](#) believes that modern bank regulation reflects a long-standing trade-off between financial stability and commercial freedom that emerged with the introduction of deposit guarantees and central bank supervision.

Growing global interconnectedness, in this view, made coordinated capital standards such as the Basel frameworks essential to protect public guarantees and ensure fair competition among banks. Biedermann argues that defining appropriate capital requirements remains highly contested, as stronger buffers limit lending capacity while safeguarding taxpayers from systemic risk. The current debate surrounding UBS and the contrasting regulatory approaches of Switzerland and the United States is seen as a renewed test of these principles. Biedermann concludes that decades of regulation have reshaped banking activity and that the question of how risk and cost are ultimately allocated remains central for global financial centers.

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NEWS



World Alliance: Latest News - Our Members

Members of the [World Alliance](#) continue to demonstrate global leadership through innovation, collaboration, and ecosystem development.

[Abu Dhabi](#) and [Dubai](#) highlighted the scale and sophistication of Middle East capital markets, while [Astana](#) advanced digital-first regulation, and [Busan](#) strengthened its maritime finance position. [Casablanca](#) and [Mauritius](#) reinforced South–South and Europe-facing investment cooperation.

[Hong Kong](#) and [Frankfurt](#) emphasized strategic roadmaps and cross-border collaboration in a changing global landscape. [Malta](#) and [Oman](#) showcased leadership in crypto regulation and Sharia governance, respectively. Together, these developments reflect a dynamic global network shaping the future of finance through cooperation and shared ambition.

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NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS



Malta Strengthens Financial Ties with UK at Mansion House Event

[FinanceMalta](#) hosted “Malta Stronger Together” at London’s Mansion House, bringing together senior financial leaders from Malta and the UK to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

The event highlighted Malta’s position as a competitive, innovation-driven financial center and reinforced long-standing ties with the City of London. Discussions focused on Malta’s regulatory framework, investment opportunities, and role as one of Europe’s fastest-growing economies. Malta’s strong economic performance and key sectors, including shipping, aviation, and fintech, were showcased. The gathering reaffirmed the depth of the Malta–UK financial partnership and its strong potential for continued growth.

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FSDC Outlines Vision to Strengthen Hong Kong's Global Capital Market Leadership

The [Hong Kong Financial Services Development Council](#) (FSDC) released a concept [paper](#) outlining Hong Kong's strategy to enhance its role as a global financial hub in the digital era.

The plan emphasizes improving cross-border connectivity, diversifying asset classes, and strengthening infrastructure to connect Chinese Mainland and global capital markets. Key focuses include broadening investor participation, accelerating settlement, and fostering innovation-oriented enterprises. The report highlights the importance of engaging with long-term investors and expanding ties with key regions like the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America. Hong Kong aims to deepen market liquidity, modernize governance, and support new financial instruments while maintaining high governance standards.

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AIFC Launches Islamic Finance Advisory Board to Drive Regional Leadership

The [Astana International Financial Centre](#) (AIFC) has launched the [Islamic Finance Advisory Board](#), uniting top global experts to advance the industry in Kazakhstan.

The Board held its first meeting in Abu Dhabi during [AIFC Connect](#), marking a major step in strengthening Islamic finance across the region. It will guide legislation, Shariah governance, capital markets, sustainable finance, and digital innovation. AIFC leaders emphasized the Board's role in setting new standards and positioning Kazakhstan as a regional hub for ethical and Islamic finance. Members also assessed current industry challenges and opportunities to accelerate Kazakhstan's leadership in this sector.

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ADGM Academy Marks 7 Years with New Partnerships and National Talent Milestones

[ADGM Academy](#) celebrated seven years of impact during [Abu Dhabi Finance Week](#) with the event “Bridging Knowledge and Building the Nation,” highlighting its work in developing the UAE’s national talent.

The Academy reaffirmed its commitment to the [UAE National Agenda 2031](#) and signed eight strategic MoUs with major government, industry, and academic partners. ADGM Academy showcased its growing influence, having trained over 9,500 individuals, supported 6,000 job opportunities, and fostered a rising group of Emirati entrepreneurs. Leading universities such as [INSEAD](#) and [Columbia Business School](#) also announced new scholarships to support national leadership development. The gathering emphasized innovation, workforce readiness, and the Academy’s role in equipping future leaders across key economic sectors.

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Busan Finance Center Showcases Its Global Ambitions in London

The [Busan Finance Center](#) (BFC) took center stage in London as industry leaders gathered to explore Busan’s rapid rise as a major Asian financial hub.

Hosted by the [FS Club](#) and [Z/Yen Group](#), the event highlighted Busan’s growing influence in maritime finance and global market connectivity. BFC Director Dr. [Soongoo Ahn](#) presented the city’s strategic roadmap for building a world-class financial hub. [KHFC](#) showcased its expanding international work in securitization, while the FSS outlined regulatory cooperation with the UK. The session marked a strengthened partnership between Busan and global financial centers.

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CFC Highlights Its Role in Advancing AfCFTA and Africa’s Economic Integration

[Casablanca Finance City](#) (CFC) joined a high-level fireside chat at the [Africa Investment](#)

[Forum](#) in Rabat, hosted by the [African Development Bank](#).

CFC COO [Lamia Merzouki](#) discussed how the AfCFTA can move from policy to real business impact across Africa. Speakers highlighted the agreement's potential to boost intra-African trade by 52% and unlock a 1.5-billion-person market. They emphasized the role of financial centers like CFC in channeling capital, reducing risk, and strengthening regional value chains. The session reinforced CFC's position as a leading hub supporting investors across 50 African countries.

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NIFC Highlights Stability and Resilience at BDO Power Breakfast

[Nairobi International Financial Centre](#) (NIFC) CEO [Daniel Mainda](#) spoke on a high-level panel at the BDO Power Breakfast alongside leaders from [Simba Corporation](#), [KRA](#), [Jubilee Insurance](#), and [MSEA](#).

The discussion explored East Africa's shifting economic landscape, including fiscal pressures and global volatility. Panelists examined current economic headwinds and the impact of evolving fiscal policies on Kenyan businesses. They also shared strategies for companies to stay resilient and competitive amid uncertainty. NIFC reaffirmed its commitment to promoting stability and predictability for investors in Kenya.

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مركز قطر للمال
QATAR FINANCIAL CENTRE

QFC Showcases Qatar's Appeal to Global Family Offices at Annual Forum

The [Qatar Financial Centre](#) (QFC) hosted its annual Family Office Forum, gathering family office leaders, advisors, and next-generation members to discuss long-term wealth preservation.

The program covered global wealth trends, governance, succession planning, and cross-border structuring. A fireside chat with QFC CEO [Yousuf Al-Jaida](#) and [Visit Qatar](#) CEO [Abdulaziz Al-Mawlawi](#) highlighted Qatar's growing appeal to high-net-worth families, driven by stability, quality of life, and strong national branding. Speakers emphasized Qatar's rising visibility as a secure, globally connected destination for

multigenerational planning and investment. QFC also showcased its tailored business structures for family enterprises, including LLCs, SPCs, foundations, and trusts.

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DIFC Reaffirms Its Role in UAE's Growth on 54th Union Day

The [Dubai International Financial Centre](#) (DIFC) celebrated the UAE's 54th Union Day by reaffirming its commitment to shaping the future of finance and advancing the nation's long-term vision.

For over 20 years, DIFC has played a central role in Dubai's rise as a global financial hub, now hosting more than 8,000 companies. With strong regulation, world-class infrastructure, and a thriving fintech ecosystem, the Centre continues to attract global investment and support business growth. DIFC remains a key contributor to economic diversification under the UAE's strategic agenda, including Dubai's D33 plan. The celebration also highlighted Emirati culture through traditional food, performances, and community activities.

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For additional news articles on WAIFC and its members, please subscribe the [weekly newsletter](#) of our Managing Director.

EVENTS



[Workshop - Connecting Asia and Europe: Asset & Wealth Management, Green Finance and Digital Assets](#)

[Luxembourg for Finance](#) invites you to “Connecting Asia & Europe: Asset & Wealth Management, Green Finance and Digital Assets”, an exclusive workshop in Hong Kong on 26 January 2026. Featuring three parallel sessions and a networking drink, the event will explore the future of asset

management, sustainable finance, and digital innovation. Participation is by invitation only.

January 26, 2026. Grand Hyatt Hong Kong, 1 Harbour Road, Hong Kong

► [More information](#)



Asian Financial Forum 2026

The Asian Financial Forum (AFF) is the region's premier platform that brings together influential leaders from government, finance, and business communities globally for ground-breaking discussions and exchange of insights on the global economy from an Asian perspective.

January 26, 2026. Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, 1號 Expo Drive Hong Kong, HKI Hong Kong

► [More information](#)



27th Annual IBA Arbitration Day Conference

The 27th IBA Arbitration Day, titled "New Horizons," will focus on new technologies, new types of disputes, the influence of new sectors and geographies (space, smart cities, green hydrogen!) on the evolution of International Arbitration, and how to stay abreast of these developments.

January 28, 2026. Rosewood Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

► [More information](#)

Derivatives Day Dubai 2026

Details:

- 📅 Wednesday 28 January 2026
- 🕒 3:00pm – 8:30pm
- 📍 New York Ballroom, Waldorf Astoria DIFC

Derivatives Day Dubai 2026

We are delighted to announce that Derivatives Day Dubai will be returning for its sixth edition on Wednesday, 28 January. The program will feature forward looking discussions that reflect the growing sophistication of regional markets and underscore Dubai's expanding role in the global derivatives landscape.

January 28, 2026. New York Ballroom, Waldorf Astoria DIFC, Burj Daman, Al Mustaqbal Street, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

► [More information](#)



Inclusive FinTech Forum 2026

The Forum is a unique collaboration between [Kigali International Financial Centre](#), Rwanda's financial center facilitating international investment and cross-border transactions in Africa, the National Bank of Rwanda; Rwanda's Central Bank, and Global Finance & Technology Network, a company set up by the Monetary Authority of Singapore to advance fintech in the digital economy.

May 10 to 12, 2026. Kigali Convention Centre, Kigali, Rwanda

► [More information](#)



Dubai Fintech Summit 2026

Prepare for the landmark 2026 edition of the Dubai Fintech Summit, organized by [Dubai International Financial Centre](#). This global gathering connects markets and drives economic transformation, bringing together the world's leading innovators, policymakers, and influencers to shape the future of fintech and finance.

May 11 to 12, 2026. Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

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DOWNLOADS

Publications

- [Report on Strategies for Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Talent](#)
- [Whitepaper on Crafting the Digital Sustainability Reporting Ecosystem](#)
- [Report on Women in Finance - Compendium of Good Practice](#)
- [Report on Art - An Integral Ingredient for Financial Centers](#)
- [Whitepaper on Enhancing Supply Chain Finance for the Promotion of the Green Transformation](#)
- [Report on How Leading Financial Centers Advance Financial Inclusion and Literacy](#)
- [Report on Supporting Ecosystem for Sustained Recovery and Growth of SMEs](#)
- [Whitepaper on the Future of Financial Centers](#)

Institutional

- [WAIFC Presentation](#)

The [World Alliance of International Financial Centers \(WAIFC\)](#) is a non-profit association registered in Belgium, representing 27 leading international financial centers. Its members are government agencies, associations, and similar institutions developing and promoting their financial centers. WAIFC facilitates cooperation between financial centers, exchanging best practices, and communication with the general public.

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