

Brussels, 4 December 2020

MINUTES

of the 11th plenary session of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly

held in the Palau de Pedralbes, Barcelona, Spain,

on 23 January 2020

The Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) held its 11th plenary session at the Palau de Pedralbes (room: Gala), Barcelona, Spain on **23 January 2020, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

ATTENDANCE LIST

The co-presidents: Karl-Heinz Lambertz (PES/BE) and Mohamed Boudra (MA)

ARLEM members present:

EU Group

Jean-François BARNIER (RE/FR)	Paweł GRZYBOWSKI (ECR/PL)
Vincenzo BIANCO (PES/IT)	Eleni LOUKAIDOU (EPP/CY)
Laia BONET RULL (UCLG)	Markku MARKKULA (EPP/FI)
Joseph CORDINA (PES/MT)	Agnès RAMPAL (CPMR-CIM)
Francisco DE LA TORRE PRADOS (CEMR/CCRE)	Ricardo RIO (EPP/PT)
Nikola DOBROSLAVIC (EPP/HR)	Christophe ROUILLON (PES/FR)
Emil DRAGHICI (EA/RO)	Uno SILBERG (EA/EE)
Barbara DUDEN (PES/DE)	David SIMMONDS (ECR/UK)
Juan ESPADAS CEJAS (PES/ES)	Urmas SUKLES (RE/EE)
Mary FREEHILL (PES/IE)	Satu TIETARI (RE/FI)
Jasna GABRIC (RE/SI)	Jean-Luc VANRAES (RE/BE)
Olgierd GEBLEWICZ (EPP/PL)	

Mediterranean partners group

Mustfa ALBARONI (LY) <i>Observer</i>	Mostapha LIMANI (DZ)
Lahcen AMROUCH (MA)	Abdelkader MELIANI (DZ)
Abdellah BAHMAOUI (DZ)	Hussain MHAI DAT (JO)
Mina BOUHDOUD (MA)	Dusan RAICEVIC (ME)
Lizzy DELARICHA (IL)	Lütfü SAVAS (TR)
Mario DJURAGIC (BA)	Ahmed SBAA (DZ)
Rama Mohammed EL EZZI (JO)	Ana VERUSHI (AL)
Musa HADID (PS)	Yucel YILMAZ (TR)
Jihad KHAIR (PS)	

1. Opening session

The mayor of Barcelona **Ada Colau** welcomed the participants and said she was honoured to host ARLEM's 11th plenary session. Now more than ever local leaders had to cooperate on activities using a multilevel framework with local and regional governments to answer the enormous challenges in our Mediterranean region.

Alfred Bosch i Pascual, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Institutional Relations and Transparency, Autonomous Community of Catalonia, thanked ARLEM for coming to Barcelona. He hoped that the plenary would be only the starting point in a series of actions to mark the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona process and to achieving the main goals in line with the Agenda 2030.

Karl-Heinz Lambertz, co-president of ARLEM and president of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), warmly thanked the mayor of Barcelona for her invitation. Barcelona was a symbolic place for ARLEM where the assembly had gathered for the very first time 10 years before. He believed ARLEM had achieved its goal to provide the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation with a territorial dimension and demonstrate the key role of local and regional governments in the Euro-Mediterranean architecture.

Mohamed Boudra, co-president of ARLEM, thanked the mayor of Barcelona and her team, regional minister Bosch i Pascual and the UfM secretary-general. He believed that the Mediterranean needs a synergy of efforts from all levels of government to help better mutual understanding and to achieve the sustainable development goals of the Agenda 2030.

Nasser Kamel, Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), stressed the organic nature of the relationship between the UfM and ARLEM for peace and prosperity in the Mediterranean region. Local and regional authorities (LRAs) were at the forefront in promoting dialogue, cooperation and development. Climate action was an urgency.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

3. Approval of the minutes of the 10th plenary session

The minutes of the 10th plenary session, held on 27 February 2020 in Seville, Spain, were approved.

4. Adoption of ARLEM thematic reports

- Regional integration in the Mediterranean region

The rapporteur **Jihad Khair**, Mayor of Beit Sahour, Palestine presented his draft report on "Euro-Mediterranean integration: The role of regional and local authorities" along with several changes where he had integrated comments received on behalf of Ms Bonet Rull, Ms Delaricha, Ms Rampal, Mr Silberg, and Mr Moreno Bonilla

Mohammed El Razzaz, on behalf of Rachid Maaninou, Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean in charge of Business Development and Employment, presented the ongoing work on the report on regional integration in the Mediterranean region, commissioned by the UfM. The OECD was now working on drafting this progress report. The aim was to identify areas of urgent action.

Mohamed Saadie, President of UCLG MEWA and President of Union of Dannieh Municipalities (Lebanon) presented the work of these organisations to increase the capacity of the municipalities and their ability to attract funds and make the best use of them to reduce disparities.

Wided Lazrak, Tunis City councillor (Tunisia), spoke about decentralisation efforts in Tunisia and their international cooperation and projects for local development.

Mina Bouhdoud from the association of Moroccan Mayors, Mayor of Lagfifat, outlined factors blocking the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation such as the lack of both a culture of cooperation and resources as well as the weakness of local markets. She would like to see genuine cooperation creating opportunities for young people in their own areas, which would stop them from migrating to the north.

Xavier Cadoret, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, agreed with the rapporteur that territorial dialogue would only be possible if the LRAs were given all the means and competences needed.

Celia Rosell, representing the government of Andalusia, presented the contribution of Andalusia to the draft report which aimed to highlight the role of the border regions, particularly in regard to the migration challenge.

Vincent Garcés, President of the Foundation Assembly of the Citizens of the Mediterranean, called on LRAs not to forget the citizens, their demands and their concerns. Regional integration in the Mediterranean would not be possible without the participation of the citizens.

Jean-Luc Vanraes (RE/BE) proposed to set up a cooperation network based on the projects of the represented cities and their contacts. He outlined the need to respond to the brain drain in the region providing a win-win solution.

Agnès Rampal (CPMR-CIM) outlined her association's ambition to create a macro Euro-Mediterranean region with a macroscale strategy in order to give a large scale coordinated answer to the challenges.

Francisco de la Torre Prados (CEMR/CCRE), Mayor of Malaga, insisted on the need to adapt primary and secondary education to the current digital society.

The draft report was adopted by consensus with the changes proposed by the rapporteur.

- **Blue Economy in the Mediterranean**

The rapporteur **Vincenzo Bianco**, member of Catania City Council, Italy, presented his draft report on "Blue Economy for local and regional authorities in the Mediterranean". He outlined the expected impact of climate change on the Mediterranean sea and region insisting that the Mediterranean countries had to make courageous choices to mitigate this impact such as defining clear and shared objectives on the circular economy, banning the production and distribution of single-use plastics, or phasing out fossil fuels.

Isidro González, Deputy SG of UfM in charge of Water and Environment, thanked the rapporteur for this important and very timely report on the health of the Mediterranean sea and outlined the role of LRAs in raising awareness and taking action.

Jacques Blanc (EPP/FR) congratulated the rapporteur for the exceptional analysis and proposals in the report. If the North and the South Mediterranean acted together, they would make all the difference.

Agnès Rampal noted that the CPMR-CIM proposed some amendments to further reduce the impact of climate change.

The report was adopted by consensus with the amendments proposed by Andalucía, CPMR-CIM and a compromise amendment based on the amendment proposed by the Turkish delegation.

5. Partnerships for development

Paolo Ciccarelli, Head of the Unit "Cities, Local Authorities, Digitalisation" at the European Commission's Directorate-General for development and international cooperation, presented the programme "Partnerships for sustainable cities" launched in two phases: One was in implementation, the call for the second one would be launched in February 2020. The general objective of the programme was to promote integrated urban development through partnerships established between local authorities from the EU and partner countries.

Marco Ricorda from the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) presented the MC2CM - Mediterranean city-to-city migration project in support of urban migration governance, funded by the EU and the Swiss government, helping the local and national governments to find better synergies in managing migration.

Diego Escalona, Director of Operations and Partnerships, UfM, presented the ENI Cross-border Cooperation Mediterranean Programme and its thematic clusters. This programme had recently been labelled by the UfM and therefore enjoyed the full political support of the member states of the UfM and a technical support from the UfM Secretariat. A call for EUR 79 million was ongoing and another call would follow.

6. Debate: Climate action in the Mediterranean

Ambassador Grammenos Mastrojeni, Deputy Secretary-General for energy and climate action, UfM, presented the UfM – R20 project "Framing a Mediterranean value chain and sub-national climate fund" aiming to support the local communities (rural and urban) as agents of the sustainability. The capacity building fund would support local communities to access climate funding programmes.

Prof. Maria Carmen Llasat, Department of Applied Physics, University of Barcelona, presented the first Mediterranean assessment report on climate and environmental change established by 85 scientists from 19 countries and supported by the UfM secretariat. Although the Mediterranean region warmed 20% faster than the globe, there were also opportunities for transformation into a more resilient and sustainable world, where local and regional collaboration was key.

Houda Bourguiba, 1st Vice Mayor of Monastir, presented the ambitions of her city to go green, resilient and sustainable. She briefly presented several projects in this respect.

Agnès Rampal highlighted the common responsibility needed to act for the environment and for survival in the Mediterranean region.

Josep Canals Molina, Secretary General of MedCities, said local was a key word, cities and villages were the place to play the game.

Markku Markkula remarked on the increased visibility of cities and regions. Looking at the next CoP in Glasgow, he suggested sharing interests and activities to increase visibility even more.

7. ARLEM activities 2020

Members took note of the 2019 ARLEM activity report.

Members adopted the ARLEM political recommendations for 2020 by consensus.

Members adopted the ARLEM Action plan 2020-2022 for the new term of office by consensus.

Members appointed **Lizzy Delaricha** (Mayor of Ganei Tikval, Israel) as rapporteur on digitalisation of small and medium enterprises and **Agnès Rampal** (IMC-CPMR, Member of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Regional Council) as rapporteur on agriculture and food security in climate sensitive regions.

After the end of ARLEM's current term of office on 25 January 2020, ARLEM would enter a new term of office of two and a half years. Following the proposal of the Mediterranean partners group, the plenary assembly appointed **Musa Hadid** (Mayor of Ramallah, Palestine) as ARLEM co-president for the 2020-2022 term by acclamation.

The new co-president from the EU group will be the new CoR president (to be elected by CoR members at their first plenary session in the new term of office in February 2020).

The plenary assembly, at the proposal of the Mediterranean partners group, appointed by acclamation the following Bureau members alongside the co-president Musa Hadid:

- Cheikh Tahara BARADJI, Mayor of Kaedi (Mauritania)
- Mina BOUHDOUD, Mayor of Lagfifat (Morocco)
- Rama EL EZZI, Great Amman Municipality (Jordan)
- Mondher MARZOUK, Mayor of Monastir (Tunisia)
- Mustafa OTIFY, Governor of Giza (Egypt)
- Lütü SAVAS, Mayor of Hatay (Turkey)
- Ana VERUSHI, President of the Regional Council of Korça (Albania)

The seven members of the European Union group, including the representative of the European associations of local and regional authorities, would be nominated after the first CoR plenary session in the new term of office in February 2020 (approval by written procedure) alongside the CoR president in office, member by right.

The plenary took note of the recent letter of invitation received by the Mayor of Izmir confirming his interest in hosting the next ARLEM plenary. The Bureau at its meeting in May-June would make a proposal to members (written procedure).

The possibility of organising an event in Hatay (Turkey) was discussed.

8. ARLEM prize award ceremony – Young Local Entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean

The co-presidents awarded the ARLEM prize –Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean – to the winners: **Ms Leila Rima BOUSSADA** (Algeria) and the local branch of ANSEJ, the agency supporting young entrepreneurs at the local level.

The other shortlisted candidates are:

Mr Obayda ABO ASBEH (Taybeh, Israel)

Ms Khouloud AYUTI Khouloud (Tel Aviv, Israel)

Mr Georges BITAR (Beirut, Lebanon)

Ms Inna BRAVERMAN (Tel Aviv, Israel).

Highlighting the high quality of the submitted projects, the secretary-general of the UfM proposed that ARLEM and the UfM work together to valorise the experience and lessons to be learned from the winners and shortlisted candidates.
