



Brussels, 22 October 2019

MINUTES
of the fifth meeting of the
Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development
of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM),
held in Brussels
on 18 October 2019

The Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) held its fifth meeting in Brussels on Friday 18 October 2019, from 9.30 a.m. to 1.35 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Chairs: Olgierd GEBLEWICZ (EPP/PL) and Rama MOHAMMED EL EZZI (JO), replacing at this meeting Hussain MHAIDAT (JO)

ARLEM members present:

EU group

BIANCO Vincenzo (PES/ IT)	MARKKULA Markku (EPP/FI)
DRAGHICI Emil (EA/RO)	ROUILLON Christophe (PES/FR)
DUDEN Barbara (PES/DE)	SIMMONDS David (ECR/UK)
FREEHILL Mary (PES/IE)	SUKLES Urmas (RENEW E/EE)
GRZYBOWSKI Paweł (ECR/PL)	TIETARI Satu (RENEW E/FI)
HUTCHINSON Alain (PES/BE)	VANRAES Jean-Luc (RENEW E/BE)
LOUKAIDOU Eleni (EPP/CY)	

Mediterranean partners group

AMROUCH Lahcen (MA)	BRINET Hocine (DZ)
BENABDELLAH Chaib Eddour (DZ)	KHAIR Jihad (PS)
BOUHDOUD Mina (MA)	MERABET Farid (DZ)
BRAHIMI Nacira (DZ)	VERUSHI Ana (AL)
Observer: BEITELMAL, Abdlauf (LY)	

Apologies received

ALBARONI Mustfa (LY)	JANSSEN Hans (EPP/NL)
ARMAO Gaetano (EPP/IT)	LAMBERTZ Karl-Heinz (PES/BE)
BARNIER Jean-François (RENEW E/FR)	MORENO BONILLA Juan Manuel (AEBR)
BLANC Jacques (EPP/FR)	RAMPAL Agnès (CPMR-CIM)
CROVETTO-HARROCH Marjorie (MC)	RIO Ricardo (EPP/PT)
DELARICHA Lizzy (IL)	VAN DEN BRANDE Luc (EPP/BE)
DOBROSLAVIC Nikola (EPP/HR)	TZITZIKOSTAS Apostolos (EPP/GR)
GABRIC Jasna (RENEW E/SI)	

Speakers

AYARI Aicha	Team Leader, Femmes Leaders de demain Tunisia
BORA Manuela	Member of the Marche Regional Council and Regional Minister, Alternate Member of the

	European Committee of the Regions (PES/IT)
GONZALEZ Isidro	Deputy Secretary-General, Water and Environment, Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean
MARANGONI Luca	Team leader, Sea basin strategies and maritime regional cooperation, European Commission - Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
OVERMANS Christiane	Vice-President of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and of its German section
SUSSKIND Simone	Founder of Actions in the Mediterranean (AIM)
TOVAGLIERI Isabella	Member of the European Parliament (ID/IT)

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1. **Opening session**

The co-chairs, **Rama MOHAMMED EL EZZI** replacing Mr Mhaidat, and **Olgierd GEBLEWICZ** welcomed participants and provided an update on developments since the last ARLEM plenary session, held on 26 and 27 February 2019 in Seville. They mentioned the meeting of the ARLEM enlarged Bureau on 30 June in Ramallah (Palestine) focusing on the role of the local and regional authorities of the region in the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Besides, ARLEM has been active, through different meetings, in the areas of sustainable housing, blue economy, social policy and employment as well as women empowerment. ARLEM took part at the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Regional Forum (annual meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs and international organisations, partners and observers of the Union for the Mediterranean). Finally, the co-chairs noted the continued relevance and activities of the Nicosia Initiative.

2. **Adoption of the agenda of the fourth meeting of the Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development (COR-2019-03789-00-02-CONVPOJ-TRA)**

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. **Approval of the minutes** of the fourth meeting of the ARLEM Commission, held in Brussels on 11 October 2018 (COR-2019-03806-00-00-PV-TRA)

The minutes were approved without changes.

4. **Presentation and debate of the thematic reports**

4.1 Contribution of local and regional authorities to the development of the blue economy in the Mediterranean

ARLEM rapporteur Vincenzo Bianco highlighted EU citizens' growing concerns with regards to climate change. Protecting the Mediterranean investing in Blue Economy present a huge potential for the Mediterranean region, reversing the effects caused by human activity. Nevertheless, he highlighted three barriers to fully implementing a Blue Economy, namely the lack of 1) interoperability, availability and integrity of data, 2) governance structure, and 3) financial instruments.

He highlighted the key role of ARLEM's community of cities and regions to ensure success of the initiative. He called for collective efforts in raising citizens' and local governments' awareness of the opportunities that the Blue Economy could bring. An organisation for all Mediterranean countries with legal value should be created to ensure governance.

Luca Marangoni fully supported the report and called for its early adoption in view of the UfM's 2nd Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy, to be held in the first half of 2020. He highlighted shared objectives between the ARLEM report and the Commission's strategy on Blue Economy. To address the three barriers highlighted in the report, he raised the following developments: On data availability, a Horizon 2020 project was providing data on ocean observation and an expansion of a data sharing platform was foreseen. On governance, the UfM provided for a framework for dialogue between countries around the Mediterranean and could serve that purpose. ARLEM is to be invited to the next Ministerial meeting and Working Group. On funding, he concurred that more was needed, but that much effort was placed on streamlining Blue Economy into the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027. He called on the CoR to advocate this in the discussions on the MFF. Further investments were foreseen under the platform on Blue Economy (4.4 M €), Blue Economy call for proposal (22 M €), and support by the European Investment Bank for blue economy start-ups.

Isidro Gonzalez congratulated the ARLEM rapporteur on his timely report. Last week's UfM Regional Forum provided further evidence that the Mediterranean area was second most impacted area on the planet by climate change after the Arctic. Temperatures could increase by over 20% severely impacting the ecology. He confirmed the invitation of ARLEM's representatives at the Blue Economy Ministerial meeting in 2020.

Nacira Brahimi, Farid Merabet, Hocine Brinet and Olgierd Geblewicz contributed to the debate. The report received support and the importance of preserving the Mediterranean was highlighted. Some highlighted the need to focus on next steps and to ensure follow-up of the report's recommendations. Others called for a balanced sustainable development allowing for greater flexibility to preserve ecosystems.

Rapporteur Bianco thanked all for their input and stated that the reviewed version of the report would include positive developments that have been achieved over the past years, listing cooperation that is already under way with Mediterranean countries, as well as further scientific data to underpin the urgency to act. The report will be put forward for adoption at the ARLEM Plenary session to be held in Barcelona on 23 January 2020.

4.2 Regional integration in the Mediterranean

ARLEM Rapporteur **Jihad Khair** briefly presented his draft report on regional integration in the Mediterranean. He encouraged all ARLEM members to send him feedback to the draft report and to the specific questionnaire he had circulated.

He saw an important role for ARLEM to implement the recommendations on regional integration. An amended version of the report, including the answers by ARLEM members to the questionnaire, will be shared for the next January 2020 ARLEM plenary in Barcelona. An in-depth debate should be scheduled at that occasion.

5. Women's empowerment in the Mediterranean – what place for women in the political life at local level?

A debate was held on the role of women in political life at the local, regional and national level, moderated by **Simone Susskind**. The moderator highlighted the important role of ARLEM in this area and called for continued exchanges between men and women to ensure further progress.

Isabella Tovagliari highlighted progress in terms of women elected in the Italian parliament, as a result of a law imposing quotas, as opposed to lower representation levels at the regional level. She called for improvements in terms of quantity (more women in elected positions) as well as quality (types of roles given to women in the public sector). She expressed caution with imposed quotas, as these could be inefficient and discriminatory. Future challenges were the equal access to politics, implementing the regulation on work-private life balance as well as on parental and paternity leave.

Christiane Overmans raised discrepancies in terms of numbers of elected women in Germany between the national, regional and local level. Most parties have imposed an informal quota of 30% at the national level. However, at the local level, less women were put forward by their parties. As regarding quotas, she mentioned that there are already several quotas informally in place in Germany (city-region, Protestant – Catholic, East-West,) due to which men were currently nominated to bodies so the outcry in some quarters regarding a quota for women was false. She called for more networking and activism in youth organisations, to ensure progress at all levels and the need to change male mentality too.

Mina Bouhdoud focused on the role of women in Morocco, where new legislation facilitates women to participate in political life at the local level. A number of improvements were made to solidify the role of women in society by amending the family law and the constitution. She called for the fight against discrimination and the need to apply the principles of equity and equality, a prerequisite for democracy. She called for quotas in order to enable less-represented sections of society to be elected. She called for a change of societal mentality, without forgetting the diversity of women in society.

Manuela Bora highlighted the difficulties women in the EU still face in terms of combining work and family life. At the local level, political positions are often dominated by men. In the Marche region, a monitoring centre for gender issues was set up, which showed that over 40% of mothers leave their jobs once they give birth and interrupt their professional career. To address this, regional policies focus on vocational training and vouchers for child care.

Aicha Ayari noted the similarities that women continue to face whether in Tunisia, Germany or Italy. In 2017 a democratisation process programme was launched in Tunisia to involve more women in politics. The municipal level has seen the largest increase of elected women, attributed to a law on quotas (vertical and horizontal) at the local level. She called for young women to be given a voice and for women in high-level political positions to pave the way for change. She called on ARLEM to invest in programmes **for women by women** on the ground.

Lahcen Amrouch mentioned that gender equality was a societal and cultural issue, and raised the importance of laws and quotas. Morocco had introduced such a quota in 2009 for the municipal level, where in his view women can bring real added value. He saw a role for ARLEM to work on training and capacity building for men and women.

Benedetta Oddo highlighted the continued importance of the Nicosia Initiative, following a study visit between Libyan mayors and Galician fishermen/women. As a result of this, a new training for fishermen in Libya welcomed three women (out of a 100) for the first time.

Christophe Rouillon informed that quotas had been instrumental in ensuring gender parity in his municipal and regional councils. He and **Markku Markkula** highlighted the CoR's code of good conduct ensuring gender parity for CoR membership, appointing of posts and nomination of rapporteurs. **Barbara Duden** urged all not to be complacent. The Code of Conduct was a step in the right direction but more had to be done. Women had to be encouraged to stand as candidates.

Mary Freehill congratulated ARLEM for one of the widest reaching discussion on gender equality the CoR has had. She highlighted that women representatives in the Dublin City Council were growing, due to quota system linked to funding. More had to be done on childcare, financial resources, networking and accepting cultural differences. She called on ARLEM and its responsibility to continue monitoring impact of policies and follow up on the work initiated with this debate.

6. ARLEM works

6.1 Renewal of the ARLEM Mandate:

Markku Markkula informed on the updated rules of procedures which introduce, as of next ARLEM mandate, an alternate system for within ARLEM which would allow an increased presence in meetings. He reminded that the Mediterranean partners' group should decide on their posts for the next term of office at the 11th ARLEM plenary session on 22-23 January 2020 (meaning the ARLEM co-president, the ARLEM Commission co-chair, the members of the Bureau and the rapporteur for the next year thematic report). The CoR would appoint its representatives after its first new mandate plenary session on 11-13 February 2020. In the case of the CoR ARLEM Bureau representatives, they should be approved subsequently by all ARLEM members by written procedure.

6.2 ARLEM Award 2020:

Olgried Geblewicz called on all members to encourage young entrepreneurs to participate in the ARLEM Award: Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean (second edition). Applications were open until the end of the month.

7. **Any other business**

None

1:35 p.m. End of the meeting
