



Brussels, 29/10/2021

## **MINUTES**

of the seventh meeting of the Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM),  
held in Brussels and online on  
**26 October 2021**

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The Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) held its seventh meeting in Brussels and online on Tuesday 26 October 2020, from 10.00 a.m. to 1.45 p.m.

## ATTENDANCE LIST

**Chairs:** Antje GROTHEER (PES/DE) and Mina BOUHDOUD (MA)

ARLEM members present:

EU Group

AGUILAR VÁZQUEZ Carlos (RE/ES)	MAUPERTUIS Marie-Antoinette (EA/FR)
AZZOPARDI Samuel (EPP/IT)	MILANA Guido (PES/IT)
ARMAO Gaetano (COPPEM)	MILLO ROCHER José Enrique (AEBR/ARFE)
BARNIER Jean-François (RE/FR)	PAIS Michele (ECR/IT)
BRUNET-LECHENAULT Claudette (PES/FR)	PORZI Donatella (PES/IT)
CACI Sergio (EPP/IT)	PROUST Franck (EPP/FR)
DOBROSLAVIC Nikola (EPP/HR)	RATILAINEN Niina (EG/FI)
DRAGHICI Emil (EA/RO)	RIO Ricardo (EPP/PT)
GEBLEWICZ Olgierd (EPP/PL)	ROUILLON Christophe (PES/FR)
GRUBLIAUSKAS Vytautas (RE/LT)	SINKEVICIUS Mindaugas (PES/LT)
GULAM Ivan (RE/HR)	STAVRINIDES Stavros (PES/CY)
KARAJALAINEN Anne (PES/FI)	SOLINAS Christian (ECR/IT)
KRATSA Rodi (EPP/GR)	ZAIMIS Fokion (CPMR-CIM/CRPM-CIM)
LOUKAIDOU Eleni (EPP/CY)	

Mediterranean partners group

AMROUCH Lahcen (MA)	ÖZCAN Kürşat Engin (TR)
BOUDRA Mohamed (MA)	ULUDAĞ Bilal (TR)
BOURGUIBA Houda (TN)	VERUSHI Ana (AL)
EL EZZI Rama Mohammed (JO)	YILMAZ Yucel (TR)
EL MAHJOUB Ettaleb Abderrahmane (MR)	

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## 1. **Opening session**

**Antje Grotheer** welcomed the participants and presented the agenda.

## 2. **Adoption of the agenda (COR-2021-04319-00-02-CONVOPOJ-TRA)**

The agenda was approved without changes.

## 3. **Adoption of the minutes of the sixth meeting of the ARLEM commission, held in Brussels on 29 October 2020 (COR-2021-04196-00-00-PV-TRA)**

The minutes were approved without changes.

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

**Antje Grotheer** first gave the floor to **Guido Milana (IT/PES)** who, on behalf of **Vicenzo Bianco (IT/PES)**, presented the recently adopted CoR opinion on *a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – a new agenda for the Mediterranean*, highlighting the importance of creating a Charter of the Mediterranean on human rights, the creation of ad hoc forums of dialogue to ensure multi-level governance and the promotion of the empowerment of women.

### 4.1. Towards a renewed partnership between the EU and its Southern Neighbours – Innovation ecosystems and start-ups in the Mediterranean as a means of recovering from the COVID-19 crisis

**Antje Grotheer** highlighted that the pandemic deepened gender inequalities and reminded attendees of the need to identify positive initiatives.

Speaking on behalf of rapporteur **Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla** (President of Andalusia), **José Enrique Millo Rocher** called to mind the high level of unemployment in the southern part of the region. He spoke of the importance of using an ecological and inclusive approach to support entrepreneurship and announced that the report would contain ten recommendations.

**Aurélien Pastouret** referred to the past and still outstanding work of the EU, ARLEM and UfM to create a sustainable area in the Mediterranean. He underlined that match-making and creating a common networking space were essential.

**Giuseppe Provenzano** recalled the difficulties faced by young people in the region concerning unemployment or underemployment of university graduates. He emphasised the importance of creating a good ecosystem for the 40% of the population under 25. It is necessary for sectors to collaborate to create an ecosystem which reflects real labour needs. The UfM's guide of good practices should be made known.

**Mikel Landabaso Álvarez** underscored that it was not about not knowing what to do, but how to do it. There is a need for good social capital, meaning confidence in politics, resulting from no corruption and feasible strategies, among other things. Artificial Intelligence could play an important role. He also spoke of the need to identify new paradigms. Schools should use an auto-evaluation test to see how well they reflect the reality of work. Digitalisation is key in the global process.

**María Helena de Felipe** underlined the problems of the EU's bureaucratic system which blocks processes. According to her, financial support was not sufficient, more investments were needed and the point of view of the regions was essential. As programmes are usually the same every time, there is a need for innovation in EU projects with the Southern Mediterranean, on women's empowerment, for example. It is also imperative to include the African Free Trade Area, because tariff barriers are one of the main obstacles hindering integration.

The floor was given to **Slim Tlatli** who stressed the need to anchor innovation in a long-term vision and not only "recovery", and to create a new development model.

**Taleb el Mahjoub** stressed that education was fundamental in building the economy. He also stressed the need to evaluate precisely every situation to find strategies adapted to each individual reality.

**Jean-François Barnier** explained that it was necessary to change the culture in some countries to fit with the objective, notably regarding the approach to vaccination.

**Gaetano Armao** reminded attendees that the loss of GDP has been vast because of COVID-19 and emphasised the need to build bridges to islands, for example between Sicily and the rest of Italy but also the EU.

#### 4.2. Discussion on the second report – Service sector re-orientation: transferring skills from the tourism sector

**Mina Bouhdoud** opened the second debate.

**Mohammed Elrazzaz** stressed the need to raise emotional intelligence and skills like multiculturalism, HR, and stress management to help the transferability of skills, so that workers would be able to move to other sectors like administration, sales, etc.

**Mohamed Boudra** presented his draft report. Based on the importance of the travel/tourism sector in the region, he stressed the need to re-train the employees of that sector so that they could be transferrable to other sectors. He also underlined the role of LRAs to promote adapted measures regarding the reality on the ground.

**Cesare Onestini** stressed the need to use new data analysis methods. He pointed out the crucial role of sustainable tourism, in particular of handicrafts, which were central to it, and was becoming increasingly attractive. He recommended looking at local specificities.

**Slim Tlatli** drew attention to mid- and long-term approaches. He stressed the need to focus on training, to delegate competencies to local and regional authorities and to create training adapted to the labour market. He underlined that we do not have to react, but anticipate. Finally, he pointed out the need to move away from seaside tourism, as it was no longer favoured.

In a video message, **Natalia Bayona** mentioned the challenges faced by tourism. She introduced her vision for improving the connection between academics, national institutions and enterprises to innovate. It is necessary to connect to investors. She stressed the importance of education, added-value jobs, green investments and sustainability.

**Taleb El Mahjoub** thanked Mohamed Boudra for his draft report and asked about studies on transferring skills and the space for digitalisation.

**Christophe Rouillon** raised the possibility of creating a Mediterranean label for tourism to promote proximity tourism and suggested decentralised cooperation as a key for recovery.

5. **AOB**

**Antje Grotheer** announced that the CoR was working on a peer-to-peer cooperation project.

No other points raised.

13:45 End of the meeting.

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