



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL AND LOCAL ASSEMBLY

Recommendations for 2018

Adopted at the 9th ARLEM Plenary session on 21 February 2018 in Giza, Egypt

For the last years the Euro-Mediterranean region has been facing significant challenges and it is of utmost importance that, at all levels of governance, authorities work together and in close cooperation to tackle them. Painful and protracted conflicts, with an extremely high human and economic cost, remain without any solution in sight; extremism and terrorism have cast their shadow over the entire region; the migrant and refugee crisis are seriously affecting the countries in the area; the economic gloom and its social implications generate frustration which can in turn generate conflicts and instability.

Bringing together local and regional authorities (LRAs) from the three shores of the Mediterranean in a joint assembly, ARLEM's role is to promote a multilevel approach in the European neighbourhood policy (ENP) and the territorialisation of the Euro-Mediterranean sectoral policies, bringing them closer to the people, and providing support for decentralisation, stressing the link between political decentralisation and territorial development.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) can play an enhanced role in supporting cooperation between the EU and its southern neighbouring partners. Furthermore, the UfM has proved to be a valuable forum for political and economic discussion, providing a framework for cooperation on issues of common interest in the region.

ARLEM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2018

Migration

1. On migration, ARLEM recommends closer coordination between different levels of governance (local, national and international), including civil society organisations; local authorities shall be helped in managing the emergencies and the integration policy to tackle the current crisis. Local and regional authorities aim to ensure overall well-being in their territories through inclusive

public policies directed towards all inhabitants, especially the most vulnerable including migrants. This should be taken into account in related international frameworks.

2. ARLEM recommends that LRAs are given a greater say when immigration, asylum and integration policies are drawn up, and that LRAs in the Euromed region develop networks and instruments for cooperation and sharing best practices on various aspects of migration management (integration, social inclusion, employment, refugee protection, prevention of irregular migration, voluntary return programmes, etc.) and have direct access to funds.
3. The importance of the policies aimed at "*circular migration*" should be better underlined and effective and sustainable return policies, which fully respect the rights of migrants and destination countries, should be promoted in parallel with the development of decentralised vocational training offices.

Political future and better governance

4. Following the adoption of the report on "*women's empowerment in the Mediterranean region*"¹, ARLEM calls for local governments throughout the region to be equipped with the required resources to roll out the necessary education and training programmes and information campaigns for women. Furthermore, ARLEM "*emphasises the importance of open dialogue between national and local governments and civil society organisations on legislation and measures to promote gender equality*".
5. As stated in the report on the "*role of subnational authorities in the Mediterranean region in combating radicalisation and violent extremism among young people*"², ARLEM members underlined that "*local authorities in the region need to develop awareness, social integration and community-based participatory development programmes that focus on fighting extremism while, at the same time, enhance the young person's sense of belonging to their community, and increase trust among individuals, their local representatives, or members of parliament*". Furthermore, ARLEM members recommended that "*local authorities or municipalities in the Mediterranean region should form partnerships with their counterparts - who have developed various models for fighting extremism - in order to benefit from their expertise and best practices*".
6. ARLEM recommends a further territorialisation of policies, programmes and projects at the implementation level, notably in the UfM's priority areas, and taking into consideration the particular needs and concerns of LRAs. ARLEM shall work to guarantee that local and regional authorities from Mediterranean partner countries can make operational and manage European cooperation funds effectively and reaffirms its commitment to promoting the application of the principles of subsidiarity and multilevel governance.

¹ COR-2017-03964-00-01-TCD-TRA, rapporteur Ms **Mary Freehill** (IE/PES), Municipality of Dublin, Ireland.

² COR-2017-04420-00-01-TCD-TRA, rapporteur **Mohamed Kamal El Daly**, Governor of Giza, Egypt

7. ARLEM stresses the importance territorial development and capacity building of local authorities, with the "Nicosia Initiative" as an example of decentralised cooperation building up partnership with a bottom-up approach. In the context of the initiative taken for Libyan municipalities, ARLEM suggests the European institutions and member states of the Euromed area to consider the financing of bottom-up initiative through the CBC-Med program which is currently precluded to Libyan municipalities.
8. ARLEM recommends a new series of initiatives that promote the exchange of good practices and the transfer of know-how to fight corruption, including fostering check and balance structures, keeping in mind that corruption is a major source of instability and threatens economic growth, investment and political stability.

Economic development, including urban agenda, sustainable tourism, bio-diversity and blue economy

9. ARLEM recommends strengthening the tools for the urban issue in the framework of EU's relations with its neighbouring countries, and stresses the need to support the sustainable urban development agenda as it was proposed by the UfM.
10. ARLEM recommends that cities and regions in the Mediterranean region further commit to enhanced action on climate, notably through the Global Covenant of Mayors, to which ARLEM expresses its full support.
11. Based on recent CoR works³ ARLEM recommends the promotion of a "*safer and more secure maritime space, better governance of the sea and a smart and resilient blue economy*" on the three shores of the Mediterranean. Furthermore, ARLEM underlines the importance of the biodiversity and numerous marine protected areas in the Mediterranean Sea due to its strategic location, at the interface of three main continents, Europe, Africa and Asia.
12. ARLEM recommends the development of sustainable and solidarity tourism activities in the Mediterranean since the tourism is one of the most effective ways of redistributing wealth, bringing income into a community that might not otherwise be earned. It encourages cities and regions hosting cultural heritage to come along with proposals for projects in the context of 2018 Year of cultural heritage and it supports in particular those cities and regions which were affected by terrorist attacks and need special support to become resilient.
13. ARLEM recommends the participation of its members to the works of the UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development and its specific thematic working groups. The ARLEM members' input would improve the quality of the debates and the effective implementation of the objectives of the UfM Urban Agenda, to promote sustainable urban development in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

³

CoR opinion on the "*Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean*", rapporteur **Samuel Azzopardi**, Councillor, Rabat Citta Victoria, Local Council, Gozo (MT/EPP)

14. ARLEM emphasises that the funding provided through the European Neighbourhood Instrument should be increased, in particular to tackle the refugee crisis, natural disasters and armed conflicts.
-