

9 February 2021

ARLEM Activity Report

2020

2020 has been a year characterised by the terrible effects that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the entire world. Meetings that used to take place were reduced to a minimum and efforts were focused on fighting the effects – regarding health, social or economic aspects – to the societies around the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, in 2020, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) started a new term of office with co-presidents Apostolos Tzitzikostas (EL/EPP), president of the European Committee of the Regions, and Musa Hadid, Mayor of Ramallah, Palestine, and continued its works on the following priorities as per the ARLEM action plan 2020-2022.

1. Sustainable economic development

- **23 January, Barcelona:** The second "ARLEM Award – Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean" ceremony takes place within the 11th ARLEM plenary session. The award goes to the enterprise Rima Dates from Algeria. The enterprise was created in 2014 by Leila Rima Boussada and her brother, Hammou Boussada from Ghardaia, Algeria. They focus on low evaluated varieties of dates to produce new market products such as syrup or dates vinegar, stuffed dates with nuts and enrobed with chocolate. Rime Dates operates in an oasis area in Algeria, bringing economic dynamism and new income opportunities for the local population. They also bring awareness about good practices as they produce compost from production cycle in order to have zero waste. The enterprise has created six direct jobs since 2014. In addition, it has an important impact on indirect jobs as they train the farmers and their families on post-harvest good practices like cleaning and grading dates. Rime Dates received support from ANSEJ, a national agency for youth employment which supports young entrepreneurs at the local level. It supported the company with its creation by exempting tax and facilitating financing.
- **18-20 February, Tel Aviv:** Andros Karayiannis, Mayor of Deryneia Municipality (Cyprus) and CoR member, takes part at the MUNI WORLD Conference organised by the Federation of Local Authorities in Israel to discuss the key challenges and threats facing Smart Cities around the Mediterranean.
- **15 October, Brussels (via videoconference):** The evaluation committee of the ARLEM award: Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean (made up of representatives of the European Commission, the UfM secretariat, the European Training Foundation, the Joint Research Centre, the IMC-CPMR, MedCities, Eurochambres, the NGO "Womenpreneur" and ANIMA Invest; chaired by the CoR) meets and draws up a shortlist of five candidates from the 23 applications received from ten countries.
- **21 October, Brussels (via videoconference):** The ARLEM workshop during the European Week of Regions and Cities focuses on "How to foster sustainable development through rural entrepreneurship". Chaired by Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP), ARLEM rapporteur on youth entrepreneurship, Agnès Rampal (FR/EPP), ARLEM rapporteur on "agriculture and food security in climate sensitive areas in the Mediterranean", and Hammou Boussada, winner of the 2020 ARLEM Award, discuss with representatives from Extremadura, Spain, and mentorship programme in the Shouf Region, Lebanon.

- **29 October, Brussels (via videoconference):** ARLEM rapporteur Lizzy Delaricha, Mayor of Ganei Tikva, Israel, briefly presents his draft report on "digitalisation of the SMEs in the Mediterranean region" at the 6th meeting of ARLEM's commission for sustainable territorial development.

2. Climate action in the Mediterranean

- **29 October, Brussels (via videoconference):** ARLEM rapporteur Agnès Rampal (FR/EPP), presents and discusses her draft report on "agriculture and food security in climate sensitive areas in the Mediterranean" at the 6th meeting of ARLEM's commission for sustainable territorial development with Isidro González, deputy secretary-general in charge of Water and Environment at the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, and ARLEM members.

3. Women's empowerment

- **23 January, Barcelona:** For the first time in the ten years of its existence, ARLEM members appoint two female rapporteurs at once for the thematic reports to be elaborated this year.
- **15 October, Brussels:** The evaluation committee of the ARLEM award 2021 takes into particular consideration the percentage and position of women in applying enterprises.
- **18 November, Barcelona (via videoconference):** at the UfM Conference Women for the Mediterranean, Laia Bonet Rull, Deputy Mayor of Barcelona and ARLEM member welcomes the launch of the UfM Institutional Ministerial follow-up mechanism and its indicators, adopted this year by the UfM member states, that will allow to monitor and measure for the coming years gender equality progress in the region.

Other activities

- **21 January, Brussels:** the 14th ARLEM Newsletter is published.
- **25 February, Brussels:** The ARLEM secretariat participates in the meeting of the ad hoc SOM on the Blue Economy.
- **29 April, Strasbourg (via videoconference):** CoR and ARLEM member Christophe Rouillon (FR/PES) takes part at the Bureau of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.
- **3 June:** the 15th ARLEM Newsletter is published.
- **30 June, Strasbourg (via videoconference):** CoR and ARLEM member Christophe Rouillon (FR/PES) takes part at the Executive Committee of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.

- **22 July, Brussels (via videoconference):** The ARLEM secretariat participates in the UfM's senior officials meeting.
- **15 September, Brussels (via videoconference):** The ARLEM secretariat participates in the meeting of the UfM Working group on the Blue Economy.
- **23 September, Brussels (via videoconference):** The ARLEM secretariat participates in the UfM's senior officials meeting.
- **28 September, Strasbourg (via videoconference):** CoR and ARLEM member Christophe Rouillon (FR/PES) takes part at the Bureau of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.
- **29 October, Brussels (via videoconference):** The 6th meeting of ARLEM's commission for sustainable territorial is the occasion for its members to discuss about the future renewed partnership between the EU and its Southern Neighbours and on the transformation potential of the COVID-19 crisis for the region.
- **29 October, Brussels (via videoconference):** The Union for the Mediterranean presents its Strategic Action Plan on Sustainable Urban Development to ARLEM and CoR members.
- **5 November, Brussels (via videoconference):** The ARLEM secretariat participates in the UfM's senior official meeting.
- **17 November, Brussels (via videoconference):** The ARLEM secretariat participates in the 4th UfM Task Force on Environment.
- **24 November, Barcelona (via videoconference):** Mina Bouhdoud, co-chair of the Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development of ARLEM, Mayor of Lagfifat (Morocco) and Vice-President of AMPCC takes part at the MedCoopAlliance webinar "Towards a renovated Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean +25".
- **27 November, Barcelona (via videoconference):** co-chair Musa Hadid, Mayor of Ramallah (Palestine), addresses the co-presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean and ministers of foreign affairs at the 5th UfM Regional Forum – Building a stronger Mediterranean on the occasion of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona process. He renews ARLEM members' commitment to work on the ground towards the shared objectives of stability, development and prosperity for a truly sustainable development in the Euro-Mediterranean region in line with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. In the concluding statement, the UfM co-presidency encourages ARLEM to further play its role to amplify the voices of local and regional authorities and to promote the territorialisation of the Euro-Mediterranean sectoral policies.
- **1-3 December, Lisbon (via videoconference):** CoR and ARLEM member Christophe Rouillon participates in the Lisbon Forum 2020 of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe: "Learning from our global challenges – enhancing solidarity".

"Nicosia initiative" for Libyan local authorities (supported by the Delegation of the European Union to Libya)

- **27 January- 3 February, Tunis:** Continuous learning workshops for Libyan municipalities and universities.
- **3 February, Tunis:** Coordination meeting to discuss the next steps for the Nicosia Initiative.
- **14 September, Trento (via videoconference):** Representatives of ten Libyan municipalities and universities meet with European provinces, regions and research institutes to discuss how the competencies of local administrators in Libya could further be strengthened. They build on the consolidated partnership within the Nicosia initiative that had developed a decentralised system of continuous learning over the past three years, establishing structured cooperation between governments and universities in the country.

ARLEM statutory meetings 2020

- 22 January, Barcelona: 23rd meeting of the ARLEM Bureau
 - 23 January, Barcelona: 11th ARLEM plenary session
 - 29 October, Brussels (via videoconference): 6th meeting of the ARLEM's Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development
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