Next ARLEM plenary session
22 February 2021, fully remote

Programme of the 12th ARLEM plenary session

On 22 February 2021, from 11 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., ARLEM members will meet online for the 12th ARLEM plenary session, chaired by Mr Apostolos Tzitzikostas, President of the European Committee of the Regions and Governor of the Region of Central Macedonia (Greece) and Mr Musa Hadid, Mayor of Ramallah (Palestine). During this plenary session, we will have the pleasure of hearing from the Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Mr Nasser Kamel, [the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy] and Mr Olivér Várhelyi, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement.

This session will address the new partnership with the southern neighbourhood in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the greener future of the region and digitalisation as a stimulus for economic activity. ARLEM will adopt policy recommendations for 2021. Finally, this plenary will vote on the adoption of the recently drafted reports on Agriculture and food security in the context of climate change in the Mediterranean and Digitalisation of the SMEs in the Mediterranean region.
ARLEM Award 2021 – Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean

During the upcoming ARLEM plenary session, the award ceremony for the ARLEM Award 2021 – Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean will be held, with the 2021 award going to a young entrepreneur from the Mediterranean region and the local authority that supported him/her. In 2020, the award went to the Algerian company Rima Dates, created in 2014 by Leila Rima Boussada and her brother Hammou Boussada, from Ghardaia, Algeria. They are moving towards lower-grade date varieties to produce new market products such as date syrup and vinegar, dates stuffed with nuts, and dates coated with chocolate.

Forthcoming adoption of draft ARLEM reports

At the plenary session on 22 February 2021, ARLEM members will be asked to adopt the two draft ARLEM reports drawn up in recent months.

The first report, entitled Agriculture and food security in the context of climate change in the Mediterranean, was drawn up by Ms Agnès Rampal, President of the Euro-Mediterranean Commission, Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region (France). It addresses issues related to food security in the region and proposes solutions to the agricultural and food challenges facing the region. The report proposes ways to restructure agriculture and a diet that is poorly adapted to the region, in particular by proposing to return to and enhance the Mediterranean diet as well as new agronomic measures.

The second report, on Digitalisation of the SMEs in the Mediterranean region, was drafted by Ms Lizzy Delaricha, Mayor of Ganei Tikva (Israel), and deals with the imperative of digitalisation and the transformative capacity of the COVID-19 crisis in this area. The aim is to find lasting solutions for adapting to the new world, in which digitalisation is crucial, and to question and adapt it to the specific challenges of the Mediterranean region.
On 29 October 2020, the sixth meeting of the Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) was held online, co-chaired by Ms Ariana Censi, Deputy Mayor of Milan (Italy) and Mr Lahcen Amrouch, Mayor of Argana (Morocco), replacing Ms Mina Bouhdoud, Mayor of Lagifat (Morocco). During this meeting, the renewed partnership between the EU and its southern partners was discussed and speakers debated the transformative potential of the COVID-19 crisis for the economy in the region. Next, the two draft ARLEM reports, on agriculture and the digitalisation of SMEs, were presented to ARLEM members with a view to opening a dialogue with ARLEM members on turning them into a collective final product.

Presentation of the Union for the Mediterranean’s strategic action plan for urban development
29 October 2020, online

On 29 October 2020, in coordination with the UfM, ARLEM participated in the presentation of the Union for the Mediterranean’s strategic action plan for urban development, in which Ariana Censi (PES/IT) participated in her role as co-president of the ARLEM Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development. The aim of the event was to present the draft action plan for 2040 in terms of urban development in the Mediterranean region, focusing in particular on the issue of housing.
Workshop on rural entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean – European Week of Regions and Cities
21 October 2020, online

On 21 October 2020, as part of the European Week of Regions and Cities co-organised by the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions, the workshop entitled How to foster sustainable development through rural entrepreneurship – Success stories from the Mediterranean was held, chaired by Olgierd Geblewicz, ARLEM member. Agnès Rampal, ARLEM member, President of the Euro-Mediterranean Commission, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region and Deputy Mayor of Nice (France), was one of the speakers, and she spoke about the ARLEM report for which she is rapporteur. The winner of the ARLEM Award 2020, Hammou Boussada, manager of the company Rima Dates, also took part in the event. The link to the recorded video of the workshop is available online.

NICOSIA INITIATIVE

In 2016, the CoR initiative in Nicosia was launched as a concrete example of peer-to-peer cooperation between European and Libyan municipalities, supporting Libyan municipalities as a legitimate level of governance in a context of dysfunctional statehood. This initiative has been a great success, with more than 35 workshops and events attended by more than 500 Libyans from all parts of the country, thanks to the partnership established and the support of the EU. At the end of 2020, the EU confirmed significant new financial support that will allow this success story to continue.
Participation in the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process

We recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process through various online events organised by the Union for the Mediterranean, among others, in order to take stock of the quarter of a century that has passed since the beginning of the Barcelona Process. ARLEM members have therefore had the opportunity to participate in these major meetings in order to learn the lessons of the last 25 years and to consider the prospects to be developed for the coming years in the Mediterranean region.

On this occasion, 28 November was launched as the Day of the Mediterranean to raise the profile of this cooperation.

Encouragement received at the meeting to mark the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration

27 November 2020, Barcelona

The final declaration of the co-presidency at the end of the Fifth Regional Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean – which celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration, in Barcelona on 27 November – highlighted ARLEM’s positive work for the region and encouraged the Assembly to continue its work to "amplify the voice of regional authorities and promote the territorialisation of sectoral policies in the Euro-Mediterranean area".
On 2 February 2021, Mr Vicenzo Bianco, Catania City Councillor and President of the National Council of the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) and member of ARLEM, took part in the Ministerial conference of the Union for the Mediterranean, which was held online, due to the constraints imposed by the health situation, on the topic of the sustainable blue economy. His participation at the conference follows the adoption last year of the ARLEM report on the Blue Economy for local and regional authorities in the Mediterranean.