



**European Committee  
of the Regions**



*Brussels, 27 May 2021*

## **ARLEM NEWSLETTER – May 2021**

### **2022 ARLEM Award – Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean**

ARLEM is launching its fourth award for *Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean*.

**Registration for applications will be open from 15 June to 15 September 2021.**

Young entrepreneurs from the South Mediterranean partner countries will be able to apply [here](#).

With this award, ARLEM focuses on stimulating local business, supporting young people and encouraging collaboration between local public authorities and the private sector. The winning enterprise and local/regional authority will be announced at the 13th ARLEM plenary session at the beginning of 2022.

The difficult economic situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures to contain it highlight the limits of globalisation and the crucial importance of the local economy. More than ever, young local entrepreneurs need support to develop their businesses covering the needs of local communities. Special attention will be given to adapting and transforming the production process and other activities introduced to address the health crisis and its consequences.

The ARLEM award 2022 is open to all young entrepreneurs born in 1986 or later who are, or have been, supported by a local or regional authority. They must have run their enterprises for at least three years and the company must also have been registered for at least three years. The enterprise's registered office and its main economic activities must be located in one of the EU's Mediterranean partner countries<sup>1</sup>.

More information on the new award edition will soon be available [here](#).

<sup>1</sup>

Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Turkey.

## ARLEM Award 2021 winner



Erilda Krasi of 1001 Albanian Adventures, a tour operator based in the city of Berat, won the third [ARLEM Award – Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean](#), beating contenders from nearly two dozen other young small businesses from around the Mediterranean.

The evaluation committee, which includes organisations actively engaged in promoting an entrepreneurial environment in the Mediterranean region, praised the work of [1001 Albanian](#)

[Adventures](#) as an example of sustainable and responsible tourism that is helping to regenerate the local economic fabric and urban environment.

Ms Krasi, who began her business while a university student, said that the "main reason" for setting up her own company was the "heart-breaking" sight of seeing friends leave the country to find work abroad. She initially focused on attracting other young people to work in the company. The company's strong commitment to the



local community is reflected in its "[Solidarity Shop Berat](#)", which sells products made by people with special needs and other disadvantaged groups, as well as goods produced by local farmers and artisans. It is similarly committed to sustainable tourism – the company promotes walking and cycling tours and camping, and since 2017 has developed a number of projects focused on eco- and agro-tourism – and to environmental protection, including running clean-up campaigns and installing litter bins.

More information can be found [here](#).

## ARLEM reports and European Committee of the Regions opinions



The 12th plenary session held on 22 February 2021 saw the adoption of an ARLEM report entitled *Agriculture and food security in the context of climate change in the Mediterranean*, drawn up by **Ms Agnès Rampal**, president of the Euro-Mediterranean Commission, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region (France). It addressed issues of food security in the region and put forward ideas for tackling the agricultural and food challenges it faces. At the European Committee of the Regions in May, COTER appointed Ms Rampal rapporteur for the **opinion Towards a macro-regional strategy in the Mediterranean** and she is very much interested in

consulting ARLEM members. More information will follow. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Lucie Durocher ([ldurocher@maregionsud.fr](mailto:ldurocher@maregionsud.fr)) if you would like to know more and contribute to this work.

Also adopted at the same ARLEM plenary was another report, "The power of transformation: Digitalisation as a key factor to boost business around the Mediterranean", authored by Lizzy Delaricha, mayor of Ganei Tikva in Israel. It contains some very concrete recommendations for what cities can do to boost SMEs in their areas and these recommendations are presented in the following video:

[Digitalisation of SMEs in the Mediterranean Region – YouTube.](#)

**Mr Vincenzo Bianco**, member of Catania Municipal Council (Italy), is drafting an opinion entitled "**Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – A new Agenda for the Mediterranean**", slated for adoption at the 145th CoR Plenary Session on July 1. This opinion is the CoR contribution to the Joint Communication by HR/VP Borrell and Commissioner Várhelyi and focuses on the important role that LRAs can play in the implementation of this ambitious agenda as drivers for territorial development close to the people, in particular on topics such as the green transition. It therefore calls for the involvement of local and regional authorities as key factors for sustainable development and partners in planning.



The upcoming 7th meeting of the ARLEM Commission for sustainable territorial development in October 2021 is to present two recently drafted reports: *Innovation ecosystems and start-ups in the Mediterranean as a means of recovering from the COVID-19 crisis* (rapporteur: Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla, president of Andalusia, Spain, and representing the Association of European Border Regions in ARLEM) and *Service sector reorientation: transferring skills from the tourism sector* (rapporteur: Mohamed Boudra, mayor of Al Hoceima, Morocco, and president of the Moroccan Association of Mayors). Two CoR-commissioned studies on these topics will be available by summer in preparation for the draft reports and ARLEM members have already been consulted on *Innovation ecosystems and start-ups in the Mediterranean as a means of recovering from the COVID-19 crisis*.

### **Nicosia Initiative**

Five years ago at the plenary session of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly, the European Committee of the Regions and its Libyan partners launched the **Nicosia Initiative** as a platform of cooperation between European and Libyan cities and regions.



The initiative has entered a new phase in 2021, with different and substantial new EU projects starting for capacity-building for municipal staff, local economic development and local governance. These will allow continued activities with Libyan municipalities for the next four years and improvement of the population's living conditions.

The **TAMSALL** action, worth EUR 3 500 000, began in **January 2021** and will last for 33 months. It aims to strengthen institutional and administrative capacity based on a multilevel governance process. The **REBUILD** action, worth EUR 4 200 000, started on **1 April for a period of four years** and will focus on the extension of the continuous learning programme already developed. The Nicosia Initiative is a concrete example of peer-to-peer cooperation which has been contributing to creating trust and keeping an internal dialogue open among local authorities.

### **The Forum "Cities and Regions for Development Cooperation"**

Every two years since December 2009 the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INTPA) and the European Committee of the Regions have jointly staged the **Forum "Cities and Regions for Development Cooperation"** (formerly: Assises of Decentralised Cooperation). In February 2020, the director-general of DG DEVCO, Koen Doens, and the CoR secretary-general, Petr Bližkovský, had agreed to jointly organise a seventh edition of the Forum during the first half of 2021. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic this event is now planned to take place in a digital format at the end of 2021.

The overall objective of the 2021 Forum will be to continue strengthening the policy dialogue between EU institutions, local and regional authorities (LRAs) from the EU and LRAs from partner countries in order to discuss current policy challenges in development policy and share good practices in development cooperation at regional and local level. ARLEM members will receive further information in due course.

### **European Portal of Decentralised Cooperation**

In 2009, the European Committee of the Regions, together with the European Commission, launched the first **European Portal of Decentralised Cooperation** to foster engagement of local and regional authorities in development cooperation. The current portal has been archived and work has started on replacing it. As a first step, a feasibility study financed by DG INTPA is currently ongoing with the aim of identifying the critical features of a new portal. This is expected to be completed by the end of July 2021, after which the work on the new portal itself could start.

## European Development Days



The [European Development Days](#) will be held on **15 and 16 June** and the programme is now available [online](#). This year it will take place in a virtual format the topic will be "**The Green deal for a Sustainable future**". The CoR will showcase its activities in the domain of development cooperation and several CoR members will participate in the event.

## WestMed



The [WestMED Initiative](#) has been initiated by the Union for the Mediterranean with the support of the European Commission to help achieve a safer and more secure maritime space, create a smarter and more resilient Blue Economy and improve maritime governance for the western Mediterranean.

The European Committee of the Regions appreciates the opportunity to link up with this initiative in the next weeks.

**Workshop on funding for local and regional authorities in Mediterranean partner countries –  
European Week of Regions and Cities**

*October 2021, online*



The [European Week of Regions](#) and Cities held jointly by the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions in October will include a workshop entitled **Funding for local and regional authorities in Mediterranean partner countries**, chaired by **Agnès Rampal** (FR/EPP), ARLEM rapporteur, deputy mayor of Nice and member of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Regional Council, France. Held at the beginning of the EU's new long-term budget period, the workshop will provide an **update on the funding available** to local and regional authorities and will offer an exchange of ideas with representatives of the European Commission and the EIB and the author of the publication *EU financial assistance available to local and regional authorities in Mediterranean partner countries*, to be launched at the session.

- Registration will open on the event website (<https://europa.eu/regions-and-cities/>) in summer 2021.
- The CoR will publish a guide on funding for local and regional authorities in Mediterranean partner countries in English, French and Arabic by the end of this year.

### **International Day of the Mediterranean**

Coinciding with the **anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration of 1995**, which laid the foundations for the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean, the '[International Day of the Mediterranean](#)' will be observed on **28 November every year**. The celebration's aim is to foster a **common Mediterranean identity** and **raise awareness** about the efforts undertaken by all the stakeholders who work on a daily basis to **enhance cooperation and integration in the Euro-Mediterranean area**.

The **cultural dimension** will also be an important component as it will provide an occasion to hold **events, exhibitions and festivals** across the region with a view to **strengthening ties between the two shores**, promoting **intercultural exchange and dialogue**, and **embracing the diversity** of the region.



*In this regard, we invite all ARLEM members to consider how you could bring life to this new*

**Day of the Mediterranean** in your city, in your region.

**In Memoriam**  
**Tatiana Dimitrova**



Tatiana Dimitrova passed away on 10 April 2021 after a short battle with a non-COVID-19-related disease. She had been working on ARLEM in the secretariat of the European Committee of the Regions since 2014 and in the recent years had been the main force behind the creation of the ARLEM Award: Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean. We will remember Tatiana Dimitrova for her kindness. She was a very gentle and humble colleague, with a sharp mind and good sense of humour: a truly inspiring personality.

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