



**European Committee
of the Regions**



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EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL AND LOCAL ASSEMBLY

Recommendations for 2023

Adopted at the 13th meeting of the ARLEM Plenary, held in Izmir, Türkiye, on 8 November 2022

Twenty-seven years after the Barcelona Declaration set the goal of creating an area of peace and shared prosperity around the Mediterranean, many objectives have not yet been reached and there are still numerous challenges. The Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) is pursuing its commitment to providing a mouthpiece and platform for local and regional authorities to promote the "territorialisation" of Euro-Mediterranean sectoral policies and promote cooperation at territorial level.

As an assembly of local and regional representatives from the three shores of the Mediterranean, ARLEM is also a two-way communication channel bringing the cooperation between the EU and its Mediterranean partners to the governance level closest to the citizens as well as conveying messages from the ground to the institutional formats and fora of cooperation that otherwise mainly rely on the state level. The final list of citizens' proposals in the Conference on the Future of Europe includes the call: "We propose that the EU, in particular in its actions at the international level [...], improve its accessibility for citizens through better information, education, citizen participation, and transparency of its action.". ARLEM can play a very useful role here in following up citizens' expectations.

At its 13th Plenary, ARLEM members adopted their Action Plan for 2023-2025, and agreed to concentrate its work on the following three fields, so as to focus the assembly's work on issues where it can bring the greatest benefit to local and regional authorities on the three shores of the Mediterranean: inclusive cities, climate action in the Mediterranean, as well as energy and food security.

ARLEM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2023

Climate action in the Mediterranean

1. ARLEM calls for local and regional authorities to be fully involved in the implementation of the Agenda for the Mediterranean on matters pertaining to the green transition (climate resilience, energy and the environment), since the potential offered by a low-carbon future needs to be harnessed, the region's natural resources protected and green growth generated.

2. ARLEM stresses the key importance of climate diplomacy and of EU outreach to third countries in order to speed up the implementation of the COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact.
3. The 27th UN Climate Change Conference (COP 27), to be held from 7 to 18 November 2022 in the seaside city of Sharm el Sheikh (Egypt), constitutes an important opportunity for local and regional authorities in the Mediterranean to step up their efforts, taking into account the UfM ministerial declarations adopted in 2021 on the environment and climate change, on energy and on the blue economy, with a view to strengthening the role of local and regional authorities in global governance to improve implementation of the UN SDGs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and raise climate ambitions.
4. COP27 is an opportunity for local and regional authorities to change the language adopted under the Glasgow Climate Pact. ARLEM highlights that subnational climate diplomacy is necessary to meet national climate targets, as local and regional authorities (LRAs) prepare and implement detailed adaptation and mitigation plans that accurately take into account local environmental conditions, socio-economic requirements, energy and climate justice.
5. ARLEM stresses the importance of subnational governments in achieving Euro-Mediterranean climate ambition with a focus on the future implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this sense, it calls to localise the Sustainable Development Goals through policies tailored to local needs and improved ownership by local and regional players.
6. ARLEM encourages cities and regions in the Mediterranean basin to be involved in climate action and existing climate cooperation, including the Covenant of Mayors, which it strongly supports.

Energy and food security

7. ARLEM reiterates that meeting the increased energy demand as well as rising to the climate change challenge through decarbonisation requires a high level of multilateral responses and collective actions. Both objectives are at the core of Sustainable Development Goal 7: "ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all".
8. ARLEM calls for the rethinking of agri-food systems to adapt them to climate change and environmental sustainability as a priority to reverse current trends in the Mediterranean. This approach goes hand in hand with the development of strategies related to food trade and sovereignty to meet growing demand and cope with emergency situations.

Inclusive cities

9. Economic development must be accompanied by inclusive and sustainable social development to promote the resilience of the population and overall stability. To this end, public authorities, including those at local and regional level, should be both strengthened and monitored in their delivery of basic public services.

10. ARLEM realises the importance of integrating newcomers to make cities more resilient. While migration competences rest with national governments, the impact of migration is local, as the majority of migrants and refugees settle in cities. In order to avoid friction and to harness the potential that these flows and the related diversity bring for innovation, local economic development and prosperity, cities' commitment to and action for the inclusion of migrants and refugees is key. Local and regional authorities also need support for such measures.
11. ARLEM calls for the European Commission to focus on entrepreneurship, especially among young people, and particularly women, as well as on investment for the sustainable development of the economy in its southern neighbourhood.
12. ARLEM helps promote youth entrepreneurship with its award for "Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean", now in its fifth year. Youth entrepreneurship being a vector for economic development in the Mediterranean region, the assembly helps showcase successful examples of young entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean region as an inspiration to others. This initiative furthermore aims to demonstrate the positive impact that local and regional authorities in Mediterranean partner countries can have on the entrepreneurial ecosystem and to highlight how young entrepreneurs in Mediterranean partner countries actively take their future into their own hands and create jobs for local economic development.
13. ARLEM could envision an updated thematic report on sustainable urban development, following on from ARLEM's previous works in this field, as well as from the presentation and discussion of the UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 at a recent ARLEM commission meeting. With this, ARLEM is looking forward to bringing the voice of local and regional authorities to the table at the forthcoming third UfM ministerial conference on sustainable urban development, to be held in Zadar, Croatia, in May 2023, and to contributing to the related policy conferences.
14. In the light of recent disaster experiences and given the key role of the local and regional level in preparedness and responses to natural and man-made disasters, ARLEM could, in 2023, draw up a report on civil protection. This topic was designated as one of the five priorities for the UfM in the years ahead at the fifth Regional Forum of the UfM.

Day of the Mediterranean

15. ARLEM shares the objectives of fostering a common Mediterranean identity and of raising the profile and increasing the sense of ownership of regional cooperation; it therefore welcomes the success of the first Day of the Mediterranean celebrations on 28 November, following the initiative launched in 2020 at the fifth Union for the Mediterranean Regional Forum. ARLEM encourages once more its members to hold cultural events in their local areas with a view to strengthening ties, promoting intercultural exchanges and dialogue and embracing the diversity of the region.