

## **The New Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)**

Position of ARLEM Bureau adopted on 11 October 2018

The Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) is the political forum of local and regional authorities from the European Union and its Mediterranean partner countries.

ARLEM aims to:

- give a territorial dimension to the Union for the Mediterranean;
- promote local democracy, multi-level governance and decentralised cooperation around the three shores of the Mediterranean;
- encourage North-South and South-South dialogue between local and regional authorities;
- promote the exchange of best practice, knowledge and technical experience in the areas for which local and regional authorities are responsible;
- promote regional integration and cohesion.

The ARLEM Bureau is expressing the following points in response to the proposal of the European Commission to establish a new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

- The envisaged increase in effectiveness, transparency and flexibility of responses to rapidly changing situations and unexpected crises by merging several current external action instruments into the proposed Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument is welcome in principle.
- However, a long-term perspective and predictability have to be maintained in the EU cooperation with its Mediterranean partner countries, including at the sub-national level, i.e. in cooperation with local and regional authorities (LRAs).
- Policy objectives specific for the cooperation between the EU and the Mediterranean partner countries should be pursued and achieved, notwithstanding the merger of the previously separate instruments. In particular, the EU assistance to and cooperation with LRAs from Mediterranean partner countries must not suffer in financial or organisational way as a result of increased flexibility in allocation of financial and other resources between the various geographic and thematic programmes.
- To ensure this, ARLEM requests that a specific programme with an adequate budget directly allocated to projects for regional and local authorities be included under the thematic pillar of the instrument.

- The EU's Mediterranean partner countries are faced with numerous challenges. Therefore, a clear commitment of the EU is needed and a fair share of the EU assistance budget should be earmarked for the Mediterranean partner countries.
- Furthermore, EU financial resources should be adapted to target the needs of local and regional stakeholders, including by supporting small-scale projects and organising co-financing in a flexible way.
- ARLEM reaffirms the importance of linking the European Neighbourhood Policy and the instrument supporting it with the promotion of emerging macro-regional and sea basin strategies or initiatives, fully exploiting the added value of territorial and decentralised cooperation and considering the possibility of applying the methodologies and principles of EU cohesion policy.
- The ARLEM Bureau welcomes the proposal that the performance-based approach shall not apply to support to civil society and people-to-people contacts, including cooperation between local authorities.
- The ARLEM Bureau is of the opinion that the increased focus on the geographic pillar, with increased reliance on country-level strategies and programming based on key priorities and strategic investment in infrastructure, could lead to a more pronounced focus on beneficiaries at national level. ARLEM therefore stresses that projects and programmes at local and regional level should not be neglected, if we want the citizens of Mediterranean partner countries to feel the benefits of the cooperation with the EU.
- Local and regional authorities are to be involved in the programming of bilateral assistance programmes for the period 2021-2027. Consequently, monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be developed at sub-national level, and performance-based funding allocation should take into account progress towards decentralisation, as well as the level of development of local democracy and good governance at the sub-national level.
- Adequate political, financial and technical support for all Mediterranean partner countries will contribute to consolidating local democracy and territorial development.

Contact:  
ARLEM secretariat  
[arlem@cor.europa.eu](mailto:arlem@cor.europa.eu)