



Brussels, 29 January 2010

**MINUTES**  
of the constitutive meeting  
of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly,  
held at the Pedralbes Palace, Barcelona, Spain,  
on  
21 January 2010

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The Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) held its constitutive meeting at the Pedralbes Palace in Barcelona, Spain, **on 21 January 2010 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

## **ATTENDANCE LIST**

### **Co-chairs:**

President in office of the Committee of the Regions, **Mr Luc Van den Brande** (Flanders/BE), and  
President of the region Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate, **Mr Mohamed Boudra** (MA)

### **Members present**

Abdel Latif Lobna (Cairo / EG)  
Addou Mohamed Kebir (Alger / DZ)  
Al-Bashir Amer (Greater Amman / JO)  
Al-Hnaifat Khalid (Greater Tafilah / JO)  
Andersen Knud (Bornholm/DK)  
Bennour Karim (Hydra / DZ)  
Blanc Jacques (Languedoc-Roussillon / FR)  
Bouchbout Shlomo (Ma'alot-Tarshiha / IL)  
Boudra Mohamed (Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate / MA)  
Boussouf Rabah (Wilaya de Constantine / DZ)  
Bresso Mercedes (Piemonte / IT)  
Chabat Abdelhamid (Fez / MA)  
Cimino Michele (Sicilia / IT)  
Cohen Michael (Kalkara / MT)  
Delebarre Michel (Dunkerque / FR)  
Djuragić Mario (Republika Srpska / BA)  
El-Dakak Said (Qalyubiya / EG)  
El Khiel Fatna (Arbaoua / MA)  
Ervälä Risto (Sauvo / FI)  
Gémesi György (Gödöllő / HU)  
Golubović Vuka (Berane / ME)  
Håkansson Harju Lotta (Järfälla / SE)  
Hamza Ahmed (Nouakchott / MR)  
Harlinghausen Rolf (Hamburg / DE)  
Hereu I Boher Jordi (Barcelona / ES)  
Hussein Adly (Qalyubiya / EG)  
Jakovčić Ivan (Istria / HR)  
Joseph Jean-Louis (Bastidonne / FR)  
Katićin Danijel (Tkon / HR)  
Kertusha Seid (Durrës / AL)  
Loucaides Eleni (Nicosia / CY)  
Luca Lorenc (Shkoder / AL)  
Micallef Ian (Gżira / MT)  
Milia Graziano Ernesto (Cagliari / IT)  
Mlika Mohamed Mehdi (Sousse / TN)  
Mohammed Mariche Hocine (Tizi Rached / DZ)  
Montilla Aguilera José (Catalunya / ES)  
Moussa Demba Sow (Kaédi / MR)  
Papastergiou Georgios (Pieria / GR)  
Quayle David (Trafford / UK)  
Raimbert Christian (Monaco / MC)  
Roatta Jean (Marseille / FR)  
Rouillon Christophe (Coulaines / FR)  
Schoinaraki-Iliaki Evangelia (Heraklion / GR)  
Schuster Wolfgang (Stuttgart / DE)  
Selmanović Erdal (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina / BA)  
István Sértő-Radies (Uzka / HU)  
Szwabski Stanislaw (Gdynia / PL)  
Valcárcel Siso Ramón Luis (Murcia / ES)  
Van den Brande (Vlaanderen / BE)  
Vauzelle Michel (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur / FR)  
Vidmar Jasmina (Maribor / SI)  
Yahav Yona (Haifa / IL)

**1. Speech by Mr Ángel Lossada Torres-Quevedo, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, representative of the Spanish government and the Spanish EU presidency**

**Mr Ángel Lossada Torres-Quevedo** welcomed that ARLEM was created during the Spanish EU presidency in Barcelona, the city where Euro-Mediterranean cooperation began in 1995. He sketched out the priorities of the Spanish EU presidency, pointing out that Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and the development of the Union for the Mediterranean were very high on the agenda. It was important to involve ARLEM in these policies and he assured that the new Assembly had the support of the Spanish government and the Spanish EU presidency.

**2. Speech by Mr Jordi Hereu i Boher, Mayor of Barcelona**

**Mr Jordi Hereu i Boher** (Barcelona/ES) underlined that the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 already stated that local and regional authorities must be closely linked to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. The creation of ARLEM was the recognition of the work of cities and regions so far and thus an important step to making Euro-Mediterranean cooperation more concrete. He underlined the role that networks and associations of local and regional authorities played in this especially through the Forum of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean which took place in Marseilles in 2008.

**3. Speech by Mr José Montilla, President of the Generalitat de Catalunya**

**Mr José Montilla** (Catalonia/ES) expressed his pleasure to host the inaugural ARLEM meeting and welcomed ARLEM members, speakers and guests. He congratulated the Committee of the Regions for the initiative to create the Assembly, through which local and regional representatives got a tool to put into practice their cooperation. He underlined that the Catalan government had always supported the creation of a formal body of representation of local and regional authorities in the Euro-Mediterranean region and that the dynamism of the networks and associations had also be a key factor in this. Finally, he welcomed that Barcelona had been chosen as seat of the secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean.

**4. Confirmation of the ARLEM co-presidents and the ARLEM Bureau members**

The Assembly confirmed the President in office of the Committee of the Regions, **Mr Luc Van den Brande** (Flanders/BE), and the President of the region Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate, **Mr Mohamed Boudra** (MA), as ARLEM co-presidents.

ARLEM members were informed that the Mediterranean group, meeting on the previous day, had agreed that a member from Egypt would be the next co-president of that group (from 2012 onwards).

The Assembly confirmed the following Bureau members:

- Governor of Algiers, **Mr Mohamed Kebir Addou** (DZ)
- Mayor of Greater Tafilah, **Mr Khalid Al-Hnaifat** (JO)
- First Vice-president in office of the Committee of the Regions, **Mr Michel Delebarre** (Dunkerque/FR)
- President of the region Istria, **Mr Ivan Jakovcic** (HR)
- President in office of the external relations commission of the Committee of the Regions, **Mr Istvan Sertő-Radics** (Uzka/HU)
- President of the region Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur, **Mr Michel Vauzelle** (FR)

**Mr Yona Yahav** (Haifa/IL) regretted that his country was not represented in the ARLEM Bureau.

#### **5. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted without any changes.

#### **6. Speech by ARLEM co-president Mr Luc Van den Brande (Flanders/BE)**

**Mr Luc Van den Brande** (Flanders/BE) thanked the Catalan government for hosting the inaugural ARLEM meeting. With the creation of ARLEM, Euro-Mediterranean cooperation entered into a new phase, giving local and regional politicians from around the Mediterranean a new tool to cooperate, foster mutual understanding, develop new twinnings, exchange best practices, and address directly the governance bodies of the Union for the Mediterranean and the EU. ARLEM offered to go beyond traditional political dialogue on the state level through concrete engagement on the sub-state level for the implementation of projects on the ground with the aim of improving the lives of the citizens. Finally, he thanked all involved actors for their contributions to the creation of ARLEM.

#### **7. Speech by ARLEM co-president Mr Mohamed Boudra (Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate/MA)**

**Mr Mohamed Boudra** (Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate/MA) congratulated ARLEM members for the establishment of the new Assembly, which was a significant step to bring the three shores of the Mediterranean closer to each other. ARLEM would help to contribute to achieve peace and development in the Mediterranean space. Moreover, he hoped it would help deal with challenges such as poverty, desertification and migration, and increase cooperation on topics as for instance training, education, research and innovation.

#### **8. Speech by H.E. Mr Hamdi Sanad Loza, Deputy Minister for European Affairs of Egypt and representative of the Egyptian UfM co-presidency**

**H.E. Mr Hamdi Sanad Loza** expressed his pleasure about the creation of ARLEM and said that the Egyptian co-presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean looked forward to cooperate with the Assembly on concrete projects. He stated that the setting-up of ARLEM was not an easy task amid a difficult political environment but that it proved to be a feasible and rewarding initiative. Now that the

Assembly was created it would have to formulate its modus of operation, based on co-ownership, and attentive to the similarities and differences between its members' political, economic and social landscapes.

#### **9. Speech by Mr Pawel Samecki, European Commissioner for Regional Policy**

**Mr Pawel Samecki** congratulated the Committee of the Regions for the creation of ARLEM, underlining that the involvement of local and regional authorities was essential. He sketched out the EU strategies for the Baltic Sea and the Danube region and outlined cooperation programmes in the Mediterranean such as the Mediterranean Transnational Cooperation Programme and the Mediterranean Sea Basin Cross-Border Programme. He believed that cooperation across borders could bring about more growth and jobs and lead to superior solutions to common problems and challenges.

**Mr Adly Hussein** (Qalyubiya/EG) congratulated Mr Boudra for his appointment as co-president. He pointed out that ARLEM was an important body to address issues of common interest such as decentralisation, the protection of human rights, the role of women, sustainable development, and the involvement of civil society and the private sector.

#### **10. Group picture and coffee break**

#### **11. Debate on the role of local and regional authorities in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation**

**Mr Ian Micallef** (Gzira/MT) welcomed the creation of ARLEM as an initiative to involve all levels of governance in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. As ARLEM member and acting President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe he looked forward to the future cooperation of the two bodies.

**Mr Graziano Ernesto Milia** (Cagliari/IT) stated that he fully supported the ARLEM's rules of procedure and conclusions and suggested that the Assembly should particularly deal with the issues of trade and migration.

**Mr Jacques Blanc** (Languedoc-Roussillon/FR) stated that the Committee of the Region's Intergroup on the Mediterranean, which he was presiding, was ready to provide input into the works of ARLEM.

**Mr Rolf Harlinghausen** (Hamburg/DE) welcomed the fact that ARLEM consisted of members from the whole European Union and not exclusively of members coming from Mediterranean countries, since the whole EU contributed to a successful Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. In additions, initiatives such as the Baltic Sea cooperation could provide interesting ideas.

**Ms Mercedes Bresso** (Piedmont/IT) expressed the hope that the European Commission takes the creation of ARLEM into account and that it involved local and regional authorities in the future

definition of Euro-Mediterranean policies. It would be interesting to discuss topics such as migration, tourism, energy and water management.

**Mr Ivan Jakovcic** (Istria/HR) stated that tourism was an important point to be tackled by ARLEM. He welcomed that his election as Bureau member had been supported by his colleagues from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. This was a sign of a new spirit of cooperation, especially in view of the recent history of his region.

**Mr Christophe Rouillon** (Coulaines/FR) informed that he had been rapporteur of the Committee of the Regions opinion on "Local authorities: actors for development" in 2008 and emphasized the important role of decentralised cooperation. He hoped that there would be financing by the European Union for new cooperation projects.

**Mr Khalid Al-Hnaifat** (Greater Tafilah/JO) hoped that Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and the creation of ARLEM would bring about change for the citizens, stating that strategies needed to be developed to achieve this goal.

**Mr Michael Cohen** (Kalkara/MT) stated that ARLEM should deal with the topic of migration and that it should be an Assembly of projects and not only of words. He announced that at the end of 2010 a twinning festival would be held in Malta.

**Ms Fatna El Khiel** (Arbaoua/MA) pointed out that the process of decentralisation and regionalisation was a priority for Morocco. She underlined the importance of improving the rights of women and of intensifying the cooperation on migration. Finally, she suggested holding the next ARLEM meeting in Morocco.

**Mr Jean Roatta** (Marseilles/FR) informed that Marseilles would be European capital of culture in 2013 and announced that the second Forum of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean would take place in Barcelona in May 2010.

**Mr Shlomo Bouchbout** (Ma'a lot-Tarshiha/IL) underlined that peace begins when people talk together. He encouraged members to create new twinings and to begin work together to build peace.

**Mr Michel Vauzelle** (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur/FR) stated that the creation of ARLEM was a historic step as well as an important sign of the desire for greater solidarity, co-development and respect towards other countries and regions in the Mediterranean.

**Mr Ramon Luis Valcarcel Siso** (Murcia/ES) suggested discussing the topic of agriculture in the framework of ARLEM, as well as related issues such as water and desertification.

## **12. Adoption of the rules of procedure**

The rules of procedure were adopted with two amendments concerning rule 2 and rule 8.

### **13. Adoption of the conclusions**

The conclusions were adopted with one amendment concerning point II. Co-president **Van den Brande** informed members that paragraphs on the decisions taken on the co-presidents, the Bureau members and the committees would also be added to the conclusions.

### **14. Observer status**

The Assembly agreed upon a proposal of the Bureau to grant observer status to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

### **15. Appointment of a rapporteur for the yearly report**

The Assembly agreed upon a proposal of the Bureau to appoint **Mr José Montilla** (Catalonia/ES) as rapporteur of the yearly report (see rule 4).

### **16. Setting-up of committees**

Upon a proposal of the Bureau the Assembly agreed to set up two committees dealing with the priority topics of the Union for the Mediterranean and in 2010 particularly with urban and territorial sustainable development, decentralisation, information society, small and medium enterprises, local water management, cultural cooperation as well as migration and integration. Each committee could draft up to three reports per year, and, to do so, appoint rapporteurs. The exact format and titles of the committees as well as their membership would be defined in the near future by the Bureau. Members would get a notification by the ARLEM secretariat in due time to express their interest in being member of one of the committees.

### **17. Any other business**

Co-president **Mr Mohamed Boudra** (Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate/MA) announced that the ARLEM Bureau would meet shortly in Brussels (tbc).

The two committee meetings would take place in Brussels in the course of 2010 (tbc).

### **18. Confirmation of the date of the next meeting**

On a proposal of the Bureau the Assembly agreed to hold its next plenary session in Morocco in 2011.

### **1 p.m. End of the meeting**

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