



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

10th Plenary Session of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly

Opening Session

Sevilla, Spain - 27 February 2019

Opening remarks by the UfM Secretary General

H.E. Mr. Nasser Kamel

Your Excellencies:

Mr. Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the European Committee of the Regions,

Mr. Mohamed Boudra, Mayor of Al Hoceima, in Morocco

Our hosts,

Mr. Juan Espadas, Mayor of Sevilla

Mr. Juan Manuel Moreno, President of Junta de Andalucía

And Mr. Luca Jahier, President of the European Economic and Social Committee,
with whom I have the privilege to share this opening session,

Dear Members of ARLEM,

I am very honored to address you this morning, on the 10th Plenary Session of ARLEM, an integral part of the Union for the Mediterranean's framework with whom we share the same vision, of a Euro-Mediterranean area of peace, stability and prosperity.

10 years ago, in the Marseille Declaration, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the UfM stressed the importance of promoting the implementation of concrete action at local and regional level and commended the initiative of the Committee of Regions to implement what soon was to become ARLEM.

The UfM is "a unique space for dialogue, and the only one where all countries of the region are able to focus on their shared interest in sustainable security and human development, through practical cooperation on common projects.". And our territorial dimension needs to be fully engaged in these objectives.

Collectively we can be more effective in tackling the problems, the deadlocks and adversities, and focus on the solutions, on the promotion of regional cooperation and integration, on guaranteeing our peoples the perspectives for a better future.

During these 10 years, the UfM has proven its relevance as a regional platform – in terms of Ministerial Conferences, platforms for regional dialogue and labelled projects. It consolidated the cooperation and enhanced regional integration in many different areas, like Energy, Water, Urban Development, Blue Economy, Higher Education, Employment, Gender Equality and many more...

Areas in which your support is valuable. We need the local and regional authorities to be informed, to be active, to be supportive and to be a driving force for the introduction of reforms and for the promotion of cooperation.

In this regard, I am particularly engaged in reinforcing our joint initiatives. ARLEM is already an active voice in a number of our regional dialogue platforms, in such diverse thematic as Women empowerment, Energy or Urban Development.

But I feel that there is so much more that we can do together.

Recently we launched a UfM Peer to Peer Dialogue for Local Authorities' Efforts in Energy Transition, where the involvement of ARLEM could be of mutual interest.

And later this year, in Lisbon, we will organize the second edition of the UfM Business Forum on Energy and Climate Action, this time dedicated specifically to Local and Regional Authorities. We will obviously encourage a strong presence of ARLEM, not only institutional but through the participation of a significant number of members.

And, of course, we are working together on the launching of the Local Entrepreneurship Award, that we'll be delivering later on, to support young innovative entrepreneurs in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Today, you will be endorsing two very important Reports, one on Governance and Transparency, and the other precisely on Youth entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, you will be announcing two new reports to be prepared during the current year.

The Secretariat of the UfM would like to contribute to those reports, and we would be very honored to receive in Barcelona the rapporteurs chosen by ARLEM. We can share our expertise; the information on our actions and projects supported by the UfM; and the data that we have available.

This invitation, of course, is open to all members of ARLEM.

The work of the Local and Regional Assembly is extraordinarily important. You represent the peoples of the Euro-Mediterranean region, more than 800 million of our citizens, that need your engagement and commitment to the promotion of dialogue and cooperation. So I would like to commend you on your efforts and you can be assured, you will always get our fullest support.

Thank you very much,