



**European Committee  
of the Regions**



*Brussels, 3 June 2020*

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

### **2021 ARLEM Award - Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean**

Following the first two successful awards, ARLEM is launching its third award for *Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean* with a new timeline.

**Registration for applications will be open from 15 June to 31 August 2020.**  
Young entrepreneurs from the South Mediterranean partner countries can 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 12th ARLEM Plenary Session at the beginning of 2021.

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 2021 is open to all young entrepreneurs born in 1985 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 is available [here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Turkey

## ARLEM Award winners

### 2020



The enterprise **Rima Dates** from Algeria won the ARLEM Award in 2020. The enterprise was created in 2014 by **Leila Rima Boussada** and her brother **Hammou Boussada** from Ghardaia, Algeria. It focuses on lower-quality varieties of dates to produce new market products such as date syrup, date vinegar, dates stuffed with nuts and chocolate-covered dates.

As is the case with many businesses, Rima Dates is heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as Algeria is in lockdown. Winning the ARLEM Award gave them the opportunity to benefit from a coaching programme in the framework of THE NEXT SOCIETY, launched by ANIMA Investment Network with the financial support of the European Commission. The programme aims at mobilising, promoting and reinforcing innovation ecosystems and economic development in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Some practical aspects of how to overcome the crisis will be part of the programme.

Rima Dates operates in an oasis area in Algeria, bringing economic dynamism and new income opportunities for the local population. The company also raises awareness of good environmental practice as it produces compost from the production cycle, creating a zero waste environment.

Algeria is one of the biggest date producers in the world, producing more than half a million tons per year. Yet only the Deglet Nour variety is widely marketed (35% of the total production).

More details on the other candidates shortlisted for the 2020 award can be found [here](#).

### 2019



The first winner of the ARLEM Award, in 2019, the fashion and textile company Zimni Jdeed based in Tripoli, has temporarily transformed its production to help address the COVID-19 crisis in Libya. It has started to manufacture a line of protective clothing for medical workers.

**11th ARLEM plenary session**  
*Barcelona, 22 and 23 January 2020*



The 2020 ARLEM plenary session, marking the 10th anniversary of the Assembly, took place at the invitation of Ada Colau, Mayor of Barcelona (Spain), on 22 and 23 January 2020 at the Pedralbes Palace in Barcelona - the same venue as the first ARLEM plenary session held in January 2010.

Sustainable economic development, climate action in the Mediterranean and women's empowerment are the main priorities for the activities of ARLEM during the current 2020-2022 term of office. These priorities will need to be enhanced to reflect the needs of our respective communities, including in terms of economic recovery, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lizzy Delaricha, Mayor of Ganei Tikval (Israel) was nominated rapporteur of the upcoming ARLEM report on the digitalisation of small and medium-sized businesses. Agnès Rampal, a member of the Regional Council of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (France) was appointed rapporteur on agriculture and food security in sensitive climate areas, which she sees as a key contribution to a Green Deal for the Mediterranean. Both rapporteurs have started work on their reports and two studies are under way to obtain input from the world of academia. ARLEM members can contribute by replying to the questions they will receive shortly from the rapporteurs via the secretariat.

At the Barcelona plenary, ARLEM adopted its report on the *Blue Economy for local authorities in the Mediterranean*. The key message of the rapporteur, Vincenzo Bianco, member of Catania Municipal Council (Italy) and president of the National Association of Italian Municipalities, was:

***"The sea is a living witness of the deprived status of our environment. As many as 30 000 bottles end up in the Mediterranean every minute. A sustainable transition is urgent and much-needed and the Blue Economy is an opportunity to achieve it."***

The Assembly also adopted a report on *Euro-Mediterranean integration: The role of regional and local authorities* by Jihad Khair, Mayor of Beit Sahour (Palestine), who stated:

***"Local and regional authorities have demonstrated that they are pivotal in boosting regional integration in the Mediterranean and we must continue our efforts in the same direction. Together, we can move ahead in a much better way."***

More information on the plenary and related documents is available [here](#).

## COVID-19 Exchange Platform and website on partner countries

The European Committee of the Regions has set up a [COVID-19 exchange platform](#) as a dedicated hub for information-sharing. The Committee is in frequent contact on COVID-19 with partners in candidate countries and potential candidates for EU enlargement, the Eastern Partnership countries, the Mediterranean partner countries and beyond. Worldwide, regional and local leaders are at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic. The web page [COVID-19 in Selected Partner Countries](#) has been created to present measures to tackle COVID-19 and other related information from selected partner countries, based on information provided by the CoR's partners.

All ARLEM members are invited to contact the secretariat ([arlem-secretariat@cor.europa.eu](mailto:arlem-secretariat@cor.europa.eu)) should they be interested in sharing their experiences or examples of good practice in their cities or regions.

## EU response to the coronavirus pandemic in the Southern Neighbourhood

As part of its global response to the coronavirus outbreak, the European Commission is standing by its partners in the Southern Neighbourhood and is adjusting its ongoing assistance programmes and reorienting its programming for 2020 to mobilise emergency support. Based on needs expressed by partner countries, this EU support has been reoriented to focus specifically on the health, economic and social sectors.

The EU is securing EUR 2.1 billion for the Southern Neighbourhood.

In addition, the overall package includes another EUR 1.42 billion in guarantees for Africa and the Southern neighbourhood from the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD).

More information is available [here](#) and [here](#).

## One World, Our World #Solidaction campaign of the North-South Centre



With the mission of spreading the universal values upheld by the Council of Europe (CoE) – human rights, democracy and the rule of law – beyond the European continent, the [North-South Centre](#), an "Enlarged Partial Agreement" of the CoE, works with policy makers and civil society, targeting in particular young people and women, to promote intercultural dialogue and global citizenship values and skills.

Concerned about the COVID-19 consequences for the most vulnerable populations, the North-South Centre launched the «[One World, Our World #SolidAction](#)» campaign in April. As a first step, the campaign highlights and encourages good practice, inspiring examples and practical gestures of solidarity taking place all around the world. Later, using a bottom-up approach, the campaign will lead to a multi-stakeholder reflection on the potential solutions for overcoming the negative consequences of a globalisation with multiple exclusions and moving towards a sane and sustainable system of world governance for all.

## Local2030 spotlight series - a UN initiative

Local2030, the initiative of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on localising the SDGs, has recently launched the [Local2030 Spotlight Series](#). It supports partners in collaborating and sharing knowledge and expertise to respond to and recover from COVID-19.

The series aims to facilitate experience-sharing among stakeholders involved in the local response to the COVID-19 crisis through short videos. Partners around the world are invited to record and share two-minute video contributions highlighting their perspectives on the main challenges and innovative solutions developed at local level to fight the outbreak. Interested partners can share their videos using the [Local2030 dropbox](#) or via twitter using **#Local2030 #SpotlightSeries**. Videos will be featured in the Local2030 media channels and fed into the global debate on COVID-19.

Every week a hot topic will be addressed. In the first week of May, the debate was centred around **housing and shelter**, followed by a second series to discuss challenges and solutions concerning **urban basic services delivery**.

For any questions, please contact [martino.miraglia@un.org](mailto:martino.miraglia@un.org).

## Nicosia Initiative

Launched at the ARLEM plenary in Nicosia, Cyprus in January 2016, the Nicosia Initiative is the European Committee of the Region's capacity-building project aimed at strengthening local authorities in Libya.



From 27 January to 3 February 2020, a continuous learning workshop for Libyan municipalities and universities was held in Tunis by CIEDEL Lyon and CCI Trento, with support from VNG International and funding from the EU Delegation to Libya.

The workshop brought together representatives of nine Libyan municipalities and focused on the evaluation of the local pilot implementation of continuous learning modules in Libyan universities, the relevance of the territorial approach to local development in the Libyan context, and the finalisation of a full curriculum for local administrators in Libyan municipal administrations.

On 3 February 2020, a Nicosia Initiative coordination meeting at the EU Delegation to Libya in Tunis, chaired by EU Ambassador Alan Bugeja, brought together the Libyan municipalities' focal points with representatives of the main implementing organisations to discuss future steps and priorities for the Nicosia Initiative. During this meeting, the EU Delegation reiterated its support for the Nicosia Initiative under a new programme, the roll-out of which is expected to start in 2020.

### SAVE THE DATE:

All ARLEM members will be invited to the 6th meeting of the Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development on 29 October 2020 in Brussels.