



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL AND LOCAL ASSEMBLY

2024-2026 ARLEM Civil Protection Roadmap

1. Background

As an assembly of local and regional representatives from the three shores of the Mediterranean, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) is 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 key role in following up on citizens' expectations.

Given the transboundary nature of crises like floods, earthquakes and wildfires, there is a pressing need for enhanced civil protection cooperation across the three shores of the Mediterranean, including on a regional and local level. This is particularly true due to cities' and regions' primary role in responses to natural and man-made disasters.

To contribute to this aim, in light of recent disaster experiences and in line with the ARLEM's recommendations for 2023, the assembly recently adopted a report on civil protection. With the report, the local and regional authorities of the three shores of the Mediterranean that form part of ARLEM, committed to advancing their efforts in the face of escalating climate change impacts. To this end, they recognised the pivotal role that ARLEM can play as a platform for dialogue and interregional cooperation among local and regional authorities in the participating countries.

They confirmed that Mediterranean local and regional authorities are dedicated to addressing climate change impacts through ARLEM, emphasising risk reduction integration into EU and UfM policies. Furthermore, ARLEM recommends that the EU prioritise investing in foresight to prepare societies for

future challenges, involving local and regional throughout the civil protection policy process, and aligning with active subsidiarity and multi-level governance¹.

Besides, ARLEM members suggested to strengthen the role of volunteers and the public through new projects similar to "ProVoice: Promoting the role of volunteers and the population in Civil protection"². Finally, they also encouraged the active participation in civil protection, as diversity can bring new perspectives and innovative approaches.³

2. Objectives

The overall objective of the ARLEM Civil Protection Roadmap is to bring the voice and experience of cities and regions to the institutional exchanges that take place to enhance regional cooperation and integration among Euro-Mediterranean countries in the field of civil protection. With a view to effectively prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters, we want to strengthen the already close cooperation of cities and regions within the Union for the Mediterranean through our joint assembly ARLEM.

In particular, ARLEM wants to lend support to the efforts of the UfM Regional Platform on Civil Protection to strengthen operational cooperation by participating in the definition of harmonized procedures, techniques and protocols; by sharing knowledge and exchanging good practices, experiences and lessons learned; and ultimately by contributing to the creation of the operational Mediterranean Framework on Civil Protection (MFCP) for effective 'on the ground' action in connection, interface, and complementarity with the European Union's Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and its regional programme, PPRD MED, the Multi country study, and On-Site Assistance.

3. Priority Targets of the 2024-2026 ARLEM Civil Protection Roadmap

The ARLEM report on civil protection emphasises the need to consider subsidiarity and shared responsibility when creating an overarching civil protection cooperation framework in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It promotes a coordinated regional approach, leveraging local and regional capabilities to build resilience at the community level, aiming to strengthen civil protection and enhance the resilience and prosperity of the Mediterranean community.

Within this context, this 2024-2026 ARLEM Civil Protection Roadmap highlights six (6) priorities of how ARLEM can contribute to the UfM and Member states' efforts to develop a Mediterranean Framework on Civil Protection (MFCP).

¹ The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) – 155th plenary session, 24 and 25 May 2023 – Opinion fact sheet: *Preparing for and dealing with crises: strengthening the resilience of the Union, its regions and cities* <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-5928-2022>

² <https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/funding-evaluations/financing-civil-protection/prevention-and-preparedness-projects-civil>

³ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/stories/female-and-front-line-women-civil-protection_en

Priority 1: Enhance the disaster management capabilities of cities and regions on the three shores of the Mediterranean and include ARLEM's local and regional authorities in risk assessment exercises that are part of existing programmes and projects.

Description:

By cooperating with ARLEM's key partners in civil protection, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) of the European Commission, ARLEM Members will have the opportunity to participate in projects and programmes that, among other benefits, allow to enhance the disaster management capabilities of their local and regional authorities, including through risk assessment exercises.

Of particular focus will be to explore how to introduce early warning systems, design localised response strategies, and acquire improved equipment.

Actions to implement this priority:

	Priority actions/activities to be implemented	Concrete steps to achieve desired results	Timeline
1	Identify the general interest of ARLEM Members to participate in existing or forthcoming Civil protection programmes or projects organised by ARLEM's partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a list of interested members through an EU Survey • Share the information acquired with ARLEM's partners so they can refer to it whenever a programme has availability • Renew the call for expression of interest at the 10th ARLEM commission meeting, once the ARLEM Civil Protection Roadmap has been shared with ARLEM members. 	April 2024 (+ July 2024 to renew the call)
2	Invite Tunisian or Algerian local authorities to participate in the "Pilot regional workshop on the prevention and fight against forest fires and natural areas in the south Euro-Mediterranean region", planned on 23-25 April in Tunis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the Algerian and Tunisian embassy to receive their nominations • Ensure that the ARLEM members are correctly registered for the workshop • Follow-up with the DG ECHO and/or UfM to support the members' participation • Invite the participating ARLEM members to share their experience at the 10th ARLEM Commission meeting 	April 2024 - <i>done</i>
3	Build on the forest fire workshop in Tunis to expand the cross-border cooperation of Tunisian and Algerian ARLEM members, with a view to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a debriefing call with DG ECHO after the forest fire workshop to hear how well the designated ARLEM participants interacted during the workshop 	May 2024 - <i>done</i>

	including them in the cross-border flood programmes run by DG ECHO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore with DG ECHO and the UfM whether the same members could be incorporated in the cross-border cooperation on floods 	
4	Associate Tunisian ARLEM Members to the "forest habitat" project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-launch the call for nomination of ARLEM members with the Tunisian Embassy, suggesting they nominate ARLEM members that could benefit from the "forest habitat" project Identify possible candidates for participation among the newly nominated Tunisian ARLEM members Inquire with DG ECHO/the UfM how the Tunisian members can be associated to the "forest habitat" project 	July 2024
5	Build on the cooperation with DG ECHO and the UfM to identify additional specific programmes that could help ARLEM members improve their capabilities, including on putting early warning systems into place, creating local response plans, and acquiring improved equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquire on a continuous basis whether there are any possibilities to associate ARLEM members to existing DG ECHO / UfM programmes or projects that might still have capacity for additional participants Put a particular focus on programmes or projects that include the development of early warning systems or local response plans, or which include risk assessment exercises. 	<i>ongoing (tbc)</i>

Priority 2: Help identify gaps in risk management specific to areas, as well as challenges faced by national authorities and stakeholders, enabling more targeted and effective technical assistance.

Description:

In order to support the work of ARLEM's key partners in civil protection, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) of the European Commission, ARLEM members will help identify gaps in risk management specific to areas. In addition, they will explore the challenges faced by national authorities and stakeholders from a local and regional perspective, enabling a more targeted and effective technical assistance.

Actions to implement this priority:

	Priority actions/activities to be implemented	Concrete steps to achieve desired results	Timeline
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1	Help ARLEM members identify gaps in risk management specific to their territories, and share the acquired information with ARLEM's partners in civil protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a technical questionnaire to identify gaps in risk management specific to territories, with the help of DG ECHO / the UfM and send it to ARLEM Members through EU Survey, with the request to please share it with the civil protection experts in their regional or local authorities; • Share the outcomes of the questionnaire with ARLEM's partners the UfM and DG ECHO, including the contact details of local experts that can give further insight into the data. 	September 2024 (tbc)
2	Organise a workshop for ARLEM members on the identification of gaps in risk management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise a ARLEM Civil protection workshop in conjunction with the 11th ARLEM commission meeting • Include a specific session on "identifying gaps in risk management", possibly with roundtables or 'work stations' that focus on particular risks (floods, earthquakes, forest fires etc) • Invite ARLEM members to share best practices 	June 2025 (tbc)
3	Explore challenges faced by national authorities and stakeholders from a local and regional perspective, to identify how the multi-level approach can help bridge gaps in risk management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquire with the participants of the PPRD-Med, OSA and Multi-country study in which areas the national authorities and stakeholders are experiencing challenges in risk management • Explore possible avenues for cooperation on risk management in particular with ARLEM members as part of the ARLEM workshop on civil protection at the 11th ARLEM Commission meeting (see point 2) 	February-April 2025 (tbc)

Priority 3: Contribute local data, insights, and expertise to regional stakeholders and the national level, including by offering valuable local knowledge to improve existing programmes and projects in the region.

Description:

Local and regional authorities are strengthening their resilience through a comprehensive disaster risk reduction (DRR) approach, including risk mapping, land-use adjustments, awareness campaigns, and disaster drills. By incorporating insights from local and regional authorities, existing programmes and projects in the region can be improved.

Actions to implement this priority:

	Priority actions/activities to be implemented	Concrete steps to achieve desired results	Timeline
1	Nominate an ARLEM members as representative of the local or regional level at the Preparedness Working Group of the UfM Platform for Civil Protection, to contribute local data, insights and expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an ARLEM member that would be best placed to contribute to the Preparedness Working Group, which meets every two months for two hours (online) Identify a support mechanism that could help the ARLEM member or expert best prepare for his participating (in-house) 	May/June 2024
2	Nominate an ARLEM members as representative of the local or regional level at the Response Working Group of the UfM Platform for Civil Protection, to contribute local data, insights and expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an ARLEM member that would be best placed to contribute to the Response Working Group, which meets every two months for two hours (online) Identify a support mechanism that could help the ARLEM member or expert best prepare for his participating (in-house) 	May/June 2024
3	Nominate an ARLEM members as representative of the local or regional level at the Recovery Working Group of the UfM Platform for Civil Protection, to contribute local data, insights and expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an ARLEM member that would be best placed to contribute to the Recovery Working Group, which meets every two months for two hours (online) Identify a support mechanism that could help the ARLEM member or expert best prepare for his participating (in-house) 	May/June 2024
4	Nominate an ARLEM members as representative of the local or regional level at the Working Group on the Observatory of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an ARLEM member that would be best placed to contribute to the Preparedness Working Group, which meets every two months for two hours (online) 	May/June 2024

	Volunteerism of the UfM Platform for Civil Protection, to contribute local data, insights and expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a support mechanism that could help the ARLEM member or expert best prepare for his participating (in-house) 	
5	Nominate an ARLEM member as representative of the local or regional level at the steering committee of the programmes and projects managed by DG ECHO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an ARLEM member that would be best placed to contribute to the steering committee, which meets once a year (in June in 2024) Identify a support mechanism that could help the ARLEM member or expert best prepare for his participating (in-house) 	May 2024

Priority 4: Facilitate community engagement in risk awareness programmes, encouraging the active participation of women in civil protection, recognising that women bring diversity to the field, which can lead to new perspectives and innovative approaches.

Description:

Local and regional authorities have a role to play in supporting the three Euro-Mediterranean civil protection initiatives (PPRD Med, OSA and the multi-country study) by facilitating community engagement in risk awareness programmes.

Actions to implement this priority:

	Priority actions/activities to be implemented	Concrete steps to achieve desired results	Timeline
1	Take stock of existing risk awareness programmes that are present at the local and regional level in the Euro-Mediterranean ARLEM countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact ARLEM Members and especially Associations active in ARLEM to help identify existing risk awareness programmes currently being carried out in ARLEM countries at the local or regional level Summarise the results in a table that can be shared with ARLEM members Identify possible speakers for a future workshop on this topic (see point 3) 	October 2024
2	Identify best practices where women have played a key role in developing innovative approaches in civil protection activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquire with ARLEM Members whether there are any specific cases that come to mind where women have played a key role in civil protection activities Identify what their key contributions were, and pass the acquired information to the ARLEM representative at the 	September 2025

		Working Group on the Observatory of Volunteerism of the UfM Platform for Civil Protection	
3	Organise a workshop for ARLEM members to showcase best practices in community engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise a ARLEM Civil protection workshop in conjunction with the 12th ARLEM commission meeting Include a specific session on best practices in community engagement in civil protection, with a particular focus on the role of women in developing innovative approaches Invite ARLEM members to share best practices 	June 2026 (tbc)

Priority 5: Offer logistical support for the deployment of advanced technologies in support of various DG ECHO/UfM programmes, and act as intermediaries between the institutions and beneficiary countries.

Description:

Local and regional authorities can serve as invaluable players in implementing the initiatives of ARLEM's key partners in civil protection by bridging the gap between regional or national efforts and the broader Euro-Mediterranean goals of enhancing resilience and cooperation in disaster management, by acting as intermediaries between institutions and beneficiary countries. A key way of supporting the common efforts includes offering logistical support for the deployment of advanced technologies.

Actions to implement this priority:

	Priority actions/activities to be implemented	Concrete steps to achieve desired results	Timeline
1	Map the current state of development of advanced technologies in ARLEM countries, and identify local or regional authorities already involved in these efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire information on the state of development of advanced technologies in ARLEM countries from the partners currently working in the different DG ECHO programmes and projects (PPRD Med, OSA, and the multi-country study) Inquire with ARLEM members if they, or their local and regional partners in their respective countries, are involved in the development or deployment of advanced technologies Share the information with ARLEM's partners in civil protection 	April 2025

2	Explore logistical opportunities for the deployment of advanced technologies in support of DG ECHO/ UfM programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map the logistical capabilities of ARLEM members and their partners at the local or regional level to support the deployment of advanced technologies through targeted questionnaires • Facilitate the contact between experts from local or regional authorities in ARLEM countries and our partners at the UfM and DG ECHO to see how they can support their programmes and projects' efforts on the ground 	May 2025
3	Identify interlocutors at the local and regional authorities that are part of ARLEM that could function as intermediaries between the institutions and beneficiary countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify with the UfM and DG ECHO in what way local and regional authorities could support their communication efforts on the ground • Identify ARLEM members (based on the criteria laid out by ARLEM's partners) that would be interested to stand in as intermediaries between the institutions and beneficiary countries 	June/July 2025

Priority 6: Establish and contribute to a repository of civil protection best practices on the local and regional level.

Description:

ARLEM is committed to using its extensive network of Mediterranean local and regional authorities to support and strengthen the civil protection programmes launched by DG ECHO and its partners in 2023. By creating and/or contributing to a repository of civil protection best practices on the local and regional level, it would give participating national authorities rich information from which to draw on.

Actions to implement this priority:

	Priority actions/activities to be implemented	Concrete steps to achieve desired results	Timeline
1	Identify existing repositories that could be used as a model for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean repository of civil protection best practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast and compare repositories created by the European Commission, the UfM and other partners in the region (including the CoR itself) • Decide together with the partners at DG ECHO and the UfM which would be most suitable for a repository of local and regional best practices 	January 2026

2	Create a preliminary overview of civil protection best practices on the local and regional level based on the experience of ARLEM Members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise all the relevant information submitted over the two years as part of the other five priorities • Add all best practices presented at ARLEM workshops or partner events that are of relevance for the local or regional level • Re-launch the request for submission of best practices before every ARLEM meeting 	March 2026
3	Extend the call for the submission of best practices beyond the ARLEM members themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Members that are part of networks (Associations or similar) that could be used to extend the call for submission of best practices more widely within the ARLEM partner countries. • Enlist the support of the Embassies of ARLEM partner countries to disseminate the call for the submission of best practices at the local and regional level 	June 2026
4	Monitor the development of the repository on a continuous basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue collaborating with our partners at DG ECHO and the UfM to ensure a continuous follow-up and maintenance of the repository. 	<i>ongoing (tbc)</i>

4. Follow-up and outlook

This 2024-2026 ARLEM Civil Protection Roadmap is a living document, which contains events and proposals that are deemed to be of use for ARLEM members, partners, and stakeholders. However, as circumstances and needs might change over the course of the reference period, its timeline, in particular, might undergo periodic revisions. In addition, ARLEM members might take the occasion of ARLEM Plenary sessions or meetings of its Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development to present a state of play of its implementation. Additional suggestions and proposals by ARLEM members, partners and stakeholders are welcome and will be incorporated based on the approval of the ARLEM co-presidents.

Implementing the civil protection roadmap will not require new personnel to be hired, and will be carried out by existing resources. The implementation of the roadmap does not give rise to additional expenses other than those linked to the presence of ARLEM members at events, which will continue to be approved according to the applicable procedures.