

CONCLUSIONS

VII MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS FORUM

"NEED FOR CHANGE"

Casa Llotja de Mar, Barcelona (Spain), 27th November 2015

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Only women's active participation in the region's economy will allow real economic growth and development in the Mediterranean

The VII "Mediterranean Women Entrepreneurs Forum" was co-organized by **AFAEMME** (Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen), the **Barcelona Chamber of Commerce**, Industry and Navigation and **ASCAME** (Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry).

This year's edition, which took place in the framework of the **IX Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders**, was a special occasion due to the celebration of the **20th Anniversary of the Barcelona Process**, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership which was established in 1995 during the Barcelona Conference.

Now, 20 years later, AFAEMME has signed, together with other Euro-Mediterranean Organizations, the **20+20 Barcelona Declaration**, which in its 4th Initiative specifically includes "Reinforcing of the role of Mediterranean women in the Mediterranean economy". Because, as the coordinator of ASCAME, Mr. Anwar Zibaoui, declared during the Forum: *"we cannot advance the economic development of the region without the active participation of women"*.



From left to right: Ms. Elizabeth Trallero, International Relations Director; Ms. M^a Helena de Felipe, President; and Ms. Beatriz Fernández-Tubau, Secretary General



Some of more than 200 businesswomen and women entrepreneurs from different Mediterranean countries attending the Forum

THE VIII MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS FORUM WILL TAKE PLACE IN APRIL 2016, IN EL CAIRO (EGYPT)



Mr. Miquel Valls, President of the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce

Women entrepreneurs are key for economic development but there are still few in both shores of the Mediterranean



Ms. Delphine Borione, Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

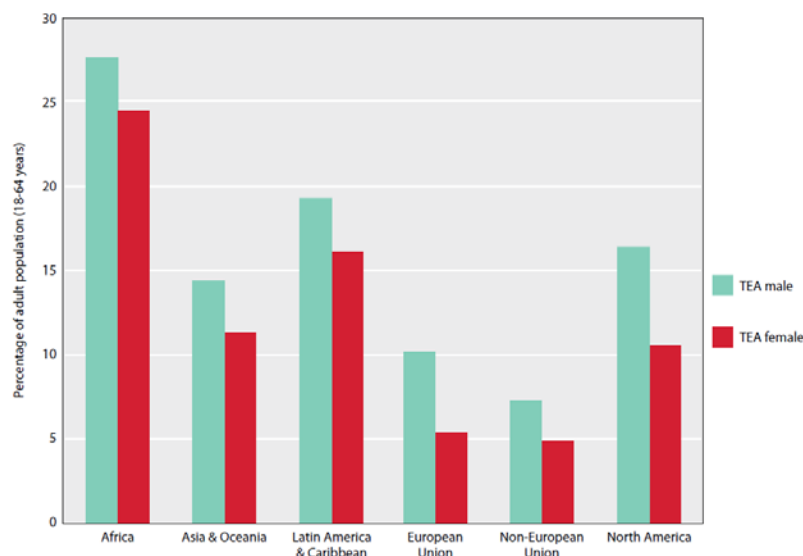


Mr. Anwar Zibauoi, Coordinator of ASCAME

Mediterranean Women Entrepreneurship in few words

Male and female early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA) in 2014, by geographic regions

GEM Global Report 2014



In the MENA region*

- 26% of women in the labour force (world average: 52%)
- 18% of women unemployment (world average: 6%)
- 20-40% of gender wage gap
- **Only 1,2% of managers are women (world average: 18,6%)**
- **12% of adult women entrepreneurs vs. 31% of men**
- Gender equality costs to nearly 25% of the MEDA region GDP

In EU countries*

- Women are 4 times more likely to be working part-time than employed men
- Double proportion of inactive young women related to young men
- 16% of gender pay gap
- **Only 34,4% of self-employed are women**
- **Only 30% of new start-ups are women-owned**
- **Women are just 20,2% of companies' board members**

* Data gently provided by the UfM Secretariat

Key points

- ✓ Cooperation between women entrepreneurs from both shores of the Mediterranean is needed.
- ✓ It won't be possible to develop the region's economy without taking into account the efforts of 50% of the population.



The panel on the role of public authorities in Promoting Women entrepreneurship

The role of public authorities in facilitating women's participation in the economy

- ❖ Women and especially women entrepreneurs need a supportive environment and Governments have to ease this process.
- ❖ Public support in formulating and implementing programs which teach women entrepreneurial skills (for example in Universities) is crucial.
- ❖ Supporting young women entrepreneurs is crucial as they are our all future but public authorities do not have to forget businesswomen aged over 40, especially in terms of the use of technology (courses are needed so that they learn about the digital world).
- ❖ A crucial role of the public authorities is also to gather relevant data about the situation so to offer effective solutions. The creation of observatories might be a good practice.

Smart Working and the use of ICTs in women-owned businesses



Ms. Rim Siam from the Egyptian Economic Businesswomen Council; and Ms. Grulitroy, Managing Director of the Euro-Mediterranean-Arab Association



Mr. Piqué, President of the Catalan Network of Science and Technology Parks; and Ms. Compte, Senior Consultant at Anteverti

- ❖ ICTs are providing new tools for transferring and managing data. They break the relation space-time and therefore help enterprises to be more competitive.
- ❖ That's how both professional and personal lives can be transformed with ICTs. Working and living with the cloud will commute in a more effective way; it will increase productivity and the balance between work and personal life.
- ❖ Smart Working (telework, distant work, e-work, mobile work) can deliver a range of measurable benefits both for the employees and the employers and is therefore interesting both for the women business-owners and the women employees.
- ❖ For the employees: Smart Working saves money on fuel, parking and public transport and it allows working and earning more (economic benefits). Among others, it allows a better work/family balance, more flexibility, increased autonomy, child care issues being less stressful, lower stress levels in general, the possibility to live in rural areas while retaining a challenging job and holding meetings only when necessary (societal benefits).
- ❖ For the employers: Smart Working can decrease real estate costs/rent costs and furniture costs, it might allow employees living in areas with a low cost of living and good internet connectivity to accept lower salaries, it will improve productivity and decrease training costs (economic benefits). It will allow a better recruitment and better retention of staff, it can attract good specialists who otherwise would not work in this office due to different reasons, it reduces absenteeism, it decreases production time, it offers new channels of service distribution and an increase in market reach, and it allows an increased diversity and a better service provision (societal benefits).



The major needs of women entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean and possible solutions

- ❖ **Ms. Flutura Xhabija**, President of the *Albanian national, professional, businesswomen and crafts association* (SHGPAZ), highlighted the importance of time. Time for women to gather (network), time to dedicate to their businesses and time to relate with institutions.
- ❖ **Ms. Raoudha Ben Saber**, President of the *Chambre Nationale des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises de Tunisie* (CNFCE), recognizes how women entrepreneurship can solve unemployment problems and advocates for a better access to finance which she considers the major obstacle for women entrepreneurs to start.
- ❖ **Ms. Carmen Planas**, President of the *Confederation of Business Associations from the Balearic Islands* (CAEB), criticized the existing salary gap in Spain and highlighted the important role of women in taking the household decisions.
- ❖ **Ms. Amany Asfour**, President of the *Egyptian Business Women Association* (EBWA), highlighted the need for businesswomen in accessing and using ICTs for progressing with their businesses as well as the importance of supportive businesswomen associations and networks.
- ❖ **Ms. Franca Audisio**, President of the *Associazione Donne Imprenditrici e Dirigenti di Azienda* (AIDDA), pointed out that one of the major barriers in Italy is bureaucracy which hinders both the creation of companies and its dynamic functioning.
- ❖ **Ms. Nicoletta Bertolone**, President of the *Association Women at Work Italy* (W@Italia), raised the childcare issue where there is little private and even less public support in Italy and which directly influences women entrepreneurship.
- ❖ **Ms. Candan Çilingiroglu**, President of the *Association of Businesswomen in Izmir* (IZIKAD), listed the major barriers for women entrepreneurs in Turkey: the lack of education, problems in accessing finance, cultural and social barriers.
- ❖ **Ms. Doris Bonnici**, President of the *Malta Association of Women in Business* (MAWB), gave a positive data: women entrepreneurship is increasing in Malta while also employment is increasing (women entrepreneurship not out of necessity).
- ❖ **Ms. Asmaa Morine**, President of the *Association des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises du Maroc* (AFEM), highlighted the need for entrepreneurship training for women.
- Ms. Shahrazad Magrabi**, President of the *Libyan Women Forum* (LWF), regrets the lack of a support network in Libya for women entrepreneurs and emphasizes the important role of Libyan women in managing home and family during war. She also highlighted that there are few women business owners due to financial and political constraints.
- ❖ **Ms. Anastasia Savvidou**, Vice-President of the *Greek Businesswomen Association* (SEGE), highlighted the barriers of highly educated women in accessing decision-making positions in the economy and listed the lack of confidence as an important obstacle for women entrepreneurs in Greece.

