



THE FOUNDATION - ECONOMY / EMPLOYMENT - EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGION

# Female entrepreneurs from all the Mediterranean join forces at the IX Meda Women Forum



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Within the framework of the Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders (MedaWeek Barcelona 2017), last 24th of November more than 200 women from 23 Mediterranean countries gathered at the **IX Mediterranean Women Entrepreneurs Forum** to discuss the

role of businesswomen in the workplace and share successful entrepreneurship experiences from all over the Mediterranean region.

This meeting was organized by the [Association of Organizations of Mediterranean Businesswomen \(AFAEMME\)](#), the [Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry \(ASCAME\)](#), the [Union for the Mediterranean \(UfM\)](#), the [Barcelona Chamber of Commerce](#) and our founding member the [European Institute of the Mediterranean \(IEMed\)](#), in the splendid building Casa Llotja de Mar in Barcelona.

Female entrepreneurs from different sectors, policy-makers, civil society organizations... took part in different discussions, mainly focused on the **obstacles that women have to face to start a business and how the role of women is changing rapidly in the workplace.**

Particularly, different speakers pointed out how **women entrepreneurs are essential for the economic development and how gender diversity contributes to business sustainability.** As part of the opening interventions, Marie-Alexandra Veilleux-Laborie, Head of Morocco of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

(EBRD), provided the interesting detail that women are 20% less likely than men to borrow money from financial institutions for their businesses. For his part, Nayef Z. Stetieh, President and CEO of the Jordanian Business Development Center, set as a main objective that women become job creators and not job seekers.

Different factors were mentioned as the major obstacles for women to embark on a business: the difficult access to financing/investment, the imbalance between work and family, the unequal policies and the lack of female role models. In this sense, several speakers talked about the big existing gap between the role of women at university, way more important and participatory than their role later in the labor market, highlighting that women should be educated to take risks.

17 women from different Mediterranean countries took part in the same session to talk about how businesses led by women are advancing in their respective regions. Some members of our network, as the [Association des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises du Maroc \(AFEM\)](#), the [Lebanese League for Women in Business \(LLWB\)](#) and the [APID Imprenditorialità Donna](#) from Italy, were part of this roundtable where they also presented their successful entrepreneurship experiences.

## **Entrepreneurship initiatives supported by our Foundation**

During the last session of the day "Mediterranean Programs & Opportunities for Businesswomen", two entrepreneurship initiatives that our Foundation supports were presented to all the participants.

Karima Bergheul, President of the [Algerian Association of Women in Green Economy \(AFEV\)](#), introduced their diagnosis about the factors that limit and encourage women to start a business, including the role of local actors in promoting entrepreneurial activities, conducted in two municipalities of the city of Algiers (Bouzaréah and Alger Centre).

This initiative is part of our project "Strengthening the capacities of equality actors", funded by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean.

**You can read this interesting diagnosis on our Documentation Center: "[For the inclusion of local actors in the promotion of female entrepreneurship](#)"**

The last intervention of the day was for Nour Salameh, part of our team, who talked on behalf of Hala Bugaighis, Executive Director of the [Jusoor Center for Studies and Development](#). Nour presented their advocacy campaign to encourage women entrepreneurs to join the official market in Libya, part of our CSO WINS project "Capacity building in Southern Mediterranean to open policy dialogue and monitoring for women in society", funded by the European Union.

To learn more about this excellent campaign, go to this article: "[Jusoor advocates for increasing Libyan women's access to formal economy](#)"

Picture: Karima Bergheul, President of AFEV, during the panel "Mediterranean Programs & Opportunities for Businesswomen". © AFAEMME

### Url

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<http://www.medaeconomicweek.org/>

### Video

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Afaemme "Mediterranean Women Entrepreneurs Forum" 24-11-2...



### Tags

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This platform is part of the Axis 1 “Strengthening the capacities of equality actors” of the Priority Solidarity Fund “Women for the future in the Mediterranean” funded by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development and led by the European Institute of the Mediterranean, in the framework of the project “Developing Women’s Empowerment” labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean.



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