



## INLW at the 203rd EXCOM of Liberal International

### Meeting 22-24 November 2019 Fès Morocco

This year Liberal International met for the Executive committee in Fès. The Liberal family was present with over 80-members from 27 countries and 32 parties from all over the world. At the welcome reception, Hakima el Haité president of LI, was very happy to see so many friends in Fès, her place of birth. The main



theme of

this meeting was “Peace and Prosperity through open markets”, also we met to finalize the renewal of the organization by finalizing the discussion on LI’s constitutional amendments. by The WIPP (women in political parties) inclusivity handbook was presented. The aim of the WIPP Inclusivity handbook is to strengthen the political participation of

women. All LI member parties will receive a copy during 2020 and will be asked to complete the WIPP inclusivity Index for their party and send it back to LI headquarters for further analysis.

During the opening reception there was also the introduction of the Liberal Democratic Training Academy, a partnership between LI and VVD. Gijs Houben, member of the VVD, gave us some insight in the setup of the academy. It is for training politically oriented, high potential and talented youth. One of the young talents told us in her speech how she now had seen



that your choice is more important than abilities, advocating for youth and defending liberalism and through her training she became really interested in politics and wants to use her new knowledge for the liberal party.



The opening gave us Mr. Mohammed Rherras, director of Human Resources, Ministry of Culture, as master of Ceremonies. He introduced himself by giving some information about Fès. We find the oldest university of the world in Fès, and this was started by a woman.

Hakima el Haité told us about the beautiful architecture of Fès with the Medina with its 5 gates and over 1000 streets. The Medina is certainly worth a visit. She continued with: “For the future the infrastructure of water will be one of the most important issues in the climate discussion. Basic needs are freedom and human rights in a changing world of economic, political and multilateralist differences between countries. We must work for peace and democracy, it is good to wish to make money, but work must be re-invented. Realism is necessary in human rights, climate change, poverty and inequality while respecting partnerships that promote democracy and stability. We must not be blind that by just making money you can also create poverty. Space for fair trade and responsible partners with support of all political parties”. Hakima el Haité gave us food for thought at this opening of our 203<sup>rd</sup> ExCom and she thanked her liberal Moroccan party, le Mouvement Populaire, for all the support she has had in the past and still gets now.



Prof. Mohamed Tamaldou, the first promoter of Liberalism in Morocco and of the other Moroccan Liberal Party, Union Constitutionnelle, addressed the delegates and guests: “Morocco has hosted LI events on 3 occasions. I am happy to be here in Fès at LIEC Fès because this meeting is headed by a Moroccan woman who calls for freedom.” In the Arabic world a women president is rare.

In Africa the level of freedom is different from the international. We need to translate liberal concepts such as freedom. It is still seen as revolutionary; we are developing a work plan to find a root of liberal thinking in our culture. This is most important”. “The linking between what we want and what we can do with liberal conventions is very often not translated into the Arab world. Many famous books written about freedom and liberalism cannot be read by most of the people of the Arab world. The Arab world must change its concepts of liberalism and the traditions of Islamic world. Liberalism is like a Moroccan dish in which you can put many different ingredients, we need different ingredients to get great Moroccan liberalism”.

He was worried that the world is changing shape. We are living in a critical period, where diplomatic leadership and multilateral conventions which brought us economic stability are dying. Diplomacy is being taken over by Populism and the might of money is taking over from multilateralism. We must together save Democracy which faces many challenges like that of the flows of migrants.



Mohand Laenser, secretary general of Mouvement



Populaire, also reminded us of the oldest university and the culture here in Fès. He said: “We must explain liberalism and must stay away from populism. Many people in Morocco only know the negative side and not the values we are working for. After 1956 and the independence of Morocco a multiparty system was started and in this way tolerance all over grew. Now we want to see progress also for the women. Despite religion, which is still very dominant in Morocco, there are quite a few women visible everywhere.

Now there is a lot of unemployment and much protest. There is a huge difference between the city and the country. Most of the problems must be solved in the local community and money is needed to get this done. Also, the right of women and children must be protracted, as countries we must help each other. Defending liberalism needs courage in the Arab world. In 1992 there were 2 women in parliament. One of them came from Fès. 2011 there were 67 women, in 2017 81 women in parliament (21%) which consists of 395 members. Investing in women is important, women are different in their perception and priorities and the way they want to implement things. This can make a better balance. The women issue is a social issue and a worldwide problem, they also get paid less. We as liberals must set an example also in our parties.

The WIPP (women in political parties) inclusivity handbook that is introduced during this meeting must be shown every year to show us the progress. Astrid Thors, LI vice president, underlined the importance of the handbook. We must implement equality within our parties. The WIPP was set up for a large part by Tamara Dancheva, consultant for Liberal International. She gave us more figures. Worldwide there are 24% women active in politics. 11 women are heads of state and 12 women are heads of government. In Sweden 60% of the politicians are women since the latest elections. With more women you can make society more inclusive. Also, elections cannot be won without women. New votes can come from women voters. Without data you cannot get a good insight of the progress. One of the problems in politics is the harassment that is met by female politicians.

During the executive committee meeting the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Prince Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein was awarded the LI Prize for Freedom for 2020.

In the evening we had a wonderful dinner at the Riad Arabesque in the middle of the Medina.



On Saturday important resolutions were accepted during the meeting such as urgency resolutions on the situation in Cambodia, Catalonia en Hong Kong and others such as one against gender-based violence (see website LI).

Mr Cellou Dalein Diallo who is the leader of the official opposition party in Guinea and former Prime Minister from 2004 till 2006 and elected Vice President of LI in Andorra in 2014 told the Ex Com meeting that he is currently running for President in Guinea. He is hoping for support of LI members as the current President Alpha Condé wants to stay on for an unconstitutional third term. This has brought about a peaceful manifestation of 2 million people, but later demonstrations were held in protest which have been met with military force. Mr Diallo is afraid that the election will not be held or if it is held that it will be held in a lawful manner. He hopes he will survive it all. LI will follow the developments closely.

The Human Rights Committee held its administrative meeting, in which the different working groups reported on their work and plans.

The LI HRC Priority working areas will be:

- 1. Women’s Political Empowerment;
- 2. Digital Space and Human Rights and
- 3. Defence of Civil and Political Rights/ Countering the Shrinking Democratic Space around the world. In 2020 the HRC will take part at the Geneva Summit for Human Rights on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Margaret de Vos participated as member of the LI HRC on behalf of INLW

The next Liberal International **63<sup>rd</sup> congress** will together with our parties and partners **MRF** and **LIBSEEN**, will convene in Sofia, Bulgaria on **25-28 June 2020**.

During that congress INLW will hold its next General Meeting.

