



A specialist in solutions of waste management and recycling in Tunisia for more than 20 years, Nielsen is the first Tunisian company to join the BeMed Business Club, stimulating a dynamic of exchange and mutual learning between companies of the Northern shore and the Southern shore of the Mediterranean.



Mokhtar ZANNAD, represents Nielsen in the Club as CEO of the company

Nielsen is the first Tunisian company to join the BeMed Business Club, what does this mean for you?

It makes me proud! But it's no coincidence that Nielsen joined the Club so early because the fight against plastic pollution has always been in our DNA, as a company acting in the field of recycling in Tunisia. Moreover, on a personal level, I particularly believe in North-South collaborative initiatives to tackle pollution issues in the Mediterranean. I mean, this is obviously our common concern: a bottle that is thrown in Tunis can be found years later in Fréjus and vice versa! As soon as I heard about a Club gathering companies fighting against plastic pollution in the Mediterranean, I wanted Nielsen to be a part of it.

When you first heard about the BeMed Business Club, what attracted you most?

I think it was the choice of the word "Club", which is translated by "College" in French, that appealed to me, because it covers a lot of positive notions. The notion of education, for example, in which I strongly believe because there is a lot of work to be done in environmental education to fight against plastic pollution in Tunisia. In "College" there is also the notion of learning and I believe that we have a lot to learn from each other within the BeMed Business Club. Finally, there is also the

idea of decisions taken collectively by very different actors.

Within the College, we manage to find solutions with players who are very different from one another because everyone is aware that the issues we tackle go beyond our differences.

Earlier you talked about learning from one another in the Club, do you have any examples?

Yes of course! We even have meetings dedicated to this mutual learning that we call "cross-perspectives". When I look at what is happening now in France – how waste management is carried out, the CSR strategies of companies, the habits of the population, etc. – it is like learning all the dos and don'ts for the future of waste management in my country. It also works the other way around: I had the opportunity to explain how the Tunisian recycling industry works to the other members of the Club during a "cross-perspectives" session. On the one hand, I think most of the participants in this session became conscious of the difficult working and living conditions of the *berbechas* (see yellow box), who are responsible for a large part of the collection and sorting of the waste generated by companies. On the other hand, it was also the opportunity to show the creativity and the innovation capacity of the recycling sector in a country which

is forced to import plastic at high prices and therefore, has a strong interest in recycling as much as possible.

Do you have any examples of this creativity when it comes to recycling?

Yes, there is, for example, all the know-how around smart irrigation and drip irrigation systems, or even electrical cable sheaths, which are all made with recycled materials. There are also what we could call "low-tech" innovations in the service of waste management, like the MiniPAC micro-press and puncher that Nielsen patented this year. This manual machine reduces the volume of plastic bottles by 80%, which allows the *berbechas* to collect them more efficiently, and thus, improve their working conditions and income. We offer this solution so that *berbechas* and NGOs can afford it. However, it can also be financed by bigger companies eager to reduce the impact of their waste.

GOOD TO KNOW

> The *berbechas*, numbering 8 to 15,000, are waste collectors who collect 60 to 80% of recyclable waste in Tunisia.

> They are important because they operate an informal collection and sorting system by picking up recoverable plastic waste. They also can stimulate locally a dynamic at the source by only collecting waste from individuals who sort.