

IPEMED News



Jean-Louis Guigou Delegate General of IpeMED

The Mediterranean about to return centre stage

During the 2007 French presidential campaign, the Mediterranean was a central theme, with speeches at Toulon and Montpellier revealing a historical plan of creating a Mediterranean union that promised to bring together 500 million Europeans and 500 million people from the South and East Mediterranean.

Since then, financial crisis in the North and revolutions in the South have moved the goalposts. French people are focusing on their own problems, like unemployment and purchasing power. New governments elected in the South are tackling other emergencies such as making Islamic politics credible, establishing rule of law, winning back trust, attracting foreign capital and meeting financial commitments.

All of which explains why the Mediterranean was absent from the presidential debates in 2012. Yet it is set to dominate

the European agenda again over the next few years in the shape of Arab neighbours' political stability, the Middle East conflict, energy resources, migration issues, the mutual need for Euro-Mediterranean economic cooperation and a water shortage of worrying proportions. The president of the French republic will need to respond to Mediterranean issues: what is the future of the Union for the Mediterranean? Should 5+5 be relaunched? What contribution(s) can we make to the Middle East crisis? Who will help southern countries confront their daunting financial commitments?

EDITORIAL

Election fever

The month of May has seen a host of elections both North and South of the Mediterranean in Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Greece and France. How will they effect relations between the two sides? It's too early to tell. The ballot box has revealed a desire for change, and also doubts, even though it is impossible to make direct parallels between the different elections.

In Syria, President Bashar al-Assad organized a new Parliament despite losing control over whole zones of the country, and the nation's security forces continue to violently repress the uprisings, despite the regime's commitment to Kofi Annan's suggested peace plan. The opposition talks of masquerade, while the authorities claim dubious satisfaction. The Algerians have gone to the ballot box with no illusions, unable to feel enthusiastic about the choice of parties in a country faced with considerable challenges. The line-up shows a strong female quota (143 women for 462 seats) but with no changes

IN A PERIOD OF MULTIPLE ELECTIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN, WE MUST SEEK COMMON SOLUTIONS TO AVOID NATIONS TURNING IN ON THEMSELVES, AN ATTITUDE THAT ATTRACTS VOTERS BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH.



Amr Moussa, former leader of the Arab League and ex-head of Diplomacy, on 11 May during a televised debate between the two presidential election favourites: a first for Egypt.

to the established system, which has had the benefit of the country's oil reserves. But until when? The Egyptians, who are for the most part hoping to be able to get back to normal, will freely elect their president for the first time; yet since there is still no Constitution, they cannot know what actual powers he will have.

REJECTION The crisis in the North has provoked power swings. The greatest incertitude concerns the future of Greece: what majority will succeed in governing when votes reject the austerity measures imposed by the EU and the IMF?

Without a government coalition, the country will go back to the ballot box – with what outcome? The Neo-Nazi party risks improving its already worrying score given the sombre prospects in countries where people “earn half as many wages and pay twice as much tax”. What can European institutions do in this context? What is the future for Euro-Mediterranean relations? More than ever, both sides must be ready to seek common solutions to avoid nations turning in on themselves and their identity, an attitude that increasingly attracts voters both North and South.

Agnès Levallois



“Create an area of trust away from upheaval”



Jean-François Coustillière, consultant, explains the 5+5 initiative and its role as a laboratory for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

Why is 5+5 stirring up interest today?

The European Union itself put forward three tools devised to organize cooperation in the Mediterranean: the Barcelona Process (1995), the European Neighbourhood Policy (2003) and the Union for the Mediterranean (2008). Although the overall goal is the same: “Transform the Mediterranean into an area of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity”⁽¹⁾, these tools have failed in fulfilling their objectives and are viewed with suspicion. Given the current unfavourable context for developing Euro-Mediterranean relations, made worse by the decline of the Israel-Palestine issue and European hesitation in the face of successive Arab uprisings, the 5+5 initiative, which is centred far from the Middle East and is perfectly transparent with the EU, constitutes a laboratory for the Barcelona Process. It is well placed to build trust in an area

smaller than the whole Mediterranean, but away from the most extreme upheavals, which are damaging for globalizing initiatives.

What are the upsides of this restricted area? Could it be described as informal?

5+5 is a modest, pragmatic initiative and, because its members are geographically and socially close to each other, they share a number of challenging concerns. Because 5+5 relations are intentionally discrete and practical, more technical than political, and genuinely based on partnership, its members are necessarily equal and less wary of hidden agendas. It is flexible and adapts itself to the priorities of the domain in question. It is non-binding and focused on the priorities of the various members, and its partners feel a strong commitment thanks to its fair handling of their concerns.

Have the changes of government in some countries encouraged renewed dialogue?

The changes have certainly done nothing to boost interest in discussions with the EU. On the contrary, there is a worry that in the eyes of the people, they could be associated with the idea of former leaders’ complicity with Europe. Yet, in those same countries, the 5+5 initiative appears to be more favourably perceived than other initiatives because its partners are free to take part, and cooperation is discussed and organized in consultation with other technical players. The history of 5+5 is not marked by personal involvement from heads of state like Ben Ali or Mubarak. As a result, it’s easier for leaders taking heed of vigilant public opinion to pick up 5+5 relations again.

How can 5+5 help the Maghreb’s integration?

5+5 was almost totally inactive throughout 2011: the last time the AMU (Arab Maghreb Union) organized a meeting of its Ministers for Foreign Affairs was in 2009. At the start of 2012, it is interesting to observe that 5+5 scheduled numerous meetings, i.e. the Ministers for Transport in Algiers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Rome, and the Defence programme steering committee in Rabat, all in under three

CARBON CONSTRAINT

Potential impact on the aviation sector



Diplomatic heads of AMU countries met in Rabat on 18 February: Hammadi Ould Hammadi (Mauritania), Saâdeddine El Othmani (Morocco), Mourad Medelci (Algeria), Achour Ben Khayyal (Libya), Rafik Abdessalem (Tunisia) and Habib Boulares, Secretary General of the AMU.

months. At the same time, a meeting of AMU Ministers for Foreign Affairs was held in Rabat with a summit programmed for September-October in Tunis. This correlation shows that there is a synergy between the two initiatives. Whatever the case, and this is particularly perceptible in the 5+5 Defence cooperation, relations developed between the ten partners contribute to building up trust between those involved.

What are the priorities of 5+5 now?

First, we need to strengthen what we have and take current programmes further by more actively looking for projects of common interest. For each programme, we need to foster partnership methods that have worked in the most advanced programmes, and include the European Union as an observer. It would be a good idea to open new programmes in health, economics culture and agriculture. The underlying priority should be a focus on bringing societies together so as to definitively encourage the improvement of socio-economic circumstances: employment and access to vital resources (e.g. water and food), which are obvious conditions for prosperity and peace. This is how 5+5 would best fulfil its role as a laboratory for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the future.

Interview by Agnès Levallois

1. UfM declaration of 13 July 2008.

The Rio+20 conference, scheduled to take place from 20 to 22 June, provides an occasion to review the sustainable development agenda initiated at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. The conference two decades ago led to the adoption of Agenda 21 and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and then the Kyoto Protocol, by which developed countries committed themselves to reducing their CO₂ emissions.

At a meeting in October 2010, 174 countries from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) adopted a resolution aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions in their domain. Although aviation's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions is only around 2%, it is going up as traffic increases. European countries set up a European emissions trading scheme in 2005 obliging over 10,000 industrial installations to conform to this market mechanism. The aviation sector is no exception, and since 1st January 2012, all international airlines whose aeroplanes either land or take off from a European airport have been subject to the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS). The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is opposed to the move, claiming that the decision is illegal because it infringes sovereignty. But a judgement passed by the European Court of Justice dated 21 December 2011 esteemed that the EU ETS conforms to international law. The impact will kick in from 2013.

DIVERSION RISK So how are airlines in Europe and South of the Mediterranean already reacting to this restricting mechanism? There is a significant risk that traffic will be diverted towards non-European platforms, leading to carbon leaks and competition issues. To avoid

SINCE 1 JANUARY, AEROPLANES LANDING OR TAKING OFF FROM EUROPEAN AIRPORTS HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO A CONTROVERSIAL EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME.

infringing on global competition in the sector, Air France and Tunisair, like most other airlines, are for setting up an international emissions trading scheme, overseen by the ICAO, which respects the principle of *shared but different responsibilities* and avoids the difficulties of multiplying regional ETSs.

At a meeting in Doha on 12 April, Arab airlines, including Qatar Airways, criticized the European commitment and said that they wanted a global agreement on the means to reduce CO₂ emissions. The Arab Air Carriers Organization (AACO) called on the European Union to work with the ICAO to establish a global, rather than European, agreement. The AACO, which represents the interests of twenty-seven companies from the Arab world, esteemed that "*The European measure contravenes the Chicago Convention and state sovereignty and risks resulting in conflict and trade wars that will help neither the environment, the passengers nor the airlines.*"

AIR FRANCE-KLM IN FAVOUR The Air France-KLM group welcomed the trading scheme because of its impact on the environment. It said that in addition, income from the auction of quotas by states could be used to improve the performance of air transport. However, the group intends to remain vigilant that the scheme is applied fairly to all international airlines and is consequently participating in work done by IATA. The aim is to propose workable solutions for reaching the environmental targets set by the General Assembly in 2009. These include improving energy efficiency by 1.5% per year, stabilizing and reaching neutral growth of CO₂ emissions by 2020, and reducing CO₂ emissions by 50% by 2050 in relation to 2005 levels.

A.L.

Ipemed's Political Steering Committee is co-chaired by Carmen Romero, European MP and Abderrahmane Hadj Nacer, former governor of the Bank of Algeria. With an equal, unbiased North-South balance, it contributes to IPEMED's think-tank work and its influence in the international political arena.



PHOTOS: JEAN-MICHEL RILLO

IPEMED'S POLITICAL STEERING COMMITTEE

Euro-Mediterranean turmoil at the heart of discussions

POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVENESS, THE STATE'S ROLE AND THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONSHIP FEATURED IN THE DEBATE. THE AIM: TO INFORM DECIDERS AND STAKEHOLDERS ON POTENTIAL AVENUES.

The Political Steering Committee held its annual meeting in Paris on 17 and 18 February 2012. The debate centred on the upheavals in the Euro-Mediterranean region, both North and South. With stakeholders and decision-makers needing information now more than ever, the committee invited contributions from Driss Ksikes, Moroccan journalist and theatre personality, Hela Yousfi, French and Tunisian sociologist, lecturer at Paris Dauphine University, and Amr El Shobaky, political scientist and newly elected member of the Egyptian parliament. The issue of political representativeness was central, with social groups at the root of the protests rarely figuring among those elected. To understand the situation in Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt, we need to be aware that participation and political representativeness do not go hand in hand: the elites are disconnected from reality, and demonstrators want to create the conditions for better governance. In Tunisia, young people instigated a revolution so that the state would play its role, and the reason they have not joined the political forces in great numbers is because they can neither trust them nor relate to them. The successes of Ennahda (Tunisia) and the PJD (Morocco) can be partly explained by their political virginity. The people need to take back debate and the public arena, which have until now been reserved for the elites.

Institutional reform

► One of the major challenges is to undertake institutional reform while maintaining state neutrality. Egypt has a large public sector (9% of the population), but will the Muslim Brotherhood be able to successfully carry out reform? And what place will the army—still respected as an institution unlike the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces managing the transition—have? After the presidential elections, it is likely to gradually move away from the political scene, as was the case in Turkey, while remaining a pillar of political life. Yet the debate should not be reduced to the political Islam issue. The economic and social challenges are huge. The economic model should strike a coherent balance between the financial economy, the real economy and the social economy.

Influence of the Gulf and regional integration

► The question was raised of the Gulf States' influence, with the fear that Maghreb countries might settle into a rent economy under the influence of the oil monarchies. Arab countries need to create a regional area. The Moroccan Minister for Foreign Affairs' visit to Algiers, the meeting of Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) Foreign Affairs Ministers



Driss Ksikes



Amr El Shobaky



Hela Yousfi

in Rabat on 17 February, and Moncef Marzouki's declaration during his visit to Algeria, in which he conveyed his wish to renew the Maghreb construction process move in this direction. These initiatives have been encouraged by Washington, whose influence would be strengthened by a pro-USA attitude in the Maghreb, to the detriment of Europe.

Redefine the Euro-Mediterranean relationship?

► The new reality reveals a rupture that Brussels has overlooked. Democratic transitions need political accompaniment. Cultural modernity needs promoting, and an industrial development model needs to be put back on the agenda. Euromed belongs to the contested heritage of the former regimes, yet civil societies need to be supported as they change, with a focus on the long term, solidarity, shared added value and investment. It depends on the political and societal projects we want to draw up together. We should take advantage of the renegotiation of the EU budget to ask the question and direct funding towards re-founding the partnership. ■

Mediterra 2012.
La diète
méditerranéenne
pour un
développement
régional durable
 CIHEAM (COLLECTIF)

Paris, Ciheam/
 Les Presses de Sciences-
 Po, March 2012



Mediterra 2012, which centres on the Mediterranean diet, is the thirteenth regional report by the Ciheam (International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies), an inter-governmental organization celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year. The report involved a scientific network comprising 50 international experts from different complementary backgrounds. The multi-disciplinary approach makes a crosscutting analysis of the different components of the Mediterranean diet, taking it beyond

the framework of a scientific study at a time when the world appears to be rediscovering the importance of agriculture.

Recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as one of the most favourable for human health, the Mediterranean diet – i.e. the agronomic, socio-cultural and culinary practices in Mediterranean countries taken as a whole – has the potential to contribute to the sustainable regional development of the Mediterranean area. Although the diet is listed in Unesco’s intangible heritage of humanity, it is less and less observed in the region from which it springs.

The report proposes an innovative method for understanding the diet, opening up eight lines of thought based on history, changing societies, the environment, business and trade, along with citizen initiatives and an emphasis on the health and nutritional benefits of a Mediterranean diet. It also encourages reflection on this multidimensional

concept and raises several questions. In these times of environmental awareness, the report wonders about the burden of this mode of consumption, about natural resources, and the responsibility of those involved in each link of the food chain. It also gives a reminder of the challenges facing the food industry in the region and the need to take a global approach to continually producing better and more in response to increasingly active consumer demand. The report purposefully ends with a look at the policies applied in the region, since in agriculture political decisions are vital.

The 2012 edition of *Mediterra* is timely. Agricultural development issues, environmental challenges and food insecurity are essential components in the vast wave of social, economic and political change taking hold in the area.

Colette Alcaraz

Available in printed version
 from Presses de Sciences-Po
 and downloadable at www.ciheam.org

ON THE WEB

The European Union and the Maghreb: What is the status of commitment one year after the “Arab spring”?

Second report on sustainable security in the Maghreb
 Institut Thomas More
www.institut-thomas-more.org

● One year after protest sparked in the Arab countries, this report looks at the four challenges facing the Maghreb: democratization, economic and social issues, security, and cooperation. As a neighbour and economic partner to the Maghreb states, the EU is also concerned by what happens. After accepting and negotiating with authoritarian regimes, the author says that the EU must now support the political processes under way without “demonizing the new teams

in power”. A global approach is recommended along with intra-Maghreb cooperation to avoid an estimated two-point drop in GDP. Lastly, the author says that only a genuine Euro-Mediterranean and Euro-Arab geopolitical project will ensure the success of Europe’s commitment to the Maghreb.

After the revolution: The EU and the Arab transition

TIMO BEHR
www.notre-europe.eu

● One year after the Arab uprisings, this policy paper produced by the think-tank, Notre Europe, attempts to assess how EU policies have changed and whether a revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy

provides a suitable framework for EU action in a constantly evolving region in which the transitions under way pose a considerable challenge. The author, Timo Behr, esteems that despite several positive changes instigated by the EU, the methods and orientation of Euro-Mediterranean relations have not changed. The European Union retains a Eurocentric vision of integrating the Mediterranean, based on a “scaled-down” version of the expansion policy. However, this strategy is not realistic. On the contrary, the EU should work out how to reconcile its Eurocentric vision with both the re-emergence of pan-Arab and pan-Islamic trends and the perspectives for emancipation in countries that have had their revolutions. To tackle this challenge, the author calls for a redefinition of euro-

Mediterranean policies based on the foundations of this relationship. This should start with recognizing how the EU’s power and its capacity to define the direction of political and economic change in the region have been undermined. The author’s conclusion is that EU policies need to integrate a number of basic elements and principles and move beyond reasoning centred on “scaled-down expansion”. Among the points brought up by the author are: the EU should accept “anti-liberal” societies among its neighbours, avoid excessive activism and beware of ready-made solutions, install genuinely positive conditionality, and create a multilateral partnership. This would make it a more efficient partner and earn it greater respect in an increasingly heterogeneous and coveted region.

Spotlight on German industrials' Mediterranean strategy

Mohamed Rouis, managing director of the Tunisian branch of the German group Leoni, a world leader in cable systems, took advantage of an Ipemed breakfast meeting to explain how the company developed its activity in Tunisia up until the revolution. Leoni Tunisia was the biggest employer in the country in 2012, with 14,000 staff spread over its different production sites. Spurred by the success of its unit branches in the country, the mother company decided to expand in Tunisia, and during the last few years the company has developed significantly. Investment projects relate not just to labour-intensive sectors, but also to activities with higher added value (e.g. assembly, R&D, IT). In 2011, the company employed around one hundred engineers and 100% of its staff was Tunisian. The Leoni case is a good example of the

TO MARK THE RELEASE OF ITS PALIMPSEST ON GERMAN INDUSTRIALS IN TUNISA, IPEMED ORGANIZED A BREAKFAST MEETING.

move towards German industrial investment in Tunisia, as described in the *Palimpsest*. The study identifies three main trends. Firstly, most German units in Tunisia correspond to fragments of the production chain, which are mainly labour-intensive (textile articles, electronic parts, etc.) and constitute the industrial base for German investors. Secondly, German investment in Tunisia has recently accelerated (FDI stock doubled from 2004 to 2009), usually to the detriment of CEECs, which have become too expensive. Lastly, Germans are almost the only foreign investors to develop activities with high added value (e.g. administration, design, R&D) around their production sites, calling on local qualified workers.

CORRELATIONS These observations reveal similarities between German industrials' strategy in Tunisia and their strategy in



Only in French, downloadable at www.ipemed.coop

Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) in the 1990s. In Tunisia, they are progressively relocating production setups (often from CEECs) and gradually transferring added value as their investments diversify and spread to higher-range activities. These entrepreneurs are taking the industrial regionalization strategy that started in the CEECs and expanding it in the South, and helping to reinforce integration by producing in the Euro-Mediterranean area. This momentum sometimes comes up against post-revolution complications, e.g. the announcement that Leoni's industrial site in Mateur was going to close was later retracted.

Maxime Weigert, researcher at Ipemed

SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

The future of Mediterranean tourism

● On 16 and 17 April 2012 in Djerba (Tunisia), the World Tourism Organization orchestrated the sixth international conference on destination management, with a focus on the future of tourism in the Mediterranean. The event was inaugurated by, among others, Hamadi Djebali, Prime Minister of Tunisia, Elyes Fakhfakh, Tunisian Minister for Tourism, and Taleb Rifai, secretary general of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), and was split into three themed sessions and three geographic workshops. As the region clocks up 300 million international arrivals (WTO figures for 2011) and tackles the Arab spring

tourism crisis, conference attendees looked at Mediterranean tourism in general and the more specific challenges facing North, East and South. Although a range of situations and questions were raised, two types of challenge stood out. The first of these is that the leading tourist region in the world needs to increase its visitor numbers, in particular by diversifying its source markets (e.g. BRIC, domestic tourists, and South-South tourism). The second is the need to vary Mediterranean products, without neglecting coastal tourism, which constitutes regional tourism's principal

competitive advantage. Building up the attraction of Mediterranean destinations therefore requires simultaneously renewing supply and demand. Tools for action were also presented. Along with the systematic mention of the crucial role played by new technologies, the impact of proactive tourism policies, and the importance of training, the main message was that the region needs to be able to count on stronger cooperation from countries in the Mediterranean. By pooling their experiences, they will be able to face competitive pressure at regional and global levels.

M.W.



Following Ministerial posts in the Jordanian government, Taleb Rifai has been Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), headquartered in Madrid, since March 2009.

Health at the centre of debate and reform in the Maghreb



January 2009, Mohammed VI inaugurating the first stage of Hassan II Hospital in Fes.

Inhabitants of the Maghreb have high expectations from their governments, including better, more affordable access to quality healthcare. The response will involve rethinking the countries' health systems and making them more socially responsible, while keeping a tight control of expenditure that is set to rise steeply with an ageing population and the emergence of new diseases (non-transmissible – 79.7% of deaths in Tunisia, degenerative and traumatological). Authorities will have to make strategic choices, define priorities and then translate them into short-, mid- and long-term health programmes. These programmes, if not common, should at least be compatible and include cooperation, perhaps even alliances between South and South and European Union countries. Unlike countries of North of the Mediterranean, Central Maghreb countries are having to face demographic transition at the same time, with very similar indica-

TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO MORE AFFORDABLE, QUALITY HEALTH CARE, MAGHREB COUNTRIES NEED TO SET UP PROGRAMMES THAT INCLUDE SOUTH-SOUTH AND EU COOPERATION.

tors: life expectancy at birth above seventy; high, but fast-dropping infant and maternal death rates; an age pyramid with progression from the over sixties occurring almost at the same time as epidemiological transition. The latter brings with it new diseases from developed countries (e.g. diabetes, cancer, depression, occupational disease, respiratory illness, etc.), involving increasingly costly treatment and more complex etiology. Traditional diseases still require vaccination programmes and traditional action (e.g. high rate of infantile and maternal mortality, especially in Algeria, transmissible diseases continuing in the form of epidemic outbreaks) at the same time as promoting a broader, more crosscutting approach to healthcare that reflects health factors like education, nutrition, habitat and the environment.

REDUCE INEQUALITY To reorganize their health systems, Maghreb countries need

Ten axes for development

- ◆ Put healthcare back at the heart of policies
- ◆ Make healthcare policy an example of democracy
- ◆ Encourage more strategic ministerial and governmental coordination
- ◆ Create efficient, appropriate management tools
- ◆ Develop a health system aimed more at users
- ◆ Promote a more socially responsible health system
- ◆ Define an efficient strategy for allocating financial resources
- ◆ Rethink and reorganize education and information for all stakeholders
- ◆ Promote increased regulation of the medication market
- ◆ Develop collaboration, foster South-South and North-South alliances

to reduce unequal access to treatment (including the share of health finance covered by households – around 40%), to establish regulation between public and private sectors, to develop a transparent, efficient and socially responsible funding system and a single healthcare insurance scheme (in Morocco this was created in September 2005). Users and professionals should also be encouraged to participate in governing health systems. In Morocco and Tunisia, healthcare ministers have understood the urgent nature of these reforms. They are organizing debates to define future health policy. The report, *National Challenges and Joint Issues, healthcare systems in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia* produced by Ipe-med¹, proposes ten axes of development and concrete cooperation to fuel the debate.

Macarena Nuño, project manager Ipe-med

1. Report produced by a group of health specialists from Maghreb countries, edited by Professors Farid Chaoui and Michel Legros. Available at www.ipemed.coop.

TO DOWNLOAD

Steps towards a med. area. Confidence in the Mediterranean digital society

● Edited by Laurent Gille, Wahiba Hammaoui and Pierre Musso, this report from the collection *Building the Mediterranean* analyzes the digital revolution underway and esteems that it is too significant for its strategy to be organized at national level only. It calls for the definition of a

comprehensive Euro-Mediterranean policy that aims to create a common area, a Mediterranean society of information and knowledge. The report puts forward seven recommendations, differentiating between desirable action and realistic action.



“KPMG plays a key role in the Maghreb’s development”



Jean-Luc Decornoy, chairman of the board of KPMG France and a founding member of Ipemed, talks about his group’s Mediterranean strategy.

Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco for twenty years, as well as in sub-Saharan Francophone countries. We coordinate our efforts and activities throughout the zone so that we can take advantage of local teams to offer our customers a range and quality of service wherever they need it based on international standards and methods.

MED’s support, and that of our professionals, to seize opportunities for growth in the best conditions.

What is KPMG’s strategy in the Mediterranean, a region that you treat as a separate entity?

KPMG and I, in my capacity as CEO of KPMG France and vice-president of the EMA region (Europe-Mediterranean-Africa), are convinced that Africa is undergoing a major transformation and currently at an important stage in its development. Although its growth is not yet at the same level as Asia’s, it has gone way past Europe’s. China is very interested in Africa, which shows that it has a role to play in global economic development. This considerable potential is very real and we have a duty to support it. Our professionals have the necessary skills and experience to help this economic development take place totally transparently, with appropriate management of the risks facing both investors and companies.

KPMG France was quick to spot the economic potential of Africa, and particularly the Maghreb. We have been investing and strengthening our presence in

Do you have development projects in North Africa and the Middle East?

In the countries where it’s needed, we’re ready to participate in developing sound regulatory frameworks for accounting, governance, training, organization and professional accountancy and auditing. Development in Mediterranean countries requires an efficient banking and finance system that is capable of improving cash flows, channelling savings and contributing to funding business. This is one of the main issues for the Maghreb and we have a key role to play here.

Have the upheavals in the Arab states had an impact on your activity?

Obviously, yes. But I should say that KPMG was present early on in Africa and Arab countries. In Tunisia, for example, KPMG France mainly relies on local, long-term resources. Upheaval brings change. In many cases, opportunities and economic interest were at the root of the political upheavals. Inhabitants in these countries need IPE-

You have been a founding member of IPEMED since the start. What motivated your membership?

For many years, every time I travelled to the Maghreb and Africa, I could feel that people were collectively becoming aware of the benefits of cooperation between Mediterranean countries. They viewed it as both a means towards prosperity and economic development, and a response to the phenomenon of globalization. I think that Europe has slowly realized, although quite late in the day, that synergy of growth could be achieved by moving closer to Mediterranean countries.

In parallel, even though the enthusiasm and motivation of local young people continues to surprise me, I can see that they want the benefits of this cooperation between Maghreb countries to become a reality fast, they want to be shown that it can work, and they want it to work. That’s what motivated me to join the IPEMED initiative. We are proud to participate, through our activities and our involvement with the Institute, in building safer, more attractive areas for investment, and through our humble but tangible contribution to the economic development of the Mediterranean region and its people.

Interview by Agnès Levallois