

10 WHAT EURO-MEDITERRANEAN POLICY TO SUPPORT DIGITALISATION?



P. Musso, N. Kerdjoudj, R. Chehik, 2012

The digitalisation of economies is a major transformation that can be compared with industrialisation. This transformation is too important to be led at the national level only, as nations are no longer a relevant space. It requires a global Euro-Mediterranean policy aiming at creating a common digital space.

A PROMISING GROWTH SECTOR WITH POTENTIAL INDUSTRIAL ALLIANCES

This common policy must be regarded in a coproduction logic involving industrial partnerships, shared added value, long-term investments, a sector-based approach and the development - in the South - of high added value contents and activities enabling job creation.

ENSURING SECURITY AND TRUST AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

In order to develop exchanges between the two shores, it is necessary to ensure transaction security and trust regarding exchanges. By opacifying relations, the digital sector can reduce mistrust but it can also induce it by being associated to bad services or coercive policies.

Hence, the importance to define an adapted regional strategy and governance. The European Union is working on it. The Mediterranean region should do the same.

COOPERATION AMONG REGULATORS ARE NECESSARY

The regulator must play a key role. In a rapidly changing environment, the regulator must decide where to stand between lax and too structuring regulations in order to encourage this type of policy. A better network-

Participation to Connec'Sud, 2014



king of the various independent regulation agencies and a reinforcement of expertise capacities would help simplifying common technical standards, the development of content industry and the emergence of a common market.

ICT SECTOR : FROM DIGITAL CONSUMPTION TO CONTENT PRODUCTION

North African countries have at their disposal the minimum ingredients to take advantage of the digital revolution (national strategies, skills, technological zones, dedicated support funds, infrastructures and 3G access, etc.). In addition to making announcements, they must make sure policies are implemented in order to reach the expected results. Besides, the implemented logics remain fragmented and are sometimes even in competition with one another. A greater North African cooperation would enable these countries to benefit from economies of scale, to make

an attractive offer to their national champions and international investors, and thus use the digital sector as a lever of emergence. The rise of North African national champions would surely help the development of the industry. They are also key elements in the reflection concerning La Verticale Africa-Mediterranean-Europe. Training is another key element. Engineers and digital skills are available in the South. Yet they are not numerous enough, hence the relevance of fostering cooperation in this field as well.

WILL E-COMMERCE FOSTER A VERTICAL INTEGRATION?

Africa has the lowest B2C e-commerce penetration rate (2.2%). It is considerably backwards, however the potential of this continent is significant. In spite of development differences between North African and Sub-Saharan African countries, Africa has numerous assets: high mobile penetration, emergence of a middle class, policies supporting the development of the sector, common currency (FCFA), a certain integration of electronic money thanks to the GIM-WEAMU and rather active diasporas. IPEMED's reflection highlights ten recommendations to make of e-commerce a source of development and vertical integration.

MAIN IDEAS PROMOTED BY IPEMED

- Reinforcing cooperation among regulation agencies
- Implementing a global Euromed policy around a cloud computing and a chart for use and reference
- Deploying an industrial strategy and a sector encouraging the development of ICT contents and services (14 evolution lines have been identified)
- Promoting an e-commerce satisfactory for populations, promoting local contents and products, accessible to all

MAIN PUBLICATIONS



Palimpsestes, n°7
 "Confidence in the Mediterranean digital society. Towards a med. area"
 July 2011



Études & Analyses
 « Les technologies de l'information au Maroc en Algérie et en Tunisie »
 October 2014



Construire la Méditerranée
 "E-commerce in Africa : Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal and Ivory Coast"
 February 2016

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