

COUNTRY STUDY

MOROCCO

Social Protection Monitoring

The EU-Morocco Partnership should:

Provide full cooperation in the education field to the regionalization process, essential for a democratic opening and sustainable growth. Promote a human rights-based approach to social protection programs. Ensure the respect of fundamental rights and revise its security-based approach on migration.

Support the Moroccan government to:

- establish an assessment monitoring mechanism in order to provide solutions to the most important deficiencies encountered in the access to health care services;
- promote the development of an efficient vocational training and technical education adapted to the needs of the Moroccan economy;
- support the implementation of the new national employment strategy towards a sustainable and inclusive growth, and
- enhance good governance by strengthening participatory democracy and human rights.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Morocco has achieved lots of progress in recent years within the EU-Morocco Partnership, comparing to other Arab countries in the region. Nevertheless, Morocco still suffers from a lack of a rights-based approach to health and education policies, rising unemployment and informal sector, weaknesses in the social protection system and serious violations in both Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Association (FoA). In order to tackle these issues, SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco recommend different actions to take into account within the EU-Morocco Partnership: among others, the establishment of an assessment monitoring mechanism in order to provide solutions to the most important deficiencies encountered in the access to health care services; a full cooperation and support by the EU in the education field to the regionalization process, essential for a democratic opening and sustainable growth; the implementation of the new national employment strategy; the enhancement of good governance by strengthening participatory democracy and human rights; and the promotion of a human rights-based approach to social protection programs.

Most urgent issues to be tackled

- **Lack of a rights-based approach to health and education policies:** the lack of access to health and education facilities for the most vulnerable groups, particularly rural population, women, children and disabled people, including persistence of geographical inequalities and of income to access it; the lack of a national politics of democratic governance in the health policy. In terms of education, a growing trend is also the privatization policy on schools.
- **Rising unemployment and Informal sector:** disproportionate labour market marginalization of women, young people - especially higher graduates, Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) and the elderly.
- **Weaknesses in the social protection system** in terms of unequal coverage and dispersion of the social security programs.

- **Serious violations in Freedom of Association and collective bargaining rights** with regard to civil society organizations (CSOs) and **in freedom of expression** with regard to journalists, activists, artists and others figures who criticize Moroccan state institutions.

Key recommendations

The EU-Morocco Partnership should:

- **Provide full cooperation in the education field to the regionalization process, essential for a democratic opening and sustainable growth.** Devolution and decentralization will be the key-elements giving more flexibility to the system¹, while the central government will focus on setting the general framework and programs. As part of the democratic opening, schools should develop relationships with local actors and links with civil society, taking into account the professional world.
- **Promote a human rights-based approach to social protection programs,** including not only quantitative aspects (job opportunity rate, companies' set up rate, GDP growth, etc.), but also qualitative elements with regard to the quality of the job opportunities, the respect of workers' rights, the companies' integration into the formal sector (including SMEs), etc. Encourage the exchange between EU's Member States and Morocco in order to raise awareness and to coordinate the promotion of human rights-based approach to social protection with a particular focus on youth, Persons With Disabilities (PWDs), women and long-term unemployed. Promote a dialogue on social issues linked to migration between European countries

¹ Moroccan regions have played a very important role in maintaining the country's unity. The transition from central level to the regional one is fundamental to integrate these regions as quickly as possible in the country's democratization circuit. The aim is to create a regional balance so that citizens enjoy equal access to public services and the same opportunities for social development.

and Morocco. Organize a convergence between state, local and community action around the approach of the National Initiative of Human Development (INDH).

- **Ensure the respect of fundamental rights**, since serious limits to Freedom of Expression with regard to journalists, activists, artists and others figures - who criticize Moroccan state institutions - are present.
- **Revise its security-based approach on migration**, to avoid racist and xenophobe events with regards to Sub-Saharan migrants.
- **Support the Moroccan government:**
 1. **To establish an assessment monitoring mechanism in order to provide solutions to the most important deficiencies encountered in the access to health care services**, promoting the human right to health and education for all. In addition, the government should take appropriate legislative, administrative and financial measures to ensure equal opportunities in access to quality health services and an equitable distribution of hospitals between regions. Constitutional organic laws and mechanisms should be activate to allow the participation of civil society in the planning and monitoring of public policies. Medical coverage should be extended for the entire population and the prices of medicines reduced.
 2. **To promote the development of an efficient vocational training and technical education adapted to the needs of the Moroccan economy**, aiming to facilitate the transition from informal to formal economy.
 3. **To support the implementation of the new national employment strategy towards a sustainable and inclusive growth**, integrating the instrument of “compensation conditionality” which encourages people to return to work. Develop a regional strategy for the social and solidarity economy, through a better balance between economic efficiency, decent work and social protection, in order

to fight against persistent inter- and intra-regional growth inequalities. Focus on promoting the transition from the informal to the formal economy.

4. To enhance good governance by strengthening participatory democracy and human rights, mainly promoting a transparent dialogue between public institutions and CSOs to ensure the participation of all interested parties in the development and monitoring of public policies; to make the 2011 Constitution effective with regard to the articles on civil society participation in public life (articles 12 and 13) as well as citizen participation (Articles 14 and 15).

REPORT

Improving equitable access to essential services and infrastructures

Whilst the European Commission (EC) positively reports some progress in health sector with the EU support², SOLIDAR’s members and partners in Morocco contrarily highlight that health policies are not fully rights-based. As a matter of fact, health sector is characterized by coverage inequality and discrimination in terms of access to quality health care facilities, especially for the most vulnerable groups, particularly rural populations, women and children, the elderly and Persons With Disabilities and long-term unemployed. Particularly, a persistence of geographical and income inequalities to access these services, together with an inequitable distribution of health and therapeutic services throughout the country (and even hospitals and health centres without staff and equipment) and a lack of human resources in health public institutions represent other fundamental deficiencies encountering the health system. In addition, SOLIDAR’s members and partners in Morocco have stressed the lack of a transparent and effective

² European Commission (2015). *Mise en œuvre de la politique européenne de voisinage au Maroc. Progrès réalisés en 2014 et actions à mettre en œuvre*, SWD(2015) 70 final, 25 March 2015, p.16, Retrieved 09 October 2015, from http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/2015/maroc-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

regulatory framework characterized by absenteeism and widespread corruption that strongly hampers the effective implementation of rights-based health policies in the country.

In terms of medical coverage, while the ENP progress report insisted on the extension of compulsory medical insurance, SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco underline that the system is still facing serious financial problems, as the government has not respected its commitments regarding the budget allocated to RAMED - not even registering it in its annual budget. With a low level of public spending on health and medical coverage by public and private collective mechanisms, the health funding remains insufficient and socially inequitable. Still 50% of Moroccans do not benefit from health coverage and 53% of the treatment costs are borne by the families³. This explains the deficits in medical and paramedical framework and hospital infrastructure.

SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco also stress that, according to a welfare (national) study by the High Commission for Planning (HCP), health is the second largest priority of Moroccans, after housing. However, 81% of them said they have problems to access health care services, particularly because of the remoteness of hospitals or the impossibility of being welcomed in a health facility, besides the high cost of medical services and treatments⁴.

³ ANNAHAR, from <http://www.annahar.ma/article/50-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AC-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%BA%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88-53-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC-%D8%AA%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%B1>

⁴ Conducted in 2012 and unveiled in April 2015, the objective of the study was to determine the criteria through which Moroccans perceive their quality of life. The analysis has focused on the interrelationships between the perception of the determinants of quality of life and satisfaction in each of the welfare dimensions identified by the citizens, including housing, work, health, education, etc. *The Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP), Enquête nationale sur le Bien-être (2012), from http://www.hcp.ma/Intervention-de-M-le-Haut-Commissaire-au-Plan-Presentation-des-resultats-de-l-enquete-nationale-sur-le-bien-etre_a1074.html*

In terms of education facilities, while the ENP Progress Report insists on the EU support to the access of education - particularly for girls in rural areas and children with special needs, SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco report that a discriminatory access to quality primary education still persists. For instance, drop-out situations mainly affect children from disadvantaged families. Particularly, they report different problematic aspects in the education system. Firstly, one out of two Moroccan girls of more than 15 years is not able to read or write and 30% of young people, who represent almost half of 34 million of people, are unemployed. Secondly, there are high rates of school dropouts. According to the HCP, the dropout concerns every year 160,000 young people under 15 years and about 200,000 among the 15-25 age group. In addition, for the 2012-2013 school year, the rates in rural areas stand at 18.5% for secondary schools and at 27.5% for qualifying schools. The main reasons of this phenomenon are: the student disaffection face to school, the distance from school premises, especially for children living in rural areas, the parents' refusal of allowing their children to continue their studies and social causes, namely poverty. Thirdly, the implementation of the privatization policy will increase the inequalities in access to education (52% of schools will be private in 2030 and 97% in 2038⁵). Finally, there are also deficiencies in teacher staff training.

Concerning the access to Vocational Training (VET), SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco highlight that, despite the ambitious strategy developed by the country in this sector, the system is not ready yet to the challenge coming from the economic and social fields, namely unemployment. For instance, the unemployment rate reached nearly 10% in 2014 and it is even higher as long as the level of qualification rises. Since ten years, the Moroccan economy has been creating an average of only 90,000 jobs per year while more than 300,000 young people enter the labor market. The situation is particularly dramatic for youth. According to the HPC, among more than one million of unemployed people in Morocco, the majority are youth: 45% aged 25-34 years are either

⁵ According to Sylvain Aubry, expert in education and member of the "Global initiative for economic, social and cultural rights", a Geneva-based organization

unemployed or inactive, 41.5% of young workers have not decent salaries and 34.5% of the population - over 15 years and with a female predominance - has no level of education.

Lastly, in terms of access to other services, in line with the ENP progress report, SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco recognize the significant progress realized in sanitation and in accessing clean water in the country since 1990. However, a lot must still be done with this regard, especially in rural areas⁶. According to HCP, 22% of Moroccans do not have access to clean water and 5% do not have access to electricity. In addition, the majority of rural primary schools in the country deplore the degraded conditions in terms of hygiene and safety. For instance, 76.5% of schools are not connected to the water supply and 73% have no toilets⁷. SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco also stress the slowness of the Moroccan bureaucracy which hinders the participatory planning to develop concerted development plans. In this context, while the DRIN project (*Projet de Développement Intégré des territoires ruraux du Nord*)⁸ covering 9 municipalities in Al-Hoceima region was aiming at fostering development of most marginalized and excluded areas, in practice very little results have been achieved since its launch in 2013, and an action plan for promoting access to basic social services has not been adopted yet.

⁶ According to a report realized by the WHO and UNICEF, 23% of people have access to water from their home ("Progress on sanitation and drinking water: update and review of the MDGs 2015")

⁷ According to the Higher Council of Moroccan Education.

⁸ The project, co-financed by the European Union (€ 19 million) and the Moroccan State, is implemented between 2012 and 2018. The project implements a series of activities grouped into 4 components (Component A: Support the process of local development and strengthening of capacities of local actors; Component B: Social Development Support; Component C: Economic Development Support; Component D: Support for the rehabilitation, protection and recovery of ecosystems). The implementation of the DRIN project is based on the promotion of participatory and partnership approach, on the principle of integration of the various components, whether technical, operational, organizational, social, economic, environmental, or institutional according to an approach of a capacity building process of the actors. *Agence pour la promotion et le développement du Nord (APDN)*, from http://www.apdn.ma/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=246%3Aprojet-dappui-aux-dynamiques-de-developpement-integre-des-territoires-ruraux-de-la-province-du-nord-du-maroc&catid=48%3AAla-une&Itemid=178&lang=fr

Ensuring Income security

Firstly, in terms of decent minimum wage, SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco stress that Moroccan government has approved the draft decree No. 2-14-343 on the rise of the guaranteed minimum wage (SMIG) in industry, commerce, agriculture and self-employed professions. Accordingly, the minimum wage has to be increased of 10% in two tranches in the sectors of industry, trade and services and agriculture: the first 5% had to be effective from 1st July 2014 and the second 5% from 1st July 2015. Thus, the minimum wage in the industry, trade and services has to be 12,85 DH (EUR 1,19) / hour from 1st July 2014 and 13,46 DH (EUR 1,24) / hour from 1st July 2015⁹. For agriculture, forestry and so on, the daily minimum wage has to be 66.56 DH (EUR 6,14) / day from 1st July 2014 and 69.73 DH (EUR 6,43) / day from 1st July 2015. While a regulatory framework on the minimum wage is welcome, in the current economic context, it is unlikely that this reform will have a positive impact on precarious workers in the informal economy, which still represents a huge portion of the Moroccan labour market.

Secondly, in terms of living income, the main problem for Moroccans concerns the salary which is not adequate to the amount of working hours¹⁰. In addition, while the unemployment rate reveals a dramatic situation for young people (20.1% for the 15-24 age group), SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco point out that the new national employment strategy should integrate the instrument of "compensation conditionality" which encourages people to return to work¹¹.

Lastly, with regard to decent livelihoods, SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco stress that the Moroccan growth model does not take into account

⁹ 2.570,86 DH / month (EUR 238).

¹⁰ *The Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP), Enquête nationale sur le Bien-être* (2012), from http://www.hcp.ma/Intervention-de-M-le-Haut-Commissaire-au-Plan-Presentation-des-resultats-de-l-enquete-nationale-sur-le-bien-etre_a1074.html

¹¹ In Morocco, unemployed workers from the private sector can benefit of a conditional compensation for employment loss. Even if the device remains modest, the compensation should be an effective instrument to the economic cycle, given the continuous training of unemployed workers.

the sustainable development dimension, in terms of inclusive and participatory economic growth. Particularly, Morocco does not have a development model that meets a defined economic strategy aimed at achieving inclusive growth, social inclusion that is anchored on international labor standards. Hence, the economic model in the country should be based on the development of the industrial sector which creates job opportunities and on the adaptation of the education system to the needs of industrial competitiveness.

Promoting a Rights Based Approach to Social Protection

Concerning the entitlement to Social Protection Floors (SPF), whilst the ENP Progress Report stresses some progress in the social protection field with regard to domestic legal framework¹², SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco highlight that the pension system is one of the most challenged social reforms by the Moroccan Trade Unions. According to HCP, Moroccan employees are worried about their retirement and social coverage. Moreover, despite the Morocco's signature of the UN Convention on the Right of Persons With Disabilities - which consecrates this right in its constitution - SOLIDAR's members and partners recognize that its implementation on the ground is not ensured, therefore the entitlement to social protection remains not fulfilled for this group.

In terms of universality of social protection, the social security system 'encompasses only 1/3 of the active population amounting to around 12 millions, which makes the majority of the workers in the informal sector are excluded from any form of social protection. Moreover, the social security systems suffer from dispersion, which leads to unequal social protection reaching maximum 35% only'¹³. SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco suggest a rights-based approach to social protection ensuring transparency and beneficiaries' participation in policy formulation. Particularly, it is

¹² European Commission (2015). *Mise en œuvre de la politique européenne de voisinage au Maroc. Progrès réalisés en 2014 et actions à mettre en œuvre*, SWD(2015) 70 final, 25 March 2015, pp.9-10, Retrieved 09 October 2015, from http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/2015/maroc-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

¹³ ANND Social Watch report, Morocco

fundamental to organize a convergence between state, local and community action within the National Initiative of Human Development (INDH)¹⁴ approach and to make the extension of medical coverage to unregistered persons effective.

Freedom of Association and enabling environment

Regarding Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs), the ENP Progress Report recommends to make the Authority for the Parity and the Fight Against All Forms of Discrimination (APALD) operational and to strengthen the fight against all forms of violence regarding women, migrants and children - especially in rural areas. Despite some progress in recent years, SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco recognize the existence of several obstacles face to the consolidation of gender equity in society, in general, and at work in particular. Discrimination against Moroccan women first originated in the unequal access to education: nearly 53% of women in Morocco cannot read or write. Moreover, values and social representations hinder girls' access to public space. As result, the high dropout rate among girls is often due to family choice based on traditional values, such as early marriages, or the preference given to boys' education.

Furthermore, Moroccan women's associations consider the draft law 79.14 concerning the APALD a regressive legislation in relation to the recommendations of the CESE (Environmental Social and Economic Council) and the CNDH (National Council for Human Rights) and to the Article 164 of the Constitution, since it limits the powers of the APALD to a mere awareness and counseling actions.

Concerning the social dialogue and political consultations with CSOs, SOLIDAR's members and partners in Morocco point out that freedom of expression, association and assembly remain restricted. Moroccan government should refrain from interfering in the activities of associations, promoting the development of an environment in favor of the exercise of FoA. For instance, the authorities have initiated criminal proceedings

¹⁴ National Initiative of Human Development (INDH), from <http://www.maroc.ma/fr/content/indh>

against journalists, activists, artists and others who criticized Moroccan state institutions. Recently, the activities of the most prominent social actors, including the Moroccan Association for Human Rights (AMDH), are systematically prohibited accusing them not to be in compliance with the "basic directions" of the state. The authorities have also blocked attempts by several human rights organizations to obtain official registration allowing them to conduct their business legally. This was the case of AMDH and Freedom Now - an advocacy organization for press freedom.

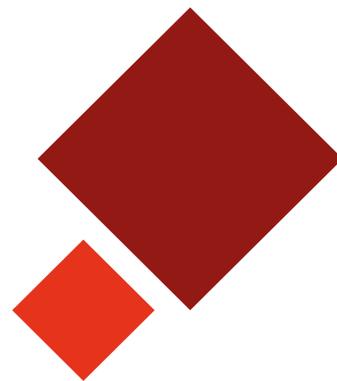
Nevertheless, a collective bargaining agreement covering nearly 1000 agricultural workers on five large farms in Meknes region has been signed between the Democratic Labor Confederation and the agro-industry employer, *Les Domaines Brahim Zniber*, in January 2015. According to this agreement, 'agricultural workers receive bonuses if their work exceeds the norm' while 'the agro-industry employer will provide safety equipment and social benefits, enabling workers to access worker compensation and other fundamental protections'. It represents a great progress in terms of promotion of freedom of association for all agricultural workers, especially women workers¹⁵.

¹⁵ Solidarity Center, *Nearly 1,000 Agriculture Workers in Morocco Celebrate First Bargaining Pact*, from <http://www.solidaritycenter.org/nearly-1000-agriculture-workers-in-morocco-celebrate-first-bargaining-pact/#sthash.53kFeFCy.dpuf>

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SOLIDAR is a European network of membership based Civil Society Organisations who gather several millions of citizens throughout Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the values of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the three main policy sectors; social affairs, lifelong learning and international cooperation.



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