

Weekly highlights by L'ÉCONOMISTE



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Weddings are still all the rage, but...



**Increase in
the minimum
wage: Remake
of 2022**



**Morocco-Israel: Carasso Motors
soon to set up shop in Morocco**



**Martin
Scorsese
returns to
Marrakech**

EDITORIAL

Soft power

Ahlam NAZIH

WITH Covid behind us, (unless a rebound occurs), international students have resumed their mobility to Morocco. After this forced interlude, the country has managed to recover the numbers lost, and can now continue to improve its score in this area, because yes, despite their rather small numbers, more and more international students are enrolling in Moroccan schools and universities, both public and private, every year.

Over a five-year period (2015-2019), international student enrollments have more than doubled, from 9,347 to 22,096. Typically, between 80% and 85% are of African origin. In 2022, the post-Covid year, 23,588 places were awarded to them. The score continues to improve.

With the gradual reinforcement of English in higher education, the diversification of the training offer and the rise of the private sector, the upward trend should continue, provided, however, that Morocco's attractiveness

as a student destination is one of the sector's priorities. Payoff was worth the effort. Education is one of the most powerful tools of soft power. Some countries have taken this on board. Turkey is a case in point. For some years now, the country has been pursuing an aggressive policy to rank among the world's top student destinations. From 2014 to 2019, it increased its international student enrollments by more than 220% to over 154,500, ranking it as the 11th most popular host country for foreign students worldwide. In 2022, the country could exceed 260,000 enrolments, before going beyond 300,000 in 2023. And it has no intention of stopping there. One of its main recruitment pools is Africa.

It's clear that Morocco has a card to play in this field. For the time being, its potential remains largely untapped. Like Turkey, it should be aiming for the moon and, at worst, landing in the stars. □

Weekly highlights

Increase in the minimum wage: Remake of 2022

WILL it increase or will it not? The second 5% increase in the minimum wage is due to come into effect on September 1. At least, this is what is stated in the social agreement of April 30, 2022, except that to date, no official statement has been made in support of this deadline. The uncertainty in the minds of employers regarding this measure is explained by the fact that the increase in the minimum wage is conditional on a number of decisions that should have been made after the implementation of the first increase of the minimum wage. These include the adoption of legislation on the right to strike (January 2023), the revision of certain provisions of the Labor Code (July 2023), and the overhaul of the provisions governing the law on professional elections (July 2023).

To date, no draft text has been submitted to the social partners by the Government. For the Moroccan employers' association CGEM, which considers that it has kept its commit-



ments, these are conditions without which the minimum wage cannot be raised, especially as certain provisions of the Labor Code, and in particular its Article 356, insist on the obligation to seek the opinion of the most representative employers' professional organizations and employees' trade unions when setting the minimum wage.

Will the Government return to the negotiating table with the social

partners, or will it force the issue of a decree on the second increase, perhaps in mid-September?

The CGEM never misses an opportunity to reiterate that it has honored all its commitments, in particular "increasing salaries and lowering the minimum threshold for entitlement to an oldage pension from 3,240 declared days to 1,320 days", declared Hicham Zouanat, chair of the CGEM social commission, at

the end of the second round of social dialogue initiated by the Head of Government. In addition, the board of directors of the employers' confederation also "agreed to raise family allowances". For the Moroccan employers' association, it is "necessary that the trade unions, as well as the government, ensure the continuation of discussions and social negotiations, particularly with regard to the regulation of the right to strike and the revision of the Labor Code".

Employers continue to press for progress on legislation concerning the right to strike and the revision of certain provisions of the Labor Code. Despite the slippage in the reform timetable, the context should be favorable. And the government could well pull a rabbit out of its hat if it wanted to. Indeed, the UGTM, the trade union arm of Istiqlal, whose Secretary General is the first President of the Moroccan Senate (Chamber of Councilors), is very close to the government majority. □

Hassan ELARIF

Morocco-Israel

Carasso Motors soon to set up shop in Morocco

THE Israeli Carasso Motors group harbors strong ambitions for the Moroccan market. The company's managers have expressed their desire to establish themselves in Morocco in the near future. As a first step, Carasso Motors is placing an order for 5,000 units of Dacia Sandero cars manufactured by Renault Maroc (Tangiers plant), to be sold on the Hebrew market. The contract will be signed "shortly" between Renault Maroc and Carasso Motors. The vehicles are to be delivered by ship from the port of Tangier Med. Carasso Motors Ltd is a company based in Israel. It specializes in the import and exclusive distribution of Renault, Nissan, Infiniti, and Dacia cars. The company's activities include the wholesale distribution of passenger cars, trucks, commercial vehicles, trailers, and other brands of new and used vehicles.

Carasso Motors is one of Israel's oldest trading companies. It has played an important role in the development of the local transport and automotive industry.



The Israeli group offers a wide range of services and a panoply of solutions: new vehicle sales, car rental, leasing, maintenance, and after-sales service, insurance, financing, logistics, digital technologies, marketing, innovation, and other sectors.

The managers of this company, founded in 1948 by Moshe Carasso, recently visited Rabat and Casablanca. They met with the Moroccan Minister of Industry and Trade. The Atlas Capital Oaklins investment bank is supporting Carasso Motors in its

projects and business in Morocco. According to our sources, the Casablanca-based investment bank (Atlas Capital Oaklins) has in recent months developed an activity dedicated to developing business opportunities in both directions between Morocco and Israel. In the space of a year, Atlas Capital has welcomed leading Israeli entrepreneurs, investors, and decision-makers from a wide range of sectors (high-tech, industry, real estate, healthcare, agriculture, energy, etc.). "There

are talks and negotiations with major Moroccan industrial groups", confides a senior executive at Oaklins Atlas Capital.

Water, agriculture, sustainable development, renewable energies, green hydrogen, technology, R&D, cyber security, tourism, and other sectors. The forthcoming signing of a free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries should boost trade volumes and cross-investment. □

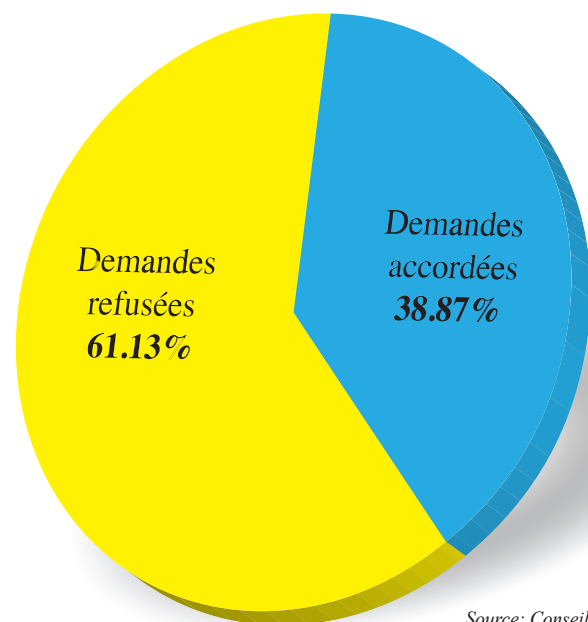
Amin RBOUB

Weddings are still all the rage, but...

Summer is still here. The peak season for wedding celebrations. According to the Supreme Council of the Judiciary, there were 1.17 million marriages between 2017 and 2021, compared with around 600,000 divorces, enough to mitigate some of the criticism of the “flaws” of the 2004 Family Code, but not only that. Official statistics are full of surprises. Polygamous marriages are declining drastically. Franco-Moroccan nationals are the most present category among mixed nationality couples, giving diplomats on both sides of the Mediterranean food for thought. The sacred bonds of marriage unite France and Morocco for better or for worse.

Faïçal FAQUIHI

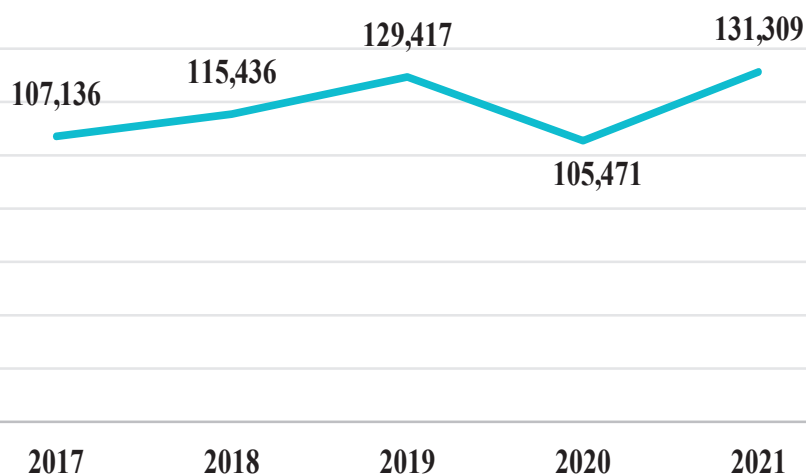
Polygamy marriage on the decline



20,000 requests for polygamous marriages between 2017-2021. Requests submitted to judges in charge of family affairs were rejected in over 60% of cases. The highest number of applications was made in 2021, representing around 5,000 polygamous marriage applications and 1.7% of requests to the courts for marriage authorization.

Source: Conseil supérieur du pouvoir judiciaire

322 divorces per day

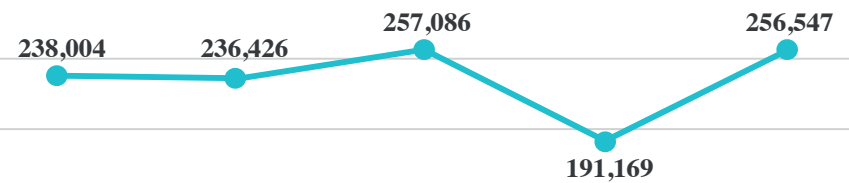


Source: Conseil supérieur du pouvoir judiciaire

All things must come to an end. And marriage is no exception... In five years, judges in charge of family affairs have recorded 588,769 divorces, that is to say 322.6 disunions per day. Divorce on the grounds of inconsolable differences (“Chiqaq”) was by far the most common, with over 421,036 cases.

For every 100 applications for marriage licenses, there are around 50 applications for divorce, according to the Presidency of the Public Prosecutor’s Office. The percentage of divorces with respect to marriages rose from 45% in 2017 to over 51% in 2021. The year of the Covid-19 pandemic posted a record with 55%.

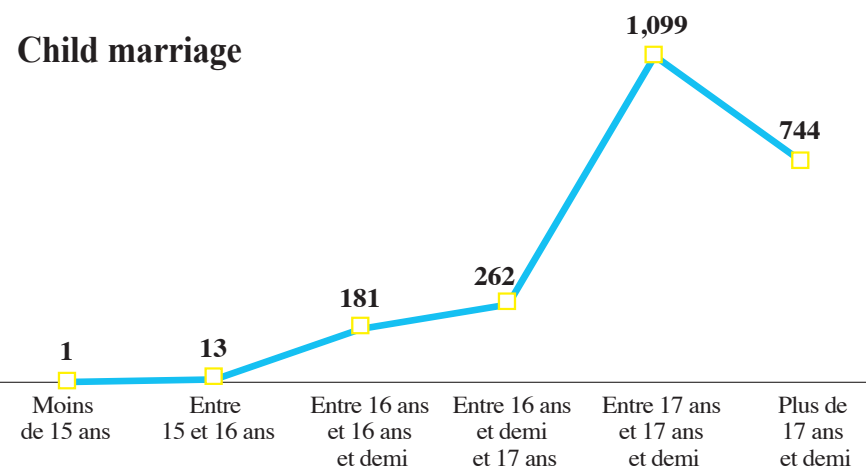
1.17 million marriage certificates



Source: Conseil supérieur du pouvoir judiciaire

The number of marriages exceeds divorces: 1.17 million versus 588,769. The number of unions increased relatively in 2019, before falling significantly in 2020, the year in which the Covid-19 pandemic triggered a state of health emergency that had the effect, among other things, of halting judicial activity.

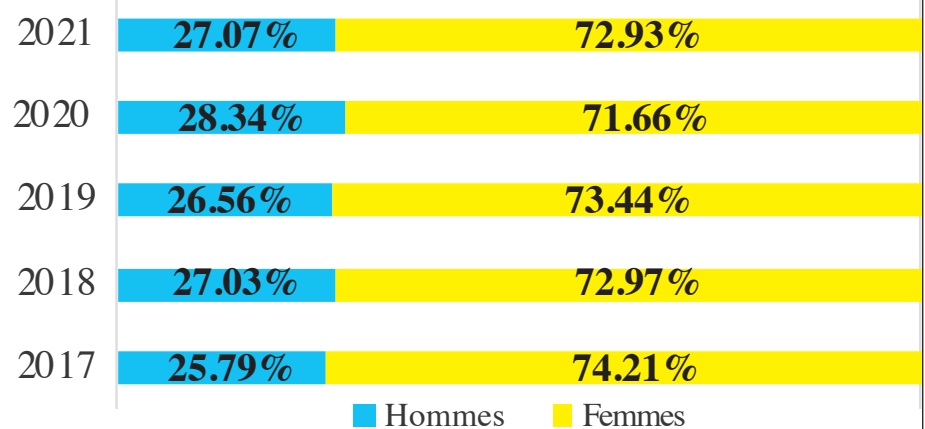
Child marriage



Source: Conseil supérieur du pouvoir judiciaire

Child marriage affects girls much more than boys. In most cases, girls are aged 17 and marry mostly adult men. This type of legal union is highly developed in wealthy, highly urbanized regions such as Marrakech-Safi and Casablanca-Settat, notes the Economic, Social, and Environmental Council.

Mixed nationality marriages: The French are favored



Source: Conseil supérieur du pouvoir judiciaire

27,626 mixed marriages out of the 1.17 million unions recorded between 2017-2021. Moroccan women marry foreigners far more than men. Most of their spouses are French. Their husbands are also American, British, Saudi, Egyptian, and Turkish. These nationalities occupy the top 6 places, with France still leading the pack. Moroccan men also marry mostly French women, followed by Americans and other European nationalities.

Weekly highlights

Martin Scorsese returns to Marrakech

A familiar face in Morocco and at the Marrakech International Film Festival (FIFM), Martin Scorsese is back for his sixth appearance at the event. The American filmmaker will be in the ochre city from November 24 to December 2 to take part in the 20th edition. With this in mind, Scorsese has agreed to be the patron of the sixth edition of Ateliers de l'Atlas, the festival's industrial program dedicated to talents from the region. Martin Scorsese will thus be the first major personality to be invited to sponsor an edition of Les Ateliers, and to lend his name to its graduating class. A legendary director and ardent defender of the movies industry, Martin Scorsese has been one of the world's most influential artists for over 40 years. A long-standing supporter of the Marrakech Festival, the director of the legendary Irishman trilogy declares: *"I'm always delighted to return to the Marrakech Festival, which is so dear to me. When I'm not there in person, I'm there in spirit. For this very special anniversary edition of the Festival, I've been entrusted with a precious mission: to exchange with young filmmakers and help guide them on their path. I'm looking forward to catching up with old friends and making new ones"*.

As an industrial talent development program initiated in 2018 by the Marrakech International Film Festival, the Ateliers de l'Atlas event supports the emergence of a new generation of Moroccan, Arab, and African filmmakers and creates a space for exchanges between international professionals and regional talent. Through a dense program, the Ateliers offer filmmakers the chance to accelerate production,



gain a better understanding of the market, and strengthen their network. After five editions, the event, which has grown to become a veritable factory for the regional seventh art, has supported 111 projects and films, including 48 Moroccan projects and films. In recent years, several films supported by Ateliers de l'Atlas have been selected and been awarded prizes at major international festivals, confirming the role of Ateliers de



l'Atlas as a key incubator and platform for the region. At the last Cannes Film Festival, four films supported by Les Ateliers were present in various sections: "The mother of all lies" by Asmae El Moudir (A Certain Glance section of the Cannes Festival- Director's Award, Oeil d'or for Best Documentary), "Les meutes" by Kamal Lazraq (A Certain Glance section - Prize of the Jury), "Inshallah a boy" by Amjad Al Rasheed (Critics' Week -

GAN Foundation Distribution Award) and "Désert" by Faouzi Bensaidi (Cinematographers' Fortnight). The next edition of the Ateliers de l'Atlas is already promising to be an exceptional one, with the presence of Martin Scorsese, who will take part in several sessions with the selected project leaders. He will also be inaugurating a new festival tradition: each year, a major figure in world cinema will sponsor the workshops. Each year's class of winners will bear the name of the celebrity who sponsored them. The class of 2023 will thus be called the "Martin Scorsese class". The sixth edition of Ateliers de l'Atlas will be held from November 27 to 30, in conjunction with the twentieth Marrakech International Film Festival. □

A.BO

LA NEWSLETTER

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