

# Weekly highlights by L'ECONOMISTE

Le premier quotidien économique du Maroc

## Tourism summer 2024 Morocco on the radar screen



(Photo by Fadwa Ahasser)

EDITORIAL

PowerPoint

Khalid BELYAZID

«DES chiffres et des lettres» («Numbers and letters»). It is an old French TV show, and a formula that Mr. Akhannouch introduced to Parliament. He was to present «a balance sheet», i.e. a series of figures, to a particular General Assembly, that of the deputies. He held up signs with figures and curves to show his Government's mid-term achievements. It's so innovative that we remember the method more than the numbers. It is almost like PowerPoint, without the overhead projector. This software is useful for company meetings, but well illustrated and packed with buzzwords like «agile», «disruptive», and a few anglicisms like «feedback» or «brainstorming», it can sometimes hide emptiness. This is not the case here: the achievements are numerous and concrete. They are supported by competent and efficient ministers, like excellent business managers who have

mastered the art of numbers. But is that enough in politics, the art of letters, words, and slogans? It is also a skill that sometimes prevails in public opinion, which has become everywhere permeable to demagoguery. This is why, in the major democracies, «minister managers» do more than just sell their good economic results. Their talents as politicians are judged by the low blows of their opponents, the doubts of public opinion, the fake news inflated by the algorithms of social media, and also in crisis situations. One day, one of our opposition MPs will take up the placard process in Parliament. But only to point out that the glass is half empty. If he knows that a balance sheet is made up of many figures, and that grandstanding is made up of a single figure, as in company meetings, all he has to do is hold up the wrong figure, that of unemployment. □

## Weekly highlights

### Tourism summer 2024

# Morocco on the radar screen

**M**OROCCO is one of the top 10 destinations preferred by tourists in 2024. Better still, it features in the top 3 of a GEO ranking behind Mexico and Tunisia. «If you choose to visit Morocco, don't miss the must-sees: the dunes around the village of Merzouga, the gorges of the Todgha and Dadès valleys, the bay of Al Hoceïma, the Ouzoud waterfalls, or the fortified village of Ait-Ben-Haddou. As you can see, there's something for everyone. The hardest thing is to decide...», recommends GEO. If the Mediterranean coast is particularly popular, it is because it suits smaller budgets. But the Mediterranean coast is not the only region of the world that appeals to people. In fact, some travelers prefer to go a little further afield to enjoy paradise-like landscapes and beaches. In search of sun and farniente, travelers will turn more specifically to South American countries, but also to Asia, the East and even Switzerland. In addition to Tunisia, Mexico, and Morocco (Top 3), the 7 favorite destinations in 2024 are (in order) the Dominican Repu-



blic, Sri Lanka, Bulgaria, the Philippines, Malaysia, Cyprus, and Switzerland. According to a recent study, SALT.agency, an agency specializing

in data referencing, has highlighted the main destinations that will be particularly popular with travelers in 2024. What emerges from this study

is a desire among travelers to appreciate, in the first instance, the gems to be found in Mediterranean countries. «Apart from Tunisia, Morocco comes in second place. Less than two hours from France, this tourist gem is particularly popular with short-stay travellers. The country offers a multitude of activities and sites to visit, to suit all tastes and, above all, all budgets», recommends the SALT agency study. According to a study carried out by the ONMT (Moroccan National Tourist Office): «Foreign tourists' perception of the image of the Morocco brand reveals an imaginary country dominated by medinas, souks, crowds, crafts, scents, colors and music...». The cultural dimension and authenticity are at the forefront of this image. The desert dimension has also been added to the brand, and is now firmly established as Morocco's typical landscape, part of its inspiring mythical African identity. This makes Morocco a preferred destination for Europeans in 2024, whether for a stay of several weeks or a citytrip. □

Amin RBOUB

## Why one quarter of young people sink into «NEETitude»

**O**NE quarter of young Moroccans aged between 15 and 24 (25.2%) are NEETs (neither in employment, education nor training), i.e. 1.5 million people. A chilling figure. A few days after the report by the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (see L'Economiste # 6762 of May 10, 2024) on this category of left-behind, the High Commissioner's Office for Planning (HCP) has done it again. The institution headed by Ahmed Lahlimi has taken a particular interest in the profile of these «NEETs» and the determinants of their status, based on the 2022 National Employment Survey. Several variables were examined, such as age, gender, level of education, marital status, and geographic location.

So what is the profile of NEETs? First and foremost, they are women. Nearly three quarters of the total NEET population are made up of women. A survey carried out by the

National Observatory for Human Development (ONDH) in 2020, in partnership with Unicef, found that 54% of NEETs were rural housewives with family responsibilities. The HCP highlights «significant disparities» between genders. Young women are affected by «NEETitude» to the tune of 37.3%, compared

with only 13.5% of young men. This raises questions about equal opportunities for young women, according to the institution. In rural areas, the proportion of NEETs among women

aged 15 to 24 rises to 51.5%, compared with 28.2% in urban areas. More than half of female NEETs are concentrated in four regions: Marrakech-Safi, Casablanca-Settat, Fez-Meknes and Rabat-Salé-Kénitra. And the older they are, the more likely they are to fall into this status (55.9% of the 20-24 year-olds).

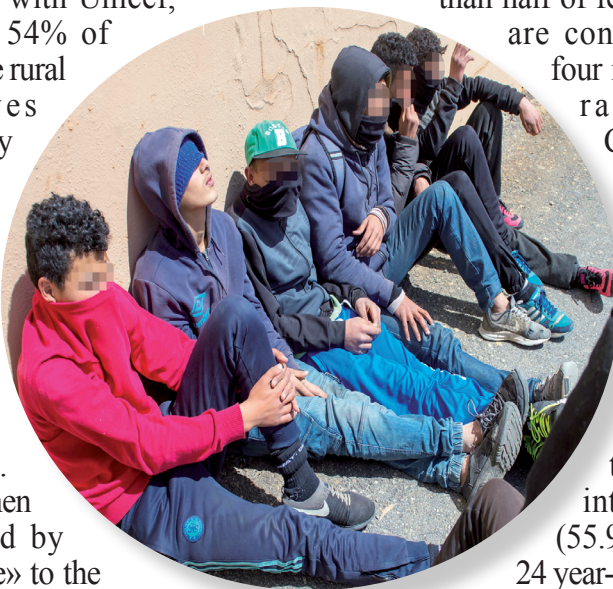
6 out of 10 NEET women live in rural areas, and almost 9 out of 10 (87.5%) are inactive. This is a state of affairs that NEET women justify first and foremost by their family responsibilities. Three quarters

of them mention the upkeep of their household and the education of their children. Around 9% confide their lack of interest in work, and 8% point to opposition to their activity from their father, spouse or family member.

The majority of Moroccan NEETs live in households where the head of the household has no qualifications.

The HCP analysis highlights the «complexity and diversity» of the circumstances facing this category, and underlines the importance of a «holistic and differentiated» approach to understanding its challenges and formulating appropriate strategies. With the Covid crisis in 2020, young people have suffered greater job losses than their elders, as well as greater educational and professional disruption. Hence the need to maximize actions targeting them, according to the HCP. Worldwide, these people account for 289 million. □

Ahlam NAZIH



# Government/CESE: Squeaky wheel

**A**HMED Réda Chami, President of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council of Morocco, couldn't have found a better person than the Head of Government to promote his latest report on the Neet, those young people who are neither in school, training nor employment. Indeed, Aziz Akhannouch cited the work of the CESE, made public on Wednesday morning, the day of the debate on its mid-term review in Parliament. However, he wondered about the timing of this release. Was it pure chance or intentional? This issue will be raised for the constitutional bodies, he hinted during his reply to the House of Councillors last Thursday. In any case, the Head of Government sought to put the matter in a positive light, giving him the benefit of the doubt. And by pointing out that this work was nothing new, since the subject was well known. The proof: before the last elections, the National Rally



During his visit to the House of Councillors, Aziz Akhannouch questioned the timing of the publication of the CESE report on NEET. Was it pure chance or intentional? In any case, the Head of Government tried to be positive, giving the benefit of the doubt (Ph. Bziouat)

of Independents' (RNI 's) «Chemin de la confiance» ( The road to confidence ) program had addressed these Neet issues. For the Head of Government, «what's new is not talking about it, but finding solutions». In his view, the solutions put forward by the CESE are not convincing. The Government cannot apply them. In this respect, he recalled that he had not confined himself to diagnosis, but had proposed solutions, notably in the reform of the education system. Indeed, one of the goals is to reduce the school drop-out rate by a third, so that these young people do not leave school. To achieve this goal, the Government spoke of actions in the fields of transport, school canteens, boarding schools, the tutoring program, parallel activities, schools of excellence, etc. In addition, there is investment in second-chance schools, which already exist and need to be developed.

The Head of Government also mentioned coding, in particular the

launch in the coming weeks of the Digital Morocco strategy, which will mobilize a large number of young people. As far as coding is concerned, the aim is to train 100,000 young people a year in the digital field, instead of 14,000 by 2022, he stressed, before moving on to set the target of employing 240,000 people in the digital sector in the future.

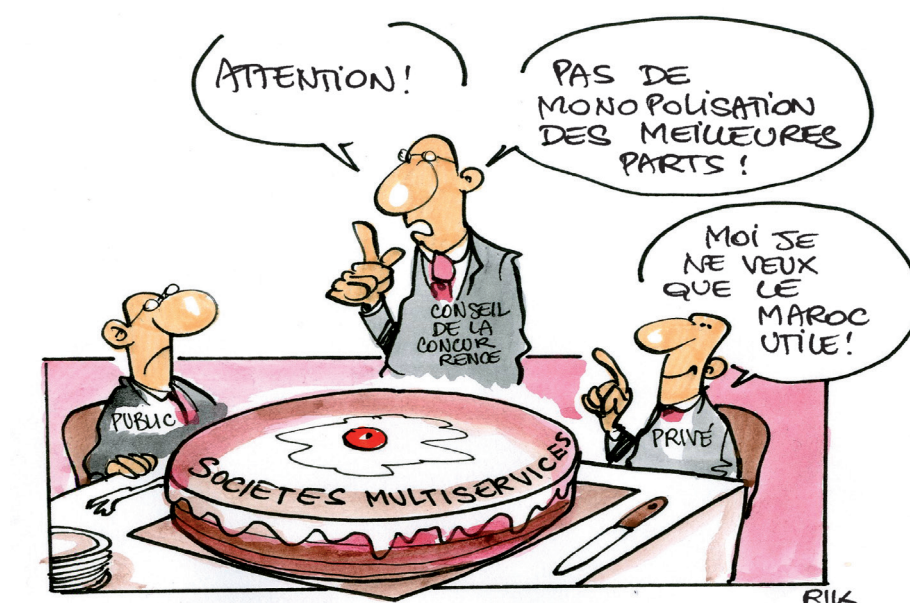
Furthermore, in times of crisis, it is imperative to boost employment among young people. To convince, the Head of Government gave the example of Awrach and Forsa, «two programs designed to get people moving to go to work, in a context marked by the freezing of the economy during the period of the Covid-1 pandemic». They were said to last no more than 2 years. Forsa ended last year. Awrach is shrinking, but has helped 50,000 young people find stable employment. The Forsa program benefited 21,000 companies and cooperatives. □

Mohamed CHAOU

## Multi-service company

# Beware of private monopolies

**V**IGILANCE against the creation of private monopolies and the risk that multiservice companies in less attractive regions will not attract private operators! This is the main recommendation of the Competition Council regarding the grouping of electricity, drinking water, and liquid sanitation services under the aegis of a single operator in each region. This will lead to the creation of local distribution monopolies, which certainly seem justified by the pooling of committed means and resources, and will therefore result in the optimization of distribution investment costs. «However, within the framework of the PPPs provided for by law, the creation of private monopolies must be avoided», warns the council. To this end, it calls for contracts to be properly framed to prevent the risk of abuse. And to take account of the fact that not all regions have the same potential. This will «prevent public operators from being the only ones involved in less attractive SRMs (Regional multiservice companies)». Law 83.21 on regional multiservice companies pro-



vides for the capital of these companies to be opened up to the private sector, with the Government holding at least 10%. In other words, private investors can hold up to 90% of these companies' capital. State-owned enterprise and agencies, including the National Water and Electricity Board (ONEE), as well as the local authorities concerned by the scope of intervention of the Regional multiservice companies.

«The reform introduced by Law 83-21 is commendable, as it opens up prospects for the development of national champions capable of exporting their expertise», said the Council. In its view, the creation of Regional multiservice companies with a contribution from private capital will make it possible to meet two major imperatives. Firstly, to mobilize the financial resources needed to meet the major

investment programs required in the distribution segment, particularly in terms of infrastructure. This will secure supply, expand, and improve service quality. Secondly, the contribution of the private sector to the Regional multiservice companies will introduce a modern management approach likely to improve, among other things, the performance of networks and the quality of service in commercial management.

Management of distribution services will be entrusted by the delegatee to the Regional multiservice companies via management contracts concluded by mutual agreement. These management contracts will be entered into for a fixed term, with the possibility of renewal. They will be subject to periodic review at least every 5 years. These Regional multiservice companies will benefit from the availability of all assets and resources allocated to the management of this public service at regional level. This will ensure that they have the resources they need to accomplish their mission. □

Khadija MASMOUDI

## Weekly highlights

# Casablanca unveils itself over three days

**I**S Casablanca angel or demon? Neither. It is a life-size urban, architectural, and sociological puzzle. A city where each place has its own history, atmosphere, and characters... A compendium of the Kingdom of Morocco from the early 20th century to the present day.

The Casablanca Heritage Days are an opportunity to see and explore L'Baïda mon amour. From May 17 to 19, 2024, the Casamémoire association invites young and old alike «to travel free of charge through time and space». Not to mention over forty workshops, exhibitions, conferences, and other events scheduled from Monday May 13.

«Casablanca, heritage in motion» is the evocative theme of this 13th edition. Volunteer guides will be on hand from 10 am to 5 pm. Only for tours of the old medina, city center and Habous. For reasons of distance and logistics, only two departures are scheduled, at 9.30 a.m. and 2 p.m. for the Casa-Est and Casa-Ouest circuits.

Friday May 17 is reserved for public and private schoolchildren. The list of beneficiary schools is already complete. The weekend of May 18-19 is reserved for the general public. A visit can last an average



Some forty cultural activities are planned for the Casablanca Heritage Days from Monday May 13 to May 19, 2024. These include a bus tour of Street Art in Casablanca with the Alouane Bladi association, the urban transport museum (at the Alsa Bus depot, Bd Bir Anzarane) and the museum of the great musician, Abdelouahab Doukkali, on the 17th floor overlooking Bd de la Résistance... The program of activities can be consulted on casamemoire's social network accounts (Photo by Fadwa Alnasser)

of two hours. So don't forget your walking shoes.

The division of Dar El Baïda into zones reserved for commerce, housing, leisure and industry is one of the legacies of Casablanca's first development plan. Drawn up in 1915 by architect and town planner Henry Prost.

Visitors will be spoiled for choice. Five tours are on offer. The old

medina, known as the «indigenous city» under the French protectorate (1912-1956). With its winding lanes, where you can discover the Ould Hamra mosque, the saints and their legends, the history of the Sqala bastion and the must-see Heritage Interpretation Center...

The city center, with bd Mohammed V and place Mohammed V. Administrative buildings, such as the

Wilaya of Casablanca and the court, open their doors for three days. For the record, offcuts from the Eiffel Tower have been recycled into sculpture! Created by César, the metal work takes pride of place in the lobby of Bank Al-Maghrib. Then the Habous district, known as the «new indigenous city». Its Mahkama (tribunal) was built between 1941 and 1952. The building was inspired by 700-year-old construction techniques. The current headquarters of the Casablanca-Settat region is also reminiscent of Andalusian castles.

The Casa-Est tour takes visitors to the Roches noires, Hay Mohammadi, and Aïn Chock districts.

This route tells the story of the White City's industrial history, its first workers' housing estates, the forerunner of social housing, and a tormented contemporary Morocco and its Years of Lead.

The Casa-Ouest circuit departs from the Maarif district to reveal Casablanca's laidback side. For the latter two tours, interested parties should register in advance at <https://forms.gle/KqofAFRY9yz1p2PE7>. Casa Bus provides free transport to discover Casa-Est and Casa-Ouest. Two departures are scheduled at 9.30 a.m. and 2 p.m. □

Faïçal FAQUIHI

## Tour departure points

**1**

**Ancienne Médina - المدينة القديمة**  
18 - 19 Mai 2024  
Départ : La Sqala - Bd des Almohades  
الإسكافية - شارع الموحدين  
De 10h00 à 17h00  
Durée de visite : 1h30

**2**

**Centre-ville - المركز المدينة**  
18 - 19 Mai 2024  
Deux points de rassemblement :  
Place des Nations Unies / Place Mohammed V  
نقاط التجمع :  
ساحة الأمم المتحدة / ساحة محمد الخامس  
De 10h00 à 17h00  
Durée de visite : 1h30

**3**

**Quartier des Habous - الحبوس**  
18 - 19 Mai 2024  
Départ : Siège de la Région Casablanca-Settat  
Bd Victor Hugo (Mahkama du Pacha)  
المنطقة : مقر جهة الدار البيضاء - سطات  
(محكمة الباشا) شارع محمد الخامس  
De 10h00 à 17h00  
Durée de visite : 1h30

**4**

**Casa Ouest - غرب الدار البيضاء**  
18 - 19 Mai 2024  
(Maarif, Riviera, C.I.L, Hay Hassani, El Hank)  
Départ : Place Mehdi Ben Barka - devant Marché Maarif  
المعاريف - ريفيرا - سي.إل.إي. الحاساني - الهانك  
المنطقة من ساحة مهدي بن بركة (أمام سوق المعاريف)  
De 9h30 à 14h00 \*Deux départs : 9h30 et 14h00  
Durée de visite : 30'

**5**

**Casa Est - شرق الدار البيضاء**  
18 - 19 Mai 2024  
(Roches noires, Hay Mohammadi, Aïn Chok)  
Départ : Place des Nations Unies - Kiosque Alsa Casa Bus  
الصخور السوداء - الحاساني - عين الشق  
المنطقة من ساحة الأمم المتحدة - كiosk ألسا كاسا بوس  
De 9h30 à 14h00 \*Deux départs : 9h30 et 14h00  
Durée de visite : 30'

1- Old medina, departure from the Sqala café-restaurant

2- Downtown, departure from in front of the fountain on Place Mohammed V

3- Quartier des Habous, departure in front of the headquarters of the Casablanca-Settat Region at Bd Victor Hugo.

4- Casa Ouest, bus tour departing from Place Mehdi Ben Barka, Maarif.

(Maarif, Riviera, C.I.L, Hay Hassani, El Hank)

5- Casa Est, bus route departs from Place des Nations Unies next to the Alsa Bus station (Roches Noires, Hay Mohammadi, Aïn Chock).