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Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education

RECOMMENDATION

on the Digital Revolution, Education and Job Creation in the Euro-Mediterranean Region

Recommendation of the Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean on the role of the Digital Revolution, Education and Job Creation in the Euro-Mediterranean Region.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean,

1. Over the past few years, we have witnessed a shift in Europe from traditional sectors to digital economy which has an impact on our everyday lives and presents growth potential for SMEs and industries. Therefore, it would be relevant to promote the potential of digitalisation, by closing the digital gap and combatting geographical and social barriers, in the emerging markets for developing innovative business models, creating new jobs for young people and offering a new range of connected and smart devices and services.
2. Bearing in mind the importance of digital data, artificial intelligence and big data, with all the beneficial consequences and risks that they entail, believes it fundamental to evaluate their impacts and direct their advantages towards not only education and employment, but also health and social protection.
3. Encourages the use of new technologies in teaching and learning processes and believes that technological development should go hand-in-hand with cultural development, accompanying ethics in the workplace, respect for human beings and improvements in peoples' social conditions. It also means encouraging people to get access to digital services like digital health or tele-health services, public or private, through active information campaigns and supporting actions to help people to acquire digital skills, e.g. through digital literacy programs. These awareness campaigns and trainings could help people to understand how to use digital devices safely and how to ensure the privacy of their data.
4. Suggests to Member States that they develop civic and political training in school curricula, introducing the values of respect for differences, democracy and cultural and religious freedom. The importance of clarifying the distinction between difference and inequality is highlighted. Stresses, furthermore, the important role of cultural diplomacy, education and cultural exchange in strengthening a common core of universal values.
5. Invites Member States to work together to share responsibilities and projects to better integrate young people who are in a situation of social exclusion, in particular in vulnerable and isolated areas. Inclusive education and cohesive development for societies, the balanced development of territories are the best prevention for situations of exclusion,

radicalisation, extremism and terrorism. Education and social and economic settings are the best defence against extremist and violent ideologies.

- 6.1. Reiterates the importance of education as a need and priority for all refugees and migrants, particularly children and young people. It therefore emphasizes the social benefit for the Euro-Mediterranean Region that would come from refugee and migrant children and young people having the opportunity to access education and be sufficiently integrated into the education systems, and to access study grants under equal conditions as young nationals of each country.
- 6.2. Welcomes the Declaration adopted at the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, held in Cairo on 27 November 2017, and encourages Member States to actively support women and girls to seize the opportunities brought by the digital revolution.
7. Highlights the importance of science and scientific research, as well as the sustainability of funding for higher education and science and technology systems as a road towards countries' sustained development, on a path that values knowledge, culture and qualified employment. Encourages Member States to work together to overcome the innovation gap and promote new industrial digital champions in the region. Stable working conditions are fundamental to pursuing academic ends. Recognises the role of science and research as soft-power tools in European external relations; highlights that scientific and cultural exchanges contribute to capacity building and conflict resolution; urges to foster the development of an ambitious science diplomacy.
8. Encourages all Member States to set attendance targets for the different levels of training that are ambitious but also realistic, promoting, in a regular and sustained manner, improvements in peoples' qualification.
9. Recalls that the Euro-Mediterranean area has a shared history, an eternal geography and it is necessary to deepen closeness between peoples. It therefore encourages governments and supranational leaders to develop academic mobility programmes in order to foster intercultural dialogue, like those developed by the CIHEAM (International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies) so that new generations can live the "Mediterranean experience", can better know the diversity and the common roots of cultures in the Mediterranean area and promote values of tolerance, as well as create youth employability projects among the Member States of the north and south Mediterranean, particularly projects that are based on the intersection of cultures and identities that thereby add new realities to the Euro-Mediterranean dimension. Asks for the setting up of mechanisms to facilitate visa access to and from third countries for cultural professionals, researchers, academics, teachers, students and staff.
10. Acknowledges that the digitalisation and automation of the economy will make new jobs appear while others fade away. It therefore urges Member States to be proactive and

make the most of the opportunity to work for a future where everyone has access to digital literacy and is digitally included, specifically by encouraging mobility for young entrepreneurs from young and medium-sized enterprises and structuring programmes that make it possible to build social and economic bridges by way of these young people.

- 11.1. Emphasises the importance of public information and awareness-raising policies regarding the importance of the protection of personal data, as a corollary to the right to privacy, warning about the risks of cyber-attacks on citizens, companies, institutions and Member States. Stresses the importance of data protection and the fact that all new digital technologies must respect personal privacy. In these terms, it notes that the future of the Euro-Mediterranean Region is one of convergence and implementation of intelligent policies regarding interconnection and interactivity, investing in technological tools, making the interests of the region a priority in the face of nationalist and/or individualist agendas.
- 11.2. Stresses the importance of a neutral and open internet ensuring freedom of expression for each citizen as well as media plurality. The Member States must enforce equality of treatment for all internet data flows.
- 11.3. Stresses the fight against cyber-crime for the protection of the countries and citizens.
12. Advises Member States to work towards a balance between all citizens of the economic benefits arising from new technological instruments, only accessible by a few. This balance should occur not only from an economic standpoint, studying new taxation mechanisms that encourage innovation but guarantee the distribution of social benefits, but also regarding use of the big data that is owned by public institutions.
13. Warns of the phenomenon of the lack of reliability of information and news as highlighted also through the spread of fake news, revealing the need for greater accountability from information broadcasters but also information receivers. In this respect, increased attention should be given on developing a critical spirit among school-age children and young people.
14. Encourages Member States to pay particular attention to the application of new technologies and digital to the green economy, through, in particular, the implementation of ambitious projects on the renewable energies, potentially supported by the Union for the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean area will be particularly affected if global warming is not halted and runs the risk of becoming an arid area, and technological evolution only makes sense if it is able to improve the Mediterranean Region, including in environmental terms.
15. Recognises legal migration as being fundamental for the economic growth and demographic sustainability of the Mediterranean basin, valuing their role in cultural and social heterogeneity, wealth creation, social balance and respect for differences and

tolerance for others in a region that wishes to live with differences in peace. Heterogeneity and diversity are competitive advantages for Member States.

16. In the context of the Industry 4.0 (digital revolution/e-production):

- Professional qualifications that will be needed in the field of Industry 4.0 should be determined by member countries;
- In line with the determined qualifications, teacher and student curriculums and training materials should be prepared;
- To increase the mobility of labor among member countries, joint projects should be conducted.

Countries in Euro-Mediterranean Region should cooperate about program and expert support in the field of education, student exchange programs and developing sister school projects among the schools.