

# Weekly highlights by L'ECONOMISTE



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## L'Economiste-Sunergia/Moudawana reform survey 7 out of 10 against equal inheritance rights

EDITORIAL

Prism

Khalid BELYAZID

**A** capital city blocked by demonstrators, and armored cars to deter them. In Africa, it would be the disorder of an underdeveloped country, a revolution in the making, a repressive state. In Paris, it's a peaceful expression of democracy, against a state that protects property and rights. With this prism, this doublespeak, the Western media and politicians qualify the same facts. Today, the «mobilizations» of French farmers are a cause for concern, especially as Moroccan trucks have been attacked and loads of fruit and vegetables destroyed. Imagine French trucks being subjected to the same violence in Morocco. It would be the subject of endless coverage on French TV, and a condemnation by the European Parliament of a country where instability and «legal insecurity» reign, unworthy of the partnership agreement with the EU. Basically, these brave French farmers

have one obsession: European environmental protection standards. Bad for them, good for others. And one demand: more subsidies. They want to export wheat and champagne, but be protected from importing meat or tomatoes when they can't compete.

Free trade is when I'm the strongest. If a Moroccan entrepreneur demands this, he'll be called a rentier. Their government will give in. None of us is happy about the unrest in France, with which we have close ties. It is just an opportunity to point out that street protests and the destruction of other people's property also affect rich countries, where the laws and mechanisms of democracy are flouted, even in Paris. As for African capitals, they are quiet; they have forgotten their peasants and think only of their football players. □



## Weekly highlights

### Investment

# Court of Auditors points out shortcomings

**M**RS. Zineb El Adaoui clearly has plenty of stamina. The first president of the Court of Auditors delivered a speech to the two chambers of parliament, which lasted over an hour and 45 minutes, without stopping. She touched on a number of economic and social aspects, as well as strategic projects. The reform of the Investment Charter did not elude the scrutiny of the magistrates at the Court of Auditors. At the strategic level, implementation of the Investment Charter began with the commitment of all parties concerned, including the Government, the private sector, and the banking world. However, the completion of the Charter remains dependent on the need to speed up the development of a national investment strategy in order to formalize all the components of the reform, which are currently being drawn up by the various players concerned, said the First President. In this context, the Court of Auditors emphasizes the need for coordination and

complementarity between all parties, in particular between the line ministry and the Mohammed VI Investment Fund. The Court also calls for mechanisms to be put together to improve convergence and increase the impact of State interventions in the field of investment.

With regard to investment support systems under the new Charter, the Court recalls the publication of regulatory texts relating to the basic support system and that relating to strategic projects. However, the second part of the implementing decrees relating to the promotion of Moroccan companies at international level has not yet been adopted, despite the fact that the six-month deadline set for this purpose has been exceeded. As for the third part of the laws and regulations relating to the support scheme for very small businesses and SMEs, the Court of Auditors stresses the importance of enacting them as soon as possible. The initial 12-month deadline for this operation has also been exceeded.



Improving the business climate has not been overlooked. In March 2023, the Government had announced the adoption of a new strategic roadmap for the 2023-2026 period at the national conference on the business climate. As a result, the implementation of the reform's components requires further work to ensure buy-in, convergence, integration, and mutualization in the use of resources. The same applies to

the implementation of steering systems, which will enable precise monitoring of the roadmap implementation.

The Court of Auditors also recommends updating the content of the reform of the Regional Investment Centers (CRIs) and the creation of unified regional investment commissions to adapt them to strategic and institutional developments. □

Mohamed CHAUI

### Teachers

# Recruitment to remain regional

«**T**HIS Government has put an end to contractualization», said Executive spokesman Mustapha Baitas on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at the close of the Government Council meeting. This is strange, given that the former Minister of National Education, Saad Amzazi (2018-2021), has constantly repeated that contractualization with teachers no longer exists since September 2018, when a status specific to «*academy executive teachers*» was introduced. This status was updated in March 2019.

In 2021, and following multiple rounds of negotiations with the unions, Amzazi proclaimed loud and clear that contract teachers were a thing of the past. Teachers recruited from 2016 onwards on contract were able to obtain the same salary and benefits as their colleagues, civil servants in the Education Nationale. As a result, they were transferred to the Moroccan Pension Fund (CMR), and were able to take all competitive examinations to become inspectors, guidance counsel-



lors, school principals... « This is what was stated, but it wasn't formalized. Today, we have a change in the law, in this case the law creating regional academies, which means that contractualization has come to an end », says Mohamed Khoufaifi, Deputy General Secretary of the national education federation (UMT).

«Henceforth, all teachers are subject to the same administrative situation, and can claim the same promo-

tions and career opportunities, and apply for the same competitive examinations, something that was not possible before», he added.

In Saaïd Amzazi's time, there was only one point of difference, according to the Minister: regional recruitment. Teachers hired from 2016 onwards retained their status as employees of the Regional Academies of Education and Training (AREF), not the Ministry. They were therefore not eligible for

national, but regional mobility, with a few exceptions. Yet, generally speaking, teachers are a highly mobile population. Amzazi spoke of 80,000 transfer requests per year, or one teacher in three. Almost 40% of requests were satisfied.

The decision to integrate contract teachers in 2016 was certainly ill-considered, not to say foolish. Nevertheless, it was a step towards the much-desired advanced regionalization and devolution through regional recruitment. And today, as in the past, this is the only difference that remains between the recruits integrated from 2016 onwards and the former civil servant teachers of the National Education ministry. « It is still the AREF academies who recruit », confirms Khoufaifi. Even if not all their demands have been accepted, the teachers have all returned to their classrooms after almost three months on general strike. Will the adoption of the new status mark the end of the protest movements? □

Ahlam NAZIH



## L'Economiste-Sunergia/Moudawana reform survey

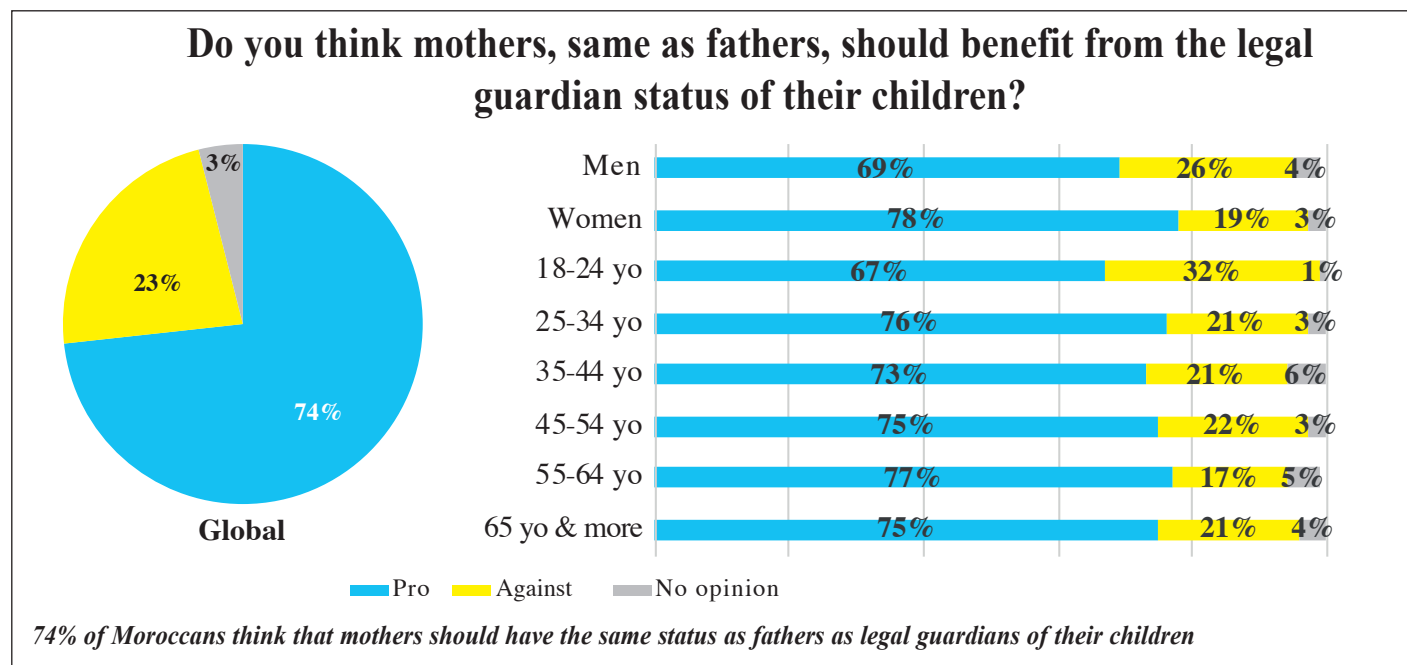
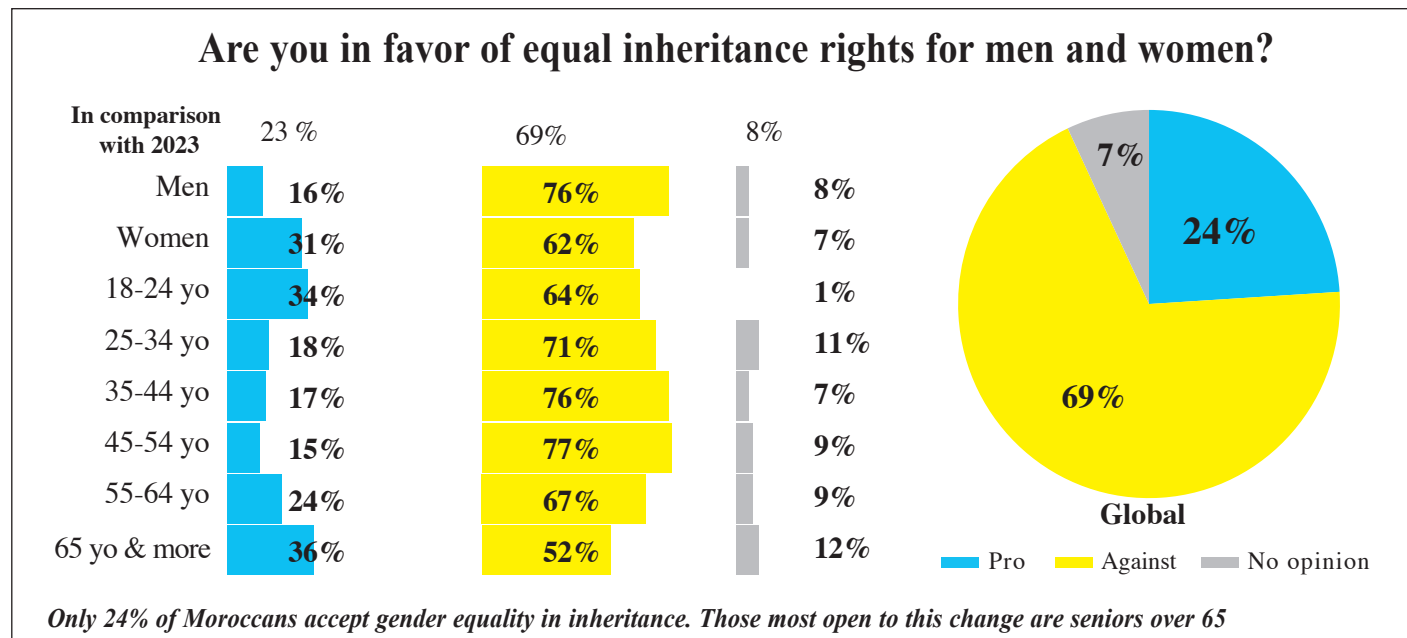
## 7 out of 10 Moroccans against equal inheritance rights

**T**HIS is one of the major projects for the current year. The reform of the Family Code is generating a real social debate. Particularly as some of the points raised by NGOs are provoking outcry from conservative groups. Inheritance, legal guardianship, division of property after divorce... In any case, the entity responsible for revising the Family Code has just completed its hearing sessions. Nevertheless, it is leaving the door open for further proposals and opinions to be submitted, either in the form of written memoranda or via the Forum's electronic site. Meetings are also planned with experts to gather their opinions and ideas, particularly in the field of Islamic jurisprudence.

In concrete terms, the reform of the Family Code will make it possible to « remedy the dysfunctions and shortcomings that the experience of its judicial implementation has revealed », according to the Royal letter addressed to the Head of Government. The Sovereign specified that the provisions of the new Family Code must be brought into line with the evolution of Moroccan society and the needs of sustainable development.

On the ground, despite the demands made by a number of associations, society still seems hesitant about certain controversial aspects, chief among them is the question of equality between men and women in matters of inheritance. These are the findings of the latest L'Economiste-Sunergia survey. Only 24% of those questioned were in favor of equality between men and women in matters of inheritance. Almost 7 out of 10 Moroccans are opposed to the introduction of gender equality in inheritance law. Mentalities are finding it hard to change on this subject. And this applies to both genders. Among men, 76% are against equality in this area. Among women, the figure is 62%. Only 31% were in favor.

By age group, the highest rates of rejection of equality in inheritance are among people aged 35-44 and 45-44, with 76% and 77% respectively. Conversely, the highest rate of support for this societal evolution is found among the over-65s (36%). Young people aged 18-24 are also



more open to this change. 34% are in favor of equal inheritance rights.

At the territorial level, people in the South of the country seem more open to a change in inheritance rules to ensure gender equality (28% for and 62% against). On the other hand, the situation seems more complicated

in the North and East of the country (17% for and 76% against). Contrary to stereotypes, the data also show a greater evolution in rural areas than in cities. 31% of rural dwellers are in favor of equal inheritance, versus 20% of city dwellers. By socio-professional category, the level of resistance to

this change increases from one category to the next. 65% of people in socio-professional categories D and E are against equal inheritance, versus 78% in socio-professional categories A and B. □

M.A.M.

## It's less complicated for legal guardianship

**U**NLIKE inheritance, which continues to polarize society, reforming the system of legal guardianship of children seems less complicated. It's true that the subject regularly raises controversy, especially when several women find themselves confronted with a series of difficulties linked to the exclusive attribution of legal guardianship status to the father. According to the latest L'Economiste-Sunergia survey, 74% of Moroccans agree that mothers should have the same legal guardianship of their children as fathers. Opinions are not very different according to gender: 69% of men and 78% of women agree as to the importance of this reform. The same applies to responses by age group, with rates ranging from 67% to 77% in favor. Per socio-professional category, people in category C in particular show the highest rate of opposition to equality in terms of legal guardianship of children (26%). Among socio-professional categories D and E, this rate is 21%, while it is 13% among socio-professional categories A and B. □



## Weekly highlights

### Agricultural crisis in France

# Moroccan trucks ransacked and burned

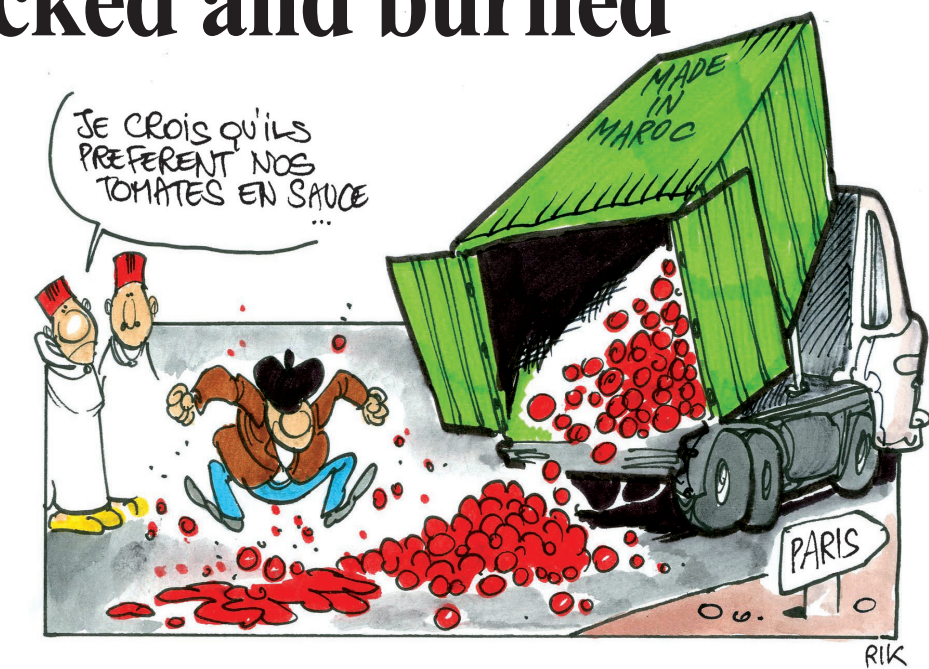
IS it a return of the «medieval peasant-type revolts» in France? For several days now, farmers have been demonstrating their frustration. Armed with their tractors, they have blocked several major roads around Paris and other major cities. In the city of Montélimar, in the department of Drôme, in the south-east of the country, farmers' discontent is escalating. There has been a wave of violence and vandalism against foreign trucks, particularly from Spain and Morocco. According to Hassan Sentissi El Idrissi, President of the Moroccan Exporters Association (ASMEX), «around twenty foreign trucks, including Moroccans», have been attacked. «The other trucks have decided to divert their passage through Paris», he added.

Tomatoes, peppers, and avocados were dumped on the road. Worse still, the cargoes of some trucks were burned. «The demonstrators stopped and emptied foreign trucks, most of them

Spanish, Moroccan, and Bulgarian», Sandrine Roussin, president of the local FDSEA union (Departmental Federation of Agricultural Unions), said to the French AFP press agency. According to the farmer, the rest of the shipments were delivered to Restos du cœur (Restaurants of the Heart) and other charities. The demonstrators denounced the «unfair competition» from imported food products.

This crisis is worrying Moroccan exporters. «It is likely to have an impact on Moroccan shipments to France», says Lahoucine Adardour, President of the Moroccan Interprofessional Federation for the Production and Export of Fruit and Vegetables (FIFEL). He added that «The farmers' anger movement in France is gaining considerable momentum. Their threats are being taken so seriously that supermarkets have withdrawn imported fruit and vegetables from their shelves».

The situation is likely to worsen if no common ground is found with the



Executive. «If the blockade continues, it will have a significant impact on Moroccan exporters. We hope that the crisis will not last long», said the president of FIFEL. For his part, the president of ASMEX remains optimistic. «The impact will not be as great. Moroccan exports will suffer a little, but not too much», he added. Despite the

crisis, Moroccan shipments are continuing for the time being. «Morocco Foodex (Autonomous Export Control and Coordination Institution) has informed us that the pace of exports will be the same as before», said Lahoucine Adardour. □

Khadija SKALLI

## Casablanca looks after its heritage... Really?

AT first sight, Casablanca enthusiasts will be delighted with the news. Some one hundred twentieth-century buildings have been listed as historic monuments, says the Official Gazette No. 7265 of mid-January and No. 7268 of January 25, 2024. The decision by the Minister of Youth, Culture, and Communication, Mohammed El Mehdi Bensaïd, was signed at the end of 2023.

The Casablanca Urban Agency initiated the procedure for the 96 buildings. Its governor-general, Taoufiq Benali, submitted applications to the Cultural Heritage Directorate on December 14, 2021 and April 6, 2023. «Their registration as landmarks is the fruit of a colossal effort by the Casablanca Urban Agency, the design offices, and architects who worked on this public-interest project. These are the first buildings in our city to be listed by the Urban Agency...», explains Karim Rouissi, the new president of the Casamémoire association (for the preservation of Casablanca's heritage). There have been similar initiatives by public authorities in the



*Soto building in Casablanca, intersection of Bd Driss Lahrizi and rues Houman Fetouaki and Aknoul. The first floor of this private property is occupied by a well-known restaurant. The apartments on the upper floors, on the other hand, appear to be uninhabited*

past. This was the case for the Church of the Sacred Heart and the Excelsior hotel, officially listed at the request of the Wali of Greater Casablanca - Prefect of Anfa (Official Gazette No. 5166 of December 4, 2003).

Buildings that had been inventoried subsequently benefited from legal protection, largely thanks to Casamémoire's advocacy for the preservation of Casablanca's heritage since its creation in 1995.

In addition, 4 of the 96 newly listed buildings are public property.

They belong respectively to the Republic of Poland, Maison Beausoleil on rue d'Alger; to the private domain of the Moroccan State, principally Colège Zerktouni; or to the Casablanca Urban Commune.

The latter owns the market at the junction of Bd Omar Slaoui and rue Agadir, as well as the School of Fine Arts on Bd Errachidi. The remaining

92 buildings are privately owned, including the legendary Immeuble Liberté. Also on the list is Poste Maroc (The Moroccan Post Office).

According to a survey on «perceptions and expectations of cultural life in the city of Casablanca», «urban planning is one of the key areas for construction in the service of Casablanca's cultural positioning». These findings include «the gradual disappearance of historic cultural spaces such as local cinemas», according to a study carried out in October 2008 by DS Marketing for the City of Casablanca. The best is the enemy of the good, say the pragmatists. Except that L'Baïda mon amour (name of a Rai song) has seen its heritage shrink. In the Anfa district, the destruction of Grand Vizier Mohamed El Mokri's villa is one of the darkest episodes in our heritage history. Its demolition was at the origin of the creation of Casamémoire in 1995. Since then, public authorities have become more sensitive to the issue. But real estate predators and their accomplices are still on the prowl. □

Faïçal FAQUIHI