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The HACA In Marrakech to Call for the Promotion of Good Practices in Media Migration Coverage

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President of the High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HACA) Ms. Latifa Akharbach, called, on December 8th, 2018 in Marrakech, for the promotion of an accurate, equitable and ethical media coverage of the issue of migration.

Ms. Akharbach announced this call during a workshop organized, by the Moroccan regulator on “the role of media and regulators in facing the crisis of migrants and refugees”, gathering African and Mediterranean regulators, as a side event to the United Nations Conference on Migration, held on December, 10th and 11th, 2018, in Marrakech, for the Signature of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

In addition to Presidents and members of the Mediterranean Network of Regulatory Authorities (RIRM) and the African Communication Regulation Authorities Network (ACRAN), the debates were attended by representatives of the International Organisation of Migrations (IOM) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as audio-visual operators and media professionals.

At the opening of this workshop, Ms. Akharbach provided figures broadcasted only by few media showing that the phenomenon of migration is often unknown and presented without any reference to proven and verified data. President of the HACA stated that although it is presented as a global crisis, “migration merely concerns about 3.4% of the world population (258 million men and women). She adds, “only 14% of migrants in the world are African, which equals 36 million, while “ over 80% of these African migrants are regular, only 20% are irregular, i.e. 7.2 million, and 4/5 of these irregular migrants stay in Africa. She continues, “unfortunately the recurrent image of the illegal migrant conveyed by the media is that of the black African, as it is strongly established in our minds, by this inaccurate and non-documented media coverage, that illegal migration is a phenomenon that only affects the Western world and developed countries.

President of the HACA also pointed out that “we are witnessing a banalization of the sensationalistic terminology (surge, tsunami, invasion), and a frequent manipulation of images during media coverage of migrants related facts, in addition to a proliferation of fake news on this topic especially in digital media”.

Furthermore, member of the National Commission on Markets and Competition (CNMC in Spanish) Josep Maria Guinart, urged the media to base their treatments on objective and verified data, as well as making a balanced coverage regarding this issue. He also insisted on the importance of making the voice of all migrants heard.

President of the HACA of the Ivory Coast, Mr. Ibrahim Sy Savané, revealed in his intervention that western media describes migrant as “distinct species” synonym to “makeshifts raft”, as he also called for the establishment of a network or a coalition that would be in charge of developing migration information treatment. Mr. Savané highlighted the fact that the erroneous media treatment of migration was not preserved to western media alone, it also existed in the African one.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) spokesperson Leonard Doyle, estimated, “Europe is going through a political crisis rather than a migratory one”, as he called the world to recognize the positive values of migration.

Deputy Representative of the UNHCR in Morocco, Ms. Bettina Gambert, confirmed that there has been a significant improvement regarding migrants images in the Moroccan media during the last two decades, which will eventually lead to a better living together, and cohabitation between the local people and the migrants.

Moreover, Mr. Réda Benjelloun, Director of Information magazines and documentaries at the 2M TV channel, shared three report extracts on migration showing images that convey the complexity of this issue, success and failure of migration being a painful phenomenon.

The fruitful exchanges of the different participants with the audience, especially media representatives, shed light on the crucial role of the regulator in framing the good media practices in terms of migration coverage.

[1] <https://www.haca.ma/en/javascript%3A%3B>