
Innovation and shared knowledge in the EU-MENA region

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Abstract

The goal of this paper is to explore the opportunities that might improve the EU-MENA relations regarding shared knowledge and cooperation. The process of creation and dissemination of knowledge does not always reach the final stage of common heritage, as knowledge is often shared only within research institutions, or at most, when it produces innovation, within the share of population that has access to the market. In other words, knowledge dissemination does not always reach communities and individuals, therefore does not innovate common sense. Given a global scenario characterized by consistent income and wellbeing inequalities, this ultimate stage is of the utmost importance, as it allows to generate a supply of goods and services (often aimed at satisfying basic needs) at an almost null cost, by virtue of the advanced stage achieved in the learning (dissemination) process. A "common knowledge based economy" is therefore able to supply that long tail of the world population that is endowed with low and stationary (if not decreasing) levels of income and wealth, at least in the short run. Common knowledge might find a suitable institutional environment to flourish in the social and solidarity economy (SSE), and the Mediterranean region has an optimal logistic placement to make a bridge among the European Union, focused on an economic growth process based on innovation, efficient use of resources and employment, and the MENA region, still characterized by low levels of human development and per capita wealth (even if with significant exceptions), and by increasing demographic trends.

Keywords: Shared knowledge, EU MENA region, spatial and social inequalities

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