



*Open Digital Space
For the Mediterranean*

Agadir Declaration

March 28, 2009

The Moroccan Virtual Campus (CVM), the Digital University of Engineering and Technology (UNIT) and the University of Ibn Zohr, Agadir, have organized the inaugural conference of the Open Digital Space for the Mediterranean project (EOMED) in Agadir on March 26-28, 2009.

The conference was sponsored by:

- The Ministry of National and Higher Education, Professional Training and Scientific Research of Morocco,*
- The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of France.*

In partnership with:

- UNESCO,*
- “Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie”,*
- Union for the Mediterranean,*
- “Sous-Direction des Technologies de l’Information et de la Communication pour l’Enseignement” – SDTICE, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research – France,*
- The International Telematic University UNINETTUNO- Italy,*
- “Université Médicale Virtuelle Francophone”(UMVF),*
- “Université Numérique Juridique Francophone” (UNJF),*
- “Université Virtuelle de Tunis”, Tunisia,*
- “Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers” (CNAM),*
- “Campus Virtuel Africain”.*

The conference brought together 147 participants from 13 countries: Algeria, Canada, Spain, France, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, Slovenia, Switzerland, Tunisia and Turkey.

Context:

Open Digital Space for the Mediterranean has its origin in founding declarations, in particular:

- *The Barcelona declaration in 1995,*
- *The Budapest Open Access Initiative in 2002,*
- *The Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities in 2003,*
- *The declaration on Accessible Information Society adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in December 2003, and in Tunis in 2005,*
- *The UNESCO convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions in 2005,*
- *The Tarragona declaration for the dialogue and cooperation between the Euro-Mediterranean universities in 2005,*
- *The Union for the Mediterranean launched in July 2008.*

This project is an extension of national digital universities and virtual campuses that are growing rapidly, on both sides of the Mediterranean. It contributes to the socio-economic and cultural development of the Mediterranean region by investing in a long term knowledge growing and sharing strategy.

Objectives:

- *Building a digital space open to all countries on both Mediterranean borders, and beyond, to the Union for the Mediterranean and its related institutions;*
- *Creating digital resource sharing based communities, pursuing education and research purposes and preserving cultural and linguistic diversity;*
- *Increasing the visibility of cultures, in particular the visibility of the Mediterranean academic activity;*
- *Establishing digital solidarity mechanisms aimed at overcoming the digital divide between northern and southern borders of the Mediterranean, and subsequently, triggering the emergence of an Information Society, antecedent to a sustainable development in southern border countries.*

General Principles:

This project advocates open access to shared digital resources and preservation of cultural and linguistic specificities of related partners.

ECMED Partners are committed to:

- *implementing an active policy of using and promoting the use of Information and Communication Technologies in their cultural, educational and research activities;*
- *sharing, as widely as possible, within the Open Digital Space for the Mediterranean, available digital resources in compliance with the legislation of their country;*
- *sharing experiences, methodologies and tools in the field of ICT, with all ECMED partners;*
- *making their digital resources freely available on the internet, using referencing, indexing and dissemination tools adopted by the ECMED project;*
- *promoting a reuse policy of existing resources, facilitating their adaptation to different cultural and linguistic contexts;*
- *Facilitating links among ECMED partners information systems in compliance with standards, interoperability principles, networking techniques, and quality control and assurance strategy determined by all partners.*

Partnership Charter:

In order to emphasize the ethics and values shared by the ECMED project partners, the ECMED charter specifies:

- *Resource sharing (mutualization) policy,*
- *Project life and its sustainability,*
- *Technical aspects.*

By signing the charter, each partner becomes a member of the ECMED project.

Operating mode:

This project is led by a steering committee representing the partners of the project.

Both initiators of the project, provisionally, serve as co-chairs of the steering committee.

Suggestions:

Recommendations of the conference participants were the following:

- *develop linguistic and cultural adaptations of existing digital resources;*
- *build strategies for the use of digital resources taking into consideration economic, educational and cultural local contexts;*
- *take advantage of collective intelligence;*
- *promote actions involving partners from different cultures;*
- *build effective mechanisms for access to and dissemination of digital resources tailored to a variety of end-users and contexts;*
- *encourage collaboration among universities and training focused on cultures and cultural heritage of the Mediterranean;*
- *encourage active participation of enterprises, ensuring open access to produced resources;*
- *promote cross-boundary actions and projects, as well as effective reuse of existing resources;*
- *promote digital resources that are reusable in different learning contexts, allowing content adaptation and appropriation by end users and ensuring: content granularity, license grant over digital content modification, open access to multimedia object resources (including repositories of images and videos, ...);*
- *build shared reference tools useful for creating and using digital resource;*
- *promote training in ICT and e-learning fields.*

Call for participation

As partners of the Agadir conference are well aware of the critical significance of heritage valorization as well as of challenges facing EOMED, they call upon the international community to effectively contribute to this ambitious project.

Partners of the conference solemnly call upon everyone who feels concerned by the construction of the Open Digital Space for the Mediterranean to make their contribution.

All partners engage in participating to the next EOMED conference, which date and place will be announced in the near future.

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