



Arab League, Cairo 19-06-08

Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
dear Colleagues and Friends,

Participating again in such a high level meeting is at the same time a great honor and a great challenge.

Last year I had an easy job: being the first institutional occasion to meet the Arab League, I had only to present our Association (COPEAM).

The fact that you have invited me again means that I have to go ahead. So, let me be braver.

Last time I asked you "to play the game", to give a new chance to the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and, in general, to multilateral cooperation, even if the results were very far from the expected ones.

One year after, we have to admit that the Barcelona Process is still sick, nevertheless we have to react to disillusion because something is moving even if we can't see it yet. I'm strongly convinced that change is possible and that we still have the chance to write a different future for our region, because I believe in the strength of reason and I can give you some evidence.

COPEAM, as you know, has a small financial power (at least so far) but, despite this, it is demonstrating its huge potential in terms of ideas and facts.

Thanks to its nature of *network of networks*, COPEAM has opened a door to a new way of connecting people, showing that a real cooperation is possible between different countries, respecting each other and highlighting each one's differences, benefiting from the richness of each one's own cultural and social heritage.

We are showing, throughout our televisions and radios – involving the web, as well – a "Mediterranean imaginary", one and several at the same time.

I have no time to go through details, but I would only like to point out two main achievements.

Thanks to a strong engagement of the Algerian TV, every year we gather in Algeria around 100 audiovisual professionals (from the North, the South and the East) for a week-long training seminar.

Thanks to a consolidated cooperation with ASBU, we have finalized the first Euro-Arab TV co-production ("Inter-Rives") that will be soon on air in the 14 countries that join the initiative (the Italian public television - RAI - is broadcasting the pilot series those days).

And I could continue.

COPEAM, in agreement with ASBU and EBU, is fully engaged in supporting the role of media in the EUROMED Partnership, not for a corporative goal but in the interest of our communities.

We are strongly convinced that, in the perspective of a Mediterranean Free Trade Area, before speaking about economy we have to create a community that can recognize itself in shared values: culture, not only market; education, not only money.

That is why, for instance, it's essential that the audiovisual would be taken into account in the framework of the Head of States meeting in Paris on the 13th of July 2008, as well as in their final Declaration.

We have to give everyone - in the common interest - an equal opportunity to grow, an equal access to knowledge: the petrol of the XXI century economy.

For this reason I am here.

Fort this reason I ask again for your help to make this process stronger and irreversible.

COPEAM needs you and I think you might need COPEAM.

Next year we will held our General Assembly in Egypt - thanks to the kind invitation of ERTU - where we signed our By-Laws in 1996.

I think that it is not by chance that we will be back here again.

Thank you.

Alessandra Paradisi
Secretary General
COPEAM