



GENERAL PRESENTATION

The 26th annual Conference of COPEAM took place from 4 to 6 April 2019 at Park Hotel in Split, upon kind invitation of the Croatian Radio-Television HRT and with the support of Eni.

Representatives of public broadcasters and cultural and audiovisual operators of the Mediterranean region gathered there to debate around the topic "*Changing societies: communicating diversities*".



140 participants



27 countries



On Thursday 4 April, following the COPEAM Steering Committee meeting, a projection of *A première vue* took place, devoted to the best short films of our associated cinema schools' students.

The following day, [participants](#) met in the morning for the joint meeting of COPEAM Commissions, during which different cooperation activities were presented in the fields of Audiovisual Heritage, Cinema-Festival-Culture, Gender Equality, News Exchange, Radio, Television and Training.

In this framework, a promotional space was dedicated to actions and projects brought by partners of COPEAM attending the session, such as Eni, whose representative presented the communication initiatives of the Italian company on decarbonisation and sustainability carried out in Italy and in the world; or Europeana, the digital library devoted to the European Union's cultural heritage.



In the afternoon, each Commission gathered again in specific operational meetings, where attendants and COPEAM delegates discussed about ongoing projects and new proposals, and made [recommendations](#) for the upcoming activity year.

Saturday 6 April, following the official opening ceremony by Mr. Kazimir Bačić, Director General of HRT and COPEAM President, and Mrs. Jelena Hrgović, Deputy Mayor of Split, participants assisted to a plenary session structured into three main sections: the first one on *“Cultural diversities in the Mediterranean Region: enriching factors in changing societies”*; the second devoted to relevant best practices in the Region; and the third focused on *“Representing diversities in the media: models from the sector”*.

Then, COPEAM members took part in the General Assembly, in order to assess the Association's annual activity and financial situation and to adopt the [Split Final Resolution](#): a declaration of intent relating to the main topic of the Conference, which shall inspire the upcoming cooperation action of the Association.

Plenary session



Introduction

The works were introduced by Dr. **Nabil Al Sharif, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation**, who provided a regional overview on the intercultural trends and transformations taking place in the Euro-Mediterranean area. In particular, he pointed out that media still have a significant influence over public

opinion, and TV remains the predominant credible source of information in the Region on both shores, compared to print and online media. Moreover, cultural diversities in the Region raise the issue of reporting in accordance with the social and cultural circumstances – i.e. cross-cultural reporting or audiences' media literacy. Better awareness and media literacy skills can in fact stimulate people of all ages to acquire the knowledge and strategies they need to be more informed actors in our increasingly media-immersed world. In this context, Dr. Al Sharif presented the regional programme “Young Mediterranean Voices” (YMV), launched in 2011 by the Anna Lindh Foundation together with the British Council. The programme aims at developing a youth-led debate across the Arab region, supporting youth to speak up, be heard and acquire a range of critical thinking, communication and information skills.

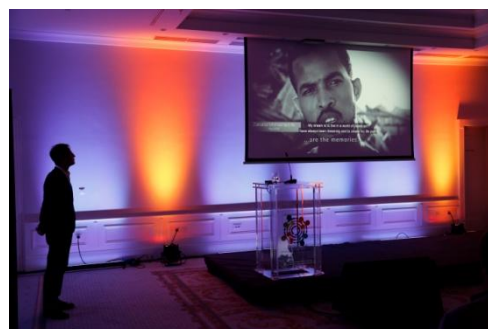


Best practices



The second part of the session was dedicated to the presentation of a number of **best practices**, such as *The Port of Diversity*, aimed at creating a city of culture and creativity for Europe, which has made the Croatian town of **Rijeka European Capital of Culture 2020**. In this framework, Mr. Ivan Šarar - Head of City of Rijeka Department of Culture – and Mrs. Irena Kregar Šegota, Development and Strategic Partnership Director of Rijeka 2020, highlighted diversity as a main thematic component of the initiative. Indeed, the large programme of the event, starting on 1st February 2020, aims to enrich the European cultural diversity, celebrate the cultural relations that unify Europeans, create a meeting-place for people coming from different backgrounds, promote their multiculturalism, multilingualism and mutual understanding and encourage the feeling of European citizenship.

Successful stories of integration were the focus of the Uninettuno Telematic University's project **NOI #senzaconfini, together for a better world**, presented by Nicola Paravati: a touching video telling stories of migrants and refugees who got ahead in their hosting societies and are now seen like modern heroes and models for fellows who are sharing the same difficult route.



Then, Mrs. Latifa Akharbach, President of the **Moroccan Audiovisual Media Authority HACA**, gave an insight on the media monitoring activity in the field of diversities, in a country whose plural identities are officially recognized and guaranteed by the 2011 Constitution. The representation of diversities in the media is not a frill or a constraint, but must be considered as a component of the quality of journalism. Media are not a mere reflection of society – she said - but they participate in the construction of public space and opinion. Therefore, regulatory authorities also exist to inject the values of tolerance, plurality and equal representation into media contents, work to counter hate speech and nationalist polarized narrations, as well as monitor the compliance with operating standards.





Representing diversities in the media: models from the sector



Finally, a round-table debate involved the representatives of the main radio and television Unions of Europe and Asia (ABU and EBU), **Olya Booyar** and **Daniela Drastata**, together with the executive director of the Media Diversity Institute of London, **Milica Pesič**. The panel was moderated by the HRT Senior international correspondent **Dragan Nicolić**.

The topic of diversity was explored from different perspectives. Mrs Booyar, bringing the example of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union – which is the widest one in the world - pointed out that diversity could have different connotations: for instance, a country like Japan is rather mono-cultural whereas in Indonesia, a huge number of different communities and groups coexist. As a result, media should take in due consideration these peculiarities when reporting.

Mrs. Pesič showed two videos produced in Denmark as effective practices for awareness raising on diversities. The first one, involving a large and varied group of people, pointed out how individuals who look very different from each other and come from the most varied backgrounds have much more in common than they could imagine. The second video, using voices and stories of children, raised the controversial theme of citizenship for second generation immigrants.

In the current scenario, how should media report on migrations? Milica Pesič pointed out that this topic is often used by politicians to build populist discourses. Migration itself is not a problem, she said: before the last financial crisis, Europe needed 14 million skilled workers to enter its labour market. Nevertheless, in the last years, emotions are taking over the facts and there is a growing need for journalists to report real figures consistently. Mrs Booyar confirmed this point of view, stressing that in Australia - for instance - public discourse had built an insecurity hysteria about migrations,



even in a country where the issue is relatively minor. She underlined that the real issue actually is the white-black division with, for example, a systematic indigenous communities' underrepresentation in commercial media.



The EU funded project *New Neighbours* - an international coproduction about diversity involving nine European broadcasters - was then presented by Daniela Drastata. Using true stories to convey a strong and impactful message to the audience, the idea of the project is to explore the mind-set of local communities when new neighbours arrive, unveiling worries and challenges related to integration.

The topic of diversity *within* media organizations was finally debated: media should not only show that societies are nowadays made of diversities, but also include the latter in the working force of their organizations in all positions, especially in the current world, where extremisms and nationalisms are strongly spreading. The closing of diversity departments within media companies was also pointed out, taking for granted the mainstreaming of the related values. Nevertheless, there is a great need for them to exist and continue playing a major role in advocating for inclusion.



At the end of the Conference, some international awards were delivered, including the COPEAM Special Prize for the UNAOC **Plural+ Festival** to Edenamiuki Aiguobasimwin, for the video "*Young Minds - Talk Solutions*".

[Click here to watch the video](#)

[Click here for the website page and photo galleries](#)

[Click here for the press review](#)
