

SUMMARY OF THE WORKS



“Digital Cultures and New Audiovisual Languages”

COPEAM Conference 2023 in figures

+200

Participants



5 Open events

*Plenary Session, Round tables,
Screenings, Masterclass*



5 Restricted events

*GA, Steering Committee and other
meetings*



25 Speakers

From the media and cultural sectors



27 Public Media Organizations

From 19 countries



4 Public Media Unions

EBU, ASBU, AUB, ABU



3 International institutions

UfM, IFAD, ALF



25 Nationalities

*From Europe, the MENA Region,
Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa*



2 Host organizations

*Radio France and the City of
Montpellier*



Introduction

The 30th annual Conference of COPEAM took place in Montpellier (France) from 26 to 28 April 2023, upon kind invitation of **Radio France** and the **City of Montpellier**.

In consideration of the major developments occurred in the last years in the media field, in particular those regarding the creation, the exploitation and the consumption of audiovisual contents, COPEAM Conference 2023 aimed to shed light on the new digital audiovisual landscape and on the place of media.

Over 200 representatives of public broadcasters and cultural and audiovisual operators of Europe, the MENA region and beyond gathered in Montpellier to exchange and discuss about the topic ***“Digital cultures and new audiovisual languages”***.

PLENARY SESSION

Opening ceremony

On April 27, the opening ceremony saw the initial greetings of the **Mayor of Montpellier and President of Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole, Michaël Delafosse**, who expressed his satisfaction for hosting the COPEAM Conference, according to the cooperation and cosmopolite spirit of the city, which is candidate to European Capital of Culture 2028. “We want this important candidacy to be a linkage, an encounter between Europe and Africa”, he said, highlighting the Mediterranean feature of Montpellier, which also holds the Presidency of “MedCities”, a network counting on 73 municipalities from all around this Region.

Concerning the works of the Conference, in particular, he said that at the time of social networks and destabilizations which can be linked to artificial intelligence and to the spread of fake news, it is important to “preserve the media and the role of journalists as reference points for the citizens of the countries here represented”, which is “a challenge for all, because no country can be considered immune”.



The **Secretary General of COPEAM, Claudio Cappon**, after thanking the hosting organizations, pointed out that this edition marked the 30th anniversary of the Conference: “In 30 years, we have been able to involve in our projects hundreds of journalists, managers and technicians from the most diverse countries and cultures, thus building a vibrant community of professionals and broadening our qualified network, a human added value that always makes the difference in challenging times”. He then added that the digital revolution had completely transformed the audiovisual world and “deeply changed the consumption habits of the citizens, pushing mainstream media to restyling their strategies and their offer”. He concluded by affirming that the title of the 2023 Conference was perfectly in line with such developments.

The **Secretary General of Radio France, Charles-Emmanuel Bon**, took the floor to express, on behalf of Ms. Sibyle Veil, CEO of Radio France, the gladness to host all the partners from the Mediterranean basin. Following up on the speech of the Mayor, Mr. Bon focused on the challenges of the media sector today and, in particular, on the risks posed by disinformation and the use of AI. Public service media – he said – “represent a bulwark against the *deregulation* of information and the relentless spread of fake news”. Radio, specifically, was described as the “media of the listening and of the calm”, playing a role in “developing the imaginary” of people, very important in the framework of citizens’ media education. As for the Conference topic, Mr. Bon said that in an era of digital revolution, in order to remain relevant in such a hypercompetitive context, the editorial and technological tools have to be combined to produce and distribute contents able to attract not only the usual public, but also new audiences, being in line with the times.

PLENARY SESSION

Conference introduction

High institutional representatives of the Euro-Mediterranean region, **H.R.H. Princess Rym Ali, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation**, and **H.E. Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean**, officially opened the works.

In her video-message, **Princess Rym Ali** pointed out how both COPEAM and the ALF are aware of the indispensable role of media to promote intercultural dialogue and of the absolute need to take positive advantage from



technology advancements, which accelerate our access to cultures, different points of view and ways of life, highlighting the “power of images to build bridges and try to improve the way we live together”.

She said that the ALF is proud of the long a solid cooperation with COPEAM over the years, mentioning joint initiatives grounded on the common values of resilience, social cohesion and integration, and which consisted in activities carried out in the field of journalism and in media campaigns in favour of gender equality and youth.

Dr. Nasser Kamel then took the floor and provided a reflection on cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area almost 30 years after the beginning of the Barcelona process, emphasizing the importance of tools of associationism at all levels to foster dialogue between the two shores.

“This year marks as well the 15th anniversary of the UfM. COPEAM and the UfM work on the same objective and according to the same values: the Mediterranean is a space of unity, not a boundary. Anniversaries are

occasions to assess the previous years but, most importantly, to set strategic directions for the future”.

Dr Kamel pointed out how the pandemic had aggravated the existing weaknesses in the Region, with very high levels of socio-economic inequality not only between north and south, but even within our countries. “The pandemic and the war in Ukraine have highlighted the need for further regional integration: we have all experienced the problems related to the supply chain, which reveal a new reality in terms of energy supply and food security”. This falls within a context of climate emergency: the Mediterranean region “heats up 20% faster than the rest of the world, which makes it the second region after the Arctic to suffer the most from this global phenomenon, with visible consequences on the populations and on ecosystems”.

The size of these challenges tells us – he concluded - that no country can face them unilaterally and, conversely, that a broader coordination and cooperation at regional level is needed, and this is when the UfM and the whole cooperation ecosystem in the region come into play: “We have methodologies and tools to face these challenges as a Region, creating a positive dynamics able to transform them into opportunities of mutual interest”.



Finally, Dr. Kamel mentioned an initiative recently promoted by the UfM and the ALF: the “Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue”. “This initiative will designate on an annual basis 2 cities - one from the north and the other from the south of the Mediterranean - which will work together to promote cultural diversity and foster dialogue and mutual understanding in our area”. The call for participation being open, he called for the support of COPEAM and its members to give visibility of this regional action.

PLENARY SESSION

Panel “Digital Cultures and New Audiovisual Languages”

Voices from COPEAM network

The main panel, moderated by the Director of France Bleu Hérault, **Anne-Marie Amoros**, saw the participation of editorial and digital experts from the COPEAM network, such as **Adil Chquiry** (2M-Morocco), **Aline De Volder** (EBU- European Broadcasting Union), **Samah Nassar** (PBC-Palestine) and **Adel Gastel** (France24/France Médias Monde). The debate offered an overview of the major changes that have taken place in the media sector in recent years, with particular reference to the new ways of creating, distributing and using audiovisual content, including storytelling techniques such as “news sketching” and the peculiarities related to social media, with a particular focus on TikTok.

Adil Chquiry, for 2M/Morocco, pointed out that “the digital presence is not a luxury but a real necessity”, with 87% of Moroccans getting informed on public channels, including on their official social networks’ pages. He underlined how over the years the digital part has ceased to be a mere showcase for promotion and has become a media in its own, adding that “it is thanks to the “brand” of public TVs that the digital part is valued and followed by viewers.

More specifically, regarding news, he said that the Twitter account had become a necessity to provide timely, verified and accurate information, without having to wait for the daily TV news programmes and thanks to dedicated digital teams “to gain in efficiency and also in autonomy”.

“Experience has shown that the digital part complements television, it does not compete with it,” he concluded.

Speaking of young audiences, he pointed out that the presence of 2M on social media – TikTok, Instagram and Facebook – is very important for the age range 18-35, adding that the same range of users follow 2M also on television: “social media are, *par excellence*, the tools which complete the communication with the Moroccan young audiences”.

Aline de Volder, from the EBU *Social Media Trends Group*, presented the digital project “European Perspectives”. “AEP is a project where a group of PSMs members exchange web articles to put on each other’s websites. An automatic translation tool developed by the EBU helps the editors and journalists to choose and rewrite the articles in proper writing. A weekly editorial meeting between the members is held”.

She clarified that the implementation of the “sharing ability” of the articles is just the first pillar of this social media strategy. The second pillar goes in fact beyond the mere sharing, with the EBU wanting to “experiment new forms of storytelling and to reach younger audiences”.

She informed that TikTok became the first phase of the EBU SoMe strategy, explaining that the choice lies behind the fact that this social media is a very young platform compared to Facebook and Instagram, and more

fertile for new storytelling models. As an example, “the big trend on every platform was and still is the 9/16 vertical format”, which was firstly experimented on TikTok and then copied by other platforms.

The AEP project had a European ambition, with contents to be spread internationally. However, some challenges were pointed out: “we realized that TikTok is much linked to the localization”, so the audience addressed is mostly from the country of the account. Other challenges relate to the language barrier and to the fact that media have different “degrees of maturity” concerning the platform, as well as different narrative specificities. Furthermore, it was noted that TikTok is reluctant to becoming a platform for news sharing.

Despite these obstacles, Ms. de Volder stressed the importance of keeping to « test and learn». PSMs have to invest in these platforms, even if there are data and privacy concerns: “Not doing so would mean to keep the door open wide to fake news”. On the contrary, “PSMs have to occupy the digital space and assert their know-how and deontology”, in order to provide the users with the opportunity to have another view. With this project of the EBU we try to enforce the values of PSMs, “speaking with a single voice on digital platforms”.

Adel Gastel from France24/France Médias Monde focused his contribution on the “news sketching”, a storytelling technique adopted in the field of journalism when the use of real images is not possible or advisable.

Mr Gastel, who has worked as a journalist in conflict areas (Iraq, Syria, Gaza), underlined that in such scenarios the personal safety of the testimonies is often at stake. In the past, techniques such as modifying the voice, using shadows, blurring images etc. were used to cover the stories of those people while protecting their identity. However, these techniques are addressed as “archaic”, since new ways of writing are overtaking them.

Other solutions include to avoid completely images and use just the words in articles for press or online. However, he affirmed that “We are professionals of the image. An image is worth 1000 words, and is a powerful mean of transmission of the information”.

Starting from this consideration, he described that at France Médias Monde an experimental lab researched on how to “produce an image when there is no image”. The result is the use of the “news sketching”.

To present the technique, an abstract of the video “[Un amour en enfer](#)” was launched. The story, told through the use of drawings, was about a young Somali boy escaping his country and who ended up in the Libyan hell in his path towards a better life.

Mr Gastel explained that the information included in the video was verified and accurate: “France Médias Monde is part of a European platform called *InfoMigrant* with partners such as Deutsche Welle and ANSA. It is a portal where information is gathered and shared”. In the case of the protagonist of his story, he précised that the migrant could communicate with the journalists on WhatsApp and that “all the information collected was verifiable on the field”. On this basis, the story was then faithfully reconstructed through the sketching technique.

Concerning the attractiveness of this kind of storytelling for young audiences, Mr. Gastel added that “if we try to chase progress, we will never catch up with it. On the other hand, we have to think about workflows and processes that allow us to anticipate the trend and create our own products”. All this considered, he stressed the importance of including very young journalists in the world of work, “breaking down generational barriers”.

Ms **Samah Nassar**, Head of social media at PBC/Palestine, closed this part of the panel, giving an overview on the uniqueness and peculiarity of the Palestinian digital content. She pointed out that “it is a media whose main concern is to present the story of its people and to show what they are exposed to”, adding that for the

Palestinian official media, this responsibility is classified as a “top priority for journalistic work, whether traditional or new and digital”.

The goal is “taking Palestine to the world and bringing the world to Palestine”, with a Commission comprising 25 digital platforms that address the Palestinian and Arab audiences, as well as the world, in multiple languages. “The widest area of coverage, whether programmes or news, is devoted to the field and its emergency developments, and then this is reflected in the digital follow-up of that, through direct transmission and in creating content related to the daily life of people and events in the Palestinian land”.

She highlighted that the Palestinian content on the digital communication platforms “face an unfair selective policy, due to the bans and restrictions applied”, which impacts on the goal of conveying internationally the Palestinian narrative of the course of the events on the field. As a consequence of this, she described how it was necessary to start implementing a “strategy based on circumvention and confrontation methods, with a specific work to bypass the ban algorithms” on social media. Therefore, thanks to these methods, PBC has managed to achieve success at the digital level, with news spreading despite the blockade and increasing numbers in terms of total views, page outreach and interactions over the last years, and with short clips that do not exceed a minute showing the greatest impact.



PLENARY SESSION

"Digital Cultures and New Audiovisual Languages"

Voices from the world

The first session was followed by the **"Voices from the World"**, with **Yasushige Nagahata** from ABU (Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union) and **Taro Kunimi** (NHK-Japan), and their presentation of a fascinating project which uses the 8K for the digital promotion of the Japanese cultural heritage.

Mr **Nagahata** stressed the importance of considering new and effective ways of using broadcast content from the perspective of the SDGs, including education and entertainment, and pointed out that "NHK developed a way to fundamentally change TV production so that it becomes the start-line for new cultural support efforts".

In 2021 and 2022 - he said - NHK produced and broadcasted 7 episodes of "Fresh Encounters with our Cultural Heritage", 30 minutes long programs showing in each episode "never-before-seen" images of national treasures and important cultural heritage. Then, he presented the "8K Cultural Heritage Project", developed by the Japanese public TV NHK in collaboration with the Tokyo National Museum, and which uses the latest technology to create 3DCG images of artworks (the project team is led by Mr Taro Kunimi).

By showing some examples on screen, Mr Nagahata highlighted that the images actually exceed 8K resolution, so that, with a game controller, it is possible to zoom in on the image and check the detail from every angle. "With the 8K computer graphics, you can approach the artwork much closer, and discover something interesting, that you may not find at the museum with your own eyes".

He pointed out that 8K computer graphics are produced in a way that is entirely different from standard broadcast technology: instead of a video camera, 3D scanning and a technique called "photogrammetry" are used. He added that these technologies are available in public, so that such projects can be replicable in any country. "I believe broadcast media can be used to convey the fascination with cultural heritage in ways that surpass museum displays, and it may be much more fun than actually visiting museums", he added.

As another example of NHK's cultural support activities with 8K technology, he said that some educational institutes in Japan also use this technology now, with a web-based service that allows elementary-school students to use 8K computer graphics.

"Even though 8K is not a popular broadcast technology at this point, I believe that the most important thing in media is content. Without content, we cannot benefit from recent technologies", he concluded.



PLENARY SESSION

“Digital Cultures and New Audiovisual Languages”

Voices of the Partners of COPEAM 2023

In the last part of the session, the floor was given to the 2023 Conference partners.

Erwann Gaucher, Deputy Director of Broadcasting and Editorial Strategy of **Radio France**, delivered a presentation titled “Radio France: new formats, new storytelling, new audiences”.

“New storytelling methods are needed to respond to new uses and reach younger audiences, by adapting their codes” - he pointed out. He then mentioned the strategy implemented by Radio France from 2015 to 2020 called “Hyper-radio”, aiming at making radio hyper-accessible, meaning to “make it findable even by those who do not look for it”. Then, starting from 2021, the main focus of the French broadcaster was put on what he called as “*platformization*” and “digital sovereignty”.



As a result of these processes, Mr Gaucher highlighted that Radio France is also listened under new formats such as streaming, podcasts and video, with 1 billion ratings each (2022 data). The challenge was to « Develop the usual formats and adapt them to the new uses generated by the platforms”. Starting from this, Radio France began to provide Podcasts in series and replicate successful tools applied by streaming platforms such as showcasing trailers and the available/ upcoming contents directly on the homepage.

Moreover, Mr Gaucher referred to the importance of being on the filed *with* the young audiences, offering mute videos on social media (which is a paradox for a radio provider) and alternating short formats and reels etc., especially on TikTok. He also stressed the importance to invest on new interactive modes, by integrating them with the traditional formats. As an example of this, he mentioned the possibility, for listeners, of recording vocal messages and sending them to the radio programmes.

As for the reach of new audiences, a very effective strategy of Radio France was to invest in contents specifically created for children. The contents were made available online and this has had a large success in France, especially during the Covid19 pandemic.

Finally, he drew attention to the importance, for radios, to “stand out” with innovative productions, mentioning contents based on immersive sounds – described as the “8K of sound” - with more than 150 productions. To conclude, he cited the potentialities of using generative AI for developing radio formats, stating that there is a future in this field.

Finally, Mr **Nicolas Dubourg**, for the **City of Montpellier**, made a presentation related to the candidacy of the City as European Capital of Culture 2028.

He pointed out that 9 cities applied to this title and that Montpellier was among the 4 cities having passed the first turn, with the next dossier to be delivered in December 2023.

Montpellier
capitale
européenne
de la **Culture**
2028

One of the axes of the candidacy – he said – is the relation between reality and fiction: “Sometimes, we can tell much more the truth through fiction than by presenting facts. Starting from this reflection about reality/fiction, he said, “we are thinking about the challenges that the City has to face in the coming years, such as climate change and populism”. In his speech, Mr Dubourg also stressed the importance of the concept of “transmedia”, in the sense of how different kind of artists can get inspired and work with methods taken from fields others than art. This candidacy – he said – “will be at the service of bringing together players from very different worlds”.

Mr Dubourg finally mentioned a flagship project of Montpellier 2028, called “*Académie du Futur*”, mainly consisting in bringing together groups of young people for a 4-year period, to work on the

concept of “The Future in Series”. In this context – he clarified - the challenge will be “how to write about the future knowing that the whole story will already be outdated? How can we actualize the narrative of the future in a story?”. This concept will take different forms such as audiovisual series production, theatre pieces, comic stripes etc. and there will be strong links with the media to be developed on this subject. Finally, he informed that the organization of a “European Forum of Youth” is also in the pipeline.

Before closing the session, Ms **Anne-Marie Amoros** declared that the bond between culture and public service radio is very strong, and mentioned a successful project developed by **France Bleu Hérault** with the support of the City of Montpellier: “*A hauteur d’enfants*”. She specified that this Festival was created three years before, starting from the idea that “there is a real challenge to inform, educate, and support the young public in relation to information, fake news, and the approach to diversified contents. She added that “by using audio as a mean, we decided that we could bring young audiences into our world, start a dialogue, educate them and accompany them through the process of news production (documentaries, newspapers, reportages etc)”. The initiative was really successful, bringing together 450 schoolchildren and 2000 people from the general public together with professionals working in the media, web and music.

She concluded by informing that a third edition of the Festival “*A hauteur d’enfants*” was scheduled this year, alongside the City of Montpellier, the Region and the important 2028 European Capital of Culture candidacy.

Conference side-events (public)

➤ **University meetings in partnership with Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3 University**

Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3 University, 26 April 2023

- Round Table on “*Journalism and Media In the Mediterranean*”, with Mohamed DJOULDEM, Political scientist, Lecturer in Political Science, Paul-Valéry University Montpellier 3; Odile MOREAU, Professor of Contemporary History, University Montpellier 3; Fathia ELAOUNI, Director of 2M Radio channel/Morocco

Moderation: Franck LIDON, Radio France

- *Masterclass* by Éric VALMIR, Secretary General for Information – Radio France

➤ **Joint meeting of COPEAM Commissions**

City Hall of Montpellier, 27 April 2023

- Audiovisual Heritage, Cinema/Festival/Culture, Gender Equality and Diversity, News Exchange, Radio, Training, TV.

➤ **Matinee of Mediterranean Cinemas**

MoCo Panacée, 28 April 2023

- Projections Cinemed (3 short films)
- Round Table on “*Public media and Mediterranean cinema: what synergies?*”, with Lamia BELKAIED GUIGA, Director of ESAC Gammarth/Tunisia; Markus NIKEL, Expert from Rai/Italy; Géraldine LAPORTE, Communication and Programming Cinemed/France

Moderation: Zina BERRAHAL – TV5 MONDE

Conference side-events (restricted)

➤ **COPEAM Steering Committee**

Maison des Relations Internationales, 26 April 2023

➤ **Joint meeting with Arab, African, Asian and European public media unions**

Maison des Relations Internationales, 26 April 2023

➤ **Meeting with local cultural players**

Maison des Relations Internationales, 26 April 2023

➤ **COPEAM General Assembly**

City Hall of Montpellier, 27 April 2023


