



## 18<sup>th</sup> Conference and 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of COPEAM

### WOMEN COMMISSION

*Agia Napa, 13<sup>th</sup> May*

On the occasion of the Women Commission meeting, the projects developed during the last year were presented. We showed the results of the regional project **Euromed-News**, financed by the European Commission in the framework of the Call for tenders "Media activities in the ENPI countries". This initiative aims at informing people of the South Mediterranean region about the initiatives supported by the European Union to generate prosperity in its neighbouring regions; during 24 months, six public broadcasters of the southern shore of the Mediterranean - **EPTV** (Algeria), **ERTU** (Egypt), **JRTV** (Jordan), **ORTAS** (Syria), **SNRT** (Morocco), and **TéléLiban** (Lebanon) - worked closely together to produce and broadcast 9 documentaries, one of which regarding gender equality issues, 40 magazines and 300 news.

The consortium devoted great importance to the "Men/Women equality cross-cutting strategy", coordinated by COPEAM in collaboration with EBU.

The main impacts of this strategy on Euromed-News editorial staff consisted in a higher awareness about the role of the media in the fight against gender stereotypes, the acquisition of specific working methodologies related to men-women equality issues, a greater sensitivity to women working conditions in the audiovisual sector and the ability to identify critical issues and appropriate solutions thanks to the tools acquired.

The Women Commission supports, among others, the **Global Media Monitoring Project** (GMMP), a worldwide study on gender representation in the news media. The main objective is to provide concerned professionals with tools able to improve communication on these themes and raise awareness about gender issues in their national and regional contexts. On September 2010 in Turin, in the framework of *Prix Italia*, the preliminary results of this monitoring were presented; on the occasion of the last Women Commission meeting, held in Cyprus last May, we shared the GMMP global results.

The data reveal that only 24% of the people interviewed or subjects in print, radio and television news are female. However, despite a slow but overall steady increase in women's presence in the news over the past 10 years, the world depicted in the news remains predominantly male and is incongruent with the reality considering that women represent at least half of the world's population.

Furthermore, out of 25 occupational categories in which the news subjects were grouped, women outnumber men in only two of them: homemakers (72%) and students (54%). This is a portrait of a world where women are virtually invisible as active participants in the labour market outside the home.

Reportages realized by women journalists contain a higher percentage of female subjects compared to reportages realized by male reporters. This trend has persisted over the past 10 years: in 2000, 24% versus only 18%; currently, 28% versus 22%.

The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies of Cyprus compared the data regarding 8 Mediterranean countries: Spain, Italy, Greece and Cyprus for the Northern shore and Israel, Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia for the Southern shore. Data did not show relevant differences

between the two considered areas. Female news subjects are considerably underrepresented in both the shores (24.7% in Europe and 20% in Middle East).

Political and institutional actuality reports a low female presence, below 50%, (19.5% in Middle East and 19% in Europe); even lower in economic subjects (13.7% in Middle East and 17.5% in Europe); although, it is higher in social and legal subjects (27.7% in Middle East and 34% in Europe). While the number of women reporters and announcers is quite balanced (46.7% women in Middle East – 48.7% in Europe) and in some countries even overcome the one of men (Egypt, Lebanon, Spain and Italy), women are underrepresented in almost all the subject categories in both Europe and Middle East.

It is also thanks to our networking on the web that we could catch the importance of the role and the interaction between the web and women during the recent riots in the Arab countries. **“Mimosa and jasmine. Women and web in the squares of the Arab world”** was the title of the meeting we organized in Rome on the occasion of the 2011 International Women's Day. Young people were the protagonists of the revolts. They were students, young men and women fighting for their freedom and their citizenship, which represent the freedom and the citizenship of all of us. On Saturday 14 May, during the opening Ceremony of COPEAM annual Conference, a video we realized on this subject was presented.

The Women Commission is also partner of **“Women Make The News”** 2011, a **UNESCO** initiative launched annually on the occasion of 8 March, aimed at promoting gender equality in the media. The theme for this edition - “Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Gender” – seeks to highlight good practices in this area and emphasize the importance of fostering media and information literate societies as a way to improve the understanding of women and men about gender perspectives in media and information systems.

Finally, Ms. Elena Chiaberge, in charge of the Commission for COPEAM, presented the **WoMed Lab** a multimedia space based on principles of gender equality, on fight against gender stereotypes in the media and on web 2.0 participative models.

WoMed Lab aims at becoming a point of encounter, collection and promotion of projects, initiatives and studies in favour of equal opportunities in the media, contributing to the promotion of a different representation of women in the media and raising awareness about these issues within the civil society and institutions of the Euro-Mediterranean region. The platform will be structured in 5 different domains:

- 1) **Information** - a multimedia thematic magazine for a female point of view on current events;
- 2) **Research** - researchers, professors and students will be invited to write and publish essays and to join ongoing researches;
- 3) **Training** - collecting information on needs in terms of training, publishing available training opportunities and organizing professional ad-hoc workshops;
- 4) **Storytelling** - publishing audiovisual contents concerning the main actors, actions, projects, associations etc., operating in favour of gender equality in the media in order to share best practices;
- 5) **Support opportunities** – an area devoted to the identification and publishing of funding opportunities to realize actions supporting gender equality in the media;

During the Commission works it was pointed out how an equal presence of women and men at top-decision levels and a correct female representation in the media are issues concerning everybody and both genders. For this reason, the President of the Women Commission took the opportunity to invite all the participants, women and men, to take part in the Women Commission initiatives.

Considering the cross-cutting nature of the matters at the centre of the Women Commission activity, the necessity to find a solution to the problem of holding all the COPEAM Commission and Working Group meetings at the same time was highlighted.

The Women Commission proposed a transversal collaboration with other Commissions and Groups, particularly with the Training Commission, in order to organize training projects on media female representation, and try all together to contrast the paucity of women's views and opinions compared to male perspectives in all our media.

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