

**15th Conference and 14th General Assembly
of COPEAM**

Bucharest 15-18 May 2008

**MORAL REPORT
OF THE PRESIDENT**

After a Conference and a General Assembly crowned in Amman in April 2007 with a total success due, among other things, to the full and broad militant and professional investment of the leaders of the Jordanian Radio Television, the new COPEAM exercise would have been marked by many multidimensional actions that had definitely consecrated it in its new status of recognised and respected international Institution.

Endowed with executive bodies, with texts of guidance as well as with mechanisms of cooperation and exchange that have proved their utility and efficiency, COPEAM has effectively accomplished its slough passing from a forum-status phase in which it has been for several years, to a new one in which it has become a structured Organisation able to give visibility and concreteness to that Euro-Mediterranean intercultural dialogue that it has started and by promoting many concrete and well-targeted projects and programs.

The aim of the present report is not indeed that of enumerating these activities and to explain their stakes, as - considering the limits that the present document has set – the result could not be exhaustive but, at the same time, it will not be superfluous to infer from them some teachings to be used in order to better understand and enlighten the meaning they hold for the present and the future times.

Just to enumerate a few of them, it could be exemplary enough to consider how much the four-year lasting cooperation between EBU, ASBU and COPEAM would have been one of the successes of our Association, a lever that has permitted to intervene towards international organisations or States on the strategic questions on the Euro-Mediterranean audiovisual sector and to weigh on them with all our common strength so as to influence their decisions.

That is how the tripartite, gathered in Tunis from the 9th to the 11th January 2008, has caught the opportunity given by the Call for Tenders of the European Union - devoted to the Media Activities in the beneficiary countries of the UE Neighbourhood Policy and involving a financing of 2.5 million euros - and has encouraged its members to federate a consortium of partners that has begun to exist around France Télévisions.

The last result lately obtained thanks to this conjugation of efforts has also been the audition granted last April to COPEAM representatives by the Euro-Mediterranean Ambassadors gathered in Brussels to prepare the next Conference of the Ministers of Culture in Athens.

An audition that has allowed our Association to have its voice heard after it had written to the same Ministers about a vital matter for the functioning and the improvement of its members, that is the carrying on, for the period 2009-2012, of the Euromed Audiovisual Program, a program that was about to be closed and concerning which COPEAM has pleaded not only for its continuance but also for its improvement and its reorientation towards both the radio and the television, contrarily to what was done before.

The same spirit has presided the initiative implemented by the Mediterranean group during the renewal of the executive bodies of EBU, an organisation that gathers many media from the South that have been part of it for several decades, what, in principle, should assure them the right to be equitably represented, especially as 2008 had been declared the Year for the Intercultural Dialogue.

It was unfortunately not the case because of a strong and persistent ostracism in some specific circles that were holding to flout the elementary rules of democracy risking to appear, under their real face, in front of their pairs and colleagues.

This has very clearly not demobilised the energies active in the tripartite that continue to strongly believe that the achievement of the construction of the Mediterranean audiovisual space inevitably passes through the respect of the other, the reciprocity and the free game of the democratic principle.

Strong of this experience, our Association has been involved for a few months, thanks to multiple contacts and relations at different levels, in an intensive lobbying towards the parts in charge of the organisation of the Summit of the heads of States of the region that will be devoted, next July in Paris, to the setting of the project of Union for the Mediterranean.

We do not need to underline that the inscription of the audiovisual questions in the Agenda of this Summit and what can emerge from it in the General Declaration and in the Action Program that will be adopted has a capital importance for our Association that expects firm resolutions and high-range projects so to boost the growing space towards some horizons closer to the needs and the aspirations of the member organisations.

The Presidency has also written, in agreement with the Steering Committee, a solemn Call that will be addressed on behalf of the General Assembly to the Heads of State who will gather in Paris on the 13th July 2008, in order that those

ones lean towards the pressing and necessary character of the consolidation of the existing audiovisual Mediterranean network and that they think about endowing it with sufficient material and financial means so to make it play the role of carrier and of escort of the Partnership policies concerning sustainable development, security, migratory flux and inter-culturalism.

As a pioneer on the subject, since its foundation in 1994, COPEAM had to let its opinions and suggestions be known in its quality of propulsive force, furthermore considering its long experience, a strong component consolidated by what it has attained in terms of human encounters, incitement to creation, production of professional and technical plus-values in the mastering and the propagation of the NTIC etc.

Through its value of model and benchmark of the achievements accomplished in this direction, the University of COPEAM, that has been held this year in Bejaïa under the High Patronage of the President of the Algerian Republic, H.E. Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA, can be considered as a decisive milestone that has anchored its durability in an indisputable way.

Complying with new selection criteria based on a very well studied casting, the 2008 edition of this event, that has gathered some talented professionals supervised by a proven North-South team, will be a reference from now on, especially regarding the level of competencies attained and the quality of products realised, including, among others, submarine filming, totally eligible to be broadcast on the screens of all the member organisations.

The other international events or projects put together by the Association with several partners such as the European Union, UNESCO, UNIMED, INA, EBU, ASBU, Babelmed etc... all come from the same standard of preoccupations whether we talk about “Boundless”, “Women and Media”, “Training on writing”, “global journalism”, “Audiovisual Memories- Euromed Heritage IV”, all directed towards the acquisition of knowledge and technical tools facilitating the visibility of relations between North and South on the one hand, and on the other hand, towards the awareness raising of the civil society and of the political decision-makers on the movements and practices concerning human rights, especially those in connexion with the circulation of people.

A result that abounds in the same way, the way of a greater rapprochement and a greater circulation of the information in the region and that deserves as well to be put forward, is the setting up, last January, of TERRAMED, a project whose too heavy financing had then discouraged more than one person. It has just been

the object, thanks to the involvement of Eutelsat, of a decision concerning the launch of an experimental operational phase aimed at opening a window on the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, with the support of RAI and the partner televisions involved.

Naturally, not everything in our common space stands under idyllic features. The evolution of the cooperation and of the exchanges is being held on a background of wars, economic crisis, tensions, denial of rights, hating discourses, of images and caricatures that do not honour our profession.

It has to be recognised that a certain number of over-Mediterranean media, despite their adherence to the Seville Charter, still grieve because of the difficulty they in broadcasting the whole of the messages of peace, of mutual respect and of acknowledgement of the human rights along with everything that this includes in terms of professional and ethical reflexes, of equidistance and equity.

What brings to underline how much the ERNM mechanism of exchanges – even though now perfectly proven – still needs to be improved so that the rules specifically advocated by the Seville Charter would be not only scrupulously observed, but also refined, so as the last “Berlin walls” surviving in some European citadels can be definitely destructed, what does not clear somehow the inadmissible exceedances and errors of which some Southern satellite channels still have the responsibility, those channels keeping on making themselves the mouthpiece of extremism and, much more serious, of terrorism, of attitudes to be condemned and banished, on the spot, from the international media landscape, a task around which all honourable journalists, all media and all nationalities together should get mobilised.

Then, the importance of contributing, with deeper strength and intellectual probity, to the ERNM, whose feeding should be shared by all members with responsibility and perseverance.

This being said, we have to praise the considerable effort deployed in the field of co-production and communication. When we look over the TV or radio programs - such as Inter-Rives that mobilises not less than 13 broadcasters, Sat 2000, Portraits of footballers, Kantara - or of editorial projects - such as “COPEAM, 10 years” book, the multimedia portal, the Acts of Venice (third meeting of the all-news channels) the Euro-Mediterranean news bulletin in the framework of the “Call for Tenders of the EU for the ENPI countries”, it is legitimate to express a rightful satisfaction about the media resonance that

COPEAM benefits of, being present in all worldwide audiovisual operational fields (Workshop for the Dialogue between the cultures in Alexandria, Baka Forum on Diversity in Karlsruhe, Cinema Festival of Grenada, Cinema Festival of Negroamaro etc...).

All those reasons contribute to inspire the feeling that the 15th Conference of Bucharest followed by the 14th General Assembly, the latter being elective, both prepared with particular care thanks to the active contribution of both the Romanian television and radio staffs – may they be here strongly thanked – will represent an intense moment of gathering, of debate, of decisions projected towards the best and, however, towards results that worth the High Patronage of this manifestation by His Excellency the President of the Romanian Republic Sir Traian BASESCU and of the presence of the Romanian Parliament President at the plenary session, a honour and a pride for our Association, considering the involvement of the highest leaders of Romania in culture and in the Mediterranean ideals even though the natural anchorage of this country is in Eastern Europe.

Let us wager that it will be an event that will mark the history of COPEAM since it will embody not only the expansion of our Association beyond its traditional borders but also the existence of concrete junction and opening points between some ensembles apparently fenced.

In any case, the echo gained in organising of this event, the number of new adhesion requests received by the General Secretariat as well as the candidacies for the renewal of our leading bodies' mandates and of our commissions constitute a very enlightening indicator of the image that COPEAM has been producing of itself over the past few years, an attraction and resonance pole that will heavily weight on the next deadlines that shall be decisive for a sector that it has been defending with all its strength for almost 15 years at a time when few institutions, organisations and governments believed in its fight.

The best we can wish it is to continue this way. All our best will accompany it for a better hearing, understanding, tolerance and common prosperity.