

## 8<sup>th</sup> PERMANENT CONFERENCE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AUDIO-VISUAL OPERATORS

Thessaloniki, 28<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> March 2001

### FINAL RESOLUTION APPROVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly of the active members taking part to the 8th Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audio-visual Operators (whose theme this year was "Mediterranean identities: the issues at stake and the responsibilities of the Media") which took place in Thessaloniki from March 28 to 31, 2001 had its momentum with **the presence of Mr. Romano Prodi**, President of the European Commission. Mr. Prodi was keen on addressing the professionals of the Euro-Mediterranean audio-visual and cinema industry.

The General Assembly:

- **Expresses** its deep discomfort in front of the current slow-down of the Barcelona Process as noticed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Feira in June 2000 and in Nice in November of the same year. This situation strongly hinders the expected application and evolution of the financial aid and regulatory support system foreseen for the cinema and audio-visual sector.
- **Reaffirms** that the re-launch of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership won't be possible unless there is a close-knit association of the representatives of civil society to the action of the governments and of the institutional managers.
- **Reaffirms**, in the framework of this concerted action, the role and responsibility of the media who are the only ones capable of sensitising Euro-Mediterranean public opinion, and without whose adhesion all attempts at cultural reconciliation, all plans for economic and social re-balancing, all searches for a just and fair peace will be impossible.
- **Expresses** its conviction that the diversity of Mediterranean identities, that could be the source of conflicts, remains still the most important issue of the Mediterranean world, to which its History and Memory should be restored on both shores of its common Sea.
- **Calls for** the organisation, as soon as possible, of targeted thematic international conferences that, similar to and beyond the one of Rabat, can allow to start working on the basis of practical and operational action plans.
- **Is committed** to strengthening its activities concentrating on three equal-priority axes already identified by the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of Casablanca: Professional Training, Exchange of Information and free Circulation of audio-visual works.

The General Assembly approved the Draft of Resolutions presented by the specialised Study Commissions and by the Ad Hoc Groups. It was especially keen to stress some of the declarations expressed and of the recommendations made, such as:

- **TV Co-productions**
  - Essential necessity to set up an EC financial aid programme for audio-visual production responding to the expectations and needs of professionals. This fund must include the 12 partner countries of the southern shores of the Mediterranean (PPM);
  - Reinforcement of author and copyrights protection.
- **TV Magazines**

- Satisfaction of the decision to enlarge the circulation of the magazine Mediterraneo, co-produced by France Télévision, RTVV (Valencia) and RAI;
- Launch of a co-production project for a new magazine focused on two topics: Memory, to evoke what pertains to patrimony and history, and Creation, to cover vibrantly the fields of cultural expression.

#### • TV news Exchanges

- re-launch and reinforcement of Mediterranean news exchanges (Med-Ex-News) in co-operation with ASBU, EBU and Co.Pe.A.M., which will be co-ordinated by ENTV from Algeria.

#### • Mediterranean Cinema

- Absolute necessity to extend to the 12 partner countries (PPM) the provisions of the MEDIA PLUS programme;
- Indispensable agreement among editors, producers and distributors of the Euro-Mediterranean cinema industry in view of the establishment of a common Charter ensuring the conditions for the development of production and the respect of copyright.

#### • Audio-visual Patrimony

- satisfaction of the pursuit in developing CAPMED project, whose early productions demonstrate how it is possible to reverse the negative trend in the difficult domain of the safeguard, the restoration and usage of archives;
- launch of a joint action of the same kind for the archives of South-eastern Europe – action that could benefit from the financial aid stemming from the Stability Plan.

#### • Radio

- assessment of the vigorous re-launch of radio co-operation, characterised in particular by the launch of a multilingual production on the subject of the olive tree to which seven stations already take part;
- set-up of numerous initiatives: directory of the festivals of Mediterranean music, inter-station twinning, production of CDs with musical compilations.

#### • Culture, Multimedia and Distance Learning

- need to re-establish a Cultural Commission whose transversal vocation will allow Co.Pe.A.M., through its multiple action fields, to participate fully to the indispensable reflection on Mediterranean Cultures and on the common culture that stems from them;
- reaffirmation of the importance of the role of the electronic media in the field of distance learning, in particular in the multimedia dimension.

#### • Professional Training

- reaffirmation of the primacy of professional training that, since 1996, totally disappeared from EC programmes and concerns;
- Willingness of the Association members to concentrate their efforts into highly specialised training programs within the framework of the common plan currently being elaborated.

The General Assembly equally considered the declarations expressed and the recommendations made by the Working Groups:

#### • Euromed TV

- Satisfaction for the emergence of Regional Mediterranean initiatives: Canal Corse, Beur TV and RAI Med. As far as the latter project, RAI underscored that it intends to develop it through

cooperation from all potential partners, in order to make of RAI Med a truly Euro-Mediterranean channel;

- Wish to see these new media find among themselves the necessary intercultural and regional synergies;
- Absolute necessity to re-launch the concept of a multilingual, intercultural Euro-Mediterranean channel (EUROMED TV) and of ensuring for it recognition and practical development within the framework of a "social, economic and cultural market" that cannot be left to commercial offers of large multinational communication groups.

- **Electronic Portal**

- pursuit of the feasibility study for the creation of an electronic programme guide and of a Euromed portal.

- **Women in the Mediterranean**

- organisation of a seminar regarding the set-up of a training plan for women, the creation of an information network on their activities, an analysis of the image of women in the media, and current regulations as far as equal opportunities for women in communications;

- **Festivals**

- The working group, after analysing the situation, decided to turn itself into a Mediterranean Festivals Co-ordination Group in order to better respond to the issues faced by professionals.

The professionals gathered in Thessaloniki unanimously wished that the set-up of a network of information be strengthened by the development of the Co.Pe.A.M. portal (**Med Portus**), enriched by new items: on-line market, project scholarships, videotheque for exchanges, chat lines dedicated to each Commission and Working Group. Portal gras should become the interactive communication means capable of permanently exchanging information and proposals especially in the fields of Production and Training. The General Assembly entrusted the Steering Committee and the General Secretariat with the achievement of these goals.

Moreover, the General Assembly unanimously approved the report of the President of the Association, the activity report of the General Secretariat and, following the proposal of the President of the Financial Sub-Committee, the financial report for fiscal year 2000 as well as the foreseen budget for 2001.

Finally the General Assembly, after having thanked ERT SA/ERT3, the Greek authorities and the Thessaloniki ones for their hospitality, favourably welcomed the invitation put forward by the General Director of the Algerian Television to host, in Algiers, in 2002, the 9<sup>th</sup> Permanent Conference and General Assembly of Co.Pe.A.M.

Closing its working sessions, the General Assembly adopted a resolution in which it expresses its strong concerns for the sufferings of Palestinian journalists and of foreign correspondents in their mission to the Middle East. Co.Pe.A.M. indicted the bombings to the Palestinian Television buildings (a member of Co.Pe.A.M.) and formally asks the Israeli government to abstain from any hostile action against the media.

Thessaloniki, March 31, 2001