

Translation (not official) of the speech of Mr. Frédéric Mitterrand at the Annual Conference of COPEAM

Paris, 10th April 2010

Dear Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou,

Dear Ministers,

Dear Emmanuel Hoog, President of the Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators,

Dear Alessandra Paradisi, Secretary General of COPEAM,

Directors and Presidents of channels and audiovisual operators,

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

For several years, we have been able to renew an ancient dream with an innovative spirit, driven by the willingness to make it come to reality. This dream is evidently the Mediterranean dream. That of a 21st century *Mare Nostrum*, that of a community of destiny, I would even say: a community of desire between Europe, Africa and the Near East.

Europe undoubtedly needed to first achieve its union after the fall of the Berlin wall so to be finally able, more resolute than ever, to look towards other horizons, to establish solid and durable ties with other shores, and therefore, rediscover an essential part of its identity. As you know, France has been one of the initiators of this important project, particularly borne by the President of the French Republic Nicolas Sarkozy. The Paris summit, held on 13th July 2008, gave life to this dream of a Union for the Mediterranean and laid its first foundations. On the eve of this founding summit, the Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators launched a call to the Heads of States in order to include the media in its final declaration, therefore enabling the structuring of a real Mediterranean audiovisual landscape. This Mediterranean audiovisual stake, we are about to win it, and this is the ambitious purpose of our gathering today.

For this reason it is a great honour for me to host the 17th Conference of COPEAM here in Paris, in this symbolic place, the *Bibliothèque nationale de France, site François Mitterrand*. We place great hopes in this event because it is here that an important part of our common future will be built. Amongst the ten projects adopted during the previous Annual Conference in Cairo, four particularly ambitious projects have caught my attention as they are likely to structure the Euro-Mediterranean audiovisual and, more broadly, cultural landscape.

The first project consists in the creation of a Mediterranean TV channel. A multinational and multilingual channel, broadcasting throughout the Euro-Mediterranean area. This channel will represent a focal point and, eventually, the perfect mirror of such an *open* Mediterranean that we are building together. This challenging project is now within our reach. It has caught the attention of the Ambassadors to the Union for the Mediterranean. The first feasibility study realised by the Presidency of COPEAM, shows that today this channel is perfectly possible technically, financially and editorially. Of course, this channel needs a large mobilization of all the Mediterranean audiovisual operators, but also support from political authorities, in order to become, without delay, a reality. I will put all my energy so to give the Mediterranean a voice and

faces reflecting its diversity, reflecting a community of desire and destiny completely and perfectly accepted.

The second important project fully matches the educational objective of the Union for the Mediterranean. It consists in a Mediterranean Audiovisual University. I congratulate the willingness to set up a network of cinema and audiovisual-oriented universities and training institutions: a first in the Mediterranean Basin. The intention, based on the dynamism of COPEAM, is to form a network of excellence, built on interactions, exchanges, experiences and trainings for audiovisual executives. The first step will have to be made this year with the development of the University Internet platform which will help to stimulate the network of the partners, offer online tools for distance learning courses and propose a set of online services open to all of them. Step by step, brick by brick, this University will build and develop itself. For example, thanks to the setting up of seminars and summer schools, then through the establishment of a common audiovisual Master Course. COPEAM and the *Institut National de l'Audiovisuel* (INA) both have the expertise and the acknowledgment of their partners to bring this important project to a successful conclusion.

At a time where technologic and cultural transformations are faster and faster, we have understood that our future cannot be based but on the solid and living foundations of a common heritage. This is why the third project that brings us together relates to the audiovisual Mediterranean memories and seeks to facilitate the publics' access to archives. An Internet website dedicated to the tangible and intangible heritage of the Mediterranean countries is clearly the most appropriate tool. We do not start from nothing in this matter; the CapMed project, led by INA in the framework of Euromed Audiovisual Programme, provides us with a solid basis. By safeguarding the most emblematic documents, CapMed has made this priceless heritage accessible. This is an outstanding achievement I wish to solemnly welcome. The present objective is to go even farther and allow a free access to a large number of documents. The challenge is significant, the ability of the Mediterranean countries to share their common heritage and to highlight what draws us together is at stake, without denying each ones' uniqueness, without reducing the diversity that precisely gives strength to the Union for the Mediterranean.

Finally, the fourth major project of COPEAM I wish to mention regards the strengthening of our news exchanges throughout the Euromed-News project. We owe this initiative to the European Commission. The objectives of Euromed-News are clear: most notably, promoting Euro-Mediterranean partnerships and co-productions; encouraging the training of journalists on Euro-Mediterranean themes; facilitating the broadcast of news, respecting the editorial freedom of the broadcaster; finally, promoting cultural diversity and the absolute equality between genders. The participation of COPEAM in the consortium established for the accomplishment of these objectives appears not only legitimate, but absolutely necessary.

Other projects of the Cairo Conference are obviously borne by COPEAM but those I have briefly outlined are, I think, the ones that best illustrate our ambition: reinforcing the intercultural dialogue between the two shores of the Mediterranean through this fundamental lever which is the Audiovisual, in all its aspects and conditions.

Be assured Madam the Commissioner, Mister President, Madam the General Secretary of the Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators, that COPEAM will benefit from the full support of France to win this stake, which is our stake, as this *Mare Nostrum* must become truly, fully ours, for each and every one of us.

I thank you for your attention.