

I sincerely regret not being present at today's conference due to an unforeseen mission that President Poettering asked me to accomplish on his behalf in Mauritania for the setting of the new President.

I have been following COPEAM work with interest and participation for some years. It represents for me a concrete example of cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area and one of the best proponents of the spirit of the Barcelona Declaration, able to set up a dialogue between culture and audiovisual.

Despite all the difficulties within this process, I believe it's important to underline the positive goals achieved in view of a true inter-cultural dialogue.

I'm convinced that the media have a fundamental role to play in this context, as asserted in the Action Plan of Barcelona 2005.

There is certainly still a lot of work to do starting with a greater involvement of the European institutions in a sector so important for the dissemination of knowledge and culture exchange.

I very much welcome in this way the recent decision taken by the EU regarding financing for the Arab version of Euronews, another example of cooperation between different public televisions.

I know very well the projects of COPEAM and rest assured that you will find me a convinced supporter who will not miss the chance to endorse the development of this organization also through the individuation of an appropriate European program of reference.

I am strongly convinced of the necessity to build bridges between different cultures instead of following the suicide-homicide idea of clash of civilization and war.

Media can play an important role for peace and justice in the Middle East and all over the world and this can happen only if their independence is granted. Many journalists are paying big prices for their honesty and courage.

I therefore would like to offer my best wishes to everybody for a successful meeting and a particular greeting to my Jordanian friends hoping to have the occasion to see you soon for a new meeting.

Luisa Morgantini

Amman, Dead Sea - 20 April 2007