



19th Conference and 18th General Assembly of COPEAM

29 March - 1 April 2012

Declaration of Marrakesh on sport rights

“Reaffirming and upholding the idea that it is for the media and the entire cultural media industry to give a tangible contribution to help make the Mediterranean a forum for cultural exchange, economic cooperation, peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding and acceptance among peoples with different ethnic, political and religious backgrounds...” is one of the objectives mentioned in COPEAM By-Laws.

This can be reached only if media, especially the public ones, are at the service of citizens to assure the mission they are entrusted, that is to allow them free access to plural and independent information and to guarantee a democratic participation to the public, national and international, debate.

In this framework, the public access to events of major importance, included sport competitions and, notably, the football ones, has always been considered as a right.

In the last years, market free competition has created and developed commercial practices that are not always compatible with the rules peculiar to the audiovisual public service mission and the educational values conveyed by the offer of these shows.

The unceasing search for constantly growing advertising incomes carried to the generalisation of this phenomenon which results in an unacceptable rise of the costs of the rights cession and, correlatively, in their monopolisation by powerful groups.

This actual privatisation of the broadcast of sport competitions penalizes a great part of our public, in particular in those countries with more economical difficulties, where media, especially the public ones, do not have the suitable financial means to be competitive.

Conscious of the negative implications of these business diktats on the image of sport and on the free access for the public to its programmes,

COPEAM, gathered in the framework of its 19th annual Conference in Marrakesh from the 30th March to the 1st April:

- **expresses its strong concern about such evolution opposite to the educational and informative vocation of the generalist public audiovisual service whose survival is consequently in danger;**
- **launches a solemn call to all the parties involved, international, continental and national Federations, professional organisations and public media, in order to find as soon as possible the most suitable solutions, on the example, among others, of the related disposals included in the European Convention on Transfrontier Television, so to guarantee a normal functioning of the public service through the assurance of sport programmes' broadcast and, in this case, football programmes, to the largest part of public, without any type of obstacles or discrimination;**
- **wishes that these solutions lead to favour the ethics of sharing out on the very narrow commercial considerations and to safeguard, finally, the ideal of young education through sport, which has to remain the essential concern of all the authorities and institutions in charge of that activity.**

Done in Marrakesh,

1st April 2012