



CONCLUDING DECLARATION OF THE PALERMO CONFERENCE

Palermo, September 1990

1. The growing importance of the media not only in forming world public opinion, but also in the very development of public events and in bringing about the great historical changes in our epoch;

the increasingly effective exchange of audiovisual and cultural industry products between countries, which opens the way to new prospects of mutual knowledge, but to new risks of hegemony and subordination as well, thereby imposing the need to preserve the cultural identity of all people;

the technological advances, which transform means of communication and information into structurally supranational systems;

are all factors contributing to the marked and special responsibility that means of information and communication have in the life of the international community.

2. As this century draws to a close, the Mediterranean region is going through a period of closer interdependence between peoples, not least of all on the cultural level.

Millions of men and women have shifted and continue to shift from one Mediterranean shore to the other in search of work and to improve their living conditions, bringing with them their own traditions and values.

As we speak, direct satellite television signal cover enormous areas, overcoming not only political frontiers but linguistic and cultural barriers as well.

All this hastens and facilitates dialogue between peoples and cultures but, as we find every day, also raises problems and legitimate concern, as well as intolerance, narrow-mindedness and reactionarism, suspicion and conflict.

In this way, the basic need arises for a framework of cooperation at the cultural level, allowing this development to find an outlet in dialogue and in the general context of the fruitful cooperation already provided by UER, URTI, CIRCOM, CMCA.

In addition, the need emerges to overcome the historical imbalances and inequalities in the development of the cultural industry and of the systems of international between the two shores of the Mediterranean, all the more so during a period in which information appears as the propulsive force in the processes of change in the now post-industrial world.

3. The representatives of the television corporations in European and African nations facing the Mediterranean have committed to operating at editorial, productive, and industrial levels so that the development of technology and of the communications and information markets can be directed towards objectives of dialogue and peaceful cooperation.

For these reasons, the African and European television services affirm their commitment:

- to promoting, within the scope the Mediterranean region, the free circulation of information and media for inter-cultural dialogue in a framework of a mutual respect for the cultural and religious values of all peoples;
- to promoting a peaceful and constructive coexistence of cultures within each country, isolating the germ of tolerance and racism and contributing to the recognition of equal dignity and equal rights. In this endeavour, decisive importance is taken on by the production of information and, more generally, of television and radio programmes by the European radio and television corporations addressed to non-Community residents of the European Community, in the spirit of recognition and development of their cultural identity.
- to pursuing a more balanced order of the information and communication flows between the Mediterranean's northern and southern shores, through a cooperation that assures proper technology transfer and development of the television industry in all the countries of the region.
- to raise public awareness on questions concerning the common destinies of the region, in particular as regards the themes of coexistence of cultures, the struggle against racism, economic interdependence, and preservation of environmental and cultural resources.

4. Means of mass communication and information will thus be able to contribute to a more general prospect of cooperation between Mediterranean's northern and southern shores, a prospect within which cooperation in the field of information and culture is called upon to play no less significant a role than that of economic and political cooperation.

Fifteen years ago, when the ideological and political division between East and West was tearing Europe apart, the initiative for a dialogue on mutual security and on cultural, economic, and political cooperation launched a process of historical importance with which this conflict has finally been overcome.

Today, to counteract the problem of the economic imbalances between North and South and the risk of conflicts no longer between ideologies but between cultures, an initiative of a similar political value is necessary to create the conditions of peaceful and mutual progress for all the people of the Mediterranean, respecting the identities of all.

European and African public television corporations present in Palermo hope that this declaration they have made will contribute to the more general dialogue between the North and South shores of the



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Mediterranean, and that the consolidation of their cultural cooperation will be met with concrete economic and political initiatives as well.

In this vein, they welcome the next meeting in Rome on cooperation in the western Mediterranean and the prospects of convoking a Conference on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean.

5. To promote the achievement of the aims set forth in this declaration, a permanent commission has been established, open to all the region's television corporations and cultural institutions.

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