

Circom Report

CIRCOM Regional Newsmoonthly • CR is the European Association of 380 Public Regional TV Stations in 38 countries • Nov. 2003/No 49

The new CR President

It's election time in CIRCOM Regional for a new President and members of the Executive Committee. And during the past months I have been repeatedly asked "who do you think is the best candidate?".

Up to this moment I do not know the candidates and I can not really say who is the best, but I certainly have some ideas about the personality of the candidate who will carry on the duties of the President.

First of all he / she has to be a very experienced TV executive who has managerial skills and knows the way a TV station is run. He / she should have the

By Lefty Kongalides
CR President

backing of a well known and respected TV organization, necessarily from a member – country of the European Union.

He / she should speak at least fluently English and French, be communicative and a good listener. A person who combines the skills of a diplomat and the experience of a veteran TV executive.

The outgoing President has the feelings of a parent who wishes that the business his /



her children will inherit is in good hands and will prosper even more.

So anyone could be a candidate but hopefully someone who can lead this association to the future for higher achievements and better services to the member-stations and the public as well.

CR elections for new President and Executive Committee members

During the European Board meeting in Wroclaw, Poland, Nov. 30, the election for the President and the members of the Executive Committee will take place.

The election procedure shall be as follows, determined by the Statute:

1) Each candidate must be nominated by a National Coordinator and seconded by two others. National Coordinators may exercise their right either to nominate or to second, but not both, and may do so for only one candidate.

2) Nominations must be submitted in writing to the Secretary General.

3) Each candidate shall provide official approval in writing from his organisation enabling him/her to take the responsibility

for tasks allocated by the Executive Committee.

Each member of the EC shall be allocated responsibility for a specific field of activity.

The fields of activity are: Finances, Annual Conference, Training, Coproductions, Prix Circom, EBS, PR & Sponsors.

Therefore you are kindly asked to select two fields in which the applicant's work will be useful for CR.

In the current EC, the membership expires for four National Coordinators (E. Spanily, P. Couchard, Z. Medved, J. Klein).

There is also the possibility for the extension of the mandate for J. Klein for a year.

The CIRCOM Report in fifth year of publication

With the issue of October, the CIRCOM Report celebrated 48 weeks of continuous publication, that is four years altogether.

Quite a feat, taking under consideration that this 8page newsletter has never failed to be in the CR members' e-mail by the 15th of each month and, at the same time, at an absolutely no cost for the 380 stations subscribing to this association.

With this issue CIRCOM Report is starting its fifth year of publication, always prepared, planned and edited in Thessaloniki, Greece by ERT3.

Russian TV planning pre - recorded debates

Russian television channels, including state-owned RTR and state-controlled ORT, are planning to broadcast pre-recorded election debates, websites gazeta.ru and grani.ru reported.

Television host and Russian Television Academy President Vladimir Pozner told newspaper, Ekho Moskvy, that recorded debates are a "farce", arguing that viewers will lose the acuteness and spontaneity of the events.

Commenting on recent legislation to regulate media coverage of elections, Mr Pozner said: "If this is a sincere attempt to combat 'black public relations,' then one can only be amazed by its stupidity.

However, I think the move [was] not that naive, and had other motivations." Yelena Dubrovina, Mr Yabloko's representative on the Central Election Commission, said that recorded debates are simply a logical continuation of the Kremlin policy of "managed democracy," the website polit.ru reported.

Sky to launch massive digital campaign

BSkyB is to spend £20m (about 28.6m euros) on boosting growth in its digital video recorder and is placing the Sky+ product at the centre of its marketing strategy. The mass campaign promotes the technology outside of Sky's customer base for the first time. TV slots across terrestrial channels will bring together "couples", including Bruce Forsyth and Kelly Brook, Noddy Holder and Simon Callow and Ronnie Corbett and Alice Cooper, who are shown living together and debating what to watch on television. The execution ends with the tagline, "Sky+, Create your own TV channel. "The campaign will also include a sponsorship of Virgin's breakfast show. Jon Florsheim, BSkyB's managing director of sales, marketing and interactive, said "Sky+ is a fantastic campaign that transforms television viewing. With our biggest campaign since the launch of Sky Digital, we aim to communicate its benefits to the mass market for the first time and ensure that BSkyB remains the brand leader in digital television."



Disregard for safety of reporters during the war in Iraq

Media unions have accused the US authorities in Iraq of handling cases where journalists were killed or missing in the war with "secrecy, deceit and arrogance". The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) said in a report that there was "flagrant disregard" for the safety of reporters during the war in Iraq this spring, following the deaths of four journalists who were killed or missing, presumed dead. An ITN crew was shot at on March 22 in Basra, killing reporter Terry Lloyd. Two of his crew are still missing presumed dead. On April 8 the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad was attacked by US forces, killing two cameramen. The same day, the US also bombed the Baghdad office of the al-Jazeera television channel, killing another reporter. US troops shot a Reuters cameraman on August 17 near a prison in Baghdad. The IFJ report said the US was "hiding results of its investigations, evading responsibility and ignoring challenges of their version of events". "It is shocking that after six months the families, friends and colleagues of the victims still await credible explanations about how and why they died," said IFJ president Christopher Warren.

SEEMO award for Sarajevo's Kemal Kurspahic

2003 "Dr. Erhard Busek - SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe" awarded to Kemal Kurspahic, former editor-in-chief of Sarajevo daily Oslobodjenje.

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) and its international jury have chosen Kemal Kurspahic, the former editor-in-chief of Sarajevo daily Oslobodjenje, as the recipient of the 2003 "Dr. Erhard Busek - SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe", in recognition of his outstanding efforts in journalism, which have contributed toward a better understanding in South Eastern Europe.

Born on 1 December 1946, Kemal Kurspahic, was editor-in-chief of Sarajevo daily Oslobodjenje from December 1988 until March 1994.

In the first year of his editorship Oslobodjenje was named "The Paper of the Year in former Yugoslavia in 1989" and given "The Paper of the Year in the World" award in 1992.

Kurspahic made journalistic history by publishing Oslobodjenje every day in the ruins of the paper's offices during the siege of Sarajevo and the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (from April 1992).

He has already received numerous awards including, The Courage in Journalism Award 1992, the World Press Review's International Editor of the Year in 1993, the Bruno Kreisky Award for Human Rights in 1993 and the International Press Institute's World Press Freedom Hero in 2000.

A noted writer, Kurspahic is the author of four books:

As Long as Sarajevo Exists, Letters from the War, The White House and Prime Time Crime (this book was also published by SEEMO and the Media Center Sarajevo in the Bosnian language under the title: Zlocin u 19:30).

He is currently a spokesperson for the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention in Vienna.

The "Dr. Erhard Busek - SEEMO Award for Better Understanding" is sponsored by Dr. Erhard Busek, Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and Chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe.

Last year this award was received by the Croatian journalist Denis Latin.

China urged by R. Murdoch to let media flourish to rival the US and Britain

Media mogul Rupert Murdoch appealed to China's leaders, saying that the country could become a centre for the industry to rival the United States and Britain.

"The potential of the open market doesn't represent any loss of power," Mr Murdoch said, in a speech at the communist party school according to a text released by his company, News Corp. It said his audience included Vice President Zeng Qinghong, Cabinet ministers and other senior officials.

China has some of the world's tightest media controls. Broadcasters and newspapers are state-owned and supervised by propaganda officials and foreign media companies have struggled to get a share of the market.

"China has the potential not only to follow the examples of the US and the UK, but to improve upon those examples and achieve a level of success all its own," Mr Murdoch said.

Such a speech by a foreign capitalist at the top school for party officials once would have been unthinkable. But as the party tries to keep pace with a rapidly changing economy and society, it has invited a string of foreign politicians, business leaders and academics to address its students.

Mr Murdoch's speech comes as News Corp. tries to expand its influence in Asia, especially China. His company's Star TV is shown in hotels and apartment buildings for foreigners in China.

Viewers claim too much war on

Most television viewers in the UK felt broadcasters devoted too much time to coverage of the Iraq war. According to a survey by the Independent Television Commission, nearly two thirds of those questioned said station planners were wrong to give over so much of their schedules to the conflict. There was concern that the views of some parties, such as the Iraqi people and governments opposed to the war, were not heard clearly enough.

Despite the reservations, television was the public's main source of news about the war, according to the survey. A quarter of those questioned felt BBC1, ITV1 and Sky News were biased towards the US and Britain in their coverage. Channel 4 and Five were perceived as the fairest, and CNN as the least balanced.

In spite of controversy at the time, 57 per cent of viewers supported the decision to broadcast images of dead soldiers and

prisoners of war. The research found public support for the use of "embedded" journalists, although 52 per cent thought such reporting "makes war seem too much like fiction" and almost half had doubts over the impartiality of embedded correspondents.

"Trivial" news are on the rise

A former BBC media and arts correspondent has hit out at the rise of "insignificant and trivial" entertainment stories in news bulletins. Nick Higham suggested that the BBC and other news organisations had gone too far in trying to make their news programmes appealing to viewers by increasing the celebrity content.

"There's too much of it, and there's been a marked increase in the last 10 or 15 years," he told the News World International conference in Dublin. Mr Higham's objection was that covering celebrities can "compromise journalistic standards". Jonathan Munro, from the UK's ITV News, disagreed about there being too much entertainment news. "Is the governorship of California a good story for our viewers?"

No. Is Arnold Schwarzenegger becoming governor of California a good story for our viewers. Yes." Teletext's editor-in-chief, John Sage, said news values had altered in the past decade "because consumers' and viewers' lifestyles have changed", citing the huge rise in the popularity of celebrity magazines.

Archive material will be shared by APTN & ABC

Video news agency APTN and Australian broadcaster ABC have joined together to share archive material.

The two organisations will share archive material in their libraries on a range of subjects including Australian wildlife, locations, social history, terrorism, international conflicts, celebrities and bizarre events.

APTN will act as non-exclusive agents for ABC's material in Europe, while ABC will reciprocate in Australia and South East Asia.

The two already share international feeds, which gives them both more comprehensive news feeds. "This relationship with APTN is significant in that it means the ABC now holds premium footage on every major event since moving images began," said James Cuming, General Manager, ABC Content Sales. "Furthermore our Southern Hemisphere clients will appreciate the fact that they can now promptly access a major international collection in their own timezone."

Broadcaster admits he is addicted to painkillers

US broadcaster Rush Limbaugh has confirmed that he is addicted to painkillers and will be taking time off to try and kick his dependency. The popular radio host, whose show is broadcast to more than 600 talk shows across the US, attracting 20m listeners, spoke after the National Enquirer broke the news last week that he was involved in an investigation into drugs by the Florida authorities.

He faces prison if convicted of illegally obtaining the painkillers OxyContin and hydrocodone.

Speaking on the radio the 52-year-old said: "I want you to know I'm no role model. I refuse to let anyone think I'm doing something heroic here, something great here. I'm not a victim. I'm not going to portray myself as a victim. I take full responsibility for this problem."

The right-wing broadcaster also admitted that he had checked himself into rehabilitation clinics twice before to try and combat his addiction to painkillers which started after he underwent unsuccessful spinal surgery five years ago, which caused him back and neck pain.

More media staff killed in action

The World Association of Newspaper Editors reported that so far 51 media workers have been killed in the line of duty this year, up from 46 in 2002.

Sixteen of the reporters and camera crew members (nearly a third of the deaths) were killed in the war in Iraq, the group said.

Several media groups issue annual tallies of journalists deaths, but the numbers can vary depending on whether they include cases for which insufficient information is available to determine if the death is related to a reporter's professional work.

So far three journalists have been killed in Russia, one in Kyrgyzstan, and one in Iran.

Troubled times for Bosnian media

The Bosnian Serb parliament voted to demand the resignation of the top management of news and political programming of the state-run radio and television broadcaster (RTRS). RFE/RL reported the legislature's declaration said the RTRS management regularly violates legislation governing the work of the media and allows some of its editors to pursue their own political agendas.

In Sarajevo, Jasmin Durakovic resigned his post as head of state-run television of the Croat-Muslim federation (FTV) following a decision by the upper house of the federal parliament requiring FTV to broadcast all sessions of both houses of the legislature.

Launched by the European Parliament

Inquiry into media freedom throughout the European Union

The European Parliament is to launch an inquiry into media freedom throughout the European Union, reports ABC News Online. Initially, the Parliament's Committee of Citizens' Freedoms and Rights had wanted to report on media ownership and democracy in Italy only - where Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi enjoys tight control over a media empire. But they have been forced to broaden the inquiry to avoid singling out just one EU member state.

The study will be non-binding, but any condemnation would send a strong political message to the country concerned. Meanwhile the French-based pressure group Reporters Without Borders published its second report on press freedom around the world. Finland came top of the league with North Korea bottom at number 166. Italy came about a third of the way down the table, at position 53, below all other EU member states surveyed, and below most accession countries.



The 38th "Balkan TV Magazine" meeting hosted by TRT in Istanbul, Dec. 14 - 16

The 38th meeting of the "Balkan TV Magazine" member-stations will be held at the invitation of TRT in Istanbul, Turkey, Nov. 14-16.

Present will be representatives from the public TV stations of Albania, FYRO Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Turkey and Greece.

On the agenda of this meeting will be elections for a new chief-coordinator. Lefty Kongalides having served for six years as chief-coordinator is ready to pass the duties to another colleague.

The agenda also includes, among others, topics for future "Balkan TV

Magazines". The participants will also prepare the forthcoming meeting of Balkan TV Editors and Heads of Sports Departments - in Thessaloniki -

China company offering insurance to journalists

One of China's largest insurance companies has started offering special insurance to journalists. China Pacific Property Insurance introduced the policy after it calculated that journalism was the third most dangerous profession in the country. The firm said it was the first insurance explicitly for journalists in China. It said only mining and policing were more dangerous. The move comes after an increasing number of violent attacks on journalists. Chen Weihua, spokesman for the insurance company, said healthy and able news reporters, aged between 18 and 65, would be able to take



the first meeting of its kind. The main topic will be the management of crisis in the area with direct communication. Also cooperation and exchange of news around the clock.

Viewing increased in the UK during the Iraq war

UK audiences for broadcast news programmes and channels soared during the Iraq war, according to new research unveiled at News World.

Multichannel news viewing increased 145% to 289 minutes per week while terrestrial-only households increased their news viewing by 84% to 315 minutes.

Ironically though, nearly two-thirds of viewers thought TV channels devoted too much coverage to the war.

The research, conducted by the Independent Television Commission, and unveiled at News World International 2003, made uncomfortable reading for the BBC, which was judged to be "fair" in its coverage by 66% of the 4,000 people polled.

That was a smaller percentage than for the other main channels, which all polled a fairness figure of between 70% and 77%.

New technology enabled live roaming reports

New technology which enabled live roaming reports from the streets of Baghdad as they were captured by US troops presents new challenges for journalists, Sky News correspondent David Chater told News World International 2003.

Chater said digital microwave link technology gave him a "tremendous feeling of freedom" as he dramatically walked among the tanks taking the Iraqi capital.

"The great feeling was looking at other news teams and knowing they had to stop and edit and broadcast while I was going live.

But there are dangers with this new technology. I was thinking about feeding this material to London live on air, and not thinking about my safety."

Growing number of Arab satellite news channels

The growing number of Arab satellite news channels has widened the chasm between Islamic nations and the rest of the world, media consultant Hala al Umran told News World International 2003. "We had great hopes nine years ago that satellite technology would bridge the gap between east and west.

Unfortunately what has happened over the last decade is that the gap has grown bigger.

We have the tools but each one of us started talking within our own circles, our own communities," she said. US political strategist Tim Russo said since September 11 many viewers of his mother's generation had a fearful perception of Islam.

"It is not the West's responsibility to get rid of any stereotype that may arise from it," said Russo.

That was challenged by a number of delegates who said US media outlets needed to exercise more responsibility. But Russo - now a London-based Democrat advising Tony Blair's ruling Labour Party - held firm. "I don't accept it's the media's fault. It simply isn't," he insisted.

CR Executive Committee meeting in Poland, Nov. 29

According to the agreement from the Meeting in Liege, the meeting of the Executive Committee of Circom Regional is to be held on Saturday 29th November at 14:30 at Hotel Doring, ul. Mikolaja 67, Wroclaw, Poland.

The Preparatory meeting for the Annual Conference in Wroclaw is to be held on Saturday, 29 November at 09:00 at Hotel Doring. The meeting should be attended by

Hubert Shilling, Anita Bhalla, David Lowen, Piotr Borys, Tim Johnson, Gerry Reynolds and Rick Thompson.

The Editorial meeting for Coproductions is to be held on Saturday, 29 November at 12:00 at Hotel Doring. The meeting should be attended by Peter Sauer, Pierre Couchard, Piotr Borys and Heike Stiegler.

Lunch will be at 13:30.

Proposed agenda of the meeting:

1. Approval of the minutes from the Executive Committee held on October 3rd 2003 in Liege, Belgium
2. Analysis of past events:
 - A) 4th European Seminar on Newsroom Management, Strasbourg (H. Schilling)
 - B) Copro Enlargement (T. Johnson, P. Sauer)
 - C) Study Visit for News Editors, Brussels
 - D) Conference on Use of Minority Languages in Broadcast Media, Baden bei Wien (J. Klein), E) EbS (M. Nemcic)
3. Preparations for future activities: A) 22nd Annual Conference (P. Borys) B) Prix Circom 2004 (D. Lowen), C) Training (R. Dijkhuis, G. Price) C) Future coproductions and participation in European tenders (P. Kraewinkels)
4. Finances: a) Current situation , b) Budget for 2004 5. Preparation for EB meeting, 6. 2004 Calendar of Events, 7. Miscellaneous



Women journalists honored for courage

A Ukrainian newspaper editor was one of three women to receive the Courage in Journalism Awards. Tatyana Goryachova, along with Guatemalan columnist Marielos Monzon and American foreign correspondent Anne Garrels, received the 2003 awards from the International Women's Media Foundation.

The awards recognize women journalists who "have shown extraordinary strength of character in the pursuit of a free press, despite financial hardships, censorship, physical attacks and death threats."

Ms Goryachova, editor-in-chief of the weekly Ukrainian newspaper Berdyansk Delovoy, was threatened after the newspaper said it would give all candidates in a local election equal space. Also honoured at the event was Magdalena Ruiz Guinazu, who was given the International Women's Media Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Friend signs off from Sky News

Veteran presenter Bob Friend is retiring from Sky News after a distinguished career in print, radio and TV journalism spanning half a century. Mr Friend, who began his journalism career aged 15 at UK newspaper the Kent & Sussex Courier, worked his final Sky News shift last month alongside Vivien Creegor.

Mr Friend was due to collect an MBE for services to broadcasting. He said he would not be retiring completely and plans to continue writing and broadcasting after he leaves Sky News. "Journalists never actually retire and after visiting some of the places I've worked in over the years, I'll settle down to some writing and, hopefully, more broadcasting," Mr Friend said.

Nick Pollard, the head of Sky News, led the industry tributes to Mr Friend, "With half a century of journalism his expertise and breadth of experience will be sorely missed," Mr Pollard said.

US soldiers aid media in Iraq

The media revolution that has filled the vacuum left by the destruction of Saddam Hussein's propaganda machine has so far bypassed the former ruler's hometown in Iraq. But US soldiers are hoping to change the situation. Major Joe Cox, of the 4th Infantry Division, is heading a four-man team in charge of getting local media outlets, from newspapers to TV, up and running. One of the first steps was setting up a transmitter in Tikrit, 120 miles north of Baghdad, to carry radio and television signals from the US-backed Iraqi Media Network to people across the northern Salah Ad Din province. For the past two months, Major Cox's team has one radio and television station functioning from the Tikrit University building, costing in excess of \$100,000 (around 85,829 euros). Three weekly US-funded newspapers are distributed in Tikrit, including the Salah Ad Din, but are published in Baghdad because there is no printing press in Tikrit. "When we leave, we want the Salah Ad Din to be a self-functioning paper," said Major Cox. However, there has been much anti-American sentiment, and local journalists have been warned against working with coalition forces. The chief editor of Salah Ad Din was threatened twice and later moved his family to Baghdad for safety. However, Major Cox said: "We want to get the message out to the Iraqi people, what we are doing to improve their lives."

New TV channel replaces Russian predecessor

Broadcasts of Lad, a national family-television channel that recently replaced Russia's Kultura channel in Belarus, cover 75 percent of Belarusian territory, Belapan reported.

Of the government's decision to replace Kultura with Lad, the station's general producer, Alyaksandr Semyarnyou said, "It is absurd that a nation of 10 million should have only one national channel,"

Mr Semyarnyou also added that the former Russian broadcaster's audience never exceeded 3 percent of the population. Lad reportedly will offer programming on the arts, history, and national heritage, cartoons and entertainment shows for children, sports, and regional news. "There is a pronounced tendency toward increasing the share of the Belarusian language [in Lad's programs]," Mr Semyarnyou said.

DTT developments threat to pay - TV

Caught up in the fight to further market share, cable and satellite operators showed scant regard for the digitalisation of terrestrial TV. If they did invest in the concept, it was as a means to promote their own platforms by propagating DTT with some token content. Few could have predicted that free-to-air DTT would become a cuckoo in the nest, threatening to guzzle up lower tier subscribers from the parent pay-TV platform. Take the UK's Freeview as an example.

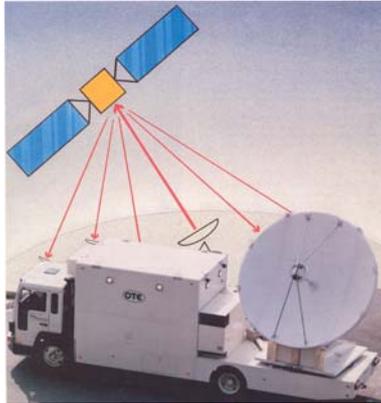
Hailed as an outstanding success by the government and the BBC, upon reaching its first anniversary this October it had an installed base of up to 2.1m set-top boxes (STBs) accounting for around 15% of the multichannel market. That's an astonishing growth rate. Keen to allay fears that the platform is now poaching basic tier pay-TV subscribers away from cable, the BBC commissioned a market survey of 1,000 participants in March 2003 which concluded that nearly 75% of viewers were new to digital.

The results also showed that 65% regarded the one-off payment as a main reason to buy, implying that a pay-TV subscription was not for them.

BT teams up with Freeview

However, with Freeview adding 100,000 STBs every month, the sheer scale of the platform's growth has certainly caused some parties to consider harnessing its potential to take on the pay-TV sector. BT does not share the BBC's qualms in using the platform to challenge cablers NTL and Telewest.

In a reversal of a decision taken at the end of last year, it has now decided to market DTT set-top boxes providing it with a version of a triple play service. Both Netgem's i-Player, a modem STB bundled with telephony and pay-per-use internet access over the TV, and the Dijam box which uses Setpal software, will be used



to directly compete with cable.

"There are opportunities with a lot of disgruntled cable customers looking for alternatives which we need to provide for and now can," said Fergus Crockett, managing director at BT's consumer division.

- With contributions from Digita, Finland, Digitenne in The Netherlands, Medienanstalt in Berlin, Germany, and Freeview in the UK, plus interviews with CPE manufacturers and market analysts, the November issue of Cable and Satellite Europe features a survey of current DTT deployments in Europe, assessing the evolution of the DTT business model and its impact on the pay-TV sector.

SEEMO certificate of Merit awarded to Romanian Radio

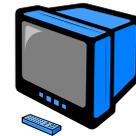
The Vienna based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), decided to award its Certificate of Merit to the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation for its contribution towards promoting independent public radio broadcasting in Romania and South East Europe.

The Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation is going to receive this award especially because of the efforts in the past years by Dragos Seuleanu, its President Director General.

BBC returns to Rome for drama documentary

The UK's BBC is to revitalise the nostalgia surrounding its 1976 television series *I, Claudius* with another epic dramatisation set in ancient Rome.

But more than a quarter-century after the groundbreaking original, the corporation has been forced to turn to the Americans for help, such is the cost now involved in large-scale television production.



HBO, the cable channel responsible for such hits as *Sex and the City*, *The Sopranos*, and *Six Feet Under*, will co-fund the multi-million pound 12-part project, called *Rome*, which will be shown in 2005 in Britain and the US.

The BBC has been in talks with HBO for three years on what will be their first co-production. Chris Albrecht, the chairman of HBO, said both broadcasters had a "strong tradition of success in projects of this massive scope".

XM radio tops 1 millions users

US XM Satellite Radio Holdings Inc. said it has topped 1 million subscribers and remains on track to reach its target of 1.2 million by the end of the year reported news website reuters.com.

Earlier this month, the Washington-based company said it ended the third quarter at about 929,000. XM is the leader in a nascent market that also includes Sirius Satellite Radio Inc. Analysts have said the companies need more than 2 million subscribers to break even.

Satellite radio provides nation-wide music, talk and news channels, including some that are commercial-free, to customers who must buy a receiver and pay a monthly fee for the service.

Many automobile makers are offering XM and Sirius radios in new cars. Shares of XM and Sirius both rose more than 5 per cent in morning NASDAQ trade recently.

Russian court rejects media law

Russia's constitutional court has struck down a provision in the country's election law that restricts media coverage of candidates. The press and opposition politicians had criticised the law, arguing that it would smother freedom of speech in the run-up to December's parliamentary elections. Part of the law made it impossible for journalists to express opinions about candidates or detail their background. Reporters and Duma deputies who brought the case said the ruling was a victory for freedom of speech and common sense. The court ruled that expressing "a negative or positive opinion" about one candidate or expressing a preference in a separate article such as an editorial was not unlawful.

The BBC's Steve Rosenberg in Moscow says the ruling is a victory for those in Russia who are battling to defend democracy at a time when there are growing signs that freedom of speech is under threat. Campaigning for the parliamentary poll is due to start on 7 November, ahead of the December elections.



For the "Comenius Week"

Pupils from 30 countries invited in Brussels by the European Commission

Every year more than 10,000 schools from the European Union countries and from the accession and applicant countries receive grants to finance transnational school projects. This year the theme of «Comenius Week» is language learning. Comenius is an initiative of the Community programme Socrates on education in Europe devoted to primary and secondary education.

The European Commission invited primary school pupils (10-12 years old) from 30 countries to come and present their projects in Brussels from 8 - 14 November for Comenius Week. In addition to the official activities and the pupils' outlining of the best national projects, those pupils also took part in creative workshops (karaoke, dance, games...) leading to a joint presentation at the end of their stay in Brussels. The European Commissioner for Education and Culture, Mrs Viviane Reding, also took part in the festivities.

Although the European event is being celebrated in Brussels, «Comenius Week» was also marked with festivities nationally.

The European Commission is making a video report on the Comenius initiative available to television journalists; it is entitled: «Comenius: ideas to spare».

Contents:

- In the little town of Kaskinen (Finland), Elina's school welcomes its Portuguese and Austrian partners, who have come to work on a joint project entitled «Proverbs and Idioms». Elina welcomes into her home Kathi, who has come from Innsbruck. Pupils as well as teachers and families test, each in their own way, the real benefit of transcultural communication and all the subtleties of their respective languages.
- Interviews: Finnish, Austrian and Portuguese pupils and/or teachers taking part in the project; Mr and Mrs Mäenpää, Elina's parents; Kathi, Elina's pen friend, and Erkki Kela, Head of the school in Kaskinen
- Filmed in: Kaskinen, Finland

For further information on the video : <http://www.tvlink.org/eac/en/home.cfm>

Technical data:

Running time: 12'14'' (+ 10' B-roll), Format: BETA SP standard, Language versions : French / English, International version, Selection of rushes

To order the video «Comenius: ideas to spare»: Mostra ! Communication, Media Relations, Tel : +32 2 537 44 00, Email : dvw@mostra.com

"Move your body, stretch your mind"

2004 is the European Year of Education through Sport

The European Commission launched a website dedicated to the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES), which starts on 1 January 2004.

Euro 2004 in Portugal plus the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Athens will place Europe at centre stage as far as international sport is concerned in 2004. For this reason, the European Union has chosen to name 2004 the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES) with the slogan "Move your body, stretch your mind".

Around 200 events will take place in 28 countries to promote links between education and sport in Europe and to raise the European public's (in particular young people's) awareness of the importance of sport in developing their personalities and social skills.

Sports federations across Europe, including the European Olympic Committees, the International School Sport Federation and the International Ski Federation, are backing EYES.

Last October, the Commission launched the new website dedicated to the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES). The site provides information about education and sport, online games and news about upcoming events.

Hungarian TV show axed as anti – Jewish

The television program Ejjeli Menedek (Night Shelter), featured on Hungarian state-television network, has been taken off the air after airing British historian David Irving's claims that anti-Jewish pogroms were a feature of the first two days of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising, Hungarian media reported.

According to news website RFE/RL TV executives explained that the statement offended the memory of 1956 and the dignity of the Hungarian nation. Mr Irving, who gained international notoriety for works downplaying or denying the slaughter of 6 million Jews in World War II, made the remarks last week at a rally of the far-right Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP) in central Budapest.

Finland boasts greatest press freedom in the world

Finland boasts the greatest press freedom in the world, according to a campaign group's latest rankings. But press freedom in Australia is being damaged by assaults on journalists and a lack of access to detention centres, Reporters Sans Frontieres said.

The country has dropped from 12th to 50th in the RSF rankings, putting it below South Korea and Ghana. Cuba is the worst country for press freedom, the group found.

BBC must be alert to liberal bias among its journalists

The BBC's head of television news said the corporation must be alert to liberal bias among its journalists, following attacks from the right-wing press in Britain. In an interview with The Independent, Roger Mosey said he and his colleagues recognised "the need to make sure that our journalism tests all viewpoints".

He added: "That includes challenging the liberal-left consensus." Telegraph proprietor Lord Black, a leading critic of the BBC, has claimed a "virulent culture of bias" has transformed the corporation into "the greatest menace facing the country".

But Mosey dismissed the newspaper's continuing criticism as "mean-spirited". Mosey also defended the BBC's dedicated news channel News 24, insisting most opinion-formers preferred his channel to its rival, Sky News.

Tony Maddox is new CNN senior VP of news operations

Tony Maddox is leaving London for the US after being named CNN's new senior vice president of news operations. Maddox was previously responsible for the network's news in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, and was the only CNN vice-president outside the US. His new position will take him to the company's headquarters in Atlanta, where he will oversee CNN's foreign news bureaux and the international news desk. Maddox joined CNN in 1998 after three years at BBC Northern Ireland, where he was in charge of news and current affairs.

Festivals, Workshops and more around Europe and the world

November

- Nov. 17 – 18: Brussels. EU Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers hold council meetings.
- Nov. 17 – 18: Brussels. EU Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers meet
- Nov. 17 – 20: Strasbourg. European Parliament plenary session.
- Nov. 18: Strasbourg. EU Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers meet.
- Nov. 18: Brussels. Intergovernmental Conference meeting of EU Foreign Ministers to discuss the proposed EU treaty.
- Nov. 18 – 20: Madrid. 'Mars: The Search for Life' European workshop for scientists and space engineers. www.cab.inta.es
- Nov. 19 – 20: Naples. Euromed 'Summit' – European Mediterranean Human Rights Network. www.euomedrights.net
- Nov. 19 – 21: London. US President George W. Bush is due to make an official visit to Britain. There may be protests from European anti-war groups.
- Nov. 19 – 25: Brussels. CIVCOM – Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management.
- Nov. 20: Rome. The 4th EU Descartes prize will be awarded to the best pan-European research project; 8 research teams have been short-listed from 230 entries. The winners share a prize of a million euros. patrick.vittet-philippe@cec.eu.int +322 296 9056
- Nov. 20: Frankfurt. Meeting of the governing council of the European Central Bank
- Nov. 20: London. A conference on Film Financing in Europe will be addressed by UK Culture Minister, Estelle Morris. +33 388 144400
- Nov. 20: Luxembourg. EU Transport and Energy Ministers meet.
- Nov. 24: Rome. EU-US Ministerial meeting on foreign affairs
- Nov. 24 – 25: Brussels. EU Finance Ministers meet.
- Nov. 24 – 25: Brussels. EU Education and Culture Ministers meet.
- Nov. 27: Brussels. EU Industry and Research Ministers meet in the Competitiveness Council.
- Nov. 27 – 28: Brussels. EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers meet.
- Nov. 29 - Dec 10: Rome. The 32nd FAO Conference – the meeting of the 183 member countries of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN, which happens every 2 years. Agriculture Ministers will attend between December 1st and 3rd. Contact Nick Parsons: nick.parsons@fao.org www.fao.org

December

- Dec. 1-2: Brussels. EU Employment and Health Ministers meet.
- Dec. 1-12: Milan. A conference by the COP 9 group of parties to the framework convention on climate change. www.ueitalia2003.it
- Dec. 2: Brussels. The EV50 gala dinner with the fifty Europeans of the Year as decided by readers of the European Voice newspaper. www.ev50.com
- Dec. 2-3: Naples. The 6th Euro-Med Conference. Foreign Ministers from the EU and 12 Mediterranean countries will discuss regional security, trade and the Middle East. http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euomed/conf
- Dec. 3-5: Berlin. The 9th International Conference on Technology-supported Learning and Training. www.online-educa.com/en/
- Dec. 3-6: Paris. The 11th annual world conference of science media producers. www.banffmedia.com/science/index.html
- Dec. 4-5: Brussels. EU Transport and Energy Ministers meet.
- Dec. 5-7: Varese, Italy. European Year of People with Disabilities closing conference will review progress. www.eypd2003.org
- Dec. 8-9: Brussels. EU Foreign Ministers meet.
- Dec. 9-12: Geneva. The so-called World Summit on the Information Society includes a Media Forum to discuss the effects on electronic media of the internet age. Contact Françoise Davies at the European Broadcasting Union: francoise.davies@ebu.ch www.geneva2003.org
- Dec. 12-13: Brussels. **European Summit.** www.ueitalia2003.it European leaders are aiming to agree the new EU constitution at this summit, but discussions may slip into the new year, with Spain and Poland in particular opposed to the suggested system of voting in the Council of Ministers, and with disagreements over how many commissioners there should be after enlargement.
- Dec. 15: Brussels. EU Transport and Energy Ministers meet.
- Dec. 16: Brussels. EU Finance Ministers meet.
- Dec. 16-19: Brussels. EU Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers meet.
- Dec. 19: Brussels. EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers meet.
- Dec. 20: Space. The European Space Agency's Mars Express spacecraft is due to reach Mars after a six-month flight, and release the British-built Beagle 2 probe for descent. (See Christmas Day) www.beagle2.com
- Dec. 22: Brussels. EU Environment Ministers meet.
- Dec. 25: Space. If it hasn't burned up or missed its target, Britain's 'Beagle 2 Lander' is due for a soft-landing on Mars on Christmas Day, before starting a 50-day search for signs of life using robotic techniques.

14 News Editors invited by CoR to plenary session

Fourteen News Editors from CIRCUM Regional Station have been invited by the Committee of the Regions to its plenary session to be held in Brussels, Nov. 19-20. The CoR will pay their travel and hotel costs.

The participants of this study visit are:

1. Tasmin O'Brien, BBC TV, North West
2. Jake Fowler, BBC TV Leeds
3. Kaj Hoejgaard, TV SYD
4. Franko Egro, Albanian RTV
5. Geoff Williams, BBC, Radio Wales News
6. Gerhard Kockert, BR
7. Lisa Lambden, BBC Nottingham
8. Diarmid O'Hara, BBC Scotland
9. Marcin Wlodarski, TVP3
10. Vedran Benic, HRT
11. Tatiana Balazova, STV
12. Katja Biocina, HRT
13. Luis Miguel Franca, RTP Made



Circum Report

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