

Circom Report

CIRCOM Regional Newsmothly • CR is the European Association of 380 Public Regional TV Stations in 38 countries • August 2002/No 34

On the agenda of the European Board meeting in Kosice

New CR National Coordinators and call for new EU tenders

During the European Board meeting in Kosice last May among other topics discussed were the new CR National Coordinators and a call for new EU tenders. Here are some of the most important points of this meeting.

Six new national coordinators were unanimously confirmed – Dr. Wilhelm Mitsche, ORF Austria, Andrew Psaila, PBS Malta, Vesna Nešovic, RTS Serbia, Peter Sauer, BR Franken Germany, Kjell Jarle Hoyheim, NRK Norway, Anita Bhalla, BBC English Regions UK.

The note was taken that Clare Morrow asked to be relieved as ITV's National Coordinator, so ITV no longer has a National Coordinator till someone new is found.

Regarding old and new members status, EB was informed that MDR Thuringen is cancelling its membership with the end of year 2002, while two new applicants - TV station 96, Macedonia and Soci Black Sea station - are still to be checked (whether they are public televisions or not).

Report on the Call for new EU tenders

Peter Kraewinkels submitted and elaborated the written report as concluded during the EC session the day before. European Year of Languages 2001 ended - CR has to send the final report to EC. New proposals have been recently submitted: Health in Europe project still unanswered could bring CR into problems. Daphne – funds to promote prevention of violence within families - TV Brussels prepared to participate in it, concept is to provide regional stations with "toolkits" for the organisation of "theme evenings". Science and Technology week - to bring attention to the topic of research during one particular day or a particular week - research in sports, music - hopefully this proposal will be approved. News projects - Research - positive response from European Commission - they are very keen in promoting researches at a larger scale - discussed with colleague from NRK, Head of Science department - magazine coproduction on science in Europe- an idea that could be developed and submitted.

There are also some ideas developed together with Gareth Price - on training within the candidate countries as well as on giving an opportunity to the enlargement candidates "to reach out local people in the regions". Reporting through the young reporters' eyes on the enlargement candidates (a kind of magazine). There is going to be the signing in 2003 of an enlargement paper in Thessalonica under the Greek presidency - European Commission would like it to be covered - ERT can do something about it since it is in Thessalonica - EC wants an event on signing of the accession party – call for proposals for a show program - EC would like that the accession referendums in all the candidate countries end positive - push to vote - recommended to have one executive producer to take it forward till March 2003 - Circom

Regional can influence call for proposals - it should be discussed on coproduction workshop. European Commission is also very keen to use the next year conference for promotion of enlargement.

Peter Zimmermann remarked that this system of co productions does not seem to work properly, because there is obviously a lack of communication between the Munich CoPro office and the CR Secretariat in Zagreb and this should improve. Reimar Allerdt replied that the Munich office is just a technical or logistical point, that it is not wise to concentrate everything in a new or an old centre. It proved practical and successful in the past that one station interested in coproduction takes charge of a project and coordinates it (Alice etc.). CoPro office is not really going to find the producer and to coordinate it - especially when they send freelancers to the meeting etc. Nicole Cauchie remarked that fishing for money is not always a good way, because contractual conditions sometimes are not fulfilled and

then it causes a lot of problems to the organisation.

Bjorn Erichsen, TV Director, EBU, at this point addressed EB and thanked for the invitation to join the meeting in Košice. He noticed a lot of similarities between CR and EBU and the possibilities to cooperate. He is working on an Action plan - how EBU TV directorate should look like within 3 years? He promised the members to double the number of co productions in 3 years. Reasons: competitors are going global, they can show it globally; public services, by its nature, cannot go global, because they are primarily national. "So, coproduction is a very good answer to globalisation of the competitors. Secondly, many of us are opening new digital bouquets and platform, new specialised channels. To specify a very narrow interest you have to launch special channels. Before BBC and ZDF, even France 2, thought that they could do it better alone, but now everybody is interested in getting more high quality programmes for less money.

Co productions are possible in 3 ways: classical exchange of programmes: produce one, get many; promoting the live events; co financing. Regional programmes are similar to children or drama programmes because they all have to include a lot of national identity - language, culture, social issues, rich-poor relationship. Seeing that CR has the same problems as we in EBU have, I can only suggest that you nurse Euromusica and even develop the new projects in the future. You have to profit from permanent stock exchange and pool or bank of ideas that should be established, you couldn't do it as Munich does it now, and ideas should come from the members. It seems that you are looking for the money first, then you discuss if it suits you.



You should not forget to ask first what our audience is interested in. That should be the primary question that you ask yourself (e.g. problem of transport infrastructure in big cities). You should form a small group of experts to select the best ideas coming from the members. It is a hard work until you build a bank of ideas, but only then you go to the permanent structure, like the one in Munich. The co production is the key of a successful organisation. Training is good, but co productions are even better".

David Lowen remarked that co funding is different from co producing - producers from different regions have to work together in something that is more than a cultural exchange. He suggested that CR should follow on what EBU is doing in next three years, not necessarily to agree all the time, but to add some more value by acting parallel.

Reimar Allerdt remarked that EBU has delegates that can make decisions on the matters discussed, which is not the case with the delegates within Circom. "It is hard to find a director who would be eager to fund some co productions in our stations. There are too many employees that would like to keep their jobs, so they rather save on show budgets, than get involved in co productions. We should need a small group of colleagues to develop the ideas, but at the same time to find a way to co produce them". He expressed a bit of scepticism about it.

Bjorn Erichsen replied that it was not important what kind of coproduction is applied but it is more important that it fits in the programme. "Co funding animations; produce one to get 50 for free; promoting live events. If you feel that the members are complicated and that they do not want to commit, then we have to sit and wait till they approach us. You have to come up with strong ideas and convince the others. Somebody came with Eurosong, Euromusica ideas - these should not be the only ideas. (E.g. Kid Eurosong Contest, Top of the Pop with music industry, Rolling Stones celebration in a concert etc.). Initially there could be just 8 members, but it is going to develop. There should definitely be several people devoted to co productions and I'm sure that the management is keen to get high quality programmes at a low price". SG suggested development of an action plan similar to the EBU's.

CR needs the Action plan because of the budgeting and the projects and each member of the EC will have some duties in it: Elena Spanily - training, Pierre Couchard - co productions, for example. For the next EC meeting in September a draft action plan should be prepared, then discussed during EC meeting and finalised for the next EB in November. "We have achieved a lot in training, a lot in Prix Circom - not so much in coproduction. We can achieve more, with a clear structure, with executive producers - after we get a project we decide who is responsible for it. We have to take one year and devote one year to it; it was similar with Training and with Prix Circom some year ago. It will of course depend a lot on the members and the national coordinators".

Jean-Marie Belin suggested that there are differences among CR TV stations. HRT probably has some programming space, but RAI, France Television have no so much space for such programmes - there is no much liberty in the scheduling to get some airspace. "Co productions cannot be very ambitious till we get to digital broadcasting when we will have our own regional programmes. Cross border coproduction could be a good way to initially improve current co productions, later in digital we should be real pioneers".

Bjorn Erichsen reminded that when developing a business plan for the future, CR has to keep in mind to develop in the area where the challenges for public services that are shared by all the members are the biggest. "For example, PBSs are using more and more funds to buy formats, so we concluded it was a common challenge and we would set a coproduction on the new format. You should identify 5-6 common challenges and develop on them. EBU would like very much to be of help in all these efforts and would like to develop parallel cooperation, but not necessarily the same". EB agreed to the proposed action plan steps - first deadline for the Action plan draft is June 15, then early September, before EC meeting.

Report of Circom Secretariat

Since all the participants have unanimously confirmed reception of EB materials by e-mail on time, SG suggested distributing written material for the future meetings by e-mail only (to avoid extra costs) and EB accepted it. A written report on activities of CR Secretariat was submitted with the proposal to have the written reports on CR Secretariat twice a year.

Tonja Božicevic, from CR Secretariat, reported on some changes on CIRCOM web pages - navigation and organization of the content was enhanced, bulletin board was installed to make exchange of ideas much easier - there are many visits, but not as many contributions. There was an average of 1500 unique visitors per month in the last 4 months; the peak of interest was in March /publishing of materials for Training workshop in Kosice/. Every time after the new edition of Circom Report is put on the web a lot of visitors are registered. Adobe Acrobat .pdf format was successfully established as a new CR distribution format. The home page is regularly updated with news and big CR events (Prix Circom, Annual Conference, Euromusica). The Real video server will be updated to enable better throughput and more photos and graphics will be added on the web. National Coordinators will be asked to verify data and contact info on their countries.

Klaudija Habek from CR Secretariat reported that only 5% of programmes in CR archive (56 out of 1274) could be properly used because there are no clean master tapes, no tests. The only written reports are recent jury reports. EB is asked to consider some changes in the Prix Circom rules.

In the discussion that followed the question whether CR should keep everything in the archive was raised - all entries and co productions? David Lowen suggested that there is no use to send two tapes per programme, one for judging with subtitles and another one (master tape) for the archive - those interested in a particular programme could address the company that produced the programme. Barbara Lewandowska recalled her station copying the Prix Circom winner to everybody interested in getting it. SG suggested that only the winners and the runners-up should send the clean master tape for the Video library and that the winners should not be given their prizes before they deliver the tape. Still the question of the archive - to keep all the entries or not, remained unanswered. There is also a problem with the author's rights - some stations are limited from entering a programme because they can not give free rights as it is requested by the rules.

Preparation to the 2003 conference

Paolo Morawski from RAI reported that due to changes in the RAI top management there has been no decision yet whether RAI will host the next year CR Annual conference or not. RAI is still willing to organize it and they'll be able to give an answer after July 7, upon the end of the EBU General Assembly in Naples. There will be an extra chance to discuss this matter and possible co productions during Prix Italia on September 14-17 in Palermo. There are good chances that RAI will host the Conference, so there are reasons to wait with the decision.

Other possible hosts for the 2003 Conference are: Brussels - the same situation as with RAI, very hard to expect EP and EC to pay some money for the Conference, Pierre Couchard will try to explore possibilities in Brussels; Poland - reluctant, because this year it was in Kosice - idea is to change regions every year (Barbara Lewandowska); Bulgaria - a possibility mentioned by the President of BNT; Denmark was proposed last year by Tim Johnson, but he could not do it. Interest to host the 2004 Conference is expressed by Poland, Bulgaria, BBC, Denmark.

EC will decide on the host for the 2003 Conference in September

Miscellaneous

Nicole Cauchie asked about the current status of the initiative to extend the CR exchanges on EbS since CoPro office in Munich informed EC earlier that there were many programmes. She was informed that EB decided not to expand the current EbS programming scheme on November 24, 2001. Regarding the European Year of Regions - a proposal has been made to the Commission to proclaim 2005 the European Year of the Regions.

“Working Together” in S.E. Europe

Euronet: new ambitious project within the framework of Interregg III

Under the temporary title: “Working Together” and Within the framework of INTERREG III, ERT 3 (Lead Partner), just submitted an integrated proposal, on the following axes: Up to date, the BalkaNet network can boast of a two year successful presence in the reality of Balkan Mass Media. In sum, BalkaNet is a telematic network, which allows the on line connection and interaction among radio and television stations of the wider Balkan area, providing a platform for a fruitful cooperation, alongside:

- The utilization of new technologies and the transfer of know how among the television and radio stations of the wider Balkan area.
- The development of innovative applications in the field of journalism, production and promotion of television broadcasts.
- Communication and exchange of information among the television and radio stations of the area.
- The training of executives, journalists and technical personnel.
- The undertaking of “joint” productions, etc.

BalkaNet is a project, which was implemented through the cooperation of ERT 3 (whose initiative it was originally) and the national television organizations of Albania, Bulgaria, FYROM, Serbia, Romania, Moldova and Turkey.

Taking therefore this successful cooperation one step further, ERT 3 intends to establish within the framework of INTERREG III a new, independent organization based in Thessaloniki, which will constitute the natural and independent headquarters of BalkaNet and expand its activities.

The main objective of the newly established entity, now known as Euronet RTV, and expanding in SE Europe will be the undertaking of mutual activities among the eligible countries’ Mass Media organizations.

Analytically:

- The maintenance of a journalist network for the exchange of information, which will be utilized by the partners, by the partners, as well as the provision of subcontracting services to other eligible countries’ Television channels.
- The production and broadcasting

of a joint television program via satellite, which will be multilingual and consisting of zones dedicated to news and broadcasts in the languages of participating countries.

- The production of joint documentaries, broadcasts and events coverage, for the promotion of the spirit of cooperation and solidarity among the peoples of the countries in question.

- Further vocational training for executives, journalist and technical personnel working in the field of Mass Media.

- The undertaking of similar actions which will contribute towards the facilitation and mitigation of the conflicts in the wider area and the utilization of information as a means for deconstructing negative stereotypes and enhancing the cultural and social cohesion of the peoples of the participating countries.

- The establishment of an Internet Website, which will attempt to join the radio realities of all participating countries. The national radio organizations of participating countries will cooperate, so that the joint internet site developed hosts music, news and broadcasts. This website, in the form of encoded archives, will constitute a platform created by journalists with different languages and places of origin, which will work together for the maintenance and updating of the website. The newly established website will constitute a point of reference and a means of expression for the problems encountered, but also the potential for cooperation and joint development.

Stations from the following countries have already shown interest in the project: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, FYRO Macedonia.



Karol Cioma

Calling all cameramen and picture editors

Karol Cioma, the Circom Regional Training Project Manager, is on the look-out for some camera operators and picture editors to join his team of technicians who could be available for future Circom training projects. Karol would like to invite applications from all member stations.

Circom Training would not be able to operate without the support of member stations and Karol is hoping that once again, the Circom membership will come to his aid.

“What I’m asking is for member stations to support Circom Regional training by supplying us, once a year for two weeks, with one of their technicians. They will join us in delivering Circom journalism training at the annual Circom conference. Multi-skilling is becoming more common in news rooms throughout Europe and I need people who are able to film and edit news packages in this new environment.

What Circom Regional can do in return is provide some training on the latest Sony cameras and Avid software, as well as being involved with the most exciting journalism training in Europe. This rewarding experience will benefit not only the technicians themselves but also their stations. They will be able to take part in the training that has been offered by Avid Technology at their European operations centre at Pinewood Studios in the UK. It’s a wonderful opportunity for technicians to develop new skills in training and state-of-the art equipment operation.”

Karol also states that applicants must have the support of their station and the Circom National Co-ordinator of their country as acceptance is on the provision that member stations are willing to release successful applicants for two weeks each year to work with Circom Training. If you require any further information contact Karol direct. The closing dates for applications is 11th October 2002.

Contact: kproductions@bopenworld.com

Free training for Circom technicians

Avid Technology has agreed to provide direct training on their Avid DV software for 8 lucky Circom Training technicians. The training, scheduled for the first quarter of 2003, will take place at Avid’s European operations centre at the world famous Pinewood Studios just outside London. Pinewood is where the “Star Wars” and James Bond movies are made.

The training will be for camera operators or picture editors and they will be trained on Sony DV camera and on the Avid DV editing system. It is hoped the training will provide a suitable number of people who will then be skilled to work as technicians on future Circom Regional training courses.

Further information on this training can be received from the Circom Regional Training Project manager, Karol Cioma. Contact: kproductions@bopenworld.com

CR National Co-ordinators: the top ten priorities

CR's Peter Zimmerman a couple of years ago wrote about the task of a national co-ordinator, which describes completely and accurately this role.

Zimmerman writes "CIRCUM Regional has gained a Europe-wide reputation - and more than 400 public regional stations as members of the organisation - because it offers so much more than the corporate representation of regional and local television on an international level. The most valuable service CIRCUM Regional can provide, is helping regional broadcasters to save funds by sharing professional know-how and production capacities for the common benefit. For the majority of public TV companies in Europe, cooperation with partners has become a must for survival.

CIRCUM Regional's contribution to this aim is its network of national co-ordinators. They represent the backbone of the organisation, the link between the producer from the small regional station somewhere in Europe and the central offices of CIRCUM Regional, and perhaps foreign partners of common projects. The personal efforts made by the national co-ordinators keep CIRCUM Regional alive and guarantee its success. The 10 essential functions exercised by the national co-ordinators are:

1. PROMOTING CIRCUM REGIONAL IN YOUR OWN ORGANISATION

The management of your company must be informed about all activities. Moreover, it is necessary to extend this information to all heads of departments which may be involved.

If your organisation represents more than one regional station, you will have even more tasks to perform: all stations have to be included in the distribution of information and be encouraged to make use of it. This can only be secured if you find reliable co-operators in every one of those stations. You have to be prepared to give them the freedom to work independently.

Important: CIRCUM Regional's activities are not limited to regional programming. They can also serve as a contribution to nation-wide programmes!

2. THE DIRECTORY

All records in this handbook must be correct and immediately updated in the case of changes. The reliability of the directory is essential for all activities.

3. CO-PRODUCTION

This sector may be a means of saving money for your company. You can serve this purpose in two ways:

- a) encouraging co-production proposals by the stations belonging to your organisation;
- b) motivating colleagues to participate in projects stemming from CIRCUM members abroad.

4. ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This is the most important event during the year. You should encourage as many participants from your station as possible. You are expected to propose topics for discussions and workshops which are of special interest to your country and CIRCUM Regional as a whole. This should be done at

least 6 months before the date of the conference. Perhaps you can even find someone to lead and organise the debates and workshops.

5. PRIX CIRCUM REGIONAL

Try to ensure a broad participation of programmes from the stations of your country. This will give them the right to use the winners of this contest in their own programming. Furthermore, your company has the opportunity to participate in the juries of PRIX CIRCUM Regional.

6. EUROPEAN SATELLITE PROGRAMME

All CIRCUM Regional members are invited to use the satellite of the European Commission in Brussels to transmit programmes (free of rights). The CR PROJECT BUREAU in Munich, Germany, handles this activity.

7. TRAINING COURSES

Graham IRONSIDE (address in the Directory) organises professional instruction mainly for younger colleagues. Companies in Eastern Europe can benefit from special funds given to CIRCUM Regional by the European Commission.

8. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

It is part of the responsibility of the national co-ordinator to monitor payment. Partner: Secretariat CIRCUM Regional, Ljubljana - SLOVENIA.

9. PUBLICATION CONTACTS

Good contacts with the local and national press are always helpful. Similar relations should be established with the political authorities of your region. In terms of internal communication, the Deputy General in Strasbourg, France, relies on receiving information from the national co-ordinators about developments in their countries for the quarterly CIRCUM newsletter.

10. CIRCUM REGIONAL EVENTS IN YOUR COUNTRY

The best means of promoting CIRCUM Regional is to have an official meeting in your area. This may serve both as publicity for your company and an opportunity to find sponsors for the organisation. Since the Annual Conference is quite a large (and costly) event, there are also other options: the European Board meeting, the Jury Session of PRIX CIRCUM Regional, the EUROMUSICA Concert or a smaller meeting of the Executive Committee. Arrangements should be made well ahead of time (about 18 months) with the Secretary General.

"The task of a national co-ordinator is more than just a centralising function. It requires a willingness to contribute to the well-being of the organisation as a whole and serve the individual interests of colleagues from other departments and even outside your own company. Being a national co-ordinator also means sacrificing some of your spare time. During the past years, numerous colleagues from all over Europe have done this job. CIRCUM Regional owes its success to them all. It is through their achievements that CR has grown to become an effective and internationally respected organisation."

SMS Meets TV Seminar in Amsterdam on Sept. 16

Building on the established TV Meets the Web series of media convergence events, Van Dusseldorp & Partners is bringing key European players together for the SMS Meets TV Seminar (<http://www.smsmeetstv.com>), the first of a naked series of autumn events.

SMS-TV has taken the market by storm and is now considered a principal value-added channel for major media properties such as 'Big Brother' and 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?' Taking place at Artis Conference Centre in Amsterdam on Monday 16 September 2002, this one-day seminar will focus on the new business models and revenue streams, analyse the roles of the various players in the value network and identify the criteria for success in this exploding sector. A "Showcase" of the main uses of SMS in TV programming will be presented and discussed as well as the findings of Van Dusseldorp & Partners' latest research "SMS-TV - Interactive TV

Congratulations

Congratulations to the EBU Vice-Presidents elected at the Napoli General Assembly on July 6th :

- Boris Bergant, RTV Slovenia, General Secretary CIRCUM Regional from 1995-2001 for his re-election.
- Jean Reveillon, Directeur Général délégué à l'Antenne, France 3, France
- Fritz Pleitgen, ARD President, Germany,
- Juan Isus Buhigas Arizcun, directeur du Bureau du Directeur Général, RTVE, Spain. Headed by Arne Wessberg, YLE Finland with Jean Stock as General Secretary, the EBU headquarters are located at: Ancienne Route 17, CH-1218 Grand Saconnex, Suisse, Tel. : 00 41 22 717 2111 - Fax 00 41 22 747 4000, Internet site : www.ebu.ch."

Festival of Underwater Pictures in Antibes

The 29th edition of the World Festival of Underwater Pictures will take place in Antibes Juan-Les-Pins from October 30th to November 3rd 2002. The theme will be "Diving in Tunisia".

The persons who want to compete can register on-line on the site www.underwater-festival.com. Full address is: Pierre Coton & Daniel Mercier Festival Mondial de l'Image Sous-Marine (29th edition 30 Oct. - 3 Nov. 2002), 62, av. Des Pins du Cap 06160 Antibes France Tel: (33) 04 93 61 45 45 Fax: (33) 04 93 67 34 93 apondyle@underwater-festival.com <http://www.underwater-festival.com>

Reinvented". As with all Van Dusseldorp & Partners' events, ample time for networking and visiting the exhibitors will be a vital part of the day. You can view the draft programme at

www.smsmeetstv.com/programme.php

and for speaking opportunities, contact Ashley Smith, Senior Researcher on

<mailto:ashley@vandusseldorp.com>.

This event has already attracted an unprecedented level of interest from all sectors and is a must for senior decision-makers from broadcasters, TV production companies, production distribution companies, new media format developers, SMS application developers, service providers, ASPs, networks, telcos and software vendors who are involved in creating, producing, developing, supporting, selling, buying, managing and implementing products and services in this sector. The delegate fee is euro 450 until 16 August (euro 550 thereafter), which includes a free encrypted PDF copy of the research report. You can register quickly and easily online at

www.smsmeetstv.com/registration.php using the secure server.

Sponsors benefit from exposure to a large, yet highly relevant audience for their brand, a platform from which to access potential customers and the opportunity to position their products and services vis-?-vis the competition. Three leading players have already confirmed their participation - Comverse-TVGate, Netsize and Liberate Technologies. For all sponsorship and exhibiting enquiries, visit

www.smsmeetstv.com/sponsorship.php or

contact Lucie Hime, Director of Sales & Marketing on

<mailto:lucie@vandusseldorp.com> or on +31 20 535 6987 for a tailored proposal.

Serbian parliament passes a new e-media law

Serbian deputies approved a media law on July 18 that critics predict will force many radio and television stations off the air, as Associated Press reported.

The law will force all broadcast stations to apply for a permit to use a frequency. A council, with four of its nine members appointed by the Serbian government, will decide which of some 1,200 radio and television stations will receive licenses for the approximately 300 frequencies available.

Zarko Korac, Serbia's deputy prime minister, said the current media scene is a "jungle" that will be "rehashed from scratch" by the new law.

Russian television on the brink of disaster

Testifying before the Federation Council's Information Policy Commission last June, ORT Director Konstantin Ernst said that "the majority of Russian television stations are on the verge of catastrophe as far as their technical equipment is concerned," RosBalt reported the same day.

Mr Ernst said that the country's television broadcasting system "is hopelessly outdated, and piecemeal repairs are proving more expensive to the channels than replacing it with contemporary equipment would be."

He stated that most of the world has switched to digital broadcasting and that the analogue equipment currently used by most Russian broadcasters is no longer manufactured.

The commission's chairman, Dmitrii Mezintsev, said after the hearing that he agrees with Ernst's assessment and that he will try to secure state support for resolving the technical problems of the broadcast sector.

Change in media law asked in Montenegro

Montenegro's strange political bedfellows -- the pro-independence Liberal Alliance (LSCG) and the pro-Belgrade Together for Yugoslavia coalition -- agreed in a parliamentary working group to call for legal changes in anticipation of early parliamentary elections.

The allies want a shortening of the pre-election media blackout, as well as the possibility to replace chief editors in the state-run media by a simple parliamentary majority vote in place of the current two-thirds majority rule.

The LSCG and the coalition also demand that state and private media report only on the foreign policy activities of incumbents, not their domestic activities.

Representatives of President Milo Djukanovic's Democratic Party of Socialists walked out of the session, while the Social Democrats voted against the proposed changes. Ethnic Albanian legislators were absent.

Representatives of the Council of Europe and independent electronic media journalists objected to the changes, noting that the LSCG had previously sought to bring Montenegrin media legislation in line with European standards instead.

CNN to block suicide videos

Broadcasts by Palestinian suicide bombers and their families are to receive the same treatment as messages from Osama Bin Laden, according to new guidelines issued by CNN.

CNN has come under sustained criticism from pro-Israel pressure groups in recent weeks, following accusations that the broadcaster gives suicide bombers and their victims equivalent status. In future, messages recorded by suicide bombers will be broadcast only in exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of a high level panel of CNN executives. Similar measures were introduced in January following claims that Osama Bin Laden's videos may have included hidden messages for followers.

Two weeks ago CNN's founder, Ted Turner, accused both sides in the conflict of terrorism in an interview. Although the interview was conducted weeks earlier, at the time of the conflict in Jenin, it was published on the day 19 Israelis died in a suicide attack in Jerusalem. Mr Turner has since apologised for his claim, but supporters of Israel seized on the interview as evidence of institutional bias against the Jewish state by one of the world's largest broadcasters. CNN points out that Mr Turner has no editorial or operational oversight of the channel.

Fire not fine, says BBC chief

BBC chairman Gavyn Davies has enraged his staff by suggesting that the corporation's board of governors should be able to fire employees for lapses in programme standards.

Mr Davies said that instead of the corporation facing fines for breaching broadcasting regulations - which he argued would be a misuse of licence payers' money - editors and producers should be sacked or demoted. "Firing the people is a much better remedy than fining the public", he added.

His comments, which were made during a debate at the Radio Festival in Cambridge, stunned senior radio figures. Among them was Radio 1 controller Andy Parfitt, who was at the centre of a row over a controversial outburst by the spoof rapper Ali G on the Sara Cox breakfast show.

He suggested that the board of governors should hold programme makers accountable for such breaches - although any punishment would only be carried out with the approval of the director general, Greg Dyke. But Mr Davies added: "If the director general didn't agree, ultimately we could get rid of him too".

Reporters should not act like superheroes

Speaking at a lunch for the presentation of the annual David Watt Prize, BBC's chief foreign correspondent Kate Adie said journalists in the field should concentrate on reporting and not get involved in the conflict. "I am often asked the question: 'When does a journalist intervene?' What's often embodied in the question is the belief that the reporter is a kind of Superman or Wonder Woman who is capable of leaping into action and subduing a group of people waving Kalashnikovs about or telling a group of fighters that 'people in Tunbridge Wells will be watching you'. The weird confidence in the power of the media is baffling but it is very common", she said.

She added that there have been "only a tiny handful of instances that I could have intervened and I'm not sure that it would have been effective". Mrs Adie went on: "I'm not going to change the world. It is important that journalists should dig for the truth, sift through the lies and the spin and serve it up in an acceptable manner. It is for others to make judgements and take action."

She believes there are few organisations left in the world that were naive about media manipulation. "Even the most remote terrorist groups are no slouches these days at understanding how the Western media operates", she said. "Videos are produced from caves and press conferences conducted from a jungle clearing. Control and manipulation of the media are not only the tools of the rich and sophisticated of the West."

Croatia Ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television

On December 12, 2001 Ambassador Neven Madej, Permanent Representative of Croatia to the Council of Europe, handed to Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the Organisation, the instrument of ratification of the European Convention on Transfrontier Television and the instrument of acceptance of its amending Protocol. It entered into force for Croatia on 1 April 2002. Most of the items from the Convention have been already embedded in Croatian laws especially in *Zakon o telekomunikacijama* (Law on Telecommunications)

The body in charge of Convention's implementation will be *Vijeće za telekomunikacije* (Telecommunication's Council) which is also the superior authority in charge of implementing and enforcing of Law on Telecommunications. Croatia up to now is participating in 53 legal instruments of Council of Europe, while 16 more have been signed including European convention on film co-production from 1992. and European convention on cyber-crime. Croatia signed European Convention on Transfrontier Television on May 7, 1999 in Budapest.

War of the words in Middle East

Israel has unveiled its own Arabic-language satellite television station in response to the scores of Arabic satellite television stations whose reports on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have had a strong impact across the Arab world.

The aim, according to those who conceived the new Israeli station - which is operated by the government, is to counter outlets like Al Jazeera, the Qatar-based satellite station whose coverage of the Palestinian uprising is very popular in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and throughout the Middle East.

The terminology of the Israeli station is also different than that of the Arabic channels, calling the West Bank by the biblical names of Judea and Samaria. Yossef Binia, director of the Israeli channel, asserted that it was by no means a government mouthpiece. Remarks by Palestinian officials and militant leaders will also be broadcast, except for incitement to anti-Israeli violence, he said.

Critics of the new station say its coverage of the conflict is sanitised, playing down Arab casualties and carefully editing Palestinian statements and pictures of Israeli Army actions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Russian firm plans to buy part of EuroNews

The Russian state media company, VGTRK, is interested in buying a 20 per cent stake in pan-European news channel EuroNews for 20.1m euros, according to Russian sources.

The stake would be sold by British broadcasting group ITN, which owns 49 per cent of the channel. The remaining 51 per cent is owned by a group of 70 European public broadcasting organisations.

EuroNews broadcasts in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and started Russian broadcasts in September.

Festivals, workshops and more around Europe and the world

- August 22-26: "Balkan TV Magazine" meeting (Greece)
- August 23-25: The Guardian Edinburgh Int'l TV Festival UK www.geitf.co.uk
- August 27-29: Int'l Satellite & Communications Exchange Conference & Expo. Long Beach, California. www.satcomexchange.com
- August 28-Sept. 7: Venice Int'l Film Festival. Venice, Italy www.veneziafiere.it
- September 9-13: Le Rendez-Vouz 2002. French TV Screenings (Saint Tropez) www.tvfi.com
- September 10-14: Le Rendez-vous: French TV Screenings. Sain Tropez, France www.tvfi.com
- September 12-17: IBC. Rai Centre. Amsterdam www.ibt.org
- September 18-22: Cartoon Forum. Gwynedd, Wales, UK www.cartoon-media.be
- September 30-Oct. 4: ECOC. Rai Center, Amsterdam www.ecoc-exhibition.com
- October 1-3: ABTA: Pay TV Telecomm International Congress & Tradeshow www.abta.com.br
- October 5-6: MIPCOM Junior: Youth Program Screenings www.mipcom.com
- October 7-11: MIPCOM www.mipcom.com
- October 11-20: Hot Springs Documentary Festival www.docufileinst.org
- October 15-17: BCE: Broadband Communications Europe www.broadband-convention.com
- October 29-31: Expo Comm Mexico Norte Cintermex www.ejkrause.com
- October 29-November 2: Broadcast India 2002 www.saicom.com/broadcastindia
- October 29-November 2: Expo Comm China South www.ejkrause.com
- November: News Editors Seminar (Strasbourg)
- November 1-2: Promax UK www.bda.tv
- November 3-6: Western Show www.calcable.org
- November 6-8: Broadcast Worldwide – BCWW 2002. TV Programme, Film, Animation, Exhibition & Conference Coex Seoul, Korea. www.bcww.net
- November 12-13: Athens. Global Sport Forum conference and exhibition, looking ahead to the Olympics in 2004, organized by the Stefi Production House. Tel: +44 20 7436 9120 www.globalsportforum.com
- November 12-14: ATVC/Jornadas www.atvc.org.ar
- November 18-20: Latin American Screens Cartagena de Indias. Colombia (caroletvor@dial.oleane.com)
- November 18-21: DSLCON Europe www.dsicon.com
- November 19: International Emmy Awards Gala www.intcouncil@iemmys2000.com
- November 19-20: Promax Latin America 2002 www.bda.tv
- November 19-21: News World 2002. The Global News Forum www.newsworld.com
- November 19-22: News World, the annual forum for the broadcast-news industry, at the Burlington Hotel, Dublin. 020 7491 0880 info@newsworld.org
- November 21-December 1: Int'l Documentary Film Festival www.idfa.nl
- December 1-5: German Screenings 2002
- December 2-3: Promax Asia www.bda.tv
- December 2-4: Streaming Media East www.streamingmedia.com
- December 2-7: ITU Telecom Asia www.itu.int/telecom
- December 2-5 Asia TV Forum 2002 www.asiatvforum.com
- December 3-5 Streaming Media Europe 2002 www.streamingmedia.com
- December 4-5: CASBAA www.casbaa.com



Valentin Nicolau is the new TVR prez

Valentin Nicolau, 42, is the new president and general director of the Romanian Television (TVR).

Nicolau who studied geophysics and geology at the Bucharest University worked as a geophysician engineer, before he founded the "Travel and Science" newspaper (1990) and the publishing house "Nemira" (2001).

In July 2001 he was appointed Prime Minister's counselor on cultural, education, research and tourism affairs. He has written books about theater and for children and he has been the recipient of the prestigious "Camil Petrescu" award for his play "Like snow and us". His plays have been translated in French and English. Two of them have been presented on stage.

Greek output deal

Universal and Star Channel Greece have entered into an exclusive multiyear licensing agreement for the free terrestrial TV rights in Greece to Universal's current and library feature films and TV product.

Circum Report

The "CIRCUM Report" is a monthly publication of CIRCUM Regional, the European Association of Public Regional TV Stations-available on the CR Internet site and coming to CR member stations and personnel either through E-mail or as an A4 size printed newsletter, through the CR General Secretariat from Zagreb. The French version of the CIRCUM Report is conceived and published by the Strasbourg Secretariat with support from the Region Alsace, the Conseil General du Bas-Rhin and the City of Strasbourg.

The "CIRCUM Report" is planned and edited in ERT3, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Production and Design: **Eleni Masoura**. Phone (30310) 299611-610 fax (30310) 299655. E-mail: pr@ert3.gr

All member stations are considered as potential contributors for this publication, with stories about new and innovative ideas, co-productions, exchanges, modern technologies, etc. Especially welcome are short stories and one-liners.

***Sony and Eutelsat are the official CIRCUM Regional sponsors**

