

25 YEARS CIRCOM REGIONAL

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Peter Zimmermann



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## Preamble

25 years of CIRCOM stand for a solid growth of the association and for continuous advancement of tasks and performances. In the historical view, CIRCOM Regional is one of the few organisations which managed the bridging over the Iron Curtain in the former bipolar world. The association created a common European „we-sentiment“ in a stage when atomic warheads had been arranged in both directions – from East to West, from West to East – and would even have started their carrier rocket in an unhappy moment. The following pages take the reader into a time, which is often unknown by younger journalists of today.

The collective exchange of ideas between media creators from television stations under public law was already possible and reasonable during the foundation, as those stations normally did not have any competition among each other. Ideas and concepts can be adopted as incitement for the own station. In a time without satellite transmission many CIRCOM Regional member stations had the chance to receive low-cost material from other European countries. Today, coproductions have become a permanent pillar for material exchange among member stations.

The Prix CIRCOM is the only Europe-wide competition for regional television. Almost 200 entries from different categories offer an extensive overview of how the task of regional news coverage can be realised successfully.

Training forms another important column for the successful enhancement of CIRCOM Regional. Especially young journalists` professional horizon is widened by those courses. The training establishes long-time and profound contacts between participants. This strengthens the positive feeling of togetherness in the CIRCOM family.

Typical CIRCOM career starts with a training course for young journalists, leads to the Trophy at Prix CIRCOM and is crowned by being a judge in the Prix CIRCOM itself. This is the basis for the highly qualified employees in member stations.

Technological changes affect work in the media sector in shorter cycles. What is a straw fire, which train should never be missed. These questions are answered in the programme of the Annual Conferences. One example is the commitment of video journalists. An American VJ pioneer presented at the Kosice Conference and his workshop had to be repeated due to huge interest. The VJ concept convinced many delegates. The result is that various stations now work with VJs and the demand for Circom VJ courses has increased enormously.

The permanent observation of developments which are important for regional stations under public law remains the main task of CIRCOM Regional. The European Union strives for more influence in legal regulations in the media sector. The media sector itself is changing rapidly. Electronic media – TV, Radio, Internet – are more and more produced in integrated teams within the station. Can we only talk about television hereafter? In future CIRCOM Regional will be dealing with this question, based on the solid fundament of its 25 years` history and experience.

This book was written by Peter Zimmermann, an important and formative character of the CIRCOM family. As Secretary General he raised the association into its final structure and created the portfolio of duties which is still valid for today.

Till his death in September 2007 he regularly took part in CIRCOM meetings being the Individual member. He was an important adviser and brought in his experience gathered over a quarter of a century. This book implies this treasure, it was his last work. We say: Thank you Peter Zimmermann.



Peter Sauer

Secretary General  
CIRCOM Regional



The book in front of us is the last contribution by the unforgettable and unique Peter Zimmermann to CIRCOM Regional. In this last and permanent work he also rounded up an important part of his life story.

Typically Peter – even in his last mission he chose a consistent, comprehensive and precise approach. Proposed, agreed, done. Meticulously as he has been, last year he came for a few hours to Ljubljana to show me the text, verify on some details and ask for opinion.

In a manuscript unusually catching to the eye for a journalist (the always exemplary readable texts have been later typed and distributed by his fairy, wife Christina), hardly ever required any change or amendment. This demonstrates how carefully everything has been researched.

Typically Peter – all his life he remained a journalist (continuously on the lookout, interested in everything but always thoroughly checking sources and information). He never made any compromise regarding perfection although visibly marked by his disease he did not mind travelling long hours by train from Munich to Ljubljana (including the eight hour delay due to the strike by German locomotive drivers).

Peter Zimmermann remains a unique phenomenon, so many talents united in one single person are indeed hard to find. Apart from his journalistic and research drive he was an equally gifted organiser, patient and therefore a quite successful negotiator who always knew exactly what he wanted, a man of immense energy and unforgivable relentlessness regarding his own body and condition. Quite often a glass of his beloved beer late at night remained his only food and relaxation he indulged in.

But most of all he was a charismatic person, who did not leave it to preaching but in his personal life and wider family kept living an intercultural dialogue, openness, tolerance and nobility.

CIRCOM regional is a special group of enthusiasts. We have never been linked by plenty of funds but constantly keep providing remarkable results. There has to be something more that keeps us together – mission, ideals, mutual trust and respect. Maybe the perception that we feel obliged to educate, encourage and attract the upcoming generations of open-minded and dedicated broadcasters whose vision although acting a regional scale, does not stop just across the street. Typically Peter.

Boris Bergant

Vice-President of EBU  
former President and Secretary General of CIRCOM Regional

## Early History

In Bilbao in the North of Spain the representatives of regional TV stations of Europe met in 2007 for the 25<sup>th</sup> time. That means that their umbrella organisation

CIRCOM Regional has an anniversary this year. That occasion justifies a historical retrospective.

### From Worldwide to Regional TV



TV set <sup>1)</sup>

When television became popular in the 1950's people at first considered it a national achievement. Those who acquired one of the first TV receivers were supplied not only with entertainment in sound and vision but also with current affairs at home and abroad before one could read about it in the newspapers. Apart from that there were events that captivated millions of people, these so-called blockbusters. Those were normally covered live, like the wedding of the British Queen, great sports events, later the landing on the Moon and more recently,

the air raid on Baghdad, for example. Transmitting world affairs to the homes of ordinary people was one of the first principles of programming of the mostly state-run TV stations. Moreover, directors in charge had a second field of focus: their own national concerns with politics, support of traditions, economic and cultural issues having top priority. That was the reason, especially in countries with greater territory, that it became necessary to establish producing centres not only in the capital, but also in smaller provincial towns. Those provided the national programme with audiovisual material from those regions. In that way the prerequisites for regional programmes have been established. With that development came more demands from leaders of respective regions for a better coverage of their local concerns, on a larger scale than it was possible to do on a national programme. Their main arguments were as follows: - individual history and culture of a region - its independent political administration - different economic interests. The extent to which those wishes could be fulfilled mainly depended on the regulations of the particular constitutions and on financial limitations. Some regional stations remained restricted to their roles as footage suppliers for the national programme, some were given their own limited air time on different

frequencies and others were granted even the sole responsibility for a complete 24-hour-programme on their own channels. Up until 1980 a complex and ramified TV network had developed in the then 31 countries of Europe.

It consisted of 39 national public corporations with 186 regional producing and broadcasting sites on the whole. In some countries there were also the first instances of locally produced television programmes. The obvious idea to use that plenty of capacities together had been put into action even before that time.

The political circumstances, however, had not allowed for establishing a European umbrella organisation for that purpose. That was the reason why until the 1990's there had been two such organizations in Europe – the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and the Organisation Internationale de Radio et Télévision (OIRT) – being divided by the political demarcation line between East and West, the Iron Curtain. In the committees of EBU and OIRT all the national TV stations were represented, but not the regional companies although their number was, as early as in 1980, five times as high as that of the national organisations in Europe. The significance of regional TV programmes was still considered quite low in general at that time. In order to change that prejudice, it was not a surprise that the CIRCOM group caused a stir at the “Prix Italia” in Riva, Lago di Garda, in 1980. Those men and women, teaming up under that name, came from different professional positions in their TV and radio companies, from countries with contrary

political systems and from different generations working in the audiovisual media. The older members had personally experienced the misuse of radio and press by governmental power, especially during times of war. The younger ones had learned about that at school or at university. Their common opinion describes radio and television as an impartial service for the benefit of the public, controlled by the public – not by political or business interests – and obliged to perform its tasks with the constant attempt to improve the quality of the programmes. In the late 1960's they met at the premises of WDR Cologne, a public regional TV station in West Germany, in order to establish an association which should function as an international platform for their convictions. The acronym “CIRCOM” represents a declaration of intent, worded in French and abbreviated like this: “Cooperative Internationale de Recherche et d’Action en matière de Communication (International Cooperative for Research and Action on the Field of Communication). That endless description was abbreviated for practical reasons to six capital letters: CIRCOM. A small number of people, less than ten, attended the act of foundation.

Among them there had been people who were to play a decisive role in the creation of CIRCOM's descendant “CIRCOM Regional” almost 15 years later: Pierre Schaeffer (France), Director of the Research Department of French Radio and Television, Chairman of CIRCOM. Michel Anthonioz (France), also from ORTF.



Robert Stephane (Belgium), Director of RTBF Liège, General Secretary of CIRCOM. Hans-Geert Falkenberg (Germany), Head of Cultural Programmes WDR Cologne. Sergio Borelli (Italy), Steering Committee of “Prix Italia”. Mike Fentiman (United Kingdom), Delegate of BBC. Once a year the members of CIRCOM met on the occasion of the “Prix Italia”, the world-famous festival for radio and TV programmes. That event, held annually in and around the most picturesque historical locations of the country, proved to be an excellent opportunity to gather information about the latest trends in programme making and to compare global quality standards. Moreover, discussions with like-minded visitors would establish new contacts, which eventually resulted in the growth of CIRCOM membership.

In 1973 the association succeeded to convince the organisers of “Prix Italia” in Venice to introduce an innovation into the programme of the festival - a public debate on current issues arising in the audiovisual landscape.

That action was a significant success and became a regular event in the following years. It established Europe-wide recognition for CIRCOM. Their activities distinguished themselves by innovative ideas, prominent speakers and sharp discussions. The organisers quickly became an experienced team that was ready to tackle additional tasks. Their next project started in Milan, Italy, in 1978. That event named INPUT was in some respects a rival arrangement to the “Prix Italia”.

It concentrated exclusively on creative and innovative programmes provided by CIRCOM co-operators from all over the world. INPUT has meanwhile become rather popular and is looking forward to its 30th anniversary.

The third decisive initiative of CIRCOM started with the “Prix Italia” debate of “Regional Television – the Last Network” in Riva in 1980. That topic corresponded with parliamentary demands in Italy and France for stronger consideration of the economic and cultural interests of their regions. The person proposing the issue for the forum was Jim Graham (United Kingdom), ITV.

The response to that discussion exceeded all expectations. The CIRCOM organisers were encouraged from many sides to follow up with the topic of regional TV into constructive action. In retrospect, it could be said that the Riva event was the birth of CIRCOM Regional.

Applause and encouragement from "Prix Italia" visitors may be considered a promising indication for undertaking a new task. However, more than that is needed in order to establish a solid platform for the interests of regional televisions in Europe.

Since the CIRCOM people were quite busy with their everyday professional duties there was only a little time left to tackle such a project. In the first place, a well-bedded sponsor had to be found to host a founding conference for Europe's TV regions since CIRCOM itself had no funds for that purpose, being a non-profit-organisation by its statute. It took just about three years to solve that problem. Finally, it was owing to the functioning relations inside CIRCOM and a fair amount of external diplomacy that the authorities of the regional channel FRANCE3 agreed to stage the pioneering event of the first reunion of Europe's regional TV stations.

The location was to be Lille, capital of the home province of the Prime Minister of France at that time, Pierre Mauroy. Robert Stephane, Head of the CIRCOM Secretariat in Liège, Belgium, and Pierre Roubaud, Director of the regional station of Lille, FRANCE3-Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie, were responsible for the organization of the

event. Invitations went out to more than 100 regional stations in Europe. The European Parliament financially supported the CIRCOM Secretariat. When the delegates of 48 stations from 8 countries arrived on the morning of the 31<sup>st</sup> of May in 1983, they were bewildered by the situation to find all the doors of the newly-built Palais de Congrès et de la Musique firmly locked. Quite a few of them felt rattled and snappish jokes went around until finally a person with the necessary keys showed up.

Entering the Congress Hall, one could notice that the interior was still provisional, the installation work not yet finished. A characteristic omen for the implementation of an organisation of TV stations that have been underestimated for such a long time! Eventually the conference started with a one-hour delay. The main part of that 3-day-event consisted of declarations of intent brought forward by CIRCOM members and FRANCE3 delegates. For the audience, mostly inexperienced in following speeches in several foreign languages, it was a rather tiring experience although simultaneous translation had been provided.

The only entertaining effects came from the disputes about aims and rights of the new organisation, vigorously fought out mainly between French and Italian speakers who gave a lively taste of Latin temperament. At the end of those three days the conference was asked to vote on the proposal to become member of a new working group named "CIRCOM Regional".

Only delegates from France, Italy, West Germany and Belgium felt authorised to agree. The other four countries represented at Lille postponed their decision and remained in the status of observers (Denmark, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom). A shorter part of the conference was reserved for programme screenings of regional productions. Following the example of "Prix Italia" they were separated in several categories.

As the majority of the delegates were programme makers that opportunity was used quite frequently. For a lot of producers it was the first time that they could compare their everyday work with the results achieved by foreign colleagues.

## Personal memories:

In the workshop for documentaries, I made the first co-production contacts with BBC Leeds and RAI Milano. I felt guilty for sneaking away from the Conference for a few hours in order to visit the coast of the Channel and to see the Second World War fortifications opposite the rocks of Dover. When CIRCOM Regional entered into Europe's audiovisual scene, some of its aims had already been put into action. The most remarkable example was "Alpe-Donau-Adria", a cross-border TV cooperation of regional stations from 5 countries, namely Austria, Italy, Yugoslavia, Hungary and West Germany. That project, stimulated by regional politicians, had started in autumn in 1982. Its basic idea was to reflect the still existing economic and cultural ties between parts of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and West Germany's province of Bavaria. Meanwhile "Alpe-Donau-Adria" has existed for 25 years and it is headed by Dr. Guenther Ziesel, ORF Styria in Graz, Austria. He did quite a lot of pioneering work by establishing the basic rules for the programme cooperation between regional stations from neighbouring countries with different official languages.



Lille <sup>2)</sup>

# 1984

## Encouragement and Progress

An essential part of the second CIRCOM Regional Conference in Biarritz was made up by such valuable practical experiences and examples from other newly created cross-border-magazines from France like "Vis-à-Vis" (FR3 Alsace/SWF Baden-Baden), "Euro III" (FR3 Lille/RTBF Charleroi/BBC Plymouth), "Alice" (FR3 Sud) and "Pyrenées, Pyreneos" (FR3 Aquitaine/TVE/Euskaltelebista/TV3 Catalunya). CIRCOM assistant Marcia Learner put all these productions on stage during the plenary session with the authors reporting their experiences. Witnessing the realisation of CIRCOM's idea of regional co-production caused general encouragement among the delegates; just as much the presence of 4 more participating countries, namely Austria, Norway, Portugal and Switzerland. Altogether 67 stations from 12 countries were represented at Biarritz.

Biarritz<sup>3)</sup>

Comparing to the Conference in Lille, the agenda had been slightly modified. No thematic workshops were organised, but there was sufficient time for programme discussions. The selection of the productions to be presented was left to the participating stations. The European Commission provided simultaneous translation. The fact that FR3 acted again as the main sponsor of this meeting of CIRCOM Regional was due to the personal relations between General Director Serge Moati and Robert Stephane (RTBF Belgium). The local organiser was Jean Suhas, Director of FR3 Aquitaine at Bordeaux. He chose one of the noblest locations in the history of CIRCOM Regional Conferences - the Palace Hotel "Villa Eugenie". A wedding present from the French Emperor Napoleon III to his wife, situated at the French Atlantic coast, 15 minutes away from the picturesque fishing harbour of Biarritz.

### Personal memories:

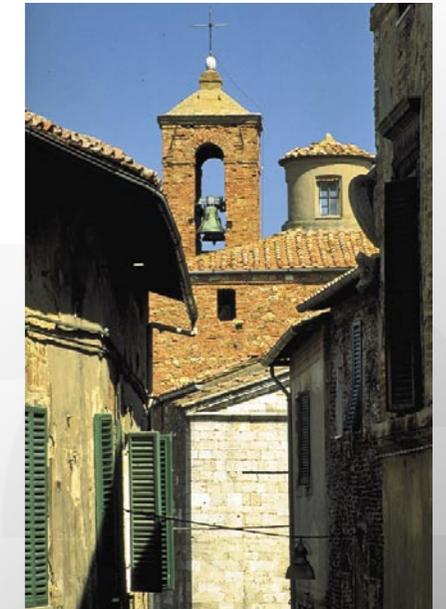
The applause received for a co-production with RAI featuring the life of metalworkers in Munich and Milano; Jean Suhas' invitation to his summer university courses at the beach of the Gironde delta, which I accepted the same year.

# 1985

## At the Crossroads of Chianciano

The positive development of "CIRCOM Regional" at Biarritz still left the parent company "CIRCOM" with the task to make its regional descendant stand up on its own feet. After having profited two times in a row from the generosity of FRANCE3, it was now necessary to find a new host for the Annual Conference. That target demonstrated the intention to install the CIRCOM Regional Conference as a regular annual activity touring across all member countries in Europe for the future. The key figures of CIRCOM, experienced by their former activities at the "Prix Italia", succeeded in getting an agreement with RAI to organise the next event in the heart of Italy at the romantic medium-sized town of Chianciano. Both partners were short of funds for that purpose. That is why a third organisation was included into the project: "Teleconfronto", an educational initiative staging TV productions from mainly commercial regional stations. Such an arrangement is likely to bear problems and those did indeed occur in Chianciano. The location of the event, an old historical building, was too small for 100 delegates of CIRCOM and the same number of "Teleconfronto" visitors. Screening facilities were in short supply, and we struggled to acquire the equipment necessary to run a workshop. Nevertheless, six of them could be produced: documentaries, cultural programmes, regional fiction, music, experimental productions and – for the first time – regional news. There was also a round-table-discussion on international cooperation of regional television, a resumption of a

debate highly approved in the previous year. A pleasant result of the 1985 Conference was the fact that two more countries participated, namely Finland and Yugoslavia. (Interesting to note in review: That happened just 3 months after Michael Gorbachev had been elected Secretary General of the Communist party of the Soviet Union.) With those newcomers, CIRCOM Regional reached a total participation of 81 stations from 14 countries.

Chianciano<sup>4)</sup>

## Dissatisfaction Results in a Step Forward

Striking the general balance of the Conference in Chianciano it became evident that CIRCOM must rely on grants or services from other partners in order to continue the activities of its regional branch. The cost of organizing Chiancano was financed in the following way (currencies of 1985 converted into Euros):

1. Subsidies from the European Commission and the European Parliament for CIRCOM Regional	€ 25,000
2. RAI	€ 20,000
3. Teleconfronto	€ 17,500
4. RTBF for CIRCOM Secretariat	€ 2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 65,000</b>

## An independent Organisation Takes Shape

During the first three years, all matters concerning CIRCOM Regional had been run by the members of the CIRCOM group especially interested in that subject. That was the usual procedure, also applied to other activities like the "Prix Italia" debate and INPUT. The organising centre was CIRCOM Secretariat provided by RTBF in Liège, Belgium. Over the years, more and more TV professionals from the outside became involved in CIRCOM projects; eventually a great number of them were to become permanent co-operators. That was particularly the case with the project CIRCOM Regional. TV colleagues repeatedly visiting or even helping with the Conferences were offering their support for the further development of the initiative. Gradually a number of them were invited to join the

decision-makers of CIRCOM with the approval of their companies. In that way the European board came into existence, at the beginning consisting of the following 11 people: Sergio Borelli, President of CIRCOM, RAI, Italy. Robert Stephane, Secretary General of CIRCOM and National Coordinator, RTBF. Hans-Geert Falkenberg, CIRCOM, WDR Cologne, West Germany. Marcia Lerner, CIRCOM assistant, USA. Ole Dreyer, National Coordinator, Danmarks Radio. John Forssberg, National Coordinator, Sveriges Television. William Greaves, National Coordinator, BBC Leeds, UK. Graham Ironside, National Coordinator for ITV, Yorkshire TV Leeds, UK. Dario Natoli, National Coordinator, RAI Rome, Italy. Jean Suhas, National Coordinator, France3 Aquitaine, France.

## Personal memories:

Falkenberg promised that he would persuade the General Manager of my home station in Munich to support the Conference in 1986 if I bring that proposal up in Chiancano. Falkenberg kept his word. We have reached the agreement.

Peter Zimmermann, Conference organiser in 1986, ARD Munich, West Germany. The regular sponsors of CIRCOM Regional, the European Commission and the European Parliament, were admitted to the European Board as observers. Their delegates were Robert Jarret (Commission) and Stephen Wright (Parliament).

The function of the new National Coordinators was defined like this:

1. Motivation and information of all public regional stations in their country
2. Acting as contact people for regional stations from abroad
3. Organisation of international co-productions
4. Assistance during the preparation of the Annual Conference.

## On Debate: The Outside Sponsorship

Still faced with the permanent need to raise additional funds for the Conference, the European Board agreed to accept an offer by the regional tourist organisation of Bavaria to support the upcoming event in Munich. The amount at stake was 100,000 DM (about € 50,000) to be spent for special events like a tour to the Alps, a visit of an ethnologic museum and a banquet with folk music. Fears that such a combination with publicity

measures may negatively affect the serious objectives of the Conference were put aside by the argument that a region hosting CIRCOM Regional should be entitled to show its specific identity. The European Board also welcomed the official reception of the Bavarian Government in the former royal residence in Munich. Since then politics and tourism have regularly gone hand in hand in preparing the Annual Conferences.

## 1986

## EU Representatives Addressing the Plenary in Munich

Three years after the foundation in Lille CIRCOM Regional succeeded in staging a prominent forum for the opening plenary session in Munich: Siegbert Alber, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Director General Froschmaier of the European Commission and Professor Albert Scharf, Chairman of the European Broadcasting Union. Those three speakers welcomed the new organisation and underlined its importance in strengthening the identity of the regions of Europe. There were also addresses by the Bavarian government and by the Director of TV programmes of ARD Munich. That plenary session conveyed the impression that CIRCOM REGIONAL had taken up a respected position in Europe's audiovisual scenery. There was full press coverage, especially in Germany. The workshops of the Munich Conference included two novelties - separate sessions for co-production and for so-called "visit cards" (typical productions from the regions). The remaining workshops were devoted to documentaries, fiction and regional news. Compared to the previous year, number of participants slightly increased to 114 delegates representing 88 stations from 14 countries.

## Personal memories:

First meeting with two colleagues who were later to become presidents of CIRCOM Regional. Namely, Boris Bergant (Slovenia) and Harald Boe (Norway).

Munich<sup>5)</sup>

## Instalment of the CIRCOM Regional Secretariat

The satisfying performance of the Conference in Munich led to the proposal by the CIRCOM delegates in the European Board to separate administrative responsibility between CIRCOM Regional and the other CIRCOM activities. A synonymous reason for this split off was the promotion of Secretary General Stephane. He was appointed Director General of RTBF, Belgium, and had to move from Liège to Brussels.

The new CIRCOM Regional Secretariat was established at the TV premises of ARD/Bayerischer Rundfunk in Munich and Peter Zimmermann appointed Secretary General. His work started in summer in 1986. The only duty left to the CIRCOM Secretariat in Belgium was the settlement of the annual accounts with professional auditors in Brussels.

## Finances – The Crucial Problem

From the very beginning all the CIRCOM Regional activities depended on grants or services from other partners like TV companies or European institutions. In the case of the Munich Conference, contributions were as follows:

- ARD/Bayerischer Rundfunk	€ 30,000
- RTBF Belgium	€ 17,500
- European Commission	€ 12,500
- European Parliament	€ 12,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 72,500</b>

(Contributions for the expenses for social events made by the Bavarian Government and the Bavarian Tourist Organisation are not included)

All such allowances had to be renewed in the following years. That meant constant efforts such as talks with potential sponsors, writing applications, settling accounts and a fair amount of diplomacy. Although it was one of the principles of CIRCOM to avoid bureaucracy, there was no way to operate without it and run the organisation in an orderly manner at the same time. The arrangement with ARD Munich for the CIRCOM Regional Secretariat included the working time of the Secretary General, a part of his travel expenses and his technical bureau facilities. There was no allowance for additional staff. With the financial situation of CIRCOM Regional still uncertain, it was rather difficult to assess income and expenditures reliably. Nevertheless, it was necessary to set up a bank account that could be used mainly for intermediate financing. In order to secure practicable credits the Secretary General arranged an additional account for CIRCOM Regional with personal liability with his bank.

## Co-production, a Source of Additional Funding...

The permanent concern about that financial bottleneck made the Secretary General look for new strategies to raise additional funds for CIRCOM Regional. One convincing idea originated from Robert Jarret, Head of the Audiovisual division of the Directorate X of the European Commission. It was part of the European Commission's policy to proclaim a so-called "European Year", in order to draw attention of the public to basic developments with significance for the future of the

whole of Europe. The budgets of those campaigns included considerable amounts of money for the purpose to forward TV coverage. The role of CIRCOM Regional could be to stimulate the member stations to produce such programmes, co-ordinate the various issues and organise a license-free exchange of all those items among the TV stations participating in the project. For those services, CIRCOM Regional was to receive a share of the EU subsidy.

## ...and a New Attraction for Member Stations

Meanwhile, with almost 100 member stations in 14 European countries, CIRCOM Regional could offer a broad basis for the "European Year" campaigns. For CIRCOM Regional members, cooperation on such a

project meant a large output of costless programmes. So it became evident for the first time that membership in CIRCOM Regional was not limited to ideals shared, but could also provide practical benefits.

## Environment, the Topic of the First Experiment

The European Year of Environment of 1987 was the first topic to come up on that new line of activity. Robert Jarret established the contact to the EU Directorate in charge of that project. CIRCOM Regional member stations were invited by the Secretary General to come to Brussels to discuss the conditions of the planned cooperation and to propose various items for programme production.

The financial subsidy of the EU was split like this:

- € 100,000 for RAI Milano for a license-free fiction programme at the disposal of all the participating TV companies
- € 150,000 for CIRCOM Regional expenses for programme meetings, interpreters, managing work and distribution of copies of all the productions emerging within that project.

From that additional income, CIRCOM Regional was able to use € 5,000 to co-finance the following Annual Conference, which featured a special workshop of environment programmes in the schedule of the meeting. The experience gained from that project was ambiguous: the occupancy of the Munich Secretariat was intense, lasting altogether over a period of 20 months. However, that extra work had saved some funds for ordinary expenditures. The realisation of production and programme exchange for the European Year of Environment annoyed some of the participating stations, mainly because of the fiction programme and the comparatively high amount of subsidy for RAI Milano. There were also a number of complaints

regarding the quality of some productions. The EU partners were nevertheless satisfied with the result of 10 stations from 8 countries transmitting more than 15 hours of programmes on the environment topic. They proposed to start another programme exchange in the following year on the subject "Contamination of Waters" and "Chemical Hazards". That project was eventually produced in 1988 with a participation of 8 stations from 7 countries. The subsidy for the management of CIRCOM Regional amounted to € 15,000. From 1987 on CIRCOM Regional cooperated year by year with various European institutions with the result of a considerable improvement of the financial situation.

## Euromusica, an Idea from Portugal

Another broadly accepted project was a proposal made by the Portuguese National Coordinator Elisio de Oliveira, RTP Porto, at the 1986 Conference in Munich. He organised a concert with musical contributions from regional stations from all parts of Europe, staged at the theatre of the Northern Portuguese town of Viana do Castelo in spring 1987. That event, originally named "CIRCOMUSICA", was a valuable tool for establishing contacts with broadcasters interested to cooperate in programmes of non-journalistic nature. Over the years, the number of participating countries grew from 10 to 16 including Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary. With the intention to underline the fact that that

project was performed by actors from both sides of the "Iron Curtain" the name was changed to "Euromusica" later on. It became a permanent part of the activities of CIRCOM Regional for 12 years and was organised in 8 countries altogether.

## Personal memories:

My acquaintance with later CIRCOM President David Lowen dates back to 1987 when he represented Yorkshire Television (UK) together with an a-capella choir of young English girls at Viana do Castelo. My home station's contribution was a folklore group from Bavaria and the co-moderator of the concert Iris Berben, at that time a promising young actress on her way to becoming a film star.

## 1987

## Enchantment during Norway's Summer Nights

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference turned out to be a successful combination of Scandinavian functionalism and splendid hospitality in the midst of memorable natural scenery - the Solstrand Fjord near Bergen, Norway. The hosting company, NRK, had chosen that location far away from urban distractions with the intention to keep the 112 delegates from 14 countries all in one place, the Solstrand Hotel, a first-class lodge on the waterside in enchanting but lonely surroundings. The effect was that the participants were dealing more intensely than ever with the subjects of the Conference. In addition, a large number of personal contacts originated from the stay at Solstrand, which was quite useful for later cooperation. Main topics of the workshop were fiction, news, documentaries and co-production. The evaluation of the programme of "European Year of Environment" led to an excessive debate, which later on made the European Board pass the resolution that CIRCOM Regional would exclusively act as an organiser of such projects and avoid to be included in other contracts made between

a member station and the European Commission. The plenary sessions were overshadowed by the growing competition of commercial television. In Italy, France and the UK that had caused a restriction of funds for public regional broadcasters. The Swedish reaction to that new challenge had been the opposite. Transfer of funds and the assignment of special tasks in programming formerly performed by the central national company strengthened regional stations. As mentioned before, the unique arrangement of the Conference at Solstrand helped remarkably to strengthen friendship and solidarity between regional broadcasters from North and South, East and West. Social highlights were a boat trip to a remote island at the end of the fjord, long strolls along the waters in the light of the midnight sun and at the final day a reception by the mayor of Bergen. The Swedish National Coordinator John Forsberg brought up a very special toast expressing the pride of the newly born "CIRCOM Spirit". It was an old folk song with some naughty Swedish verses.

## Personal memories:

The NRK organisers Harald Boe and Grethe Haaland were the first to ask for the advice of those who had prepared the preceding Conference. So it happened that the Secretary General's clerk worked for some time with NRK staff in Oslo and at Solstrand. The reward was a surprise. A four-day trip by plane and car, led by Harald Boe, to the Norwegian districts beyond the arctic circle, to the endless sunshine of midsummer.

” Vi scalar för vänner  
och alla som vi nu kämer  
Och dom som vi inte kämer  
Dom skiter vi i “

(Free translation: "We drink to all friends and to all we got to know. And about those we don't know we don't care a damn!")

## From "PRIX EUROPA" to "PRIX CIRCOM Regional"

Beginning in 1987 CIRCOM Regional became involved in the organisation of the "PRIX EUROPA", a television contest initiated by the Council of Europe and the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Communities in Europe. President Sergio Borelli (RAI) and Hans-Geert Falkenberg (ARD) cooperated in that project on behalf of CIRCOM Regional together with the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Manchester Institute and the European Cultural Foundation, which was to be the main sponsor of the event. The motive of CIRCOM Regional to work for "Prix Europa" was to secure equal rights for regional TV stations in this contest.

For the inauguration in Amsterdam in late summer 1987 the delegates of CIRCOM helped selecting the jury while the Secretariat assisted by advertising "Prix Europa" to the regional stations. Unfortunately, the majority of the organisers pointedly neglected the regional aspect of the new TV award. The only suggestion of CIRCOM Regional to be accepted was the proposal to have the 1988 "Prix Europa" organised by a regional station, SFB Berlin-West, Germany. Even this compromise eventually turned out to be unsatisfactory. SFB with the Senate of Berlin acting as an additional sponsor did again treat the participation of regional stations of only secondary importance.

That caused considerable dissatisfaction within CIRCOM Regional and led to a basic debate of the European Board at the 1988 Conference. The conclusion was that CIRCOM Regional should apply to the Council of Europe and the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Communities to become the permanent organiser of "Prix Europa". That same year those negotiations took place at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg with a negative result. The national aspect of "Prix Europa" remained to be seen as priority. SFB and the Berlin Senate were chosen as permanent organisers. CIRCOM Regional demonstrated loyalty to its principles by announcing the withdrawal from the contest. Simultaneously the intention was stated to create a rival

### EU Funds for Improvement of CIRCOM Regional Communication

In 1987 and 1988 the Secretary General had intensified the contacts with Robert Jarret, DG X of the European Commission. He learned on several occasions that the annual subsidies for CIRCOM Regional could not be continued indefinitely, but were rather given to help during the years of start. For the future, Robert Jarret advised to strengthen the part of CIRCOM Regional as an assistant to the Commission helping to perform desirable TV publications as it had been done during the European Year of Environment. The following "European Year of Film and Television"

competition just for regional stations. It took one more year to organise the new "Prix CIRCOM Regional". Dr. Jürgen Hassel, WDR Cologne, West Germany, leader of the Europe-wide project "Europaplatz", agreed to take care of that activity. It has become a permanent event in the calendar of CIRCOM Regional since 1990, supported by prize money from the European institutions and CIRCOM Regional member stations and by the hospitality of stations inviting the jury sessions. Prizes are awarded at the Annual Conference. Dr. Hassel had remained "Mr. Prix CIRCOM Regional" for more than 10 years until his retirement when David Lowen (UK) took over this task.

served as another opportunity to raise EU funds for the purposes of CIRCOM Regional, amounting to € 40,000. By decision of the European Board and the Commission that money was used for the production of a manual including detailed information about all CIRCOM Regional member stations, the purchase of a computer used for storing the respective data, regular newsletter detailing latest co-production proposals and the expenditures to be made for the co-production workshop at the next Conference.

# 1988

## BBC and ITV Pair up for CIRCOM Regional

The 6<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in the North-Eastern region of the United Kingdom at Harrogate involved an organisational novelty: Two rival networks, the BBC and ITV, were managing the Conference together, assisted by the staff of the Munich Secretariat. That solution helped to diminish the costs of only one host station, which had been increasing from year to year (1985: RAI € 20,000, 1986: ARD/BR € 30,000, 1987: NRK € 35,000; BBC and ITV shared the amount of € 42,500 in 1988). Conference site was a traditional English hotel in picturesque park scenery at the holiday resort of Harrogate in Yorkshire county.



Harrogate<sup>7)</sup>

125 delegates from 14 countries participated in that Conference, slightly more than the previous year. Among them, 10 British IBA controllers as well as professors from the Television Academies in London and Munich were present. For the first time, the question was raised how CIRCOM Regional could extend activities to the training of young people. Other highlights were the hours of co-production discussions with especially strong attendance during the presentation of projects co-financed by the European Union, the report on the difficulties of CIRCOM Regional with the organisers of "Prix Europe" and a press conference with leading personalities from the BBC and ITV. Besides the co-production workshop, three more topics were brought up. Namely, creative programmes, documentaries and news. In addition, all participating stations were given the opportunity to present examples of their programmes. That was a forerunner of today's "Teletheque"- an idea by David Lowen (Yorkshire TV), which became a permanent institution three years later.

### Personal memories:

The biggest fish-and-chips-dinner I ever attended was the element of a surprise during a trip for all the delegates - the kind private hospitality of the Conference organisers William Greaves (BBC North-East) and Graham Ironside (Yorkshire TV).

## The Second Step to Independence

After CIRCOM Regional had made its public entrance in six countries and became partner in financial arrangements with the European authorities in Brussels and Strasbourg, the European Board felt that time had come to define a new situation in general and the relation with the parent organisation CIRCOM in special. Since 1986 CIRCOM Regional had a separate Secretariat and its own Secretary General in Munich, West Germany. However, responsibility for financial matters remained with the Secretariat of CIRCOM at RTBF in Belgium. CIRCOM President Sergio Borelli also acted as Chairman

of the CIRCOM Regional meetings. Borelli himself proposed to change the status of CIRCOM Regional and to make it an independent organisation separated from CIRCOM with full responsibility for all its internal and external matters. Membership in both organisations should remain possible (which was the case with Sergio Borelli, Hans-Geert Falkenberg and Robert Stephane). The European Board accepted Borelli's recommendation. A working group was appointed for the task to word the new statutes for CIRCOM Regional, which were to be adopted at the next Conference.

# 1989

## From Portugal to new Horizons

The year 1989 ending with the collapse of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, marked a sudden change in the existence of CIRCOM Regional. Several months before those revolutionary political happenings, TV colleagues from Poland, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union arrived at the Annual Conference at Ofir, Portugal, and became members of the organisation together with Stads TV Rotterdam, Netherlands. The presence of the newcomers from beyond the "Iron Curtain" was mainly the result of the diplomatic cleverness of the Portuguese hosts of RTP. They had earlier succeeded in inviting Bulgarian and Polish

folklore groups to a "Euromusica" festival in Madeira and submitted copies of that production to the state-run TV stations of the participating countries. Good relations having once been established by becoming partners in a CIRCOM Regional project, Polish and Bulgarian TV stations were ready to become official members. The Russian colleagues were from Gosteleradio Murmansk in the northern part of the country. They had produced a cross-border project together with their Norwegian neighbours. As a present of friendship NRK National Coordinator Harald Boe included the Russians into the Norwegian delegation travelling to Portugal. The first appearance of delegates from Warsaw-Pact-States created hopes for a further enlargement of CIRCOM Regional in the near future. Mr. Mikulicz, Head of the International Department of TV Poland (and former ambassador of that country to Vietnam), delivered an encouraging speech to the plenary at Ofir.

Ofir<sup>8)</sup>

## An Independent Organisation with New Self-Confidence

That Conference resulted in some more trendsetting decisions:

- Adoption of the new Statutes of CIRCOM Regional
- Election of Jean Suhas, National Coordinator for France, as the first President
- Decision to organise the "Prix CIRCOM Regional" as a Europe-wide TV contest, exclusively for public regional stations.

For that activity, a new subcommittee was established and chaired by Dr. Jürgen Hassel - ARD Cologne, Germany. The representatives of European Commission and Parliament announced that subsidies for the project "Prix CIRCOM Regional" could be expected for the future. As a statement of the intent of the new TV contest, a certificate of honour was awarded to RTP Azores for the production "O Barco e o Sonho" (A Ship and a Dream), which had impressed the 140 delegates in the workshop for creative programmes. A second workshop concentrated again on news. Co-production was again a topic of great interest. Main topics were a review of the environment programmes produced in cooperation with the European Commission and a new project proposed by the European Parliament on occasion of the elections in 1989. Another valuable event of the Conference was a session about recent political and financial developments of regional

television in Europe. Altogether 7 countries were reporting, namely Austria, Denmark, France, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia. That forum was very instructive and broadened the view on their own situation for the audience. Last but not least, a varied social programme stimulated the days at Ofir. Delegates had numerous opportunities to make friends with foreign colleagues. Small parties hired cars for the sightseeing tours to the mountainous part of the Minho province near the Spanish border. RTP invited the participants to a folklore evening, to a steamboat trip on the Douro River and to the celebration of St. John's Day in the streets of Braga. During working hours, there was still another temptation: The 2-hour break at siesta time provided the opportunity to swim in the Atlantic, only a few yards away from the Conference hotel.

## Personal memories:

*Celebrating my birthday among more than 100 TV colleagues in Braga and receiving dozens of hits with plastic hammers on my head on that occasion. A female delegate from Norway celebrating the end of the Conference at the village of Esposende until late hours took the risk to approach a lion in its cage in a travelling circus. She was hit by its paw and had to be treated in a hospital for some days. That incident gave CIRCOM Regional far reaching publicity, especially by the press in Scandinavia.*

## Final Steps to Financial Independence

Now operating under the rules of the new statute, CIRCOM Regional had two more executive people to its own disposal - President Jean Suhas and Vice-President Boris Bergant from the autonomous Slovenian region of Yugoslavia. (While the President had to be elected by vote, the Vice-President came automatically into office representing the host company of the following Annual Conference.) The first task taken on by Suhas, Bergant and the Secretary General was to explore all the possibilities to secure a more stable financial basis for CIRCOM Regional. They were forced to do that despite continuous increase of activities like the new project "Prix CIRCOM Regional". Up to 1989, the organisation had been kept alive by the following main types of support:

1. Member stations hosting the Annual Conference and meetings of the European Board
2. Member stations supplying the facilities for the Secretariat
3. Member stations compensating travel costs of their delegates to CIRCOM Regional events
4. Earnings from contracts with the European Commission for the task to perform TV co-production in Europe

5. Subsidies from the European Commission and the European Parliament amounting to € 10,000 each in the meantime in order to compensate the effects of inflation

6. Provision of EU interpreters for the Conferences

In evaluating the overall situation, it became clear that CIRCOM Regional totally depended on the sponsors' cooperation. The majority of them contributed in kind. Money available in cash came mainly from European sources. Several attempts to increase the income were initiated. Some of them were successful, others not. EBU and OIRT acknowledged CIRCOM Regional as a special working group for the regional stations of their national companies and granted together a subsidy of 12,500 Swiss Francs for 1990 to be raised to SFR 25,000 in the future. The Council of Europe refused sponsorship after the first approach (probably because of disagreement concerning "Prix Europa"). Negotiations with the European institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg resulted in a compromise: Commission and Parliament agreed to raise their subsidies in view of "Prix CIRCOM Regional" to € 20,000 each for 1990. After that year, there was to be a progressive reduction to € 15,000 for 1991 and to € 10,000 in 1992 and 1993.

In 1994, subsidies were cancelled. Support from EU interpreters would also end as soon as in 1991. The conditions of that agreement reflect the general strategy for EU subsidies: Support is granted to promising projects only for a limited period. Later on, in case of success, those projects should be able to stand financially on their own feet. CIRCOM Regional profited from continuous EU support for more than 10 years. From 1994 on, the only method of obtaining income from the EU was through participation in European projects, including TV cooperation. All those experiences made the leadership of CIRCOM Regional conclude that the organisation had to self-finance its activities in the future. In doing so, it would additionally gain more independence. Therefore, they applied to the European Board to adopt an addendum to the Statutes introducing an annual fee for all the member stations to be collected for the first time in 1991. That contribution was to consist of a basic sum for each station and an additional amount depending on the number of inhabitants in the area of transmission. It was to remain equal at least for a period of five years. The new regulation was passed at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Bled, Slovenia.

Bled<sup>9)</sup>

# 1990

## Surprising Experiences in “Socialist Wonderland”

For many Western European visitors the 8<sup>th</sup> CIRCOM Regional Conference in Bled in Slovenia was the first trip to a so-called “socialist country”. They were surprised to find an idyllic alpine lake resort comparable to famous locations in Switzerland or Austria. Accommodation and food were much better than it had been expected by those who had believed the horror stories about the misery of life under the rules of communism told by the media in the western part of Europe. At Bled, a lesson could be learned about the cleverness of a small nation maintaining its traditional way of life against the restrictions of an artificial political system. The opportunity to explain the specific situation of Slovenia to an international audience was thoroughly used by high-ranking politicians addressing that CIRCOM Regional Conference. President Milan Kucan and Prime Minister Lojze Peterle surprised the delegates proclaiming openly the aim of autonomy for their country (which happened only one year later and gave

rise to the break-up of Yugoslavia and the subsequent wars in the Balkans). The upheaval of the political situation had already started earlier in other parts of Europe, mainly in the German Democratic Republic, in Czechoslovakia and in Hungary. The state-run TV companies of those countries sent their delegates for the first time and became members of CIRCOM Regional. A special session was staged in Bled with reports on the new development of TV in Central and Eastern Europe. The radical changes to be expected made one hope for better conditions for regional television. At the same time, dismay was caused by the description of former procedures of oppression by state authorities in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Latvia (at that time still part of the USSR).

## TV Kosice Wins First “Prix CIRCOM Regional”

Another highlight of the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference was the introduction of “Prix CIRCOM Regional”. It had been preceded by a jury session hosted by RAI Torino, Italy. In a special workshop, arranged by the Chairman of the jury Dr. Jürgen Hassel, the best programmes were presented to the participants in Bled. Honourable mentions were awarded to TSR Geneva / Switzerland, NRK Moere ok Romsdal, Norway, Denmark's Radio, Denmark, RAI Trieste, Italy, Canal 9 Valencia, Spain, and DFF II Berlin, East Germany. The Slovak regional station of Kosice won for its entry of “50 days after”, a documentary about a case of murder in a community of gypsies. Numerous activities were performed at small workshops concentrating on specific subjects like regional drama, economy, local television, minorities,

light entertainment and ecology. The co-production sessions held in Bled resulted in 8 new projects - among them two of the most successful ones in the history of CIRCOM Regional: “Christmas in Europe” (proposed by RTP Azores and TV Slovenia) and “Eurotourism” (proposed by the European Commission). According to the Statutes, a new presidential election had to be held in 1990 by the European Board. The votes were cast for Boris Bergant, especially due to his merits for bringing up more countries to CIRCOM Regional. In Slovenia a record number of 180 delegates from 20 countries could be registered. The function of the Vice President was given to FRANCE3 being the host of the following Conference in 1991 in Strasbourg.

## The Years of Expansion and Consolidation

After first contacts with colleagues behind the Iron Curtain have been established and resulted in the participation of Bulgaria, Poland and USSR at the Conference in Portugal in 1989, CIRCOM Regional intensified efforts to increase membership in Central and Eastern Europe. Boris Bergant and Peter Zimmermann, both in charge of international relations for their home companies, took many chances to motivate new possible entrants on occasions like missions to foreign countries or meetings of EBU and OIRT.

Such activities included among others:

- A visit to DFF Berlin (Eastern Germany) and to Czech Television in Prague
- A tour organised by TVP to regional stations in Poland and a session of “Prix CIRCOM Regional” jurors in Szczecin
- A meeting with Yugoslav regional stations in Belgrade

- A trip to Riga (Latvia) to establish contacts with the Baltic countries, followed by an invitation of SVT to a European Board Meeting in Karlstad (Sweden)
- Presenting CIRCOM Regional to a new autonomous station in Valencia (Spain)
- Contacts with the new network of regional TV2 Denmark

All those undertakings had positive results, which already became evident at the Bled Conference in 1989. One year later in Strasbourg, the Baltic States, Ireland, Romania and Albania joined CIRCOM Regional. They all had varying motives to become members - solidarity

with the aims of CIRCOM Regional and the benefits to be expected from TV cooperation with the whole of Europe. A serious obstacle for some of the new member countries from Central and Eastern Europe was the lack of funds for travelling. In many cases, CIRCOM Regional could solve that problem by raising funds from EU projects for that purpose, provided the colleagues invited were partners in such contracts. That way was especially successful with the project "Eurotourism" attracting numerous regional stations from former socialistic countries. By using such methods, CIRCOM Regional made quick progress in integrating most of those newcomers from the East, faster than the unification of EBU and OIRT was achieved for the national TV companies.

# 1991

## Under European Flags in Strasbourg

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of CIRCOM Regional saw the participation of the record number of 205 delegates from 24 countries. 42 of them came from former socialist states. The town of Strasbourg had helped by providing 18 free hotel rooms. The special charm of that place, the semi-wooden houses along the banks of the Rhine and Ill rivers, the impressive cathedral, the modern buildings of the European Institutions, the French-German bilingualism – all that created an atmosphere of hope for a better future in a greater Europe among the delegates. The organisers of the Conference were

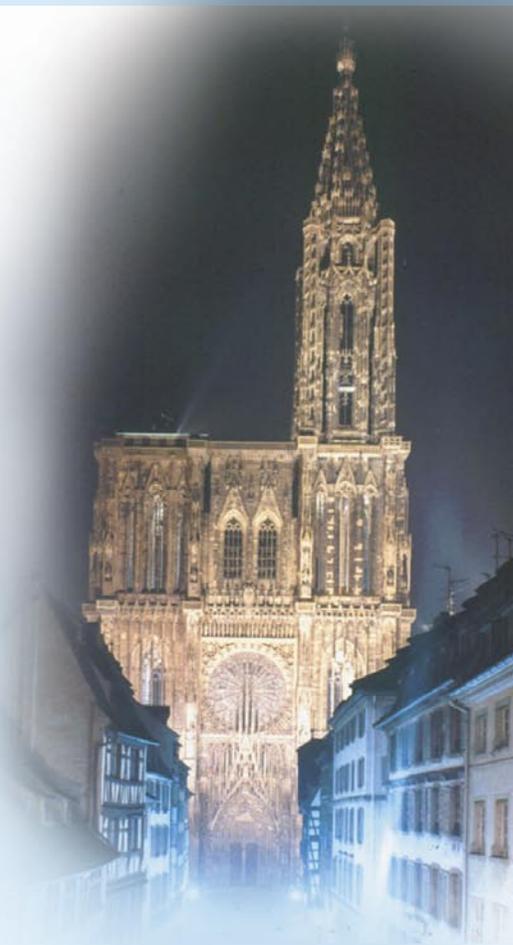
Marie-Paule Urban and Georges Traband from the regional station France3 Alsace and the Public Relations Department of the City administration. The European Parliament, the Council of Europe and the City of Strasbourg itself took responsibility for important parts of the official programme - a reception in the Town hall, a workshop examining the possibilities of the European Institutions to support TV productions, and a gala dinner at the end of the Conference. The regional government of Alsace organised a trip to the wine producing village of Barr for all the participants. The working schedule

of the Conference was long and contained numerous events, among them daily sessions with co-production proposals. 13 other workshops offered various topics: politicians and television, the regional and the central networks, the unique marks of the region, religion in TV, press and TV, social action in TV, financing of TV, drama writers, new ideas and new technologies, cooperation in Europe. Two sessions were staged for the two prize categories of "Prix CIRCOM Regional", documentaries and news programmes. France3 broadcast the prize-giving ceremony live. Winners were RTBF Charleroi (documentaries) and BBC Manchester (news). In addition, FR3 Alsace produced a daily cable programme informing about the progress of the Conference. The President of Antenne 2 and France3 Mr. Herves Bourges paid a visit to Strasbourg. He addressed the delegates and delivered a paper on the actual situation of the media in France and Europe. A well-received innovation at the Conference was the so-called "Teletheque", a library of more than 200 programmes from all participating countries. The European Board held several sessions in Strasbourg. Some of the results were the re-election of President Boris Bergant and the nomination of the Vice-President representing RTVV Valencia (Spain), the host of the following year's Conference. Amadeu Fabregat Manes was to take that office being represented by José Abad-Estornell and Josine Majoie from time to time. The status of an Associate Member was given to SBS Australia, an organisation of public regional TV stations interested in participating in co-production with European broadcasters. Reinard Allerdt (ARD Munich) replaced Peter Zimmermann as National Coordinator for Germany.

## Personal memories:

In a humorous ceremony, Marie-Paule Urban, Grethe Haaland, Jean Suhas, Boris Bergant, David Lowen and the author of that report were knighted "Chevaliers du Vin" by the winegrowers of Barr.

Strasbourg<sup>10)</sup>



## New Management Procedures for CIRCOM Regional

The sudden growth of membership was also on the agenda. That increase, desirable as it was, entailed a new administrative problem. For the decision-making authorities, the European Board, the number of items on the agenda increased and, at the same time, more National Coordinators had to be consulted. The danger of loss of efficiency of management was obvious. During the Strasbourg Conference, a task force led by John Prescott Thomas (BBC) found a solution by an amendment to the 1989 Statute - a so-called "Executive Committee" consisting of six National Coordinators elected by the European Board. That body was to meet four times a year with President, Vice-President and Secretary General to assist the management or even take on certain tasks independently. The competence of the European Board was not restricted

by that innovation. The new rules of management were adopted at the autumn meeting of the European Board in Karlstad, Sweden. On that occasion, the three Baltic countries were officially received as members of CIRCOM Regional. The new National Coordinators were Hagi Shein (Estonia), Remigijus Miksys (Lithuania) and Ilse Prikule (Latvia). A few months later in April 1992, the Board had to deal with the problem of the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Slovenia and Croatia became separate members of the organisation with Boris Bergant and Vladimir Spicer being the National Coordinators. Another new associate member was the European Cultural Channel in Strasbourg. That new station, founded by "La Sept" (France) and ARD and ZDF (Germany), was planning a weekly European magazine in cooperation with CIRCOM Regional.

and RTBF Charleroi (for the documentary category and the best direction), RTV Slovenia (for the best fiction programme) and TVE Barcelona (for the cross-border programme "ALICIA"). Besides other social events like a reception by the Mayor of Valencia, there were numerous activities in the Congress Hall. Altogether 25 proposals for co-production were discussed. Seven workshops dealt with the following topics: Media development in Eastern Europe, autonomous regional television in Spain, the skills of presentation, the independence of new programmes, co-financing by the European institutions, youth programmes and history of television. Two more workshops concentrated on the best programmes of Prix CIRCOM Regional. Valencia again marked a record in participation: 220 delegates from 100 regional stations of 30 countries. The European Board held several meetings and came to some important conclusions. The new Executive

Committee was elected. Boris Bergant (RTV Slovenia), Marco Blaser (RTSI Lugano), Amadeu Fabregat Manes (RTVV Valencia), Jaromir Bures (Slovak TV Kosice), Grethe Haaland (NRK Oslo), Bernard Mounier (France3 Toulouse) became members of it. It was agreed that José Abad-Estornell should permanently represent Amadeu Fabregat Manes. David Lowen (Yorkshire TV, UK) was elected President for a term of two years. The European Institutions were granted voting rights at the European Board. TV Macedonia was accepted as a new member with Stalin Lozanowski becoming National Coordinator. Henk Tiesma (Stads TV Rotterdam) was nominated Vice-President being organiser of the Conference of 1993 in the Netherlands.

# 1992

## At the Banks of Riu Turia

That year in Spain the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbus' voyage to America was celebrated with festivities all over the country: Barcelona organised the Olympic Summer Games, Sevilla the World Exhibition EXPO and Valencia hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> CIRCOM Regional Conference. The host company Radio y Television Valenciana (RTVV) was the 6<sup>th</sup> autonomous public station founded in Spain just a few years ago by the regional government of Valencia. One of the motives of the creation of RTVV was the preservation of the special idiom spoken along

the Southeastern coast of Spain, a dialect closely related to Catalan. As a symbol for regional identity, the government had raised funds for the most modern TV building CIRCOM delegates had ever seen before. A large complex of futuristic architecture, equipped with the newest technology. That impressive location served for the final gala dinner of the Conference performed as part of a live transmission of typical Spanish music together with the award ceremony of Prix CIRCOM Regional. The winners of 1992 were RTBF Brussels

## Personal memories:

- 1 - During the hot midday hours, "siesta time" for the Valencian people, Conference work had to rest and recreation was found either at the seaside or at the shadowy banks of Riu Túria.
- 2 - An enchanting evening tour by fishing boats into the romantic lagoon of Albufera.



Valencia<sup>11)</sup>

## After 10 Years – Consolidation of CIRCOM Regional

With the Conference at Valencia, the European organisation of regional television had entered its tenth year of existence. Striking the balance of that first decade, the outlook onto the future was positive. With the exception of Greece, Malta, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Faroe Islands and some new states emerging from the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the whole of Europe had joined CIRCOM Regional. The financial situation had been decisively improved by the levy of the annual membership fee starting in 1991. That amounted to an annual income of 90,000 ECU (=€), 60,000 of which could actually be collected. (Payment of the remaining sum of 30,000 had to be postponed due to the shortage of western currencies of some of the new members in Central and Eastern Europe.) Additionally, CIRCOM Regional could count on the regular subsidies of EBU/OIRT, the European Commission and the European Parliament totalling € 42,500 in 1991. Altogether, the regular annual budget amounted to more than € 100,000.

The average expenditures were as follows:

52,000	for the Annual Conference
13,000	for Prix CIRCOM Regional
14,000	for Communications (News Letters)
20,000	for the CIRCOM Secretariat
<b>Total</b>	<b>99,000 €</b>

In view of the fact that the European subsidies were discontinued in 1994, the Secretary General had intensified efforts to achieve new contracts for cooperation with the European Commission.

Those contracts always provided opportunities to cover extra costs for workshops or travelling expenses appearing at the Annual Conferences, for translations of Newsletters and for the management of programme exchanges. The Secretary General used part of the income from the contracts with the European Commission to employ free-lancers for special tasks. That way the staff of the Secretariat could be enlarged to 4 permanent colleagues, also available for the general duties of CIRCOM Regional. Altogether 5 of such projects were carried out from 1987-1993. The total amount of subsidies was € 500,000. (See the following list).

Year	Subject	Number of stations involved	Amount of subvention
1987/88	European Year of Environment Programme Exchange	16	ECU 150,000
1988/89	European Year of Radio and Television (data bank and introduction of co-production letters by CIRCOM Regional)	all	ECU 40,000
1990/92	EUROTOURISM	40	ECU 120,000
1991/92	Special project for small and medium sized enterprises (SME)	65	ECU 15,000
	Distribution of two information programmes		ECU 25,000
1992/93	SME Additional programme exchange	20	ECU 150,000
<b>1987-1993</b>	<b>Total</b>		<b>ECU 500,000</b>

The acquisition of EU contracts required the permanent observation of the initiatives of the various directorates of the European Commission in Brussels. Since 1990, CIRCOM Regional was cooperating with Mr. Peter Kraewinkels, "Europartners" Brussels, on a commission basis for that purpose. With the introduction of the data bank and the regular news letters since 1988, the communication between the Secretariat and the member stations had intensified as well as by the growing participation in co-production projects and programme exchanges. The expansion of activities also had a strong impact on the general interest in CIRCOM Regional. That also made it less difficult to find hosting

stations for the Annual Conference, for meetings of the European Board or the Executive Committee and for the Juries of Prix CIRCOM Regional. While during the first years, such meetings were almost exclusively held at the Secretariat or at the Conference, CIRCOM delegates assembled now in Italy, Poland, Sweden, Slovakia, Denmark and Ireland. In 1992 "Euromusica" was organised for the first time in the former Soviet Union by Ukrainian TV Kiev. The Conference location for 1993 had already been secured (Stads Rotterdam, Netherlands). For the following years, applications were submitted by Romania and Croatia.

## The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Liège – Focus on Minorities

On occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CIRCOM Regional, a special Conference was organised in October 1992. Robert Stephane, General Manager of RTBF Brussels and his assistant Jacqueline Bikofsky were its organisers. The town of Liège was chosen as the location in memory of the first CIRCOM Secretariat headed by Robert Stephane and stationed at the local premises of RTBF until 1987. That time, the meeting took place in the Conference building of Liège. With more than 100 participants, that meeting was more than just a celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Executive Committee and the European Board convened on the first day dealing with the actual business of the organisation. Afterwards, the reunion

dealt with the problem of minorities and migration in Europe. More than 30 programmes on that topic from different countries were shown and discussed at Liège. At the end, the assembly drew up a declaration of intent obliging CIRCOM Regional member stations to emphasise such problems more often in their regular programmes. It was also stressed that “minorities” should not only be seen as an ethnic or lingual problem but also as the results of illness or social separation from European societies. The Liège Conference had a strong influence on the future activities of CIRCOM Regional and the co-operation with the EEBU (=European Ethnic Broadcasting Union).



Liège

# 1993

## Bad News in January – Good News in March

The upcoming 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference turned out to be a crucial test for the solidarity inside CIRCOM Regional. A contract had been signed with Stads TV Rotterdam defining the mutual responsibilities for the reunion to be held in June 1993. Henk Tiesma, the Rotterdam station manager, had become Vice President, the European Board inspected the location in the Netherlands and a staff member from Munich was sent to Rotterdam to assist in the logistic preparations. Everything seemed to run smoothly, when it became evident in January 1993 that the financial basis of the Rotterdam station was no longer solid. The City Council of Rotterdam dismissed Henk Tiesma and the contract with CIRCOM Regional was cancelled. The Secretary General had to send an emergency call to the Executive Committee and to the Board. The first one to answer was the National Coordinator of RAI, Italy, Sergio Borsi (Milan). His plan of emergency was gratefully accepted by the Executive Committee assembling on short notice at the premises of RAI in Milan. The new project “Conference 1993” was to be realised in cooperation of two neighbouring RAI stations in Torino and Vale d’Aosta, an Alpine region next to the French and Swiss borders. While the organisational part of the Conference was carried out by a team from the bigger station in the industrial city of Torino (with the assistance of a CR delegate who had previously worked for the same project in Rotterdam), the smaller station in the Valley of Aosta took on the

function of the host. The colleagues in this bi-lingual alpine region selected a large modern hotel in the holiday resort of St. Vincent as the location of the Conference and prepared a number of interesting excursions for the social part. Moreover they contributed an innovation to the programme: In the town of Aosta an information centre was installed, where people of that region could follow the activities during the Conference and attend (like delegates of CIRCOM Regional) HDTV-screenings. A competition for media students was organised, as well as a popular vote on the best title sequences that people from Aosta could watch at the mentioned Information Centre.

Valley of Aosta<sup>12)</sup>

## 1993 – The Horrors of Civil War and Revolution

Highlight of the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference was a Plenary session on the experiences of regional television during the civil war in former Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland and the upheaval of the communist government in Romania. That session was improvised last minute due to the attendance of the colleagues Benjamin Filipovic (Sarajevo/Bosnia), Vladimir Spicer (Zagreb/Croatia), Petre Popescu (Bucharest/Romania), Mark Davenport (BBC Northern Ireland) and Friedhelm Brebeck (ARD correspondent in Sarajevo). Working under incredibly dangerous circumstances, in danger of being caught in the crossfire from the combatants, they had fulfilled their tasks to inform the public far beyond the usual professional routine. Within two years, 43 journalists had lost their lives in Europe during similar dangerous assignments. The reports of that workshop caused

dismay and a lot of sympathy for the colleagues being challenged by such extreme conditions and for the regional TV stations suffering severe losses of equipment during civil wars. Another plenary session conveyed an overview of the chances of regional improvement by the European institutions. While Jean-Pierre Berg (European Commission) explained the chances provided by the European Regional Fund, Nicole Cauchie (European Commission) mentioned the “MEDIA Project” aimed also to support regional broadcasters even in countries not yet being members of the EEC. Kirsten Stahlschmidt-Andersen informed the delegates about the technical assistance offered by the European Parliament especially to Eastern European countries willing to report on the activities of the European Parliament.

## 1993 – A Year of Upheaval

In many other aspects, that CIRCOM Regional meeting in the Valley of Aosta reflected the new developments in a changing Europe. Jean-Bernard Münch, Secretary General of the EBU, informed the delegates about the membership of the former communist countries and stressed the necessity to cooperate more closely with the European organisations. Leonardo Valente, Director of RAI, mentioned the political intentions in Italy aiming at stronger consideration of the interests of the regions and the consequences for RAI. Ilario Lanvi, President of the Autonomous Region of Aosta, gave details about the special charters for that smallest region of Europe (only 115,000 inhabitants), its special rights and its

independent economy. Six additional workshops had been organised: “The Viewers – do we really care about them?”, “Public and Commercial TV in Italy”, “East/West in Europe – can we cooperate?”, “Migration in Europe” (a continuation of the special Conference in Liège), “How can Regional TV Support National Identity?” and the evaluation of the jury work of Prix CIRCOM Regional. 4 prizes were awarded in 1993, namely to the documentary programme “Partir Accompagnée”, a co-production of FR3 Bretagne-Pays de Loire and FR3 Ile de France, to the youth programme “Zig-Zag” (Denmarks Radio Aarhus), to “Off Beat” (SC04 Wales) for the best use of non-commercial music offered by RAI and to

“Haji at the Hilton” (BBC Northern Ireland) for the best investigation offered by France3. During the days of St. Vincent 25 co-production projects were discussed. Participation was ranging from 30 delegates as a minimum to a maximum of 85. Interest in co-operation was expressed 150 times in written form. Those figures showed the broad interest in co-production during that year. From the 217 delegates more than 50 percent were participating in co-pro sessions representing more than 100 stations. The crowning event of the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference was a special concert performed by the RAI Symphony Orchestra Torino. In St.Vincent there were also a number of meetings of the European Board and the Executive Committee. The most important decisions were the following:

- The placing of the next Conference in 1994 to Iasi, Romania, and the Conference of 1995 to Birmingham, UK
- The re-election of President David Lowen for a second term, with Violeta Olteanu (TVR Bucharest) becoming Vice-President
- Grethe Haaland (NRK) in the Executive Committee. Amadeu Fabregat (RTVV Spain) and Marco Blaser (RTSI Switzerland) retired. Olle Mannberg (STV Sweden), Sergio Borsi (RAI Italy) and John Blackman (RTE Ireland) replaced them
- Since Peter Zimmermann had announced his retirement from television at the end of 1995, a new Secretary General had to be found. A deadline for applications by European TV companies was set for autumn 1993.

## Three Companies Competing for the Secretariat

The search for candidates to take over the tasks of the Munich Secretariat turned out to be less difficult than expected. Only a few weeks after the announcement was made in St. Vincent, three applicants had made their bids: RTV Slovenia in Ljubljana, France3 Strasbourg and the Baltic Media Centre in Bornholm, Denmark, supported by the majority of the General Managers of the TV2 stations in that country. Being confronted with the dilemma to have to refuse some of these generous offers the Secretary General and

the Executive Committee started a series of bilateral consultations with the three candidates trying to find a compromise for the benefit of the future work of the organisation. A weighty argument was the constant growth of activities of CIRCOM Regional that called for a broader distribution of tasks. The final solution was found in two meetings of the Executive Committee during autumn 1993 in Krakow (Poland) and Strasbourg (France), where it was also approved by the European Board.

## The New Structure of CIRCOM Regional

Starting in 1995, the responsibilities were allocated as follows:

- Secretary General: Boris Bergant (RTV Slovenia); coordination of all activities, Annual Conference and meetings, finances, contacts with EBU
- Deputy Secretary General: Marie-Paule Urban (FR3 Strasbourg); protocol, newsletters, CR archive, language versions of documents, contacts with the European institutions
- Co-productions and EU projects: Peter Zimmermann (ARD Munich) to be continued by the Munich station after his retirement
- Special Tasks: Bent Norby Bonde (Baltic Media Center Bornholm)

# 1994

## Iasi (Romania) Supreme Efforts and Unforgettable Adventures

Before the new structure became effective, CIRCOM Regional had taken on, until that point the most ambitious Conference project. The 12<sup>th</sup> annual reunion, proposed by Romania state television even in 1992, offered a unique opportunity to set a sign of solidarity with the colleagues of an Eastern European country who had recently overcome a long period of communist dictatorship. But there were obstacles never experienced before during the preparation of a CIRCOM Regional Conference. The convention was not to be held in Romania's capital Bucharest but in the town of Iasi, 350 km to the Northeast, close to the border with the former Soviet Union. In order to establish suitable

flight connections, the state government had to permit us to use a military airfield near Iasi. The International Department of TV Romania, headed by Violeta Olteanu, achieved that. The Secretary General contracted a private Romanian airline to organise charter flights between Iasi and Vienna where the participants from Western Europe were to be picked up and returned. Austrian television ORF kindly provided a room for hospitality for those delegates at Vienna airport and TVR Iasi organised bus transport from and to the airfield near Iasi. Since the whole economy of Romania was only slowly recovering from socialist methods such basic elements like food supply as well as hotel

accommodation had to be secured long time before the Conference. For that purpose, the Secretary General and members of the Executive Committee made frequent trips to Iasi where they inspected hotels and instructed the personnel.

They also assisted in arranging the menus for the duration of the Conference. That was necessary to secure the food supply on time. Romanian authorities, as well as extra money for the renovation necessary for the most of the hotel rooms, gave all the assurances. Those negotiations were new to the CIRCOM delegates and sometimes embarrassing for both sides. But all the

problems of those critical situations were solved thanks to the TVR organisers Carmen Serban and Gregore Ilisei, the Director of the Iasi station. Both colleagues impressed the CIRCOM people by their frankness to admit the difficulties of their tortured country without giving up their pride as individuals. For many years, they have personified the exceptional memories of the conference year 1994. During one of his visits to Romania, the Secretary General crossed the border to Moldavia together with Carmen Serban and visited the colleagues in the capital Chisinau. It was agreed that Moldavia TV should join CIRCOM Regional at the Iasi Conference.



Iasi<sup>13)</sup>

## Training, a Promising Innovation

One of the intentions of CIRCOM Regional connected with the placing of the annual reunion in Romania was the hope that participation of colleagues from former communist countries would be increased by the fact that travel expenses would be lower than those to Western Europe would. Nevertheless, an extra budget was necessary to cover hotel accommodation, which had to be paid in "hard" Western currency. For that purpose, the Secretary General addressed Robert Jarrett from the European Commission. An agreement on a subsidy of € 25,000 was achieved on the condition that the beneficiaries should not only attend the Conference but also participate in a professional Training Seminar on TV Journalism in Iasi. Furthermore Robert Jarrett

established a contact to the PHARE and TACIS Programme of the Commission, two special funds to build up new economic and social structures in former communist states. That resulted in another contract with PHARE amounting to € 100,000. Its subject was the following: 4 seminars for regional television in Romania in 1994 and 1995 (later on extended to a neighbouring region of Hungary). The project was based on an agreement between the European Commission represented by Ms Karen Fogg and the Romanian government. The Council of Europe, Department Mass Media, contributed a sum of FF 25,000 to cover travel and accommodation costs for the Eastern European trainees in Iasi.

## Rick Thompson and the Thomson Foundation

Having secured the money for a training seminar in Romania CIRCOM Regional still had to find an organiser for that new task. Rick Thompson, head of BBC Midlands in Birmingham, volunteered for the job. He had already had relevant experiences in Poland and established valuable relations with the Thomson Foundation. Having been active in the field of training for a considerable

period of time, that organisation provided instructors and covered their travelling costs. Rick Thompson succeeded to find altogether 12 instructors coming from the UK, France, Germany and Ireland. (That group has continued the training activities of CIRCOM Regional for more than 10 years).



Trainees<sup>14)</sup>

## Trainees - Guarantors for the Future

Reviewing the first training event in Iasi, it has to be stated that it was by far more successful than the organisers had assumed when planning it. Fifty young colleagues, all under forty years of age, spent a week of intensive training in modern TV journalism in theory and practice. Twenty of them came from Romania, 18 from the neighbouring countries of Bulgaria, Hungary, Moldavia, Poland and Ukraine, 12 from France, Germany, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. Assisted by Romanian camera operators and by editors from the UK and Germany (with the necessary equipment brought from ARD Munich), the trainees produced an impressive series of reports about life in Romania, which were presented to the delegates of the Conference at the final session in Iasi.

Unanimously, the young professionals declared that they had had an unforgettable experience working together with colleagues from other countries with the English language being their only means of communication. It became evident to the participants of that session that they had witnessed the birth of a new promising activity of CIRCOM Regional. Up to that point, mainly senior executives had been participating during the conferences and other meetings. Continuing the training efforts with young colleagues could eventually result in advent of a new generation who will be the future of the organisation. It was announced that Rick Thompson would try to organise a similar event for the next Conference, which was widely welcomed.

## Workshops on Cooperation with the EBU

Another innovation at Iasi was the inclusion of an EBU seminar into the Conference schedule. Several topics were presented during the two days.

An East-West-comparison of organisational structures of public television, minorities in regional TV and economic and technical aspects of regional TV. A keynote speech was given by Geraint Stanley Jones (EBU Programme Committee). For that cooperation, CIRCOM Regional received a subsidy of SFR 15,000. Additional workshops organised in Iasi were the following: Business and TV, Regional Sports and Violence in Regional Television. The co-production meetings resulted in seven new projects.



## A New CIRCOM Member and a New President

Decisions of the European Board in Romania:

- The inclusion of the neighbouring country of Moldavia as a new member, after a visit of the Executive Committee to the Moldavian capital of Chisinau, only 180 km away from Iasi
- The election of Harald Boe (NRK Oslo) as President
- The Opening Session of the Conference was combined with a musical event and the award ceremony of Prix CIRCOM Regional in the National Theatre of Iasi, while the working sessions were held in the local Palace of Culture

The social part of the meeting in Romania was full of memorable events: Dinner invitations by the provincial government and by the Romanian TV, trips to various locations near the town and to orthodox monasteries in the Carpathian Mountains and a farewell night with music and dance. Western visitors could gather interesting impressions about life in Romania after the political changes of 1989. The common charter flights from and to Vienna are also remembered as unusual adventures with happy ends.

## Personal memories:

A surprise farewell party given in total darkness on the banks of a river near Chisinau by the TV colleagues from Moldavia. The encounter with a young monk in a Carpathian monastery who expressed his happiness being allowed to dig his own grave. The embarrassment because the delegates had to collect the money during the last night in Iasi in order to pay for extra hotel costs and to argue with a man from the black market at late hours to get western currencies changed into Romanian Lei.

## The Transition from Munich to Ljubljana and Strasbourg

As it had been decided in 1993, the organisational structure of CIRCOM Regional was going to change by the end of 1994. The responsibilities originally all resting with the Munich Secretariat were divided up between the new Secretary General Boris Bergant (RTV Slovenia) and the new Deputy Secretary General Marie-Paule Urban (FR3 Strasbourg). Her main tasks were to be the contact person for the European institutions. Responsibility for all other fields was to remain with the Secretariat in Ljubljana. Special duties were to remain with Jürgen Hassel, WDR Cologne (Prix CIRCOM Regional), and John Blackman, RTE Dublin (CR-Directory). During that period of transition, the Executive Committee and the European Board were also involved in the preparation of the 1995 Conference hosted by BBC Midlands and of the next CIRCOM Regional training course organised by Center TV in Birmingham (UK). Some personal changes had to be registered: Hans-Geert Falkenberg (ARD)

### Progress of Training Activities

In March and April 1995, Peter Zimmermann organised a series of new training courses for young TV employees and students of TV journalism in Romania. That activity was financed by the contract with the PHARE Programme of the EBU over the global sum of ECU 100,000, which had partially been spent for the 1994 seminar at Iasi already. Substantial contributions were also made by CIRCOM member stations providing instructors and equipment free. France3, several ARD companies, RAI Italy and RTV Slovenia participated in that venture taking place during a period of two weeks

retired after 12 years of service at the European Board; Maria Okulicz (TV Poland) and David Nelson (BBC) became new members of the Executive Committee. In March 1995, the former Secretary General Peter Zimmermann invited the Executive Committee for its regular spring meeting to his Portuguese home in Évora. On that occasion, a group of RTP colleagues joined the party offering to host Euromusica 1995 on the island of Terceira, Azores, that same year. That proposal suited fine since the Hungarian TV had postponed the original event. A more serious problem turning up at the Évora meeting was the future of auditing finances of CIRCOM Regional. Having performed that job in the past, the auditors in Belgium were now demanding several changes to register the organisation under the more suitable French law with the office of the Deputy Secretary General in Strasbourg establishing the necessary legal contacts.

in Arad, Bucharest, Constantia, Cluj-Napoca, Iasi and Timisoara. Altogether, another 124 trainees profited from theoretical instructions and practical work with the instructors; among them were 43 students from the universities of Bucharest and Timisoara. Together they produced 20 TV reports, most of them about social topics. An additional instruction was given in Szeged, Hungary, with the aim to initiate cross-border co-operation with Romanian TV. The participating Romanian and Hungarian stations invested a lot of work and equipment in those seminars, which were

open also for commercial TV companies as it was foreseen in the PHARE contract. In May 1995, trainees from Romania and Hungary visited the ARD station in Munich, Germany, in order to co-produce a video report about the results of that PHARE project. Later on, they proceeded to Birmingham, where their common work was shown at the CIRCOM Regional Conference. An additional training seminar was held during the annual CIRCOM meeting, following the model successfully tested the previous year in Romania. David Nelson, responsible for the Conference, had achieved the technical assistance of Central TV, an independent station and a member of CIRCOM Regional. Instructors from the UK, Germany and Norway carried out the course under the motto "Modern Democracy in TV Journalism". Thirty participants from 16 countries attended it, the majority of them coming from Central and Eastern Europe. A subsidy of FF 12,000 from the Council of Europe helped to finance part of that seminar; the costs for ten participants had to be paid from the budget of CIRCOM Regional.

BR Munich



# 1995

## Birmingham – A New Step towards Affirmation

The 13<sup>th</sup> Conference confirmed again the strength and attractiveness of CIRCOM Regional. Including all young trainees visiting Birmingham there were more than 240 participants from 33 countries. Professional training was one of the main topics of that reunion in 1995.

The experiences from Romania, Hungary and Birmingham were evaluated with the conclusion that CIRCOM Regional would have to intensify its efforts in order to obtain additional funds and to be prepared to allot money from its own budget for that purpose. It was also demanded that more care should be taken in selecting trainees and that experienced partner organisations should be approached to co-operate during the seminars. That led to the conclusion of the European Board to accept the offer of the Baltic Media Center Bornholm to host the CIRCOM training

Birmingham



in Denmark in 1996, where TV2 Lorry Copenhagen was to organise the following Conference. Besides, the Birmingham agenda contained the following workshops: "Local and Regional Diversity in the Global Information Society", "What Makes a Programme Regional?", "The Economics of News", "Regional TV and the European Commission", "News Illustrated on March 8, 1995", "Low-cost Television – Hi 8", "Regulation and the Growth of Local Television", "Anti-Semitism and Racism", "Co-operation means Co-Production" (15 such projects were presented during the conference).

The prize-giving of Prix CIRCOM Regional brought the following winners on stage:

**Category Documentaries:**

Television Gdansk – Poland

**Special Prize of France3:**

ARD Hessischer Rundfunk Frankfurt, Germany

**Category Local Issues:**

BBC South West Plymouth, UK

**Category Multi-Cultural Society:**

BRTN Brussels, Belgium

## Personal memories:

The Conference manager Michael Johnson pressing delegates to the sessions in the medieval costume of an ancient herald; the surprise of an unexpected "laudatio" by Boris Bergant for the retiring Secretary General and a load of presents given by the National Coordinators. A boat trip on the channels of Birmingham, together with long-time CIRCOM friends.

London<sup>16)</sup>

## Other Activities in 1995

During a meeting in London with the Thomson Foundation on the subject of future training, Graham Ironside (Yorkshire TV) was appointed to coordinate such activities. CIRCOM representatives participated in the reunion of Eastern European regional TV stations in Miskolc, Hungary. The European Commission started a satellite TV channel and invited CIRCOM Regional to co-operate by providing programmes on European topics. The co-production bureau at ARD Munich was put in

charge of organising such contributions. The Secretariat in Slovenia established an e-mail link in order to improve communication inside the organisation. Johan Forsblad, SVT Karlstad, Sweden, took over the task of co-ordination of future activities of the "Euromusica" festival. RTV Slovenia installed computer processing of all CIRCOM Regional video materials with the possibility of external access by all the member stations.

Copenhagen<sup>17)</sup>

# 1996

## Faroe Islands, Greece and Malta Join in Copenhagen

At the 14<sup>th</sup> annual reunion of CIRCOM Regional in Denmark, the membership of the association rose to new record of 38 European countries. The European Board welcomed the Faroe Islands, Greece and Malta. Nevertheless, participation did not exceed the record of 240 delegates marked in Birmingham in 1995. That was due to two circumstances: Hotel capacity was limited during late spring in the Danish capital and the CIRCOM training was not organized at the same time and place. Dan Tschernia of TV2 Lorry and Gitte Albertsen from the city of Copenhagen had organised a smoothly functioning event with Scandinavian efficiency, embellished by warm temperatures and never-ending sunshine. In connection to that stimulating atmosphere, the highlights of the working programme were aligned to generally interesting themes concerning presence and future of regional television like "European Examples" (Jean-Paul Gugneau, FR3, and Sune Kampe, SVT Stockholm), "The Scandinavian TV Scene" (Hans Bonnevie, SVT Karlstad), "Interactive TV" (Peter Moelsted, Danish Telecom) and "The Digital Broadcasting Revolution" (Per Applequist, SVT, and US experts). For the first time, programming for ethnic minorities was discussed. Aside from those

workshops, several co-production sessions resulted in 11 new proposals. An additional meeting with experts of several European countries was held on the "European Year of Life-Long Learning", a project financed by the European Commission.

The Prix CIRCOM Regional was awarded to the following stations:

**Documentary:**

Carlton Broadcasting, United Kingdom

**Special Prize RAI-TGR:**

France3 Aquitaine, France

**Special Prize of France3:**

Televisio de Catalunya, Spain

**News Programmes:**

TV2 Lorry, Denmark

**Special Prize of TV2 Denmark:**

SVT Norrköping, Sweden

Decisions by the European Board made in Copenhagen:

- Carlo Ranzi (RTSI Lugano, Switzerland) was elected as new President with the option to extend his term up to three years
- Due to professional reasons, Olle Mannberg (Swedish TV) had to give up his job as Conference Manager. David Lowen (Yorkshire TV) replaced him
- Laszlo Koloszvári-Papp was nominated new Vice-President following the assignment of the following Conference to MTV Szeged, Hungary
- The Conference of 1988 was given to ERT Thessaloniki, Greece

- Joos Tuerlinckx (BRTN) and Tim Johnson (TV2 Syd, Denmark) became newly elected members of the Executive Committee
- For training activities in 1996, it was decided to make a co-production with the Baltic Media Center in Bornholm.

Altogether three separate seminars were planned: the well-tryed course for young TV journalists from all-over Europe, another one for ethnic minority broadcasters and one just for the staff of the Szeged station hosting the 1997 Conference. Instructors were again to be recruited from the experienced group of people with previous working experience. Finances would hopefully come from subsidies, otherwise from the CIRCOM Regional budget. During the year of 1996, President and Secretary General travelled privately for promotion purposes to Moscow and to the MAT Festival on the Azorian Island of São Miguel.

# 1997

## More Delegates than ever in Hungary

At the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Szeged the highest number of TV colleagues ever attending a meeting of CIRCOM Regional convened. That was achieved by the participation of the co-production groups "Alpe-Danube-Adria" and "ALICE" using the opportunity to have their regular editorial discussions. In addition, 26 trainees from Central and Eastern Europe were

trained during the CIRCOM seminar held in Szeged at the same time. It was an enormous task to arrange that record event for the organiser David Lowen and his Hungarian assistants. Among them were two former CIRCOM trainees, namely Eva Zombori and Erika Kocsor. The workshops of that Conference offered a wide variety of journalistic and technical issues and

attracted large audiences. Topics were “Television in Hungary” presented by MTV President Istvan Petak, “Television in Central and Eastern Europa” chaired by Vladimir Spicer, HRT Zagreb, “Faces of Regional TV” presented by Johan Forssblad, Sweden, “Digital News Production” chaired by Olle Mannberg, Sweden, “Bi-Media-News” organised by Harald Boe, Norway, “New Ways of Training/Interactive Media”, presented by John Prescott-Thomas, UK. Together with the independent journalist Scott Rensberger from the USA, Tim Johnson, TV2 Syd Denmark, contributed a remarkable session about video production performed by a one-man-band. Another highlight was the training course showcase, already a traditional regular part of the Conference. Over twenty co-production projects were discussed in Szeged. Besides, Godel Rosenberg (ARD, Munich) and Giulio Giordano (RAI, Rome) organised a general debate on experiences and problems of co-production and programme exchange. During the opening session of the Conference the Prix CIRCOM Regional winners were honored.

The following stations received the awards:

**Category Documentaries:**

France3 Rennes, France

**Special Prize of France3:**

Omroep Fryslan, Netherlands

**News Magazines:**

Westcountry TV Plymouth, UK

**Prize of the European Commission for Cross-Border Programmes:**

NDR Kiel, Germany



Szeged<sup>18)</sup>

The European Board registered the loss of three member organisations in Szeged: BRTN Belgium, Arte Strasbourg and Danish Radio TV (a founding member). That was compensated by the new membership of Center TV Moscow (National Coordinator Sergej Erofejev) and “Internews”, an organisation for journalistic training in Russia. The following new Executive Committee members were elected: Grethe Haaland (NRK), Juliana Toncheva (Bulgarian TV) and Gerry Reynolds (RTE).

The term of President Ranzi was extended by one year. Further decisions: The 1999 Conference was to be organised by HRT in Croatia; the EbS Channel could be used by all member stations to copy CIRCOM Regional programmes. A subcommittee named “Board of Governors” (BoG) was inaugurated in Szeged with the special task to develop strategies for future training and to assist the CIRCOM leadership in the raising of funds for those activities. The first members were Robert Jarrett, chairman, Graham Ironside, coordinator, Barbara Lewandowska, Poland, Vladimir Spicer, Croatia, Annie Guibert, France3, and Hans Jassen, Germany. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in Rome in October, the BoG was enlarged by Gareth Price, Thomson Foundation, and Rick Thompson, UK. During a third meeting in Brussels in early 1998 Rick Thompson was appointed as the new training coordinator, following Graham Ironside who had to quit that job because of other professional duties. In order to respect the numerous merits of the France3 training unit, Didier Desormeaux was admitted newly to the BoG.

# 1998

## Thessaloniki Hosts more than 300 Guests

The 17<sup>th</sup> Conference in May 1998 brought together 310 representatives from 31 European countries and from the ASITRA organisation of Spanish speaking TV stations in Latin America. For the first time, the Euromusica concert took place as a part of the annual reunion. That was one of the reasons for the increase in participants besides the number of fifty trainees from all-over Europe in the CIRCOM Seminar and another twenty producers of the working groups “ALICE” (France3 Toulouse) and “Balkan-Magazine” (TV Macedonia). CR Vice-President Lefty Kongalides (ERT Thessaloniki) was responsible for that mammoth organizing task. David Lowen, Tim Johnson, Vladimir Spicer and Rick Thompson assisted him (for the seminar). There was a wide spectrum of workshop topics: “The Waters of Europe”, “Branding Your Station”, “ERT 3 Showcase”, “Digital Broadcasting”, “The TV-Executives in 2010”, “The Newsroom Philosophy”, “Broadcasting on Internet”, “Copyrights in TV”, “The One-Man-Band”, “Regional TV in European Capitals” and a very lively encounter with the winners of Prix CIRCOM Regional.

Awards were given to:

**Documentaries:**

France3 Toulouse, France

**Special Trophy of France3:**

Carlton TV, UK

**Innovative Programmes by Young Producers:**

BNT Sofia, Bulgaria

**Special Trophy of the Danish Ministry of Culture:**

RTV Oost Hengelo, Netherlands

**Prize of the European Commission for Cross-Border Programmes:**

France3 Toulouse, France

Thessaloniki<sup>19)</sup>



In Thessaloniki 15 co-production proposals were discussed, among them the “Euro Regio TV” project with a subsidy of ECU 75,000 from the European Commission. The manifold social events completed the warm and friendly atmosphere of that Conference. The Euromusica group arranged a gala evening and a number of street concerts. A boat trip around the harbour united all the participants for a joyful farewell party. The European Board decided on the following matters:

- New National Coordinators: Mira Shuteriqi-Blushi (Albania) and Neil Robinson (ITV-UK)
- BRTN, Belgium, and TV Latvia lost their membership because they were not producing regional programmes

### Training Needs Change Financial Strategy

After 5 years of training seminars during the Annual Conference or at the Baltic Media Center, the leading people of CIRCOM Regional realised that the new field of activity had become one of the main tasks of the association. Subsidies from the PHARE Project of the European Commission, from the Council of Europe and other sources as well as the assistance rendered by the Thomson Foundation, France3 Formation and numerous CIRCOM Regional member stations had made it possible to instruct more than 200 young colleagues during that period. The growing interest in that service had been illustrated by 95 applications for the 1998 seminar alone, half of which had to be put on a waiting list. With financial support from other partners remaining uncertain,

- Barbara Lewandowska (Poland) and Sergej Erofeev were appointed as new Executive Committee members
- The organiser of the 1999 Conference, Marija Nemcic, HRT, Croatia, was elected as Vice-President.

Boris Bergant informed the delegates that RTV Slovenia would stay on with the Secretariat until the end of 2001. In the meantime, a new candidate for the Secretary General had to be found.

CIRCOM Regional decided to revise its financial expenditures in order to allocate more money for training purposes. For the Cavtat seminar in 1999, which was attended by forty trainees from all-over Europe, CIRCOM Regional had to provide an additional sum of ECU 30,000 from the regular budget. The only subsidy came from the Council of Europe (FF 70,000). Besides, Eutelsat and Sony signed a three-year sponsoring contract. Meeting in Cavtat in June 1999 the European Board confirmed the following new National Coordinators: Gerhard Draxler (ORF Austria), Valentin Stoyanov (Bulgaria), Zorica Solomon Kostovska (Macedonia) and Vesna Pejovic from the new member country of Montenegro.

Cavtat<sup>20)</sup>

1999

### The Pearls of the Adriatic and the Fierce Reality of Kosovo

When Cavtat, a small Adriatic harbour near the famous town of Dubrovnik, was chosen in 1997 to host the Annual Conference, some people were concerned regarding the security conditions of that location because of the critical political situation recently having ended in former Yugoslavia. Croatian organisers promised that nothing would disturb the meeting of CIRCOM Regional and that promise has to come true, albeit under unexpected circumstances. NATO attacked Serbia because of their oppression of the Albanian population of the Kosovo province. Every night the 250 participants could listen to the roar of bombing squadrons flying eastwards from Italian airports – a strange contrast to the picturesque and peaceful atmosphere of the Dalmatian coastline. The impression of an oasis of hospitality and pleasure - not far away from the theatre of war - was underlined by a night performance of Croatian music together with the award ceremony of Prix CIRCOM Regional in which Otto von Habsburg, crown-Prince of the former Austrian Emperor's family, participated. There was also another memorable social event. A trip to the famous town of Dubrovnik, still badly damaged from the time it was shelled by Serbian guns. Fitting well to the location, the Conference included a plenary

debate on “Truth and Lies at War”, organised together with the IFJ (International Federation of Journalists), in which numerous competent reporters from international and Balkan channels participated. For the first time, a workshop on “soap operas” and a presentation of cultural channels run by CIRCOM member stations were staged. Another innovation was a survey on regional weather forecasts, introduced by Roel Dijkhuis, Netherlands. Some other topics, already discussed in previous years were again on the conference schedule: “The One-man-Band”, “Minorities”, “Digital TV”, “Social Actions in TV Programmes”, “Technical Future of TV”, and a number of co-production meetings, among them the working session of the ALICE group. Altogether 8 projects of co-production were discussed. It was again a special highlight of the reunion to witness the entertaining presentation of the results of the training seminar, which was attended by thirty young colleagues. During the closing session, the European Board gave thanks to the effective team of organizers, namely Marija Nemcic and Vladimir Spicer (HRT Croatia), Tim Johnson (TV2 Denmark), Lefty Kongalides (ERT3 Greece) and Gerry Reynolds (RTE Ireland). Reimar Allerdt (ARD Munich, Germany) was elected as

the new President. He announced that the Conference 2000 would be organized in Potsdam, Germany. Gerry Reynolds was appointed as Vice-President for that year. Three new members were chosen for the Executive Committee: Barbara Lewandowska (Poland), Roel Dijkhuis (Netherlands) and Lefty Kongalides (Greece). The Secretary General honoured the retiring president Carlo Ranzi (Switzerland) who had served for three years as the Chairman of CIRCOM Regional. During autumn 1999, two personal changes in the CIRCOM Regional leadership were decided on. Dr. Jürgen Hassel having been responsible for Prix CIRCOM Regional since the

beginning in 1989 was retiring from WDR Düsseldorf, Germany. His task was given to David Lowen (UK). For that purpose, CIRCOM Regional signed an agreement with Mr. Lowen who was to act as a private contractor. That model had already been applied to the activity of Rick Thompson regarding the CIRCOM training. The second change took place in the Executive Committee: Gerry Reynolds, Ireland, expressed his wish to get more involved in the topic of digital TV. His responsibility for training matters was relegated to Roel Dijkhuis of Netherlands.

## 2000

### The Year of 2000 with a Conference under Exceptional Conditions

The thrill of that millennial date gave rise to extraordinary efforts by the German hosts. Reimar Allerdt, the newly elected CIRCOM Regional President, gained support from the General Manager of BR Munich and EBU President Albert Scharf for the idea to make the project a common financial venture of all the German ARD stations. With the necessary funds being provided,

it was possible to select one of the lesser stations of former communist Eastern Germany, ORB Potsdam, situated only 30 km from the centre of Berlin, to host the Conference. The arrangements of the 2000 Conference followed the aim to present the delegates new impressions from the changes in Eastern Germany ten years after the re-unification of the country. The Berlin Film and Television Academy assisted in the Training Seminar. Prix CIRCOM Regional was awarded at the historical Film Studios of Babelsberg, framed by an open-air party. Several trips to and around Potsdam and a boat trip along the Spree and Havel rivers of Berlin interrupted by a visit to the German Reichstag completed the manifold social programme. The overall impression of the Potsdam meeting was to a certain

Potsdam



The winners of Prix CIRCOM Regional were:

**Category Documentaries:**  
TVP Gdansk, Poland

**Prize for Originality by France3:**  
TV2 West-Jutland, Denmark

**Category News:**  
BBC Midlands, UK

**European Matters:**  
ORB Potsdam, Germany

**Cross-boarder Programmes:**  
TG4, Ireland, and France3 Nord/Pas de Calais, France

**Application of New Technologies:**  
France3 Alsace, France

extent lessened by the accommodation in the huge hotel of Ostdeutsche Sparkassenakademie (capacity of 500 rooms) far outside the city and by the fact that the long distances had to be covered by the delegates themselves during arrival and departure. The final settlements of accounts also turned out to be an unpleasant experience for Reimar Allerdt facing painful discussions about details of some costs. Nevertheless, there were a large number of memorable events, like a welcoming address by Mathias Platzeck, Prime Minister of the Region of Brandenburg, a key-note speech by Prof. Albert Scharf, President of the EBU, a round-table discussion on regional TV in the digital society, workshops on regional identity and "How to win viewers", the first presentation of the European Committee of the Regions and a seminar about the future media situation in Southeastern Europe and a series of co-production sessions with 22 projects altogether.

The Potsdam Conference was visited by 318 delegates from 31 countries. For the first time it included exhibitions on CIRCOM Regional history by artists from Bulgaria, Italy and Slovenia. During happy hours, hospitality was offered by Rheinland-Pfalz, Lower Austria and Slovenia.

## The Secretariat Moves to Croatia, a New President from Greece

The autumn meeting of the European Board was held in Porto, where the 2001 Conference was to be hosted by the Portuguese TV station of RTP. Djalme Neves, Vice-President of CIRCOM Regional that year, received 42 participants, the largest number ever convened for a reunion of the Board. Two guiding decisions were made: At the second ballot, Lefty Kongalides (ERT 3 Thessaloniki, Greece) was elected as President with just one vote more than Roel Dijkhuis, Netherlands. Confronted with only one valid application, the convention agreed to move the Secretariat from Ljubljana, Slovenia, to Zagreb, Croatia, with Marija

Nemcic (HRT) becoming the new Secretary General after the transition period ending on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2001. Five new National Coordinators were confirmed: Pier Luigi Malesani and Paolo Morawski as his deputy for Italy, Pierre Couchard for RTBF Belgium, Elena Spanily for Romania, Jean-Marie Belin for France3, France, Per-Ake Krook of Sweden. Three new Executive Committee members were elected: Zoran Medved (Slovenia), Elena Spanily (Romania) and Pierre Couchard (Belgium). Olle Mannberg (Sweden) and Gerry Reynolds (RTE Ireland) were appointed to succeed Grethe Haaland and David Lowen as Internal auditors.

# 2001

## in Porto and the Bridges to the Future

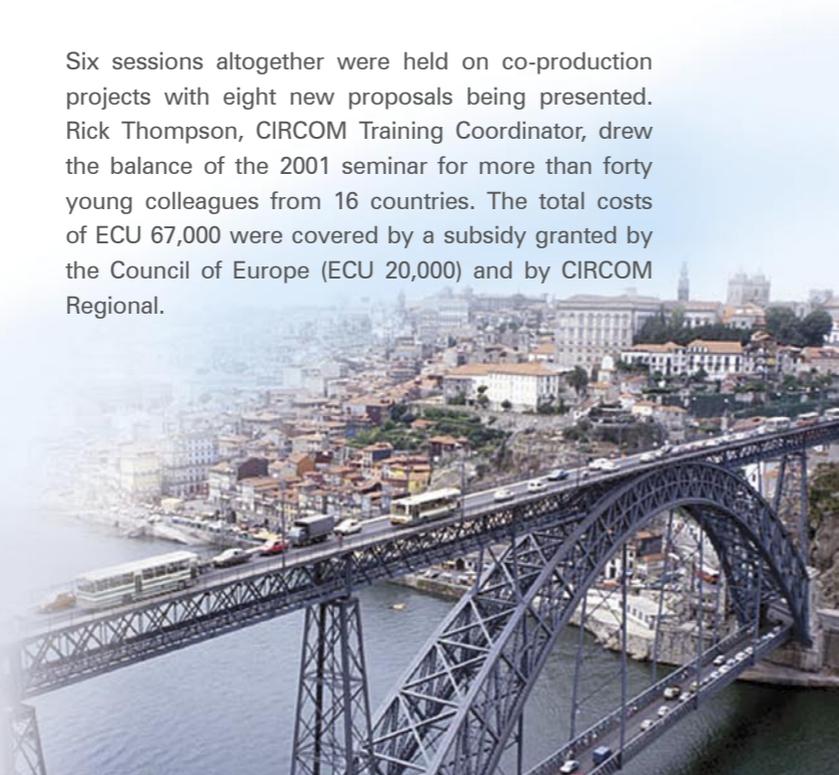
For the first time, the Annual Conference took place in a city honoured as the cultural capital of Europe the same year. RTP, the public Portuguese broadcaster, arranged a highly professional event in co-operation with the local administration, represented by the Mayor Nuno Cardoso and Dr. Teresa Lago. The central theme of the year in Porto – “Bridges to the Future” – was represented by a number of outstanding cultural events, as well as by the topics debated during the three-day meeting of more than 250 delegates from 30 European countries.

Three main issues dominated the workshops:

- Digital changes of the work inside TV stations
- The most successful formats for regional programming
- Methods used by regional TV stations to keep in close touch with their environs

Six sessions altogether were held on co-production projects with eight new proposals being presented. Rick Thompson, CIRCOM Training Coordinator, drew the balance of the 2001 seminar for more than forty young colleagues from 16 countries. The total costs of ECU 67,000 were covered by a subsidy granted by the Council of Europe (ECU 20,000) and by CIRCOM Regional.

Porto<sup>21)</sup>



## Three Prizes for Poland

The Prix CIRCOM Regional awards were given to the following stations:

### Documentaries:

TVP Białystock, Poland

### Most Original Programme:

TVP Lublin, Poland

### News:

TVP Szczecin, Poland

### Cross-boarder Programmes:

France3 Nord, France

### Current Affairs:

France3 Alsace, France

Chairman David Lowen reported a record-breaking number of 170 registered entries. A great number of visitors to the Porto Conference will remember the romantic boat cruise on the river Douro and along the port-wine cellars out the sea passing the famous

bridge constructed by Eiffel's assistants at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. That trip once again underlined the motto of the Conference of “Bridges to the Future”. In Porto, the European Board accepted the invitation of TV Kosice, Slovakia, for the Conference of 2002. Roel Dijkhuis, Netherlands, was appointed as Chairman of the BoG (training activities). In November 2001, another European Board meeting in Kosice appointed two new members of the Executive Committee, namely Judith Klein, Hungary, and Marija Nemcic, the new Secretary General. In a small ceremony, the National Coordinators honoured the retiring Secretary General Boris Bergant. Marian Kleis, Vice-President, Vladimir Spicer (HRT Croatia), Zoran Medved (RTV Slovenia), and Roel Dijkhuis (Netherlands) constituted the working group for the 2002 Conference.

## Contract on Training with the Thomson Foundation

In 2001, Rick Thompson retired from his job as training coordinator. A new contract was signed with the Thomson Foundation, which already had helped CIRCOM Regional since the beginning of the seminars in 1994. Gareth Price (TF Cardiff) assured that the continuity of the spirit of training would be guaranteed. Karol Cioma was appointed as the project manager for all the training activities carried out for CIRCOM Regional.

## 2002

## Back to the Roots in Kosice

On the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Kosice, Slovakia, two other anniversaries were celebrated: The hosting regional station completed forty years of existence and ten years had passed since the first Board Meeting in Eastern Europe was held in 1992. At that time Kosice was still part of the State of Czechoslovakia divided in the course of the political changes at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For some of the older delegates, the 2002 visit to Kosice was connected with memories of the past when the colleagues of Slovakia, Director Marian Kleis and National Coordinator Jaromir Bures had established the first contacts with CIRCOM Regional. Since then, living and working conditions in that region at the border to Ukraine and Poland had significantly changed the economic progress. In addition, the more upbeat mood of the people was clearly noticeable. Zoran Medved (Slovenia), Vladimir Spicer (Croatia), Gerry Reynolds (Ireland) and Tim Johnson (Denmark) assisted the organisers of the Conference. They successfully created a very special atmosphere by confronting very progressive issues in the workshops and plenary sessions with nostalgic impressions during the social events. A visit to the old premises of Kosice TV combined with a barbecue and beer party took the 185 delegates of 25 countries back to the roots of regional broadcasting under primitive conditions during the sixties of the last century. A rafting trip on the river of Dunav including a reception by TV colleagues from the other side of the Polish border was of similar sentimental value. The working days of the Conference contained

the following subjects: "Digital Television", "Minorities in TV", "Regional TV Examples from Europe", "Regional Programmes for National Networks", "Archives – how to use them", "What's there and what is not regional broadcasting" and "Global Issues through the Eyes of the Region". In various co-production meetings, there were eight new proposals on the agenda. Bjørn Erichsen (EBU) reported on the schemes of his organisation regarding co-production and invited CIRCOM Regional to follow that EBU-pattern. During a splendid award ceremony, David Lowen announced the Prix CIRCOM Regional winners.

Kosice<sup>22)</sup>

The following stations received the main prizes:

**Category Documentaries:**  
RTE Dublin, Ireland

**Cross-Border Programme:**  
TVP Wroclaw, Poland

**Special Award for the Most Original Programme:**  
Omroep Flevoland, Netherlands

**Current Affairs:**  
TV2 Ostjylland, Denmark

**News:**  
BBC Scotland, UK

The training seminar in Kosice had to be limited to 25 participants since a number of trainees from South Eastern Europe did not show up. The European Board appointed six new National Coordinators: Dr. Wilhelm Mitsche (Austria), Anita Bhalla (BBC), Peter Sauer (Germany), Andrew Psaila (Malta), Kjell Jarle Hoyheims (Norway) and Vesna Nesovic (Serbia). Marija Nemcic, the new Secretary General, invited all Board members to co-operate with a new plan of actions to be tackled during the years to come. At an Executive-Committee meeting

### Euromusica Finished in 2002

President Lefty Kongalides reported on the 2002 Euromusica event in Olympia, Greece. Although the participation of Euromusica countries had been satisfactory and a considerable number of them had transmitted that production, no organiser could be

in Bucharest in September 2002, Paolo Morawski (RAI) informed the participants that his organisation would host the 2003 Conference. RTVE (Spanish Public Television) returned as a member of CIRCOM Regional after a ten-year absence. In November 2002, the European Board met in Trieste, Italy. The Secretary General presented the new action plan. It contained among other aspects a new co-operation with the European Committee of the Regions, which had agreed to a long-term contract to sponsor the Cross-border category of Prix CIRCOM Regional. In addition to that, it constituted that training seminars would be increased in the future up to four annual events including instruction of ethnic minority TV producers. The 2004 Conference was given to TVP Poland, the location being the city of Wroclaw. Lefty Kongalides (Greece) was confirmed in the position of CIRCOM Regional President for another year. Anita Bhalla (BBC) and Tim Johnson (TV2, Denmark) replaced the Executive Committee members Barbara Lewandowska (Poland) and Roel Dijkhuis (Netherlands).

found for 2003. The decision of the Board to wait for an application in 2004 eventually turned out to mark the end of Euromusica after a period of no less than 15 consecutive years.

## Hubert Schilling Replaces Marie-Paule Urban

The year 2003 started with a significant change in the organisational structure of CIRCOM Regional. The Deputy Secretary General in Strasbourg Marie-Paule Urban was appointed as regional coordinator of France3. The Executive Committee meeting in Budapest, Hungary, in February, formally welcomed her successor Hubert Schilling (France3 Alsace). The President and the Secretary General of CIRCOM Regional expressed the gratitude of CIRCOM Regional

for the ten years in which Marie-Paule Urban had devoted her work to the organisation. The attempt of CIRCOM Regional to intensify the activities of the co-production office in Munich was also discussed. In the meantime, two new projects co-financed by the European Commission were launched: "Teenage Europe" and "The Straight Line" with Tim Johnson, Denmark, and Peter Sauer, Germany, acting as executive producers.

# 2003

## Grado: New Consciousness under Italian Sunshine

The 21<sup>st</sup> Conference had an ideal setting for intense contemplations of the purpose of regional television in Europe. It took place in the romantic fishing town of Grado situated on an island offshore the Adriatic coast of Italy. By co-incidence, the CIRCOM Regional convention was paralleled by a revision of the structure of Italian regional public television with the centre of Testata Giornalistica Regionale being moved to Milano. That reorientation of RAI had inspired the Conference organisers to include several basic issues into the working programme. Such were for example a survey on successful regional TV models from all-over Europe, legal aspects, the challenges of new technology and the economic basis for regional broadcasting. Journalists, scientists and politicians lively discussed those topics. Overall, the Conference had a strong impact on the 180 delegates. For many of them, the days of Grado provided new insights for management and programming of

regional television. Still to remember: The idyllic walks around the picturesque harbour of Grado and along the beach promenade to the Conference Centre and the trip to the splendid villas and castles of the region of Udine.

The Prix CIRCOM Regional was awarded to:

**Documentaries:**  
TVP Katowice, Poland

**Special Prize:**  
BBC Scotland, UK

**Current Affairs:**  
BBC Northern Ireland, UK

**Cross-Border Programme:**  
France3 Nord, France

**News:**  
TVP Wroclaw, Poland

**Most Original Programme:**  
Omroep Flevoland, Netherlands

The annual CIRCOM Training Seminar marked its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Italy. 35 young colleagues participated. The European Board accepted the following new National Coordinators: Robert Olson, Sweden, Angel Urreztieta, TVE Spain, Maria Eugenia Baptista, Portugal, and Piotr Borys, Poland, who was also appointed as Vice-President organising the 2004 Conference in

Wroclaw, Poland. Furthermore, it was announced that the ITV stations of the United Kingdom had decided to drop their CIRCOM Regional memberships at the end of 2003 since they had cancelled regional programming. Newly admitted to the association was Deutsche Welle, Germany.

Laguna Grado<sup>23)</sup>

## Paolo Morawski, an Italian President of Polish Origin

The autumn meeting of the European Board in Wroclaw was still influenced by the strong impressions from the Grado Conference. Paolo Morawski, the Italian organizer, delivered a DVD of the event, which was used for further promotion of CIRCOM Regional. His energetic approach to all kinds of problems and his friendly manner convinced the National Coordinators to elect him as the new President since Lefty Kongalides had to retire after serving a term of three consecutive years. Paolo Morawski also seemed to be an excellent replacement because he is a descendant of Polish

emigrants to Italy. The chairman of the 2004 Conference was going to be able to address the delegates even in Polish. Three members of the Executive Committee had to be newly appointed: Angel Urreztieta, Spain, Jean-Marie Belin, France3, and Peter Sauer, Germany. Alessandra Paradisi, Italy, and Evgenija Teodosievka, Macedonia, were approved as National Coordinators. In November 2003, CIRCOM representatives followed an invitation of the Committee of the Regions of Europe to Brussels.

## Wroclaw a Symbol of Reconciliation

When the Polish public television decided to invite CIRCOM Regional for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference they had two main motives - the integration within the European Union in 2004 and the presentation of Wroclaw, capital of the province of Lower Silesia, as a symbol of 100 years of European history shaped by both Slavic inhabitants and German settlers. With the end of World War II this territory had come under Polish sovereignty with the majority of the German population being replaced by Poles deported from their former homes in White Russia and Ukraine. Since that more than sixty years had passed. The similar fate had helped to create an atmosphere of reconciliation between Germans and Poles. The reconstruction of Wroclaw and the equal care for the cultural heritage of both nations are famous examples for progress and tolerance in a greater Europe. The good spirits felt at every time in that town contributed immensely to the success of that Conference. More than 200 delegates strolled around the medieval market place, celebrated at night in illuminated parks, listened to the witty performance of violin artists during the prize-giving of Prix CIRCOM Regional, took a cruise on the river of Odra and danced in the neighbourhood of the old-Austrian castle in Krakow just having been restored to a noble hotel. "New challenges – new solutions" was the general topic

of the Wroclaw meeting. The following was discussed in detail: "How to build up Audiences?", "Broadcasting in the New Democratic Countries", "Current Trends in News Production", "Building up a Special Brand", "Working with New Technology".

David Lowen honoured the following Prix CIRCOM Regional winners:

**Documentaries:**

TVP Wroclaw, Poland

**Special Award of France:**

TVP Szczecin, Poland

**Special Prize of Swedish Television:**

France3 Alsace, France

**Current Affairs:**

HR Frankfurt, Germany

**Cross-Border Programmes:**

TV Syd, Denmark

**Regional Sports:**

TVP Katowice, Poland

34 young journalists attended the training seminar. For the third time in a row, Rick Thompson acted as official announcer of the Conference.

## Personal memories:

A splendid performance of Romeo and Juliet (Jean-Marie Belin and Anita Bhalla) during the farewell-party in Wroclaw. The European Board announced in Wroclaw that the Conference of 2005 would be staged in Liverpool (United Kingdom) with Anita Bhalla (BBC) acting as organiser and Vice-President in co-operation with David Lowen. The Secretary General informed the delegates that the co-production office had been moved from BR Munich to BR Nuremberg with Peter Sauer now being in charge of that job. HRT Zagreb from then on handled the provision of CIRCOM Regional programmes for the channel "Europe by Satellite". Erik Berg-Hansen (Norway), Manuel Lombao (TVE Spain) and António Ribeiro (Portugal) were newly confirmed as National Co-ordinators.

## Satisfactory Results of Co-production and Training

The re-organisation of co-production activities with Peter Sauer / Heike Stiegler (BR Germany) and Tim Johnson / Lene Krüger (Denmark) serving as executive producers resulted in a considerable rise in number of projects and participation of CIRCOM Regional members. Subsidies from European partner organisations helped to cover part of the production costs of the participants. BR Nuremberg installed a new video and download system for programme exchanges.

That Internet link replaced the old system of mailing co-pro material. "Networking Europe" and "Families in Europe" were new topics in 2004 while "Teenage Europe" and "Frontrunners", another project on the enlargement of the EU, had been successfully completed. At the autumn Board meeting in Liverpool, the training contract with the Thomson Foundation was extended for another three years. The number

of seminars per year was increased to five: One at the Annual Conference, two on Video Journalism in Budapest, one on Management in Strasbourg and one for youth programme-makers in Paris. The total number of trainees instructed by CIRCOM Regional reached the number of 600 after ten years. In 2004, a promotion project was initiated together with the Committee of the Regions of Europe on occasion of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting in Brussels. 13 journalists of CIRCOM Regional member stations were invited to that event, which was to be continued as a regular annual reunion between both organisations in the future. Elections in 2004: President Paolo Morawski (Italy) for another year, new members of the Executive Committee Piotr Borys (Poland) and Robert Olson (Sweden), new National Coordinators Jogvan Jespersen (Faroe Islands) and Iana Ivanova (Bulgaria). The Committee of the Regions was adopted as a new Institutional Member.

# 2005

## At the Piers of Liverpool

In May 2005 the visitors of the Annual Conference in Liverpool had the opportunity to see the transformation of a historical harbour and an industrial town into a futuristic city trying to meet the challenges arising from its nomination to be the European Cultural Capital in the year of 2008. Anita Bhalla (BBC) and David Lowen had convinced the local administrative and commercial organisations to sponsor the social part of the event, which included several dinner invitations, an evening with a jazz band and dance at the historical Adelphi Hotel, sightseeing tours to the harbour and some art galleries and a nostalgic boat trip with music of the Beatles. An unplanned sensation was the homecoming of the "Reds", the Liverpool football team, after winning

the Champion's League finals. That event attracted about 150.000 people from the whole region, overcrowding the streets and the bars of the whole city.

The 200 CIRCOM delegates had to try hard not to get lost. The working part of the Liverpool Conference contained a key-note speech by Pat Loughrey (BBC Nations) and topics like "Regional content in a multi-future platform", "New platforms – new revenues", "Co-productions – Connecting Europe", "The Relations between the Channels and the Public", "Politician's Grip on the News", "New Techniques which Work Well". The view of the 28 trainees of Liverpool was presented during the closing session of the Seminar.



Liverpool

The winners of Prix CIRCOM Regional:

**Category Documentaries:**  
TV2 Oestjylland, Denmark

**Most Original Programme:**  
TG 4, Ireland

**Current Affairs:**  
TVP Bialystock, Poland

**Cross-border Programmes:**  
HRT Zagreb, Croatia

**News:**  
BBC South-East, UK

**Regional Sport:**  
France3 Bourgogne, France

The European Board confirmed Michael Lally (Ireland) as new National Coordinator.

## New Leadership – Anita Bhalla and Peter Sauer

The autumn meeting of the European Board in Kolding (Denmark) brought two important personal changes. Since Paolo Morawski wanted to retire, Anita Bhalla (BBC) was elected as the first female President of CIRCOM Regional. Marija Nemcic (HRT Croatia)

announced that she would resign from her job as Secretary General after 5 years at the end of the transition year of 2006. Her successor, Peter Sauer (BR Nuremberg), was unanimously elected.

## Conference of 2007 in Bilbao

Another decision made in Kolding was the selection of Bilbao (Spain) as the location for the 2007 Conference. TVE Spain and the local Basque regional station Euskaltelebista had agreed to host that event as a common project. For 2006 Tim Johnson, TV2 Denmark, was appointed as Vice-President.

# 2006

## A Smell of Rural Life in Denmark

Up to that point the majority of CIRCOM Regional's annual meetings had been organised in larger cities or well-known holiday resorts. That habit was clearly discontinued in 2006 by the host of TV Syd in Kolding, Denmark, a smaller town of about 55,000 inhabitants in the centre of the Juteland peninsula. Upon arrival, more than 200 delegates could enjoy a bus ride from Billund Airport through the picturesque countryside revealing peace and prosperity of a small nation in a region far away from the bustling life of the political and business centres of Europe. Surprisingly, when getting to know Kolding better there were no sings of backwardness. To the contrary, a keen interest in modern technology and progressive culture could be found – an ideal location to reflect on the challenges of modern public regional television in our time. The Conference programme named "Digital, Dialogue and Diversity" contained a large number of attractive speakers and subjects. Students of the University of Southern Denmark took an active part by reporting on the events, preparing press releases and updating web pages. The University of Ansbach (Germany) also participated. A group of

three students from there did some research on "New Platforms - Mobile Media", which was published later on as "CIRCOM Future Guide 2006". The Prix CIRCOM Regional contained some new categories in 2006.

The winners were:

**Documentaries:**

TVP Poznan, Poland

**News Reports:**

TVP Krakow, Poland

**Television Across Europe:**

TVP Lublin, Poland

**Regional Sports:**

TVP Bialystok, Poland

**Station Websites:**

SVT Vaexjoe, Sweden

The Award Ceremony was celebrated in Koldingshus, a historical royal castle near Lake Slotsoe. Modern rhythms dominated the dance party with gala dinner at the Cromwell Hotel. During a trip to Legoland, the delegates had the opportunity to learn something about the economic resourcefulness of regional producers in conquering a global market. 20 junior staff people attended the Journalistic Training Seminar 2006. In Kolding the European Board accepted Agathi Mammadou as the new National Coordinator for Cyprus and it approved a renewal of the association's logo proposed by TV Syd, Denmark. Concerning the function of the new Secretary General Peter Sauer in Nuremberg, Germany, the Executive Committee was informed in September 2006 that the staff from HRT Zagreb would continue to work for CIRCOM Regional. In November 2006 the European Board accepted TV Kosovo as a new member and Pawel Dudek as the new National Coordinator of Poland. TV Faroe Islands and ARD/MDR Dresden cancelled their memberships. Secretary General Peter Sauer reported on the participation of about fifty visitors to the "European Week of the Regions" in Brussels. During that session in Bilbao, Anita Bhalla was re-elected for a second term of presidency. Four new members joined the Executive Committee: António Ribeiro, Portugal, Pawel Dudek, Poland, Zoran Medved, Slovenia, and Antonella Madonna, Italy.

Kolding



## 2007

## In the Basque Country

For the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, the Spanish organisers had chosen one of the areas with the oldest regional tradition in Europe - The Basque Country at the northern shore of the Iberian Peninsula. A native culture with roots in prehistoric times and a peculiar language of still unknown origin have been strong enough to survive the political and economic influence of national Spain for the past centuries – even after the civil war of the last century. After the end of the Franco regime, the return of the Spanish democratic monarchy and new constitutional rights for the regions of the country, there are now hopes for peaceful progress for the

people of the Basque Country. The regional capital of Bilbao where the Conference was held showed clear signs of that development - a modern renovation of the city including a large underground railway system, booming business and as a highlight the remarkable Guggenheim Museum. In addition, the media sector made futuristic improvements. The Basque Radio and TV station EITB presented its new production in Basque and Spanish language, one of them serving for the Basque community all over the world. Like CIRCOM Regional, EITB celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007. With one of its 15 regional stations the national Radio

and Television station RTVE was also present in Bilbao. Altogether, it serves the public with 2 national channels, five radio networks and several international channels being present on all the 5 continents. For the 2007 Conference, the national and the regional broadcasters joined forces and succeeded to produce a highly professional event together with the person responsible for CIRCOM Regional. At the front desk of the Plenary and Workshops senior TV executives and university experts presented new ideas concerning the future of regional television. Main topics were: “Presence and Future of Public TV in Europe”, “The Challenges of New Technology”, “Globalisation and Regional TV”, “Digital Newsroom Editing”, “Creative Regional Programmes”; “New Technologies on Mobile Phones and the Internet”, “The Upcoming Generation of TV Journalists”. Retiring from his job as the chairman of the CIRCOM training board in 2007, Roel Dijkhuis announced the results of the training seminar, in which 19 young colleagues had participated. The social highlight of the Conference was the Gala dinner at the Guggenheim Museum combined with the award-giving of Prix CIRCOM Regional.

The winners:

**Documentaries:**  
TV2 Ostjylland, Denmark

**Special Prize of France3:**  
NRK More and Romsdall, Norway

**Magazine Programmes:**  
SVT Gaevledala, Sweden

**Regional Sports:**  
France3 Alsace, France

**Station Website:**  
BBC London, UK

**Video Editing:**  
MDR, Germany

**Fiction/Drama:**  
HRT Zagreb, Croatia

**Video Journalism:**  
BBC South-East, UK

190 participants in total enjoyed the days of May 2007 in Bilbao, especially the cheerful evening reception by Mayor Inaki Azkuna and the memorable trip to the mystic town of Guernica and the beautiful Bizkaja coast.

## Final Remarks

With the upcoming 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in May 2008 in Maribor, Slovenia, CIRCOM Regional will complete its 25<sup>th</sup> year of existence. During that past quarter of a century, the following aims have been achieved:

- The merits of public regional television as well as its economic and political prerequisites have been acknowledged throughout Europe by national broadcasters, the EBU and the most important European institutions.
- Membership has grown from four European countries in 1983 to 38 in 1996 with 400 co-operating regional stations. In the meantime, those record numbers have been reduced because several national companies cancelled regional broadcasting or their annual contributions. The situation now: 31 countries with about 290 regional stations.
- The quality of regional programming in general has been continuously improved by the exchange of new ideas and experiences all-over Europe during the Annual Conferences.

- The introduction of Prix CIRCOM Regional in 1990 amplified that effect even more: Since then, more than 2000 regional productions have been thoroughly evaluated by experts and about 100 of them were honoured by money-prizes or special recommendations. The winning programmes of "Grand Prix CIRCOM Regional" are available to all the member stations for free transmission.
- The discovery of quality productions made by foreign regional TV stations has stimulated co-production and programme exchange all over Europe. In 25 years, more than 1000 projects have been produced by CIRCOM Regional member stations, most of them from neighbouring countries. In about thirty cases, subsidies could be obtained for topics of social or economic interest from the European institutions.
- A CIRCOM Regional programme archive with access for all member stations has been established.
- Starting in 1994, CIRCOM Regional has become active in the field of training, at first only on occasion of the Annual Conference with seminars for young journalists, in the following years also for management, video production, youth programme-makers and lately even for training experts in several other locations in Europe. In 2007, the number of seminars reached 48 and the total of trainees is estimated at 1000.

- Thanks to co-operations with the Thomson Foundation, France3 Formation and trainers provided by CIRCOM Regional member stations those instructions are possible. Costs are partly covered by sponsors; the main part coming from the CIRCOM Regional budget. From 1983 on, that association has become active as one of the working groups of the mother organisation CIRCOM and has depended from subsidies from the European Commission and the European Parliament. Independence was achieved later in two steps:
  - 1989: Adoption of Statutes and election of a CIRCOM Regional President
  - 1991: Introduction of the annual membership fee, making CIRCOM Regional a self-financing organisation. The annual income from that source was raised several times in the meantime amounting now to € 140,000.

- The European institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council of Europe and Committee of the Regions) as well as the Council of the French region of Alsace, supporting the Deputy Secretary's Office in Strasbourg, have been sponsors of CIRCOM Regional activities. Seven national companies and AVID presently finance the awards of Prix CIRCOM Regional and a considerable amount is granted by the EBU.
- From the total budget of CIRCOM Regional of 2007 (€ 250,000), € 136,000 are spent for training seminars, € 45,000 for Prix CIRCOM Regional, € 54,000 for administration, finances, databank and public relations and € 11,000 for the Conference.

## Calendar of activities

Annual Conferences, European Board  
and Executive Committee Meetings

**1983:** Lille, France  
**1984:** Biarritz, France  
**1985:** Chianciano, Italy  
**1986:** Munich, Germany  
**1987:** Solstram/Bergen, Norway  
**1988:** Harrogate, United Kingdom  
**1989:** Ofir, Portugal  
**1990:** Bled, Slovenia  
**1991:** Strasbourg, France  
**1992:** Valencia, Spain  
**1992:** Liège, Belgium  
**1993:** St. Vincent/Aosta, Italy  
**1994:** Iasi, Romania  
**1995:** Birmingham, United Kingdom  
**1996:** Copenhagen, Denmark  
**1997:** Szeged, Hungary  
**1998:** Thessaloniki, Greece  
**1999:** Cavtat, Croatia  
**2000:** Potsdam, Germany  
**2001:** Porto, Portugal  
**2002:** Kosice, Slovakia  
**2003:** Grado, Italy  
**2004:** Wroclaw, Poland  
**2005:** Liverpool, United Kingdom  
**2006:** Kolding, Denmark  
**2007:** Bilbao, Spain

European Board and Executive Committee Meetings  
elsewhere since 1992

**1992:** Kosice, Slovakia, Rotterdam, Netherlands  
**1993:** Milano, Italy, Iasi, Romania, Krakow, Poland, and  
Strasbourg, France  
**1994:** Munich, Germany, Birmingham, United Kingdom,  
Ljubljana, Slovenia  
**1995:** Évora, Portugal, Klagenfurt, Austria, Copenhagen,  
Denmark, Strasbourg, France  
**1996:** Szeged, Hungary, Ljubljana, Slovenia, Thessaloniki,  
Greece  
**1997:** Brussels, Belgium, Rome, Italy, Lugano, Switzerland  
**1998:** Ljubljana, Slovenia, Brussels Belgium, Linz, Austria,  
Cavtat, Croatia  
**1999:** Cork/Kinsale, Ireland, Dortmund, Germany, Potsdam,  
Germany  
**2000:** Brussels, Belgium, Opatija, Croatia, Porto, Portugal  
**2001:** Groningen, Netherlands, Kosice, Slovakia  
**2002:** Zagreb, Croatia, Bucharest, Romania, Trieste, Italy  
**2003:** Budapest, Hungary, Liège, Belgium, Wroclaw, Poland  
**2004:** Strasbourg, France, Santiago de Compostela, Spain,  
Liverpool, United Kingdom  
**2005:** Rome, Italy, Cavtat, Croatia, Kolding, Denmark  
**2006:** Birmingham, United Kingdom, Galway, Ireland, Bilbao,  
Spain  
**2007:** Nuremberg, Germany, Cardiff, Wales, United Kingdom,  
Maribor, Slovenia.

Jury Sessions PRIX CIRCOM  
REGIONAL 1990 – 2008

**1990:** Torino, Italy  
**1991:** Szczecin, Poland  
**1992:** Dublin, Ireland  
**1993:** Bornholm, Denmark  
**1994:** Krakow, Poland  
**1995:** Lugano, Switzerland  
**1996:** Palermo, Italy  
**1997:** Odense, Denmark  
**1998:** Cork/Kinsale, Ireland  
**1999:** Groningen, Netherlands  
**2000:** Klagenfurt, Austria  
**2001:** Örebro, Sweden  
**2002:** Langlau, Germany  
**2003:** Sinaia, Romania  
**2004:** Galway, Ireland  
**2005:** Kolding, Denmark  
**2006:** Maribor, Slovenia  
**2007:** La Petite Pierre, France  
**2008:** Cardiff/Wales, United Kingdom

## Euromusica 1987 – 2002

**1987:** Viana do Castelo, Portugal  
**1988:** Ljubljana, Slovenia  
**1989:** Funchal, Madeira, Portugal  
**1990:** Linz, Austria  
**1991:** Nuremberg, Germany  
**1992:** Kiev, Ukraine  
**1993:** Leeds, United Kingdom  
**1994:** Nowgorod, Russia  
**1995:** Angra do Heroísmo, Azores, Portugal  
**1996:** Shekesfehervar, Hungary  
**1997:** Trondheim, Norway  
**1998:** Thessaloniki, Greece  
**1999:** Umbria, Italy  
**2000:** Opatija, Croatia  
**2001:** Sopron/Eisenstadt, Hungary/Austria  
**2002:** Olympia, Greece

# ” Years to Remember

By Boris Bergant

The regional and local are a kind of counterbalance to the global and national. The more the globalisation pattern becomes accepted, the more people are resorting to their immediate environment; they feel safer there and are more certain to have a decisive impact.

That is the reason why it is no wonder that during the last two decades the interests, activities and power of regional broadcasting has been growing continuously.

Even the fact that regional broadcasting moved beyond local boundaries and became an important factor of cross-border cooperation during the last two decades is interesting and meaningful.

Moreover, integration and links across Europe on the political and media level have been facilitated in particular by strengthening cross-border regional cooperation. Peacefulness and openness start right at the borders, people from opposite sides of the border are often closer than those from distant capitals.

CIRCOM Regional accepted the first full members from the other side of the former Iron Curtain as early as in the second half of the eighties; it managed to connect Europe even before the fall of the Berlin wall.

And it is an honor – since following positive experience on the regional level I also played my part in it – that its sister organisation EBU, which links national public broadcasters with one another, managed to unite Europe more than a decade before the first EU enlargement to the East took place.

True public broadcasters are first of all in their viewers' and listeners' debt, so in the field of cooperation and service they were a step ahead of politics in establishing links across Europe; they were much quicker in adapting to the need, requirements and challenges of the time.

It is also interesting that two memorable anniversaries coincide – 25 years of CIRCOM Regional and a quarter of a century of the oldest and still functioning cross-border cooperation project of public and radio-television service in Europe – the “Alps-Adria-Danube” programme (18 regional stations from seven countries). Both have had a pioneering role and set standards of regional broadcasting.

Due to various circumstances Slovenia and our media institution have always been in the focus of those developments.

Personally, I had the chance of being among the pioneers of the Alps-Adria project, proposed by the ORF and remaining closely linked to it in one capacity or another up until today.

It was my pleasure to act as President and Secretary General of CIRCOM Regional, whose seat was in Ljubljana at that time. During all that time we made every effort to become more successful and to provide mutual benefits. But we also managed to learn a great deal.

CIRCOM Regional has provided me with pleasant memories only. It is an irreplaceable network of professionals and cooperation, whose importance is still growing. It is my pleasure to keep meeting hundreds of participants of our educational seminars, who meanwhile became Editors-in-Chief and Managers of their individual stations.

I remember that in Bled in 1990 the CIRCOM Regional Conference was the first public appearance of the new Prime Minister Lojze Peterle only a day after his election by the new, pluralistic Slovene Parliament (in those times still within Yugoslavia). The final part of that meeting (including the CIRCOM award ceremony) was broadcast to several countries. In the midst of the broadcasting when the star Ditka Haberl was singing “Singing in the Rain”, rain actually and unexpectedly started to pour. But the show had to go on. While most of the audience sought shelter under nearby roofs, in the centre of the auditorium under a small umbrella the first Slovene President Milan Kucan remained next to his seat as a sign of moral support for the performers.

As early as in June 1991, only a week after the short combat activities following the declaration of Slovene independence, we participated at Euromusica (in Nuremberg), while later we campaigned strongly for balancing the image of Europe within our organisation (attracting new members from the East, organising the Conference in Iasi, Szeged, Kosice and Cavtat).

In my opinion the contribution to raising the awareness of Europe as our shared home regarding unity within diversity and raising the awareness of compulsory standards of the independent public broadcasting service are the features of the CIRCOM Regional heritage which I am, in a way, the most proud of.

Boris Bergant

RTV Slovenija, EBU Vice-President

CIRCOM Regional President 1990-1992

CIRCOM Regional Secretary General 1995-2001

# List of pictures

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