



**N°124**  
**April 2014**

Many of you sent us your documentaries and news reports for the 2014 PriMed. For the late-comers, don't forget, you only have a few days left to send in your films, the deadline is **April 15<sup>th</sup>**!

This month *Méditerranée Audiovisuelle* has an interview with **Talal MAKDESSI**, chairman of **Télé-Liban**; a close-up on **CoPeAm** and its 21st AGM, which was held in Tunis from April 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>; Turkey's Filmmor Festival, celebrating women film directors and other news about Mediterranean broadcasting, always so very rich.

**Happy reading to you all.**

**The Editorial team**

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## LIFE IN THE CHANNELS

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### Denmark / Denmark bans the Kurdish channel ROJ TV

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, after a trial lasting nine years, Denmark's Supreme Court banned the Kurdish ROJ TV channel. The decision also imposed a fine on the group. The court's argument: ROJ TV has links with the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party), which is on the list of terrorist organizations named by the United States and European Union.

Since the beginning of the case, diplomatic relations between Denmark and Turkey have been strained. **Imdat Yilmaz**, the channel's former director, claims that "Turkey and the United States put pressure on Denmark". The case might not be over: it could be taken to the European Court of Human Rights if the channel's directors decide to appeal.

(Sources : Courrier International, Turquie news)

### Israel / Closure of the state radio & television



On March 6<sup>th</sup> the Israeli Communications Minister **Gilad Erdan**, announced the closure of the Israel Broadcasting Authority, the state-run radio and television. The aim is to create a new agency to supervise public media. For several years now public broadcasting has had its ups and downs, including disputes between employees and management (appointed by the government).

The rise of private channels was in stark contrast with the public broadcaster's drop in ratings. As **Yair Lapid**, Minister of Finance, said: "We have a public television that nobody watches." In the coming weeks Gilad Erdan is going to propose various bills in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) to bring about a restructuring.

(Sources : Huffington Québec, Israel Valley)



### [North Africa / TV5 Monde & France24 popular in North Africa](#)

At the end of last year TNS Sofres conducted a survey in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia about the popularity of TV channels. TV5 Monde is the most popular French-language channel in North Africa, receiving an average rating of 6.9 across the three countries. France 24 ranks number three in North African countries.

(Sources : Lettre d'information n°7 TV5 Monde Maghreb-Orient, Algerie1)



### [France / France Télévisions launches its news-on-demand channel](#)

On March 20<sup>th</sup> France Télévisions launched its news-on-demand channel FranceTVinfo. The channel is available on internet TV, so if you have access to the Internet you can watch FranceTVinfo. The group sees the channel as a “personalized news service” – you will no longer have to wait for the midday or evening news programmes: as soon as a report is ready, it will be available on the channel when you want it. In the future this service will be available whatever the medium (Apple TV, game console etc.). In other words nearly 49% of French households.

(Source : Le Figaro, Le Nouvel Observateur)



### [Algeria / Closure of Atlas TV](#)

On March 13<sup>th</sup> the private television channel Atlas closed. The premises were raided by the national police on the orders of the public prosecutor, material was seized.

NGOs such as Reporters Without Borders considered the search arbitrary: “We strongly condemn the search and closure of Al-Atlas TV’s studios without a valid reason. Such arbitrary actions are a serious violation of freedom of information and a worrying precedent.” The real reason for the search has not been given. According to unverified sources, Al-Atlas is accused of making defamatory statements against Algeria’s President, **Abdelaziz Bouteflika**. In particular, protesting against his standing for a fourth term on April 17<sup>th</sup>. The written press widely reported the case and there have been many reactions on the social networks. But other private televisions companies merely put the information on a banner at the bottom of the screen.

(Source : Djazairress, Atlas Info)



### [Tunisia / New specifications for Tunisian radio and television rejected](#)

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, following a meeting of the Committee for General Legislation, the HAICA (*Haute Autorité Indépendante de la Communication Audiovisuelle*) presented the technical specifications needed to obtain a license for radio stations and private or community television companies. It had come into force when it was published in Tunisia's Official Journal. However, on March 15<sup>th</sup> representatives of professional media organizations issued a statement announcing their "categorical rejection" of the project. They want it to be reconsidered on the basis of constitutional principles. They also criticize the HAICA for not asking them to comment on the project.

(Source : *Le Tunisien numérique, shemsfm.net, Direct Info*)



### [Europe / Euronews, new resource for MSN Arabia](#)

Euronews, the news channel based in Lyon (France) and European leader, will provide MSN Arabia with a selection of international news programmes produced by three of its services. MSN Arabia has 100 million monthly visitors from the Middle East and North Africa and will benefit by having news about Europe, culture, science and technology, all available in English, French and Arabic -- an opportunity for MSN Arabia to diversify its sources of information.

(Source : *Digital TV Europe*)



### [Tunisia / Record audience for Nessma TV](#)

On April 3<sup>rd</sup> Sigma Council released the March ratings figures in Tunisia. Nessma TV was the most watched channel with 32.2%, closely followed by *Al Wataniya 1* with 31.3%. In third place *Ettounsiya TV* with 28.1% of the audience, although for several months it held the top spot. As for the private channels like *Zitouna TV* and *Telvza TV*, they are relegated to the bottom of the list.

(Source : *Turess, Africanmanager*)

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## QUESTIONS FOR...

**Talal MAKDESSI,**  
Board chairman of **Télé-Liban**



*In July 2013, Talal Makdessi, businessman and communications and media specialist, was appointed chairman of the Board of Télé-Liban by Beirut's courts. The former Information Minister had appealed to the courts to find a way out of the paralysis in which the company found itself when bad health forced the CEO to retire. Télé-Liban's situation became so bad that its future was in doubt. A temporary appointment simply to manage everyday affairs limited to day management which could be terminated when a new Board of Directors was appointed.*

Télé-Liban is the oldest state-run generalist channel in the Middle East. In 1957 two Lebanese businessmen created CLT -- *Compagnie Libanaise de Télévision*. The channel began transmitting with two channels in [May 1959](#): one broadcast in Arabic, the other in French. CLT's offices were in Beirut at Tallet El Khayat.

In [May 1962](#) they created *Télé-Orient*, Lebanese television's second channel. Its studios were in east Beirut at Hazmieh.

In [October 1967](#), thanks to CLT, the Lebanon became the third country to broadcast in colour.

In [July 1977](#), with the economic conditions deteriorating because of the civil war, the advertising market was not big enough to fund two companies. To minimise losses, a government decree merged CLT and *Télé-Orient*, creating *Télé-Liban*. The state bought 51% of the channel, giving it the exclusive right to operate TV channels in the Lebanon until 2012.

In 1991, when the situation was more stable, the French language channel stopped broadcasting.

Although very popular in the past, *Télé-Liban* never really recovered from the effects of the civil war. Its debt was considerable, it lacked resources, was plagued by organizational problems, its facilities were old and worn out, its most popular programmes consisted of reruns of shows from the 1960s, a situation aggravated by the political environment caused by the country's sectarian divides.

**Jean-François Tealdi:** In July last year you were appointed chairman of *Télé-Liban*'s board. An interim arrangement until a new Minister of Information was appointed who could in turn appoint a new board of directors. The new Minister took office in February, but has he named a board for *Télé-Liban*? You have been confirmed in your duties, is that still for a fixed term?

**Talal Makdessi :** Yes, the national government was formed on February 15<sup>th</sup>. The Ministerial Declaration was passed and we are waiting for *Télé-Liban*'s board to be appointed as soon as possible, even though unfortunately in our country it's only the temporary which lasts. I've always had in me the rage to succeed, and I do my best. *Télé-Liban* is recovering. My mission is a sacred one, but nevertheless subject to the law.

**JFT :** You were going to apply for a long-term appointment. Have you done that?

**Talal Makdessi :** That kind of appointment is made by the Information Minister.

**JFT :** *Télé-Liban* has never really recovered from the aftermath of the civil war: debt, lack of resources, old equipment, reruns of the 1960s. A few days after your appointment, you said you were preparing a recovery plan which would be presented to the Government. Your priority was to make everything digital. Have you submitted the plan? Have you been allocated the necessary funding? You also announced that "*a number of studies had been undertaken renovate broadcasting stations.*" Have they been refurbished?

**Talal Makdessi:** Like all Lebanese institutions, *Télé-Liban* suffered its share of the consequences of the civil war. More than 20 years have passed since the end of that destructive war and *Télé-Liban* has not fully recovered yet. Since then there have been several attempts to revive this national company, but unfortunately the problems are huge. I speak of course of the company's debts and technical equipment which is pre-war. Before I arrived here a few months ago, we had analogue transmission. The challenge of digital's not easy, because it's changing so fast -- but I didn't wait for government funding to start the job. We made studies and developed plans to make the switch to digital, which we did in November last year. It will gradually take the place of the old analogue system, using more than 18 transmitters to provide both a better programme schedule and a previously unknown sound and picture quality.

**JFT:** The former Minister of Information said your archives are "*a national treasure as important as the Bank of Lebanon.*" In 2012 a news film described "*deteriorated film, a treasure turning to dust*"; 50,000 hours to restore and digitize! The minister said he would take measures to protect them; a project that will probably spread over five years. On February 21<sup>st</sup> you and the Minister of Information received a delegation from INA, what came out of it and did you get the funding?

**Talal Makdessi:** I stress what our former Minister of Information, S.E.M. Daouk said. He adopted the project to preserve our archives and I would add that our archives are the memory of our nation. We've already managed to save a lot of material which was most at risk. This long term project will not stop until we have transferred and restored all this rich heritage. This is not our first collaboration with INA. In 2003 a preliminary study resulted in a project to digitize some of our 16mm collection. Since 2009 nearly 100 hours of *Télé-Liban*'s 16mm archive have been restored, digitized and archived. We thank INA for coming to the Lebanon and once again offering to make its expertise available to us. An INA team produced a study of our collection after we said we wanted a comprehensive plan to preserve and digitize it. For this major commitment it's essential to have funding, so enlisting the help of our friends is one way to do that.

**JFT :** In April last year, before your arrival, *Télé-Liban* signed two cooperation agreements, one with *France 24* allowing you to broadcast two hours of programmes in Arabic a day. In November 2012 an agreement was signed with the AEF (now *France Medias Monde*), which included co-operation in multi-media and training. How does *Télé-Liban* benefit from these agreements? Does *Télé-Liban* manage to produce its own programmes and broadcast fewer Turkish, Syrian or Egyptian ones?

**Talal Makedssi :** Having programmes from an international channel like *France 24* broadcast on our airwaves can only enrich our schedule and give it an international status. *Télé-Liban* has always had a special relationship with its French counterparts and this relationship is behind the cooperation agreements we are lucky enough to have signed and put in place. I take this opportunity to appeal to the European community to provide us with programmes and documentaries at nominal prices.

**JFT:** Since December 2013 *Télé-Liban* has been part of the TerraMed Plus programme, giving you 115 hours of programmes. Is that a breath of air for you, given the financial difficulties you face producing your own programmes? What can interest you in the programmes of *France Television*, a member of the network? In February you announced 15 hours of your programmes were now available to the network “to give another image of Lebanon for tourism and culture,” what kind of productions did you choose?

You also said “it gives us presence at the international level.” Is that necessary for you?

**Talal Makedssi :** *Télé-Liban* had its golden age in Lebanese and Middle Eastern production. I hope to restore that pioneering role not long from now. But in any case we will never cease looking for interesting programmes, whether from *France Télévisions*, a long-time partner, or other partners with whom we’ve had the privilege of working. As far as Terramed Plus is concerned, documentaries about the Lebanon are now available to the network’s members.

**JFT:** The Lebanon is among the most open countries in the region as far as freedom of expression goes, the new Minister emphasized that freedom, but regretted that “because of political programmes, courteous and decent dialogue has given way to platforms where sectarian language prevails.” For your part, in an interview last August on ANI you said that *Télé-Liban* would be “a bridge between the various Lebanese parties.” What did you mean by that and what role can *Télé-Liban* play in this context?

**Talal Makedssi :** The Lebanon’s history is about freedom and dialogue between cultures. In an era of globalization, where there is trade in everything and where anything can be traded, freedom of expression in my opinion is the desire to give a special place to dialogue which conveys diversity. In a country like the Lebanon, where politics are very troubled, we are all seeking peace in our society. I believe an organisation has the responsibility not to alter news in the interests of one party or another. It can be a major communication link allowing politicians to exchange among themselves and with citizens. *Télé-Liban* provides a platform for expressing public opinion while providing proper news with reliable sources.

**JFT:** On that subject, you said you want an “objective and impartial news, guaranteeing the right of reply.” Was this not the case prior to your arrival? Recently the Information Minister said “I



encourage openness towards other countries. Nevertheless, a journalist's primary concern should be the national interest." What do you think about this statement?

**Talal Makdessi :** I strongly endorse His Excellency's remarks. The media and journalists must provide the public with news which is complete and true to the facts and events. The national interest should occupy a central place, it's the keystone of journalistic work. That's what engenders respect for our nation. Wanting objective and impartial news, guaranteeing the right of reply has always been the concern of the heads of *Télé-Liban*, aware of the crucial role our organization plays in the preservation of freedom of opinion and expression.

**JFT:** The *Compagnie Libanaise de Télévision* has been transmitting in Arabic and French since 1959. Deteriorating economic conditions caused by the civil war penalized Lebanese media and in 1991, despite the return of some stability the French language channel was taken off air. Do you still broadcast in both languages ?

**Talal Makdessi :** We still have Channel 9, which used to broadcast in French, but unfortunately *Télé-Liban's* successive financial difficulties forced management to stop production. At one point an agreement was signed between the Lebanon and France to broadcast *TV5 Orient* on Channel 9. I am optimistic about *Télé-Liban's* future and I hope we can revive the French-language channel.

**JFT :** In 1959 the first faces that viewers saw were three women: two announcers and the news reader. Is this feminine presence still relevant today?

**Talal Makdessi :** *Télé-Liban* was founded in 1959, the first Middle Eastern television channel and at the time such a thing was not common. 55 years have passed and women are still a majority.

**JFT:** In March 2004 in "*Le commerce du Levant*" you expressed your views on television advertising, regretting that market and audience research are unreliable, opaque and lack ethics, so you asked for more accurate ratings.

Do you want *Télé-Liban* to have a larger share of advertising revenue? Are you going to make *Télé-Liban's* rating system "*more ethical*"?

**Talal Makdessi :** Market studies are and should be an honest and reliable source for any advertiser. Research should be based on an honestly representative sample of the Lebanese community. In addition, professionally speaking, a percentage of the samples should be changed every 6 months. Unfortunately nothing I just mentioned is respected in the Lebanon. My personal criticism is not only to help *Télé-Liban* but all media and also to guarantee their advertising revenues which free them from politicized money. Of course I want *Télé-Liban* to have a high proportion of advertising resources, which would make it more independent.

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## PROGRAMMES

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### Turkey / Turkish series attract more and more viewers



According *Habertürk*, in 2013 over 204 million people, mainly in the Balkans, Russia and Arab countries, watched Turkish productions on the small screen. Most popular was "*The Magnificent Century*", broadcast in 45 countries in addition to Turkey and listed in the 7 ratings of best audiences worldwide. In March its director, **Timur Savcı**, received the Bavaria's "Integration Award" for his contribution to intercultural cohesion.

Turkey is not stopping there and wants to expand its audience into Europe (Greece, Italy and soon France). Turkey is the world's second largest producer of television series, just behind the United States. Last year out of around 100 series on offer, 70 were sold to 50 countries, bringing in around €150 million.

The cost of these series is relatively low mainly because they use few writers and most of the filming is done in Istanbul studios on very tight schedules.

(Sources : Myeurop, Habertürk, Turquie-news, Le Figaro)



### Egypt / "El Mashou3" launches its 2<sup>nd</sup> season

After the success of its first season on *Al Nahar TV*, the reality programme "*El Mashrou3*" is preparing its second series. The programme is open to anyone aged between 18 and 35 years old who is pursuing an entrepreneurial project. To be chosen, candidates have to fill out a form with information about themselves and of course their project, even if it is not yet fully developed.

A total of 16 candidates will be selected and the second season is scheduled for the end of 2014. There are 13 episodes and the winner walks away with a cheque and technical support to create his entrepreneurial project. Producers present the programme as a way out of the current economic crisis by promoting entrepreneurship which has been growing since 2013.

(Sources : Wamda, Daily News Egypt)



SHINEFRANCE

### [France / Shine buys the rights of the Turkish series “The End”](#)

After being bought by 35 other countries, it is now France’s turn to acquire the broadcast rights to the series “The End”. Shine is a film production company founded in 2009 and chaired by **Thierry Lachkar**, head of purchasing.

“The End” is a drama series broadcast by ATV in Turkey between January and June 2012. The story centres on Aylin, living peacefully in Istanbul until her life is turned upside down when a plane in which her husband is supposed to be travelling, crashes. She then learns that he was not on the flight, so decides to go looking for him.

(Sources : Satellifax, Toutelatélé, Shine France)



### [Tunisia / Suspension of “Andi ma n'kollek”](#)

On March 3<sup>rd</sup> Tunisia’s HAICA (*Haute Autorité Indépendante de la Communication Audiovisuelle*) decided to halt the broadcast of the series “Andi Ma n'kollek” for a month. In addition, *Ettounsiya TV*, which broadcasts the programme, has been ordered to pay a fine of 200,000 dinars. The fine follows the broadcast of an episode connecting a paternity claim with **Sheikh Hedi Gueddiche**. For the High Authority, the episode is an invasion of privacy and dignity. In the episode, a young man claims to be the illegitimate son of the Sheikh, although DNA tests ordered by Tunis’ Court of First Instance showed the claim to be false. The channels’ legal experts said on Mosaïque FM that *Ettounsiya TV* would appeal the decision. The series has been back on the small screen since April 3<sup>rd</sup>. (Source : *Tunisien numérique, investir-en-tunisie.net, Direct Info*)



### [Italy / An interactive programme for children](#)

On March 27<sup>th</sup> **Sergio** and **Francesco Manfio** released the second season of their children's series "Cuccioli-Il paese, del vento". The film carries an environmental message about renewable energy, and to do that it relies on interaction. In fact, the youngest people can actively participate in the adventures of their favourite hero through games. Sergio Manfio, the film's director, screenwriter and composer explains: "After much thought and consultation with experts, we opted for an interactive narrative which, from time to time, stops and asks the audience questions: children's participation has been very important from the emotional and educational point of view." As a TV series, "Cuccioli" is broadcast daily in 61 countries. And the first film "Cuccioli He codice Marco Polo" was released in 36 countries.

(Source: Cineuropa)

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## CLOSE UP ON...

### **COPEAM - The Mediterranean as a network (COmmission PERmanente de l'Audiovisuel Méditerranéen)**

*Every month, Méditerranée Audiovisuelle presents a portrait of one of the CMCA's members. Presentation, organisation, flagship programmes. This month, close-up on COPEAM.*

About 20 years spent encouraging cooperation in the broadcasting sector; a hundred members in the Euro-Mediterranean area, including 35 public broadcasters. Strategy, method and result: the “COPEAM formula” is based on the development of professional skills and the exchange of know-how. A lot of work with European institutions to lobby political support for Euro-Mediterranean broadcasting; an ongoing partnership with its European and Arabic counterparts (EBU and ASBU); multilateral training projects for young professionals across the Euro-Mediterranean Region as far as the Gulf countries; coordinating international co-productions (TV and radio) and promoting “Mediterranean products”; organizing forums and meetings on current topics of interest to the media.

#### **EVENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

COPEAM organizes numerous debates and actively participates in international meetings on topics related to broadcasting and culture. Exchanging good practices and promoting dialogue and cooperation are at the heart of its work and animate the many partnerships which COPEAM has created, among others, international organizations such as UNESCO, UNAOC, FAO.

#### **TRAINING**

Multilateral training is a strategic priority to develop broadcasting across the region. 25 Euro-Mediterranean countries are involved, with a large number of participants coming from the principal broadcasting organisations as well as independent professionals.

#### **BROADCASTING PRODUCTS**

Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean broadcasting means, above all, promoting and developing programmes. To do this, COPEAM promotes and coordinates projects which help create a specific broadcasting identity for the region through radio and TV productions, the preservation of Mediterranean broadcasting heritage, the exchange of regional news and innovative multimedia platforms.



## 21st COPEAM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

April 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> 2014 - Tunis

The search for a new impetus and for renewed participatory mechanisms in Mediterranean broadcasting were at the heart of COPEAM's 21st AGM:

“The Mediterranean: rethink cooperation”

Over the past two years, socio-economic and political developments have permanently changed our societies, our countries and our institutions. In both the north and the south, the media are going through a period of profound changes, like the countries in which they are located. COPEAM is now facing a major turning point in cooperation and confronting the many challenges which face us today.

These issues were discussed and analyzed on Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> at three plenary sessions:

- Reinventing a common future
- The role of the young
- The contribution of the media

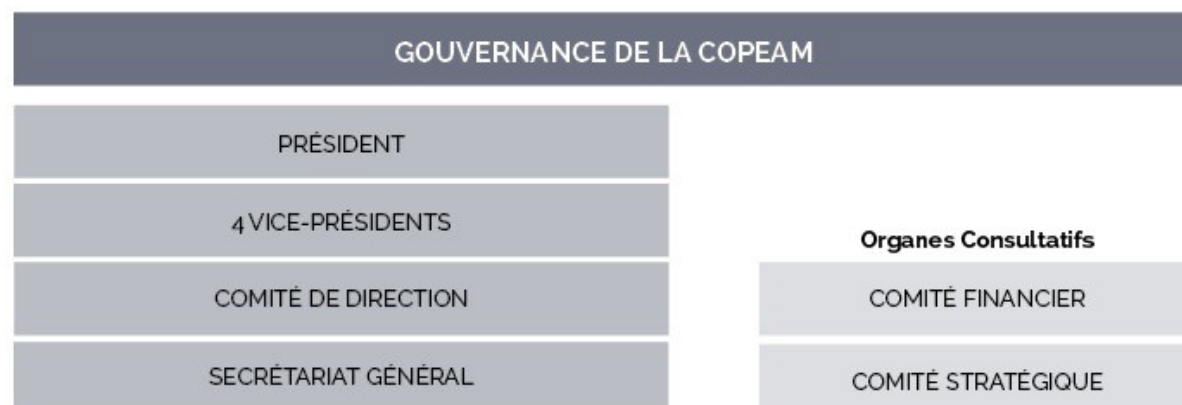
In addition, this year the AGM had an election, providing the partial renewal of the Executive Committee, the Executive Board and the chairs of COPEAM's Committees.

Pier Luigi Malesani is today's general secretary

More information available at : <http://www.copeam.org/conference.aspx?ln=en&id=42&cnf=53>

# COPEAM

## CONFÉRENCE PERMANENTE DE L'AUDIOVISUEL MÉDITERRANÉEN



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## ECONOMY

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### Spain / The Prisa group takes the crisis head-on

In the year 2012/2013 Prisa, Spain's leading communication and media group (*Union Radio, Digital Plus, El Pais*) doubled its financial losses to €649 million. This result is a direct consequence of three years of economic crisis in Europe. Pay television on the other hand is up 9.2%.

(Source : AFP)

### Israel / Massive investment in international film production



The Israeli Government, together with Jerusalem's town hall, has decided to make \$6.3 million available to support international cinema and TV productions filmed in Jerusalem.

The Minister of Economy, **Naftali Bennett**, said: *"Nothing is more important than supporting programmes which highlight Israel's beauty by investing in international productions filmed in Jerusalem."* To receive a grant, productions must commit to investing at least 25 million shekels (about \$7 million) in Israel, with 4 million in Jerusalem. In addition, the film must be set mainly in the city.

(Source : Euromed Audiovisuel)



## [Portugal / Investigation into the merger of sports channels](#)

### **SPORT-TV**

In March the Portuguese Competition Authority launched an investigation into the fund equity of pay-channel *Sport TV*, shared between the 3 channels *Zon Optimus*, *Portugal Telecom* and *Controlinveste*. The investigation focuses on the agreement between the three partners in joint control of companies *Sport TV Portugal*, *Sportinveste Multimedia* and *PPTV (Portugal Publicidade e Televisao)*. The Competition Authority has identified both horizontal and vertical competition concerns resulting from the merger.

(Source : *Telecompaper*)



## [Spain / Huge job losses at Madrid's state-run television](#)

On March 26<sup>th</sup>, a job-reduction plan was endorsed by the Spanish courts, resulting in the loss of 861 jobs out of 1,150. In late November Valencia's public television closed, weighed down by heavy debt. However, changes were made to the severance agreement, which increased from 20 days worked a year to 45. **Maria Salvador**, spokesperson for Madrid's regional government, said it was "good news for the people of Madrid because it ensures the future viability of Telemadrid as a public television company." According to the regional chairman, **Ignacio Gonzalez**, if the job-reduction plan had been refused, the channel would have had to close down. Indeed, the region, like the central government, has had to adopt drastic austerity measures to reduce both their own and the country's debt. Since the beginning of the crisis in 2008, APM (*Asociacion de la Prensa de Madrid*) has recorded 284 fewer media companies with 11,151 jobs lost.

(Source : *rtbf.be, Libération*)

### [France / Drop in funding for French cinema](#)



French film production remains strong, but the effects of the economic crisis are nevertheless being felt. Overall investment fell more than 4% according to the CNC's study (*Centre National du Cinéma*). **Benoit Danard**, director of studies at CNC, said “*there are as many films being made but with less money.*” In a year the number of films with budgets over €10 million has shrunk from 33 to 19.

TV channels are investing less in the cinema. This is explained by the drop in their turnover and a longer gap between signing a contract and the start of filming. So the cinema will be looking for other sources of funding, including internationally.

(Sources : *Les Echos, Le Figaro*)



### [France / Purchase of D8 and D17 with conditions](#)

On April 2<sup>nd</sup> the Competition Authority announced it was validating, again, Canal Plus' acquisition of two channels, D8 and D17, from the Bolloré Group. Their first decision was overturned a few months ago by the *Conseil d'Etat* after protest from competing television groups TF1 and M6. Canal Plus' commitments are identical to those made in July 2012 except for the purchase of French film rights, which have been strengthened. Now Canal Plus will not be able to pre-purchase one-year rights coupled with more than 20 films. The final step will be validation by the CSA (*Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel*).

(Sources : *Les Echos, Le Monde, Ozap*)

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France-Algeria	<a href="#">Making a film about Judas</a>
Egypt	<a href="#">Art house films come to Egyptian cinemas</a>
Morocco	<a href="#">Quarzazate wants to be the cinema's Mecca again</a>



### [Greece / Producers and directors angry](#)

The Greek Federation of Cinema Producers and Directors and the Greek Association for Documentary Films have come together to found Creators Under Threat (CUT).

They will protest against the delayed payment of the Ministry of Finance's subsidies, calling into question the EU funding already granted. When the public broadcaster ERT closed in June 2013, the Ministry of Finance temporarily took over its accounts and is supposed to make sure grants promised by ERT are paid -- some productions having been already broadcast.

The documentary director **Anna Papathanasiou** said: *"this is not charity we're waiting for. It's payment for a job finished and delivered."*

(Source : Cineuropa)



### [Spain / Shooting Fernando León de Aranoa's \*A Perfect Day in Grenada\*](#)

On March 18<sup>th</sup> Fernando León Aranoa's "*A Perfect Day*" began filming, his biggest international project to date. The cast includes **Benicio del Toro**, **Tim Robbins** and **Mélanie Thierry**. The film is produced by *MediaPro Reposado* with the participation of TVE (*Radio Television Espanola*). It is an adaptation of **Paula Fariás'** novel *Dejarse llover*. Fariás has worked as a casualty doctor with MSF (Doctors Without Borders) since 1999. He was inspired by his experience to write his novel.

A group of people, in a war-zone in Kosovo, are going to try to retrieve a corpse thrown into a well to contaminate the water. However, their task quickly proves to be extremely difficult. Aranoa's experience as documentary filmmaker and as a volunteer in war zones helped set up the project. He specifies that *"to keep a distance the film uses humour."*

(Sources : Cineuropa, Publico)



### [France-Algeria / Making a film about Judas](#)

On April 7<sup>th</sup> Franco-Algerian director **Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche** will begin shooting *“The Story of Judas Iscariot”*. It’s a very personal interpretation of a passage from the New Testament. The filmmaker questions the past to understand the present and is *“taking a modern historical approach to ancient Judaism and early Christianity.”* It *“rehabilitates Judas who was, like Jesus, the victim of power, fear and ignorance.”*

Shooting will take place in France, Tunisia and Qatar. *“The Story of Judas Iscariot”* is the director’s 5th feature film. He became known in 2002 with his drama *“Wesh, Wesh, What’s Going On?”*

(Sources : cineuropa.org, artetv)



### [Egypt / Art house films come to Egyptian cinemas](#)

On March 12<sup>th</sup> *Misr International Film* launched the Zawya Initiative at Cairo’s Odeon cinema. Zawya is an alternative cinema project which will screen national and international art house films not usually shown in Egyptian cinemas. The aim is to support and promote small, local and independent productions by young Egyptian filmmakers. As well as the screenings, there will be cinematic events, master-classes and retrospectives throughout the year. This project is an extension of the *Panorama of European Cinema* launched in 2004 by *Misr International Film*. Zawya also hopes to extend the project by including the same “image education” used by *Panorama*. The latter brings cinema to schools in partnership the country’s academic institutions.

(Source : Euromed Audiovisuel)



### [Morocco / Ouarzazate wants to be the cinema's Mecca again](#)

Ouarzazate attracts mainly big-budget historical films and productions needing a large number of extras, providing employment for hundreds of people. At the beginning of this year **Nicole Kidman** and **Tom Hanks** went there to work. **Aziz**, a film extra, adds “*as long as it lasts! There are four films currently shooting.*”

To make the town more attractive, the Moroccan Tourist Office has launched various projects, including creating a cinema museum and upgrading the film equipment. Despite that, Ouarzazate still seems to be sinking into oblivion at exactly the time the indigenous Moroccan film industry is going through a real boom, with 22 films made last year compared with 5 ten years ago.

(Sources : *La Dépêche*, *Euromed Audiovisuel*)

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## FESTIVALS

### FESTIVAL OF THE MONTH

## **Filmmor : women film-makers celebrated in Turkey from March 15th to April 20th 2014**



The 12th Festival of Women's Film, Filmmor, will be held from March 15<sup>th</sup> to April 20<sup>th</sup> 2014. Around sixty films will be screened in Bodrum, Mersin, Adana and Istanbul. Made in 2013 exclusively by women around the world, these films are of various kinds: short films, animations, documentaries. The screening will be accompanied by lectures, discussions, workshops etc.

There are 33 films in the "Women's Cinema" category.  
The other categories are:

- "Our Body is Ours" which examines the relationship to the body;
- "A Purse of Her Own" showing women's struggle to achieve financial

independence;

- "Sex - ual - ity " which focuses on gender and sexuality, questioning the standards imposed by society.

The festival will also pay tribute to two directors: Turkish director **Bilge Olgac**, 20 years after her death, and French director **Catherine Breillat**. Six of her films will be screened.

As far as awards are concerned, the "Purple Camera Award" will be given to a promising director who presents women who are independent, blooming, free -- and unlike the clichés too often shown in Turkish cinema. There will also be symbolic prizes awarded during the closing ceremony, for example the "Golden Okra Awards" which denounce male dominance in Turkish cinema.

Filmmor is only open to cooperation between women. Established in 2003, its objectives are to increase the presence and visibility of women in film and other media while at the same time helping them exchange experiences. Secondly, to increase the participation of women in film and media, and in this context improve their opportunities to express themselves while enhancing their power and productivity. And, of course , ensure them a future in which there will be no more gender discrimination in the cinema or any other aspect of life, and where women and men will have similar opportunities.

**For more information:** [click here](#).

## OTHER FESTIVALS



### [Germany / Stuttgart celebrates the Arab world](#)

From April 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> there will be the 21st Stuttgart Festival of Animated Film, which this year is celebrating the Arab world at a forum organized in parallel to the festival.

This is an opportunity for German and Arab producers and directors to meet and discuss their work during the various sessions and workshops. The forum provides opportunities for those present to cooperate on future projects for animated films.

**For more information:** [click here](#)



### [Morocco / Tétouan Festival](#)

From March 29<sup>th</sup> to April 5<sup>th</sup> the 20th Tetouan Mediterranean Film Festival took place in northern Morocco. Films made in 2013 and 2014 (documentaries, feature films and shorts) were screened in different venues around the city. 16 Mediterranean countries were represented and the films highlighted the art and culture of this region. The screenings were accompanied by round tables, seminars as well as presentations in local schools.

**For more information** [click here](#)



### [Egypt / Mobile Film Festival](#)

The 3rd Festival of Contemporary Arts is organizing the Mobile Film Festival. The idea is to make films using a cell phone. Participants must submit a film of only one minute.

The jury will then select between 50 and 60 films which will be screened for three weeks starting March 20<sup>th</sup> in various Egyptian cities. The festival is accompanied by the SMART programme which organizes workshops for making films using a phone.

**For more information:** [click here](#)



### [France / 2<sup>nd</sup> Rencontres Internationales of Arab cinema in Marseille](#)

The 2<sup>nd</sup> *Rencontres Internationales* of Arab Cinema were held from April 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> in Marseille. The aim of these meetings is to show the widest possible audience films from Arab countries which have been in upheaval since the revolution.

This year focussed on young filmmakers from these countries. The *Rencontres* were divided into 5 sections: Headlines, Young Talents, A Filmmaker, A Career, So-and-so's Cousin... and A Critic: Two Ways of Looking. The two filmmakers celebrated this year were the Chadian **Mahamat Salah Haroun** and the Moroccan **Fouzi Bensaidi**.

**For more information:** [click here](#)



### [Switzerland / Geneva International Festival of Eastern Film](#)

The 9<sup>th</sup> edition of FIFOG (*Festival International du Film Oriental de Genève*) was held from April 4<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>. The Festival took place in Geneva, Lausanne, Versoix and also in France. About a hundred films of all types were shown in more than twenty different places. Tunisian cinema was well represented, with over 10 films in the official competition and parallel categories. Algerian cinema was also at the heart of the programme, not to mention films from Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Israel. At the closing ceremony of each of the seven competitions a Gold FIFOG and a Silver FIFOG were awarded.

FIFOG explores Eastern societies in their diversity and questions the boundaries between East and West. In addition, there were discussions throughout the festival providing a platform for dialogue and exchange between Swiss and Eastern filmmakers. This year's guest of honour was the Moroccan poet and writer Tahar Ben Jelloun.

**For more information:** [click here](#)



### [Tunisia / Doc à Tunis Festival 2014](#)



The 9th *Doc à Tunis* Festival took place from April 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> in the Tunisian capital. This year's theme was the environment, with the title "The Environment: Everyone's Business". The programme included 22 documentaries, broadcast in four cultural areas of the city. They came from 6 countries: France (the majority), Tunisia, Germany, Turkey, Switzerland and Russia. The event was hosted by *Ness El Fen*, an organisation responsible for environmental issues. Their aim is to make the viewer aware of these issues and help develop critical thinking. A special tribute was paid to Yann Arthus-Bertrand, environmental activist and acclaimed documentary filmmaker.

(Sources : *Euromed Audiovisuel*, *Tap.info*, *Direct Info*)

#### **Candidate calls**

[Rencontres cinématographiques de Béjaïa](#) (Béjaïa, Algeria) – Deadline: April 10th

[PriMed](#) (Marseille, France) – Deadline: April 15th

[Astra film Festival](#) (Sibiu, Romania) – Deadline: April 15th

[Ismailia](#) : platform for documentary coproduction (Cairo, Egypt) – Deadline: April 15th

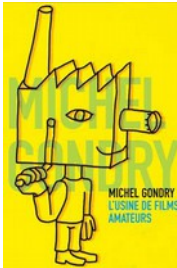
[Aan Korb](#) (London, UK) – Deadline: April 28th

[Festival International du Film Francophone](#) (Namur, Belgium) – Deadline: June 1st (shorts) and July 1st (feature films)

[Balkan Beyond Borders](#) (Sarajevo, Serbia) – Deadline: July 1st

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## THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN WAY



### [Morocco / The “Usine du film amateur” at Casablanca](#)

French director and screenwriter **Michel Gondry**, together with the French Institute of Morocco and Casamémoire (an association of Moroccan architectural heritage), have created a “factory of amateur film”. This “factory” took place in the *Fabrique Culturelle des Anciens Abattoirs* from March 12<sup>th</sup> until April 30<sup>th</sup>. The idea is simple: professionals or amateurs form groups of 5-20 people to make a film together. The project is open to all young people over the age of six.

It’s a true team effort: together they work out the film's plot, its genre, the characters, choose the cameraman etc. At the end of the shoot, each film will be screened and the apprentice filmmakers will leave with a copy of their masterpiece. The filmmaker adds that “*the Factory is not a film school but an activity*” where everyone can let his imagination run free. There are already many enrolled in Casablanca and a “*great project for Moroccan culture.*”

(Sources : *Aufaitmaroc, Libération Maroc*)



### [OIF / Grants to complete feature films](#)

The cinema component of the OIF (*Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*) has launched this year’s call for proposals to benefit from its production fund for French-language southern broadcasting. This grant is only for completing feature film projects of 52 minutes or more, either drama or documentary. Projects from Tunisia, Morocco, the Lebanon and Egypt will be posted on the professional page of the website “*images francophones*” between April 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Productions must be completed no later than November 30<sup>th</sup> 2014. The first 40 complete applications will be submitted to the Selection Committee, which will meet in June 2014.

(Source : *Euromed Audiovisuel*)

For more information: [click here](#)

(Sources : *id-film.com, cineuropa.org*)



## [Italy / Appointment with the new French cinema in Rome](#)

From April 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> the French Institute of Italy, Unifrance and the Villa Medici hosted the *Rendez-vous avec le nouveau cinéma français*. Villa Medici has created the section *Cinéastes d'aujourd'hui* for recent French cinema. This is part of the French Academy in Rome's determination to support the creativity of French cinema and to show *auteur* films. This 2014 edition included a close-up of actor **Vincent Macaigne**. None of the films have been shown in Italy though many have been screened at the most important European festivals.

(Source : Cineuropa)

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## ON THE WEB



### [Tunisia / Success for the web series "Hor Cujet"](#)

On December 23<sup>rd</sup> five students from the *Institut Supérieur des Arts Multimédias* (ISAMM) in Manouba (Tunisia) launched a web series: “Hor Cujet”. It was an immediate success since the first two videos clocked up 220,000 views on Youtube. The idea is simple: in a short video the project’s creator, **Seif Ben Amaar**, discusses the

Tunisian news from his bedroom.

He says: “I want to make videos about what Tunisians are living through, because there are things happening here which only we can understand.” The series addresses these issues in a humorous way. The Internet makes it easier to develop such programmes, giving greater freedom. The young ISAMM student adds: “On television there are more restrictions, the web allows us to confront the real criticism.”

(Sources : Huffington Maghreb, Afriqinfo)



### [Spain / "Purgatorio", a hybrid film](#)

“Purgatorio” is the first feature by Spanish director **Pau Teixidor**. At the end of March it was screened at the Malaga Festival and is now being distributed in a complex though ingenious way. The aim is to reach audiences wherever they are. Before opening in Spanish cinemas on April 4<sup>th</sup>, a short introductory version was shown on television. At the same time an internet version, condensed into four 5-minute chapters, “Purgatorio Redux” will be available on mobile devices in Spain only. So “Purgatorio” is a hybrid between feature film and web series, an alternative way of producing and distributing in a Spanish film industry going through a sharp slowdown.

(Source : Cineuropa)

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## STOP PRESS



### [France / INA launches its "mook"](#)

**Mathieu Gallet** ended his presidency at INA with a “mook” (a cross between a magazine and a book) dedicated to the world of media. Three and a half years ago INA launched a “review of the creative industries and media,” INA Global. **Serge Schick**, director of INA Expert and head of the INA Global project said: “we want something between a more factual site and a magazine with more committed articles.” Available for €15 from March 27<sup>th</sup>, the first issue ran to 10,000 copies. There is an article on the decline of Al Jazeera and an interview with Regis Debray about the Edward Snowden affair. The magazine wants to give maximum space to photojournalism and will be sold in bookstores..

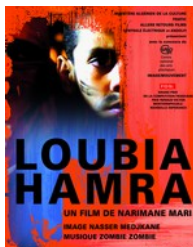
(Source : *Télérama, Les Echos*)



### [The Lebanon / First training workshop for art house films in Beirut](#)

On March 13<sup>th</sup> Beirut’s Metropolis cinema hosted a 5-day training workshop for programming and managing art house cinema. The workshop was made possible thanks to the support of the Arab cinema network (NAAS). Some 30 professionals from across the Arab world took part, led by **Rémi Bonhomme** (general coordinator of the Cannes Festival Critics’ Week) and **Rasha Salti** (programmer at the Toronto festival). The workshop’s theme was: “how to programme a festival”. The contributors provided some practical tips and then opened the floor so everyone could share their experiences. The Egyptian **Mohammad Shawky Hassan**, founder of NAAS, explained: “we met with other people working in art cinemas and film clubs and discussed the problems we have in common: financing, the audiences and even subtitling.” The aim is to solve these problems by creating festivals or alternative places to show the films.

(Source : *Euromed Audiovisuel*)



### [Algeria / The documentary “Red Beans” in London](#)

Algerian director **Narimane Mari’s** “*Loubia Hamra*” (Red Beans) was shown in competition at the 10<sup>th</sup> Birds Eye View Film Festival for women film directors. This year’s festival was held in London from April 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>. The festival’s founder and director, **Rachel Milward**, said it gives “greater visibility to women working in the film industry”, at present only 10% of filmmakers. Readers may remember last year’s festival featured Arab women directors. “*Loubia Hamra*”, produced in 2013, takes another look at Algeria’s war of independence, combining drama with documentary. The Algerian-French film has already won three awards: at FID Marseille, the Victor Renaud Award and the Grand Prix in the French competition.

(Source : Algérie Presse Service)



### [Morocco / S.O.S. for the Tangier cinémathèque](#)

The Tangier Cinémathèque is launching a crowd-funding operation. In fact, the building used to promote film culture through films, conferences and festivals is in an extremely awkward situation. There are plenty of projects but few funds. The Cinémathèque’s team decided to take action and collect 81,000 dirhams (\$10,000) to save the archives, recruit staff and re-decorate the building. The deadline to find the money was April 17<sup>th</sup>. **Malika Chaghal**, Associate Director of the Cinémathèque is optimistic “we will not give in, if necessary we’ll find other ways of getting the cash.” (Source : h24info.ma)

You can participate in the fund-raising by [clicking here](#)

Translated from the French by Tim KING