



Conseil International du Cinéma, de la Télévision  
et de la Communication Audiovisuelle ( CICT )

International Council for Film, Television  
and Audiovisual Communication ( ICFT )

Partenaire Officiel de l'UNESCO  
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## FINAL DECLARATION

### XXV EUROMEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE ON CINEMA

*"Platforms and AI: the rise of global cinema?"*

8<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – 80<sup>th</sup> Venice International Film Festival

**The Participants of the 25<sup>th</sup> Euromediterranean Conference on Cinema "Platforms and AI: the rise of global cinema?", held on September 8, 2023, during the 80<sup>th</sup> Venice International Film Festival,**

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*Thanking*

The *Conseil International du Cinéma, de la Télévision et de la Communication Audiovisuelle* for the continuous implementation of the mission entrusted in 1928 by the League of Nations to its precursor, the *Institute of Educational Cinema*, then re-confirmed in 1956 as an Umbrella Organization at UNESCO that has organized the Conference since 1995;

*and*

*OCCAM – Observatory for Cultural and Audiovisual Communication in the Mediterranean and in the World*, created by UNESCO in 1995 and in Consultative Status with the UN Economic and



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Social Council since 2005 for the support provided for the organization of the Conference and its realization;

*Assuming*

## THE DISCUSSION REPORT

*"[...] Technological advances have fundamentally transformed the way we create, produce, share and access cultural content raising questions about intellectual property protection, fair compensation of creators and transparency in AI-generated content. In this context, [we have a] collective responsibility to act and stimulate a policy dialogue to support a fair, equitable digital transition of the creative sector and reaffirm culture as a global public good."*  
**(Ernesto Ottone R.)**

*"The concept of cultural heritage has evolved a lot and it has met with digital transformation. [...] The regulation that is being attempted in Europe could act as a trailblazer at a global level because the standards that the European Union is beginning to define outline "a playing field" on artificial intelligence. Whether it will succeed, this could be the benchmark that pushes the international community to adopt forms of regulation that can put boundaries between the uniqueness of human creation, the use of technology, and the expropriation of creativity by algorithms, without stopping the digital transformation. We have to train generations capable of working and using technology without being just an instrument of it, while also ensuring that there is a human and social integration within the art of cinema. We must preserve this diversity and pluralism. To do so, a dialogue is fundamental. Transformation is not about shutting down innovation, it is about being able to govern it."* **(Francesco Rutelli)**

*"[...] The fact that the conference is held in Venice is unique and unrepeatable. In any place of cinema, be it Cannes, or Berlin, reality is inferior to cinema, it is rehabilitated, renewed and made visionary by cinema. In Venice the opposite happens: any connection with Venice makes the place where cinemas are screened more dreamlike, more spectacular than any film, and I am happy to say that the primacy of Venice in the world of cinema is a primacy of its history and glory."* **(Vittorio Sgarbi)**

*"The scenarios that the conference poses record the situation of the Mediterranean in a dramatic degradation, due to the culpable obtuseness of political and economic decision-makers, who have transformed this basin from a place of civilizational encounters to a site of tension and death. [...] Cinema remains a garrison of culture with many operators and festivals that keep this identity alive. [...] The advent of AI, which is transforming communication, will change paradigms for the better only if the tidal wave of the web – now obsolete and occupied by spam – is optimized into more secure and efficient versions, and the algorithms themselves, that are the engines of digital exchanges, are considered equally as works of art, with identifiable authors bound to codes of ethics like all registered professionals. Otherwise, the current state of chaos will turn into a Far West of lawlessness and undermine the social structure itself. [...] It is essential, therefore, that the European Parliament – and all decision makers – move forward with regulation, to open a new prosperous and just digital age."* **(Pierpaolo Saporito)**



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*"[...] Human interactions are increasingly mediated by artificial tools and are addressed by algorithms behind citizens' awareness of the consequences in their daily lives. [...] One of the phenomena under the spotlight is the undue appropriation by the artificial intelligence of human talents and their creative production. [...] The European Parliament is working to face this complex phenomenon to valorize what digitalization can offer, but also to keep alive the profound meaning and the political, economic, social, and cultural function that arts represent [as well as to endorse] a harmonised European legal framework in order to enable adequate protection. In the case of artificial intelligence, it is necessary to maintain an anthropocentric approach that sees human beings as real and not only the source and beneficiary of processes triggered by technological innovation. [...] For this reason, it is necessary to strengthen collective bargaining and to develop a real system of portability of rights and professional qualifications within the European Union. Only in this way, it will be possible to guarantee everyone decent wages, an efficient long-life professional training system, and adequate systems of health and safety at work. [...] Only broad alliances can address a global challenge."* **(Daniela Rondinelli)**

*"Since the foundation of this Conference, everything has changed in the Mediterranean: from the hopes of the Barcelona Agreements to the total lack of interest that followed the German reunification, which saw Europe concentrate investments in and attention to the East, leaving out the Southern front, with the dramatic consequences that we see. Only cinema has maintained its focus on the Mediterranean basin and has been able to hold the – unfortunately slender – threads of a fusion of civilization that persist, in which every immigrant is a bearer rather than a social outcast. [...] Promoting widespread festivals in Italy but also abroad, meetings, open communication on platforms not as a source of profit but tools of communication, is, therefore, crucial to relaunch the European and Mediterranean community."* **(Luciana Castellina)**

*"[...] There [are] no clear aggregate figures on investments in AI. [However, from what there is, it is clear that] the European Union will need to bind transatlantic alliances. [...] We need effective regulations, not ones that we put in place to buffer when the damage is already done, but ex-ante regulations. [...] To be effective in the regulatory sphere [of AI], owning the technological development of the programmes is crucial. [As to the public], it will be the spectators who will manage, who will lead this kind of process and we should not be under any illusions [that they will disregard the facing challenges and risks] because the cinema public has been quick to accept technological innovations and to demand to continue on the path of innovations. [...] Audiences will likely be happy with the use of AI, for voices, costumes, and set designs, because so far, they have been extremely receptive and quick to adapt to the technological changes that cinema has introduced in its evident. However, the public has always demanded something else from cinema: a function of representation of our society and a function of inspiration and guidance concerning our transformations. [...] What will be asked of cinema, is an ethical attitude, is to have values. This is the unique role of cinema: while AI is already having an impact on it, movies have to establish a narrative supporting our society in coping with the impact of such a technology, using poetry, beauty and moral standards - as happened when cinema at its best mirrored great social changes."* **(Niccolò Rinaldi)**

*"[...] We are faced with an approach that will undoubtedly succeed in refining itself more and more in the years to come, which we need to deal with before our worries grow stronger. [...] The thirst for innovation should necessarily be accompanied by reason and by a dialogue with those who wish to ban it. Arguably, there are risks that we neither*



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*know nor can imagine and account for at this stage. Not the least of which is informing a conscious user of whether what she is seeing is real or unreal.” (Gianantonio Da Re)*

*“[...] At which points does the cinema industry change under the impact of AI? First, it will impact the creators, then those commissioning the products. Then, it’ll be investors, production and distribution companies, and finally users. [...] If the concept is based on the maximization of the audience, you decide which movie you’ll produce based on what will be most successful. The high risk is that it will be homogeneous, a common global product available everywhere. [...] The risk of the AI-based decision is that the decision to make a movie will only be based on the expectation of success. [...] But tomorrow, where’s the limit? What about ownership? And property rights? What about the concept of public domain?” (Giacomo Mazzone)*

*“[...] The countries of the global south see AI as a great opportunity, especially in the educational field and the medical field. The concern is how to ensure that its access is as widespread as possible to populations and groups that do not have adequate means of technological infrastructure. In other parts of the world, the use of AI can lead to severe violations of human rights and therefore require regulations and protocols that are able to control its use. [This context stresses] the importance of addressing the issue through the human rights-based approach. The first step is to map the negative impact of AI on the enjoyment of fundamental rights and the potential violation of rights. There is a need to define a verification tool to establish and use a checklist and make it possible to analyze on a case-by-case base. [...] It is to try to prevent AI from reinforcing structures that are based on inequality. The use of algorithms may impact aspects of inclusion and exclusion of certain social groups, ethnic groups, minorities, and people with certain political or sexual orientations, with an exclusion intended, thus being used in discriminatory ways. [...] Equally important is to study how AI can control or disrupt aspects of individual autonomy, authentic thinking and the human being’s capacity for discernment. [It is thus] important to educate people about understanding AI. [...] By establishing clear parameters and a scale of risk one can evaluate, from time to time, the application of AI in a way that privileges its positive aspects, enjoying the benefits it can bring to social welfare and seeing the potential instead of the negative views on rights.” (Elisabetta Noli)*

*“[...] The key is understanding the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. [Right now] we’re talking about having the possibility to understand artificial intelligence, having a possibility to connect with different groups and wonder where exactly we go, as humans. Ethics is the basis of everything. [...] What we have to do, then we have to find the young people who are going to replace us, who are going to be the leaders of many countries, to give us a chance to understand where we go, and how we go.” (Jasmina Bojic)*

*“[...] As ICFT, we support the necessity of making films. Of course, one thing is to help with props, background, or special situations, but another thing is to help with writing a story, editing, for producing, and we have to be careful not to stifle creativity. [...] AI offers new opportunities but new risks. Where does AI begin? And where does it end? How is it done? Answering will help us to limit an uncontrollable development.” (Serge Michel)*

*“The Digital Revolution in cinema, through platforms and artificial intelligence, risks accentuating the push towards an idea of cinema exclusively understood as a commodity rather than a good, thus neglecting its qualifying aspect of the universal heritage of humanity according to UNESCO principles. Careful, continuous and pressing vigilance is*





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*therefore recommended so that the film is reaffirmed as a "cultural asset" to be protected and promoted as such, as defined by the Biennale Cinema Convention held precisely in Venice in 1981 (March 25/29)."* (**Vittorio Giacci**)

*"[...] After the digital era, we are going to have the artificial intelligence era. [...] I think that artificial intelligence is something that is not going against creativity, but I agree that there is a danger in artificial intelligence. There's a danger because we have to set some values in order to understand and control it. [But] who is going to set these values? [...] If artificial intelligence is not well managed, we can be left only with artificial and no intelligence. I still feel we are very far. [...] I'm closely paying attention to what's happening in the movie industry, on the other hand, I don't want to renounce my artisanal way of working."* (**Ruggero Gabbai**)

*"[...] all politicians in Europe – and the world – will have to think about the protection of cultural differences to promote them and the associated identities that come with them, in Europe and all over the world. [Now], it's time to exploit and concretize this opportunity passing from words to action in order to advance and protect cultural differences as well as traditions."* (**Alessandro Mandelli**)

*"[...] Cinema is holistic: it includes literature, politics, economics, aesthetics, ethics, all aspects of your life and human culture and human culture and intellect and it will survive. [...] AI can contribute in terms of technology, of technicality, of organization, of logistics, [serving a great deal in terms of efficiency] but then there's the ethical concern of the copyright and the dehumanizing the human. [...] The question is: is cinema an industry, an art or a means of expression? Is it human or technical? [In any case], cinema should preserve its identity, originality, and humanness, but it should be open to innovation and technology: it's unavoidable. [In this sense], creativity could represent a turning point. So, what matters the most is insight into the human condition. Technology can be a facilitator, but it starts the goal, it's not the purpose of the end in itself. [There is a need] to introduce media and information literacies in schools, educational systems and in all aspects of life, for civil society to consume these new products and to promote its intellectual, emotional intelligence alongside with their artificial intelligence."* (**Salmane El Allami**)

*"[...] how can we define cinema? Is it art or just business? [In any case] we should concentrate on supporting the national film industries. Everyone has to promote their national film industry. [...] We need creativity and to support and stand for local culture."* (**Ahmet Boyacioglu**)

*"[...] All of us know the cinema industry as we know it today is the outcome of hundreds of years of cinema history and a series of technological developments. The Digital Era revolutionized the cinema industry on multiple bases, [encompassing also] the democratization of Cinema. [OOT Platforms] are playing a significant role in preserving and promoting local languages and cultures. [They] also empower the local communities because their voices are amplified, they share their stories and experiences as well as challenges. [They] would also bridge the digital divide, by making content accessible to remote and underserved regions. Finally, [they] offer lots of variety and diversity in the content and make movie-watching convenient, accessible, and affordable for a wider segment.*

*[...] By leveraging AI systems, the film and entertainment industry can make data-driven decisions to enhance storytelling character development and audience engagement. These insights not only help studios mitigate risks but also contribute to creating more compelling and relatable stories that resonate with viewers. AI actually helps you to*



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*create better content. [...] Protecting human creativity and the art of filmmaking, in turn, is of paramount importance as the world collectively evaluates this technological paradigm shift.*

*[...] Cinema is a global language, a fundamental right also, therefore empowering the culture of cinema in all its formats and shapes is necessary for its wider reach." (Rizwan Ahamd)*

*Convene on the following*

## DECLARATION

*ON EUROMEDITERRANEAN COOPERATION:*

1. To face the ongoing process in the Mediterranean Sea, we believe that the artistic and cultural efforts promoted by UNESCO are one of the key responses we appreciate most. For this purpose, we suggest relaunching the UNESCO Mediterranean Program (\*), created in 1998, and its powerful network of hundreds of private and public institutions and *fora*, many still operational, to re-aggregate them into a common action on the wave of this Conference and towards a great new *multaqa* on "cultures for peace".

In particular, we recommend the creation of a Mediterranean streaming Platform to restore a shared Mediterranean identity and contribute to guaranteeing the human rights frequently violated in the area. Such a platform would be aimed at showing the awarded best movies selected by each country to enrich the euro-Mediterranean network on TV, digital platforms and cinema manifestations. This should contribute to building a new alliance involving the countries of the North and the South, allowing the latter to overcome the current gap and find a new way for the participation of all communities, giving voice to the migrants with special access for reconnecting with their families in a context of virtually civilized coexistence.

*ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:*

2. The emergence of Artificial Intelligence has raised some concerns and expectations. If used appropriately and with respect for creative professionals, Artificial Intelligence tools can bring significant benefits to the cinema, audiovisual, and arts industries. On the other hand, Artificial Intelligence could lead to the disappearance of creative works and cause further concentration of the supply chain of films.

- Artificial intelligence and its constituent algorithm raise hopes and threats because of its hidden mechanisms, owned with private rather than social purposes.



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- The effort of regulation activated by the European Parliament should be reinforced, treating the algorithm, at the origin of any Artificial Intelligence, exactly as an intellectual work, enabling the identification of each author who must be licensed by a professional *ad-hoc* register to be officially established. Such instrument will allow the monitoring of the activity and prevent any negative socio-economic effects on the web, instead of what is happening now.
  - Consequently UNESCO, under the realm of the United Nations, shall define such regulatory framework addressing:
    - a. Respect for the uniqueness of artistic creation and the irrepressibility of the artist as a physical person.
    - b. Fair remuneration and respect for the author's rights.
    - c. Prohibition of attributing the intellectual property of a work produced by machines to the owner of those machines.
    - d. Redefinition of the “public domain” concept.
3. Finally, considering that all digital actions are based on the web – the current universal operating base of the internet – we shall emphasise its obsolete and insecure state. We recommend deeply verifying the World Wide Web system according to the advent of Artificial Intelligence and its emerging products and services. It might be necessary to redesign it by creating a new web system to ensure regular safe activity and provide first and foremost adequate connectivity for all people, in order to guarantee equal rights to all and prevent discrimination from being carried out within the new digital society.
4. The XXV Euromediterranean Conference on Cinema mandates the Conseil International du Cinéma, de la Télévision et de la Communication Audiovisuelle, CICT-ICFT to establish, in collaboration with UNESCO, a specific group to implement the identified actions.



Networks and activities



Network of Mediterranean Study Centres	15
Network for Research on the Mediterranean Regional Area	15
Euro-Mediterranean Social Science Network (EUMENESS)	16
Network of Academies of Mediterranean Countries	16
Community of Mediterranean Universities (CMU)	18
PEACE Programme	19
Mediterranean Network for the Distance Education of Managers	20
Networks for Education on the Environment and on Tolerance in the Mediterranean	21
a) The Children of the Mediterranean	21
b) Young People and the Mediterranean	22
c) The Western Mediterranean Sea Project	22
d) The South-Eastern Mediterranean Programme (SEMEP)	23
Mediterranean Citizens' Forum	23
Network of Mediterranean Women for Co-operation and Parity	24
a) Mediterranean Women's Forum	24
b) UNESCO Centre for Women and Peace in the Balkans	24
c) Network 'Squares of the Mediterranean for Women and Peace'	25
d) Network of Vigilance for Co-operation and Parity	25
e) Workshops on the History of Women in the Mediterranean	25
f) 'El Boletín'	26
g) Pilot project for trans-Mediterranean co-operation on behalf of migrant women: 'Successful integration or the choice to return'	26
h) The Friendship Group	27
i) The Exchange Market	27
Mediterranean Centre for Human Rights	27
Mediterranean and Black Sea Regional Network against Intolerance, Discrimination and Violence	28
The Mediterranean NGOs Forum	28
Network of Mediterranean Foundations	29
Networks of Cities	29
a) Network of World Heritage Cities	29
b) The project '100 Historic Sites of the Mediterranean Coastal Heritage'	30
c) Urban Development and Fresh Water Resources: Small Coastal Towns Network	30
d) Festivals of the Sun	32
Forum of Mediterranean Towns and Territories	33
Network of Cultural Centres in the Southern Mediterranean	34
International Institute of Mediterranean Theatre	35
DIONYSOS, Network of the Ancient Sites for the Performing Arts	35
International Council of Mediterranean Cinematic Manifestations (MCM)	36



Observatory for Cultural and Audio-visual Communication in the Mediterranean (OCCAM)	37
Mediterranean Media Network	39
- CMCA	39
- COPEAM	39
- JEMSTONE	39
- REMFOC	40
- European Children's Television Centre	40
- Training Programme for Mediterranean Women Journalists	40
- International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX)	41
Computer Networks and Services in Mediterranean Countries	41
The Medlib Network	41
Virtual Libraries and Forums in the Mediterranean	42
The Cultural Tourism Network	43
The Al Andalus Heritage	43
Network of Mediterranean Cultural Itineraries	44
Network for Support to the Internationalization of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in the Mediterranean	45
Mediterranean Solar Council, the Medsolar Network, UNESCO Summer Schools and Mediterranean Workshops	45
Division of Water Sciences	46
a) Study of hydrological regimes: FRIEND-AMHY Network	46
b) The Wadi Hydrology Programme	47
Oceanographic Research Networks in the Mediterranean	47
- PRIMO	48
- POEM	48
- IOC	48
- MEDGLOSS	48
- MEDGOOS	49
Medinfo, Seaweb and Medisle Networks	50
Mediterranean Network for the Science and Technology of Polymer-Based High-Tech Materials (MEDNET)	50
ENDA Networks in the Mediterranean	52
a) ENDA Maghreb	52
b) ENDA Inter-Arab	52
Mediterranean Development Network (RDM)	53
Mediterranean Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (CMEDD)	53

Activities associated with programme



Euromed Civil Forum	57
Interparliamentary Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean (CSCM)	57
The Council of Europe's Transmed-Info Network	58
Mediterranean Observatory for Information and Reflection (OMIR)	58
Blue Plan	59
Mediterranean Crans Montana Forum	60
International Centre for the Human Sciences	60
Arabia Plan	61
a) The Arab Women Writers' Newsletter (AWN)	61
b) The Project to Promote Arab Artistic Creativity (CREART)	61
'Bayt Al-Hikma' Project	62
a) The Summer University	62
b) The Encyclopaedias	62
c) Commemoration of Omar Khayyam	62
AMAR-UNESCO Project:	
- European and Islamic Civilizations, a Permanent Forum for Dialogue	63
Mediterranean Programme of the European Cultural Foundation	64
- Diagnoses	64
- Toledo: Escuela de Traductores	64
- Memories of the Mediterranean	64
Association of Tourism and Culture for Peace	64
Mediterranean Institute for Culture, Tourism and Employment	65
Programme of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) on Cultural Symbiosis in Al Andalus	65
International Association for Science, Education and Culture in the Mediterranean (SECUM)	66
Association for Cultural Exchanges in the Mediterranean (ECUME)	67
International Dance Biennale 1998	68
Mediterranean Multaqa	69

