

**Declaration by the President of the
World Electronic Media Forum
Mr. Jean Stock**

**Reporting Session to the Summit
Friday, 12 December 2003**

**President of the Summit,
Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

He was 35. He was Australian, and father to an 8-year-old boy. And he died in Iraq last March. Taras Protsiuk is one of 123 journalists to have lost their lives since the beginning of the year while doing their job gathering information.

I have only three minutes at my disposal. So I won't be asking you for a minute's silence in memory of these 123 journalists. However, I suggest we adopt the Italian tradition of applauding to say goodbye and thank you to those who left us before their hour had come.

We have been 621 people here, representing a total of 374 organizations from 112 countries, attending between Tuesday and today the World Electronic Media Forum organized in conjunction with Monsieur Shashi Tharoor, UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, his staff in New York and Geneva, and the Swiss authorities.

For the first time in media history the heads of the world's broadcasting unions have adopted a joint platform, which was handed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan on your behalf.

This platform served as a basis for our work. I will not reiterate its content here, as it has already been given to you, but just allow me to draw your attention to the highlights of our work that followed this declaration from broadcasters. I would draw five conclusions:

- 1 There is no conflict between software and hardware, between the content and the carrier. One cannot exist without the other and consequently one must respect and valorize the other. We, the electronic media, are prepared to provide the content.

- 2 In the many territories of the emerging countries, the new media of the information society is first and foremost radio.

The figures speak for themselves:

- There are 6.5 billion people on Earth,
- 700 million own a computer,
- 1.4 billion a mobile phone,
- 3.5 billion a television set,
- and 4.5 billion own a radio.

Radios are above all local media. Often they are the voice of a rural community.

For example, ten years ago in Sub-Saharan Africa there were just 10 independent radio stations; now there are thousands.

3 The Web may be worldwide but its success relies on the organization of the local connection facilities. To achieve this aim, consulting and creating websites via the radio using wifi connections is now the quickest, cheapest way to enable communities to use the Web in their own language. These small transmitter-receivers connect to the Internet via satellite.

4 Local productions can also present a real interest at worldwide level. We would like to see every country authorize the unlimited uplinking of pictures and sound from their territories via satellite, just as has been done in Europe for over 50 years with Eurovision.

In addition to information, this technique must also allow local, regional and national cultures to be spread around the globe. This is the role Euroradio has already been playing in Europe for more than 10 years for music exchanges.

5 Radio and television feed cultural identity and diversity. They are therefore a forum for democratic debate. They are spaces that must remain open to everyone. And to fulfil this mission, broadcasting needs the editorial independence that guarantees its credibility. Yet to be credible a journalist needs to be trained. We would therefore like to emphasize to you the importance of training for journalists and those who provide them with information in your name.

At this very moment there are 400 journalists in prison. This situation is certainly also the result of a lack of responsible, professional contacts between those who govern and those who inform the population.

I will conclude by telling you that we are already preparing ourselves for the Tunis summit in November 2005. Two years in our industry is a very long time. We need only remember that the Internet has existed for the general public for nine years. Broadcasters, the content producers, and journalists will be preparing for the Tunis summit in such a way that in two years' time, each and every one of you, heads of State and government, will be able to say: "I am proud of my radio and television stations and the role they play in the information society. They are professional and independent. This evolution, or might I even say this revolution, is thanks to me!"

Thank you.