



EUROPEAN BROADCASTING UNION

UNION EUROPEENNE DE RADIO TELEVISION

June 2007

## WELCOMING ADDRESS BY JEAN REVEILLON

International Organizations are collective organizations. In our case, the European Broadcasting Union has 73 active members in 55 countries - Europe's national broadcasters - and 43 associate members in 25 countries.

The EBU is one of eight Broadcasting Unions in the World Broadcasting Union, who collectively represent broadcasters serving more than 4.5 billion people.

Our aim is to serve our members in technology, programme making for radio, television, and new media, and in legal affairs.

We have our own permanent vision and sound distribution network, which connects the capitals of all European states and many more states besides, via satellite and fiber optic connections, from our control rooms here in Geneva. Our network can carry normal television programmes and high definition television.

You may have seen our network in action via annual events such as the Eurovision Song Contest, via many of the great sporting event, and via the daily worldwide exchange of news. The EBU is part of the lives of virtually every European citizen, and we supply news and sport around the world.

We are very conscious of the need to adapt ourselves to evolving technology, and the evolving needs of society. We know that broadband delivery will become ever more important, and be a partner for broadcasting. We know that we are on the threshold of the great transition to High Definition television. HDTV will bring new experiences to programme makers and viewers. Broadband will bring a world of choice to viewers and listeners.

I am not an engineer, but I can observe what is happening in the technical world.

One of the consequences of digitization is that essentially anything and everything is now possible technically.

What we have to do is to decide NOT whether we can make something technically. Whatever it is we need, we can probably make. What we have to decide is THE KIND OF WORLD WE WOULD LIKE TO BE PART OF.

So many things are possible with digital phones, Internet, and broadcasting. We can try everything, and see what succeeds and what fails. But, better, we could also try asking ourselves what would make a better world, and concentrate on those things. This should be a role of International Organizations.

The other consequence of digitization is an enormous MULTIPLICATION OF TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR THE SAME SERVICES. As one example, for broadcasting to mobiles, there are now ten different and incompatible technical standards in the world, and no one has yet started any major services yet. What will the situation be like in a few years? I know there is no easy recipe, but the international organizations must work harder to gain international consensus for single technical standards. The situation gets worse and worse.

I know we cannot wave a magic wand and hope for an easy path to either of these two things. But, if we never try, we will certainly never succeed.

If we are to serve our Members we must try to anticipate trends and tendencies. We cannot wait for the future to overtake us; we must help to shape it. The only sure way to be ready for the future is to help make it yourself. This is what we must try to do.