

Opening speech – Robert Guédiguian **Brussels – June 22 2006**

It is extremely moving to be in front of a cradle, to assist to a birth... Especially when what is born is a new way of resisting to the homogenization of our world.

Faced with the breathtaking concentration of the means of distribution of cinema and television, but also of press and edition, we can fear for the future of the freedom of creation, and more generally for the freedom of thought of our time. We could even be worried for freedom itself in our contemporary democracies. Our act today is for that very reason a strong political act, in order to preserve the multiplicity of work of art, the hatching of new tendencies, all things without the truth of a society remains hidden. It is also a strong act for Europe, for the Europe that we claim, which means a Europe not only conceived as a market, but also as a vision of the world.

Our first task, after having shown the necessity of our existence, will be to obtain from our cities, our regions, our countries and from Europe that they put into practice this beautiful dialectic developed by Marx in his "Critic", demolishing the bourgeois idea of formal equality by substituting to it real equality: for the right to be just, it should not be equal for all. On the contrary, in front of unequal situations, it has to be unequal.

Public authorities, whichever they are, have to favour the independent, the pioneers. They have to advantage them, to favour them so that their work can continue and get developed. They have to over-protect the weakest to the detriment of the strongest.

We could even say that, without the commitment of the independent, the bigger groups, the concentrated groups of which we were talking about above, will rapidly have nothing left to sell, since they most of the time take over, once the success is established, the authors discovered by the independents.

Independent producers, exhibitors and distributors are thus for a double reason vital for our countries.

First of all they are essential to the diversity of opinions without which democracy cannot exist.

Second of all they provide and renew the successes of the so-called "cultural industries".

Here we are. I wish us beautiful struggles, great victories and above all a long life.

Robert Guédiguian