

# **OPEN CHANNELS FOR EUROPE 1997**

4th Convention  
of the German Open Channels  
Berlin Nov. 13 - 16, 1997

## **The Berlin Declaration**

We, the participants of the congress "Open Channels for Europe!"

- SUPPORT the principles stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Declaration on the right to development, and welcome the Amsterdam Protocol to the Treaty of the European Union
- AFFIRM that, in the spirit of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the MacBride Commission, the right to communicate - including the right to expression - must be recognised and defended as inalienable for individuals and peoples and as indispensable to the democratisation of societies
- AFFIRM that, in the sense of The People's Communication Charter, communication should contribute to the empowerment of people to defend human dignity, equality and liberty against pervasive forms of censorship, distorted and misleading information, stereotyped images of gender and race, restricted access to knowledge, and insufficient channels to communicate their ideas and opinions
- AFFIRM that guaranteed and non-discriminatory access for the public to all means of communication are essential to the creation and preservation of a democratic process leading to a cohesive Europe built and sustained by its inhabitants
- VIEW the ongoing pursuit of deregulation and liberalisation policies in media and communication; the continued growth of poverty, unemployment and exclusion as the increasing risk for reinforcing nontransparent, elitist and undemocratic trends in Europe.

Based on the above, we

- COMMIT ourselves to building a European coalition for citizen's media as part of a global movement for media equity and democratic communication structures. This coalition will encourage and strengthen the effort among groups working at national level, as well as develop and consolidate their cooperation. The coalition will also advocate on a European level the non-discriminatory access for the public to all means of communication as an essential part of the civil right to free expression.
- CALL UPON the European Parliament and the European Commission, as well as national parliaments and governments in Europe, to recognise that people's direct access to information and participation in community television and radio and open channels are indispensable to democratic societies. They are essential for the development, preservation and integration of cultural identity and national, regional and community identities. Thus they are an important part of the foundation for a Europe for all people.
- DEMAND that in Europe, as well as on a local and regional level, an adequate legal and economic framework be created which will guarantee for the public non discriminatory access to all means of communication, all relevant public information and institutions, media policy decisions making processes, and appropriate forms of expression.