

24th Annual Conference



Kolding, Denmark 2006

Annual Conference Summary

prepared for Circom Regional by

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(<http://www.sdu.dk/>)

<http://www.circom-regional.org>
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Digital, dialogue and diversity – 24th AC in Kolding

By Niels Overgaard



The annual Circom conference kicked off at Comwell hotel at 9:30 Thursday morning when TV Syd director Tim Johnson welcomed the assembled crowd to the conference and the city of Kolding. After the welcome he presented a short film about Denmark and the structure of regional TV in the country. Life in the duckyard is nice, the film stated, as long as you're hatched from a swan.

The next speaker was the mayor of Kolding, Per Bødker, who gave a well delivered speech in English. He too welcomed everyone to the city and joked that he didn't know how expensive the conference would be, when he accepted to host it. He then urged the participants to remember their credit cards when attending the two things that Kolding boasts the most off: Pubs and shops. He then went on to spend some time explaining the comprehensive structural reform that Denmark is undergoing at the moment.

The next speaker was Bo Libergren of the new region Southern Denmark who said more about the work and challenges of the new regions. Tim Johnson introduced Erik Berg Hansen of NRK in Norway, who spoke English with a happy, Norwegian accent.

The crowd was clearly amused as he lightened up the atmosphere with a couple of well timed jokes. He went on to touch on a structural reform in the making in Norway which I assume he was asked to speak about. The last part of Berg Hansens presentation was about NRK's experience with decentralisation in a view to prepare for the future. The bottom line is clear: More decentralisation, which includes more video journalists, led to lower costs and higher ratings.

Next up was the president of Circom, Anita Bhalla of the BBC. She also welcomed the participants and gave a short speech in which she underlined that surveys show, that amidst the forces of globalisation, the demand for regional TV is as high as ever.

She then showed a video, that focused on the three d's who, according to Bhalla, should be at the heart of regional TV in the future: Digital, dialogue and diversity. Last man up was Germanys Peter Sauer of Bayerische Rundfunk. He used the upcoming football world cup in Germany to exemplify the new media platforms influence. At the world cup, he stated, the Germans have the possibility of watching all the games on a so-called TV-handy, a mobile phone with a small screen. He then went on to introduce some of the people of the workshops who gave short presentations of their particular topic.

Politics - Turn on or switch off?

By Anne-Sofie Wesche

The freedom of speech is the freedom to tell stories; this was one of the numerous points, which arose from the first plenary session. But why tell a story if no one is listening. This seems to be one the issues that the regional stations all over Europe are struggling with.

The first speaker was Craig Henderson, head of programming for BBC English regions. He named six elements, which he found important when attracting audience.

The first one was *talent* and knowing your stuff, e.g. when practicing political journalism, you have to possess knowledge regarding the issues raised during an interview.

Secondly, *be creative* and do the interview on the backseat of a limo when debating parking issues with the mayor.

The third point is *knowledge*; the reporter must have a profound knowledge on the area she is covering. Fourthly, have *relevance* and keep in step with the issues that matters to the audience.

Local is the fifth point, some of the news must stem from the local life. And finally Craig Henderson mentioned the *web*, which according to him adds new potential to political life, and provides an interactive link between the user and the media.

As mentioned above one of the corner stones of attracting viewers is being talented. This is clearly one of the main characteristics of the next speaker Scott Rensberger. He is covering the political issues from Washington as a one-man-band. He is the most awarded VJ in North America. His approach to politicians bare resemblance to Michael Moore, and as he bluntly puts it: "Politicians have a slogan, but do they achieve it". He has therefore devoted himself to turn the political message upside down and show the seamy side of politics. Scott Rensberger explained that there are three main elements in his stories: heart, mind

and pocket. He aims at telling histories with the three elements profoundly integrated. During his speech Scott Rensberger showed clips from his own productions as well as from a nightly program called The Daily Show, which is a comedy-news show watched by the younger audience in USA.

At last but not least was Lars Jespersen, the editor of Nordjyske Medier. He explained how they successfully have integrated a newspaper with a 24H television show all day. Lars Jespersen explained how they have changed the focus from the conflict between politicians to solving the problem. In that sense journalism becomes more involved in its local area as a catalyst. One of methods used, was to place local politicians in a summer cottage for 24 hours with the task of solving local issues.

All of three speakers emphasized the importance of involving the viewers as well as approaching them directly with relevant issues.

From local - To international

By Anna Klitgaard

When the Danish newspaper, Jyllandsposten, published the 12 cartoons picturing the Prophet Muhammad in September of 2005, nobody could have foreseen the crisis ahead. Or could they? Lars Erslev Andersen, professor at Southern University of Denmark (SDU), and Frank William, broadcasting director at Nederlandse Moslim Omroep (NMO) discussed whether the media needs more self-control

Burning Danish flags, embassies at fire, Danish diary products being boycotted in the Middle East. Denmark lost its innocence during the Muhammad-crisis. Lars Erslev Andersen, Professor at SDU, says:

- Danes suddenly found out, that they were no longer isolated in the world. What was discussed in Denmark, quickly spread out to the bigger world.

Danes have perhaps, for too many years, believed that they were loved throughout the world. Even despite the often very harsh tone in the Danish foreign policy. And whilst Danes have joined Americans in bombing Iraqis and Afghans, we have still had the firm belief, that the Muslim world loved us for our liberalism and tolerance.

The cartoons changed all that. Suddenly the Danes were not the darlings of the world. They were hated. We saw our embassies being burnt, whilst the mobs looted them. Heads of State spoke out against the Danish government and the now infamous newspaper.

In Denmark the media were trying to come to terms with the new situation. They were looking for a new enemy, an enemy we could hold

responsible for this new and disastrous situation. Lars Erslev Andersen explains:

- The media started to look for a responsible group. Just like the Spanish and English media did when the bombs hit Madrid and London. But the enemy did not come from the outside. It came from within. And it wasn't a group, but a loose knitted network of individuals.

Like in Denmark, the Muslims of Holland have been a part of a very sharp and critical debate during the past years. This indirectly led to the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004.

Frank William is the broadcasting Director of the Dutch public service network NMO. Since 1997 he has worked for the only state run Muslim channel in Europe. And he is no doubt about what went wrong with the cartoons:

- The editor of the newspaper could have asked the Muslim leaders about their opinion. Both about the cartoons and van Gogh's film, Submission. Muslims do have humour, but we do not like to be humiliated.

Therefore Frank William calls on the media to show a greater degree of self-control. Those involved in broadcasting and reporting should have a good general knowledge of the area they are reporting from. Likewise the media should concentrate on moderate Muslims rather than on the extreme Islamic groups.

- The moderate Muslims have for too long been excluded from the public debate. By solely concentration on violent Middle Eastern group, people forget, that the people on their front doorstep are peaceful. The Muslims of Europe proved this during the Muhammad-crisis.

Freedom of the media

By Anne-Sofie Wesche

This could be the most important topic of the whole conference - how to remain independent of the politicians and others who have an interest in interfering with the journalistic content.

The participants had each a different story to tell; yet they bore similarities. They all revolved around the difficulties of keeping a public station independent of pressure from the surroundings, this being politicians, financial supporters and other opponents.

One of the speakers, George Lee from RTE, Ireland pointed out the essential needs for a public station to stay independent, those being a strong democracy, a strong editorial judgment, and finally as he eloquently described the relationship between the media and the politicians:

- Good neighbors need strong walls.

According to Niels Jørgen Thøgersen, who has been working with media in EU for the past 32 years freedom of the media is fundamental and

non-negotiable; "Any journalist must be able to publish when and how she wants. We have to fight for that right with all the guns blowing "

Moreover Niels Jørgen Thøgersen suggested that new EU members must ensure that the freedom of the press is sustained. In that sense he pointed out that EU could do more for the freedom of the press such as starting a program which supports journalists within EU e.g. as a traineeship. At the moment EU has no instrument, which can ensure that new countries sustain the freedom of the press, however this could solve by appointing a media ombudsman in EU.

According to many of the participants one of the most important thing is for the media to realize that they themselves have the responsibility to support and help one another, and to speak up on behalf of those less autonomous.

It was truly an important session, which we all can learn a great deal from.

Workshops

Viewers or content Providers

By Katja Damkier Hansen

- Viewers must have power - The sentence struck the crowd of journalists and other media people who had chosen to participate in the workshop "Viewers or content providers". The words belonged to Michael Lally, RTE TV, who had come all the way from Ireland to contribute with his message about the demands of journalism today.

At RTE TV Michael Lally among others has developed a new TV experiment. The main idea is to include local citizens from the different communities in making TV news broadcast. The purpose is to make close links between TV and viewers.



Local TV is not national TV

All interested communities in Ireland had the opportunity to apply to the RTE citizen journalism project. The only requirement for the communities was to come up with an idea to use as a feature in the local news broadcast.

RTE casted the communities with the best ideas and gave them training in handling cameras and managing interview situations. But an important thing for RTE TV was to make it clear that the local features should not look like the national news:

- Watch what we do tonight and make sure you don't do the same, Michael Lally explained. These was the words he had told his new group of wannabe journalists, who had volunteered to the project and who in the daytime had nothing to do with the media business.

Norwegian private videos

Ireland is not the only country to come up with new concepts within journalism. Norway is another country that has started to use the viewers as content providers. According to NRK, the national Norwegian TV station, it is important to use the viewers in order to make them feel part of what they see every day in the TV. For NRK identification is an important keyword. Every day the national news broadcast makes sure to appeal to the Norwegian viewers by encouraging them to send in private video films of interesting occasions from real life.

- The other day a 10-year old boy had filmed a flood with his private video camera. We used the pictures and published them on our website and our journalists wrote the news story, the Norwegian editor Inger Johanne Solli from NRK explained.

Another new element at NRK is the cooperation with local newspapers. The idea is to be able to reach out to the most remote areas of the country. The local newspapers deliver local pictures to NRK who then writes the story and publishes it.

Danish representative at the workshop Tim Johnson, TVSyd, was pleased to hear about the innovative concepts of both Norway and Ireland.

- This conference has already given me two new ideas, which I would like to implement in the regional programmes of TVSyd, he said happily.

New Platforms

By Hans Gottlieb

Imagine the terror bombings in London happening again in the year 2010. How would the news coverage be? Which media platforms would be used? Who would take the pictures? How will the eyewitnesses communicate with the media stations? The answers to these questions and many more were given by Andy Griffee, BBC, at the workshop: "New Platforms".

The example of the terror bombings in London was presented in a short video where the BBC gave their prediction of the future media platforms. The video showed eyewitnesses communicating directly with the news stations, using their webcams in live-interviews and their mobile phones to photograph what happened instantly.



The “on demand decade”

Andy Griffie explained that all media are facing multiple challenges in the years to come. The number of multi-channel homes will increase as a result of the digitalisation, giving people the opportunity to pick between hundreds of channels. One solution to this dilemma could be the “on demand news” strategy, giving the viewers the opportunity to see, hear and read news at all times, online. And the technological future is rapidly moving closer.

- Every ten seconds another broadband connection is set up in a home in Britain, Andy Griffie said.

Multi-educated journalists

The new platforms will also require more from the future journalists. Andy Griffie emphasized that the reporters need to acquire more technical skills to function as VJ's (one-man-bands) but also the cameramen and editors will have to learn to operate as journalists. In that way the news coverage will be much more efficient and the large number of VJ's will be able to come closer to the viewers, Andy Griffie said.

Risk of fake news?

In the future the number of platforms will expand, the news circulation will be faster and the citizen-journalism will increase. None the less Andy Griffie stressed that the investigative journalism will continue unchanged.

- Investigative journalism is still very important for the credibility of the BBC, so it is not a “neither/ nor situation”. There is a potential risk of fake news finding their way to the TV-screens, but the solution is to strengthen the

editorial filter before the broadcast, Andy Griffie concluded.

Interactive Television

By Anders Rune Jansen

The merger of media platforms is complete at Nordjyske Media. One newsroom contains reporters from radio, TV, web and several versions of newspapers. The goal is to interact with the public and satisfy all their needs.

When Michael Lally, RTE Ireland, opened the workshop “Interactive Television” he declared that dinosaur journalists of the past were extinct.

- This is the logical conclusion of the technologies available today, said Lally, who has 20 years of media experience to draw on,- a radically changing media picture, which will continue evolving.

Then it was time for Lars Jespersen from the Danish organization Nordjyske Media to show how this challenge can be handled. Nordjyske has integrated their different media channels to cooperate and expand on one another. An excellent example is a theme they ran on weight loss, the newspaper would run background articles, the TV channel would show reality stories of subjects battling weight problems and on the web people could join in and personally participate in lose weight programs and share experiences.

Jespersen also described the organizational changes that helped create these interactive stories. Editors from all media branches work in one newsroom led by a “newsmaestro” who ties all the strings together. Emphasis is placed on longer periods of idea development, including which media is best suited for potential stories.

- Some ideas have been successful some not, Jespersen commented near the end,

- The project is three years old and so we take some wobbly steps, but we have a lot of fun.

The second speaker was the web prix recipient Leonard Wallentin from STV in Sweden. He immediately disagreed with the workshop description in the circom program, where the web is mentioned as an extra service.

-Many young people don't have a TV, but rely solely on web broadcasts, Leonard argued.

- The internet can be considered a main channel in its own right. He went on to explain his prize winning webpage, but unfortunately the projector went haywire and the technology, which allows so many things, foiled much of the presentation. Thus the long first day at Circom ended on a lighter, ironic note.

One Man Band

By Anders Rune

In the fast moving world of news coverage, the VJ "video journalist" is the ultimate weapon. Alone he performs all the tasks in the production chain, making a cheap, quick and effective alternative compared to traditional procedure. The conclusion of this session was absolutely clear; the VJ is here to stay.

Andy Griffee told how BBCs regional stations extensively use VJs, and that plans are a foot to add more off the same. With 470 cameras covering the country, compared to 70 five years ago, the VJs offer much better width in the coverage. And once a big story breaks it can immediately be flooded with cameras, thereby also adding further depth. A firm believer in the VJs, Griffee plans to have a VJ trainer in each region to shorten the process of educating more staff in this role.

Listing the strong points of the VJs, Bernd Kliebhan, HR Germany, spoke of cost reduction, flexibility and more intense close coverage of events. For instance the station dispatched two VJs to Thailand in the wake of the tsunami, something that would have been too expensive for a full crew. Kliebhan then dwelled on the challenges of adding VJs to the station, and said that the editorial staff at times could be skeptical in dealing with VJs due to inexperience. He concluded that you need good implementation training, which takes time, and that the VJ role was a challenge for the best staff.

Next up was the flamboyant VJ Scott Rensberger from USA, his upbeat style was a breath of fresh air at the conference. Rensberger showed a selection of his impressive work and displayed his passion and self confidence, claiming that he could kick everyones ass in VJ'ing. He explained how he "seeks out luck" and finds the great stories through persistence. In the VJ role Rensberger is free of compromises and can edit the stories in his head, he believed it was the best way to work.

Sabine Streich a VJ trainer from Germany echoed this statement, submitting that the VJ is more than just a cost cutting imitation of traditional news crews. If you play to its strengths it's possible to experiment with style and form. Streich envisioned that in the near future kids and hobby journalists will produce news and documentaries, and submit or sell them on the web. This concluded an interesting session that showed the possibilities and extent of Video Journalism, a central component of the modern media.

Regional Drama

By Eva Jakobsen and Alexander Dornwirth

Dialect is a part of our cultural heritage. The regional television-stations can benefit from putting regional drama into their range of programs.

Proinsias Ni Ghraíne from the Irish TV-station TG4 had some shocking news to the crowd in conference room A. She has ten years of experience of making regional drama.

According to her there has been a huge revival of regional produced drama-series in Ireland and Britain. She says that:

- The TV-shows with the highest ratings today in Britain, are not coming from London, but from the regions. Places like Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow. People don't want the American thrash anymore.

Especially the news-stations can learn from the experience of regional drama.

- Today people are more stressed. When they get home from a hard days work, they want to relax. They want something to identify with, and not hard facts from watching TV. They miss social interaction in their daily life, and that's what they get from their regional drama-series. The regional stations, which also produce news, can benefit from including regional drama in their range of programs.

Proinsias Ni Ghraíne, Commissioning Editor at TG4 said that the TV-station decided to make a huge gamble. A quarter of the stations total budget was used for a soap-opera which only featured people speaking gaelic, the original Irish language. Now only spoken by 100.000 people scattered all over Ireland. And it has been a great success. She thinks it's because:

- The viewers are craving for more fiction in local dialects. They get addicted to it, and the strong characters keep them hanging on from episode to episode. They will live and die for the characters.

Johan Nijenhuis, producer of regional drama from TVooest in Holland, have had the same kind of experience as Proinsias Ni Ghraíne. He is behind a successful show called "Country Roads", which is a show based primarily on regional amateur actors. He has come to realize that the regional dialects are an advantage, and a source of talent you can successfully tap into when producing TV.

- 18 out of the 22 actors in the show are amateurs, but almost playing the role of themselves, which makes it more natural from the viewers to watch. The regional broadcasting stations earn their invested money back by selling the series to other TV-stations. Regional drama works not only on a regional level, but also on a national one.

Future Survival - Attracting younger viewers

By Katja Damkier Hansen and Anders McCulloch

How do the regional TV-stations in Europe become better to approach the younger audiences? The question was debated at the conference today.



- To attract young viewers it is absolutely necessary to be on the internet.

That was one of the main statements from Christina Aagreen, the representative from Smålandsnytt, a regional part of Swedish SVT.

- The web is where we create our future, she added.

Christina Aagreen is chief sub-editor and has through the last years put a lot of effort in improving Smålandsnytt so that younger viewers are better approached. She was one of the main speakers when the conference this noon assembled to discuss how to attract younger viewers.

New contributions

In the region of Småland the internet has become the main working tool for editors, reporters and users. Topics are being debated on their website and these discussions are later used as themes in their new debate program called "Reagere" – "React". The program also invites viewers to participate in discussions on TV.

Christina Aagreen states that this is an important element because it makes the viewers feel a part of the TV. Identification and interaction is, according to Christina, necessary to survive in the future.

New platforms: a challenge

Professor in Media and Film from Copenhagen University, Gitte Stald, is pleased to see the new contributions from Swedish regional television. She agrees with Christina Aagreen that the internet is of great importance to the young viewers. Gitte has spent many years researching the needs of young viewers. She stresses that the progress in new technological media platforms has made the viewers more

demanding. They want professional TV, which is now possible with new media components as the ipod, webcam, video mobile and the internet.

Besides the interaction on the internet, the Swedish regional channel Smålandsnytt has also seen the new possibilities of the video mobiles. As an experiment the channel has now made it possible for the viewers to download 60 seconds of compressed news.

- It is important that we figure on all media platforms, Christina Aagreen emphasizes.

Meet the winners

By Anders McCulloch

The documentaries are facing a hard fate. More and more frequently they must give way to shorter TV-stories. That is a serious problem, says president of the Prix Circom Regional.

- The documentaries are under threat. There is less and less time available on the major broadcast channels.

The statement was unmistakable when David Lowen, president of the Prix Circom Regional, were asked to assess the future for documentary programs on television.

David Lowen today presented bits of the winning entries at the conference before the prize ceremony this evening. The majority of the entries are in fact documentaries.

Dull or depth?

- Why are documentaries harder and harder to find on the broadcast channels? Are they dull?, David Lowen asked the crowd rhetorically.

- We don't think so, after we have seen these documentaries, he quickly added.

According to David Lowen all the winning documentaries showed the strength of longer TV-stories: The ability to give the story perspective, one of the main arguments for making documentary films.

- Documentary gives space to explore a story in the same way a nineteenth century novel could explore themes, he explained.

Strong drama

Also the ability to get close to human beings and follow them in the most intense way is one of the advantages of documentary films. Lucian Ionica from TVR Timisoara, Romania is one of the participants at this conference. He has used the Videotheque to watch some of the tonight's winners and he knows what makes these documentaries so good.

- I have just seen the film called Evil from out the shadows. It was very professionally produced and it showed a very strong personal drama, he says.

What about the future

If documentaries are to be revived it takes courage among broadcasters. David Lowen admits that in the long run it's all about economy. Making a documentary takes a lot of time and they are expensive to produce. But he also points out, that for broadcasters promoting documentaries is very difficult. This may also be one of the reasons why documentaries are threatened.

- Broadcasters need to be brave. They have to give documentaries a chance. None the less the absence of documentary films on the television would be noticed by the viewers. We all like to see a good documentary, he emphasized.

Workshops

Workshop: European Co-works

By Stine Bærentzen

Information on European matters on local TV-stations, and offers from the EU. That's two of the main-topics when representatives from European Union institutions and from European TV-stations met Friday, to talk about their expectations of producing television.

- You have to put some local stories in an international context to understand them, said Johan Lindén from Swedish Television.

- Therefore it's important to share much more information from different regions in Europe that we do today, he stressed.

Another lecturer, Steen Illeborg, from the Committee of the regions, said, that there should be a link between local and regional politics to European politics. A targeted corporation with the journalists is necessary for the link to be established.

The European Parliament has launched some new initiatives such as a vox-pop-corner, to make it easier to reach the citizens, said Elena Kurze.

Offers from the EU

Representatives from Strasbourg and Bruxelles talks about what they have to offer.

The European Parliament talked about grants. Companies can win a call for grants, if they live up to sudden demands. The parliament offers workshops to the journalists, where it's possible for the journalists to use the camera-crews and to tjeck the agenda, said Elena Kurze.

High Definition TV

By Niels Overgaard

The future of TV is High Definition it seems. But which advantages and setbacks are there? The speakers of today's session

tried to answer that question at the workshop.

The workshop was chaired by David Lowen, the president of prix regional Circom regional, who set the stage by claiming that HD TV (High Definition TV) is gonna be the hot topic for years to come in the world of TV.

He then introduced the first speaker, Ian Myatt who is New Service Development Manager at the BBC. His power point presentation gave a basic introduction to HD TV. The higher resolution makes small things visible which will make people in the background more visible and require more make up for the journalists and actors. He then showed a short film in HD that gave the audience a glimpse into the future.



The next speaker was a self proclaimed opponent of HD TV, Ivar Brændgaard of Danish regional station TV/MIDT-VEST. His concerns are of economical issues as his station has just spent a lot of money on a new OB-van, which would have cost three times as much had it been for HD TV. He then proceeded to show a film of examples of the quality of their coverage of events such as live sports and a royal wedding to prove that it's still possible to make TV of a high standard on SD (Standard Definition) equipment.

Brændgaard was quickly contradicted by Henrik Prom from Sony Denmark.

- The technology is there it's the people who need to get ready for HD TV.

He then showed a nature film from BBC that had fantastic pictures. Depth and details galore.

The sessions was followed by a Q & A session where Tim Johnson of TV SYD made a the point, that HD is a threat to regional TV. If the national shows, he argued, is made up of prime quality HD pictures, and the regional still uses SD, the viewer will feel like his watching in black and white if he goes from a national to a regional channel.

Training and the future

By Eva Jakobsen and Alexander Dornwirth

19 trainees of television journalism invaded Kolding city in the last two weeks. Their assignment was to make great television.



- Don't make TV like you were illustrating radio. Pictures from political meetings bore the audience. You have to make great pictures.

That was one of the messages from the trainers of the young trainees in Circom Regional. The idea of the training was to encourage the young journalists to think in different angles, involving the audience and to individually develop their own stories. Karol Cioma, Ian Masters, Hans Jessen and Didier Desormeaux were the men in charge of the training.

The result of the two weeks hardcore training ended up with eight different features shot in Kolding and small towns close by. The subjects filmed spanned from the seriousness of the Muhammed drawings to smaller issues like dog poopoo on the streets. The standards were great pictures from beautiful locations and nice soundbites, and that was just the intention of the training.

- We want the people we train to go back to their regional networks, and share their experiences. But sadly, not many stations listen to them. Often because it's controlled by indifferent managers, but also a lot of bad cameramen try to run the show, and overrule the reporter on location, says Ian Masters.

800 journalists have been trained over the last 12 years by Circom Regional in cooperation with Thomson Foundation. But now new blood must arrive on the training scene, says Ian Masters. That is why there is starting a program next year in Bristol, England, educating a whole new breed of young trainers.

The panel seriously encouraged people from regional stations to enlist co-workers in this program.

- The trainers are getting old, and can't continue till they are 89, laughs Ian Masters.

At the end of the seminar the 19 young trainees each received a diploma from president of Circom regional, Anita Bhalla. She encouraged them to spread the message:

- Go out and use what you have learned. You can do it!

Thank you Kolding, see you next year in Bilbao

By Morten Risager

Circom Regional Conference ended in a positive manner as Kolding said it's thank yous and goodbyes, before leaving next year's responsibilities in the hands of Bilbao.

Satisfaction and gratefulness. Three days of listening, know-how exchanging and dancing, ended with a lot of thanking as Circom Regional wrapped this years' conference up in a closing ceremony and went off to less deliberative amusements in Legoland.

- I'm usually satisfied, if I can go to this sort of conference and take just one thing with me back to my own station. This year I actually have three things, I will bring back. So I'm very happy, said Tim Johnson, the director of TV Syd and one of the main organizers of the Conference.

He was very confident, the conference was a success and felt he and his fellow organizers had proven, the small city of Kolding had been up for the job.

Anita Bhalla, the president of Circom was also certain the conference had been a success.

- I was particularly impressed in seeing how many skilled video journalists there are. It's definitely an area of future focus, she said before thanking the organizers, the students who covered the conference and the secretariat for their contribution.

Santiago Uriarte was happy to receive the honours of hosting next years event from the 10th till the 12th of May in Northern Spanish city of Bilbao.

- It's an event, we take seriously and want to make bold. We can announce, that we will sponsor one more category for The Prix Circom next year.

Prix Circom 2006 awards presented in Koldindhus, Kolding

The authors of the winning programmes in Europe's richest awards for television productions received Prix Circom 2006 awards at the gala dinner in Koldinghus, Kolding on May 26, 2006. during the Circom Regional 24th Annual Conference

The Polish public service broadcaster TVP3 has won four of the six awards for television programmes – in the categories for Documentary, News Report, Sport and Television Across Europe. The two other programme awards were won by the Swedish broadcaster SVT and France 3. SVT has won the other award – for Web.

The Grand Prix for Documentary is won by TVP3 Poznan with a 25-minute programme on how distressed mothers cope with the loss of children at or just after birth (MY BABY IS AN ANGEL/MOJE DZIECKO JEST ANIOLEM). The producer was Artur Polanski and the director Monika Gorska. The station won the specially-designed trophy and prize money of 5000 euros.



Monika Gorska in Koldinghus, Kolding

The Prix for News Report is won by TVP3 Krakow (LOST WALLETS/ZGUBIONE PORTFELE). The short news report, on what happened when some very honest children found and returned a wallet lost in the street, was made by reporter Wojciech Brzezinski. The producer was Pawel Mrozek. The station wins a trophy and prize money of 3,000 euros.

The winner of the Television Across Award, sponsored by the European organisation the Committee of the Regions, is The Eastern Border Talks (ROZMOWKI WSCHODNIOGRANICZNE) from TVP3 Lublin.

This is a 22-minute documentary on the lifestyle at the border between Poland and Ukraine. The director is Grzegorz Michalec. The award is worth 4,000 euros. This programme is part of a magazine series produced on both sides of the border by Polish and Ukrainian journalists in Wolyn.

The winner of the Sports Programme Award is The Masters (MASTERSI) from TVP3 Bialystok. This programme tells the story of three very old amateur swimmers and how their interest in sport keeps them active and together as friends. The award is sponsored by ERT3 Thessaloniki in Greece and is worth 3,000 euros. The director is Beata Hyzy-Czolpinska and the producer is Ryszard Urbaniak.

The newly-created category for Web Site was won by SVT Vaxjo. Leonard Wallentin, the editor of the site collected the cheque for 3000 euros and the trophy on behalf of SVT. The category was created to encourage stations to support their programming through the web by offering an extra service to viewers. The category is sponsored by SVT, ironically the first winners!

There are two further documentary awards.

The first award is for the quality of journalistic investigation. The winner of the France 3 Award is Evil From Out The Shadows (MÖRDAREN FRÅN) from SVT Sydnytt in Malmo. This was a programme on how the killer of a young girl was tracked down more than 15 years later with the help of medical advances in DNA testing. It was produced by Per Lärka. The award is worth 3,000 euros.

The second award gives special consideration to the quality of post-production editing. The winner of the Avid Award is We Weren't Just Becassines (NOUS N'ETIONS PAS DES BECASSINES) from France 3 Ouest in Rennes. This was a programme about how young girls used to be despatched to Paris to work as domestic servants – perhaps as many as 200,000. The programme was directed by Thierry Compain and produced for France 3 Ouest by Saint Louis Productions. The award is worth 3,000 euros.

Seven awards, including three for documentaries, were decided by a team of 14 programme makers from 14 different countries meeting over three days in Maribor, Slovenia. There were 149 entries from 22 different countries.

The cash value of the awards is 24,000 euros – plus a trophy, trip to the Circom Regional Annual Conference for the winning producer or director or station representative and the prestige and publicity which goes with winning one of the most sought after prizes in European television.