

THE CLAMER FILM: 'LIVING WITH A WARMING OCEAN'

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As a director and producer of documentary films for international television for over 20 years, I must tell that the making of the film 'Living with a Warming Ocean' on behalf of the European project CLAMER was a new kind of intellectual challenge for me. Based on a first reading, the title of the film project as written in the call for tender looked a bit technical. It was called: 'Production of a film on climate change in European marine waters and its socioeconomic consequences, including documentation of public knowledge on the issue'. Moreover, it was asked to create a film written as a documentary for the general public. At first glance, the task was not looking particularly easy! My interest quickly focused on this 'public knowledge' approach, where I felt a possibility to write a film that could interest the general public. Though there are many existing documentaries on climate change, I did not know any approaching the topic from the aspect of public awareness and consciousness. By writing the film from the public side of view, it would be possible to connect with another innovative aspect: the communication between science and the public, another topic that is not really known to the public.

Filming in seven European countries, from Greece to northern Germany via Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK, earned me a warm welcome from the public as well as from scientists, demonstrating that the climate change phenomenon inspires Europe, at all levels of society. Because of a tight schedule, I had to film all the sequences before the answers of the poll on public awareness related to climate change conducted by TNS in nine European countries on behalf of the CLAMER project. I must recognise that I was a little bit afraid that some of the sequences of the film could be in contradiction to the reliability of the poll results. But this did not happen: the most surprising match for me being the reaction of Dutch people against the rise of ocean waters. Technically speaking, when one writes a documentary film, one is faced with two general writing approaches what we call the conceptual and the factual aspects. Conceptual aspect is the expression of intellectual ideas, of theories, to be integrated in the film, which are expressed in the narration itself, or by means of interviews, and our job as director is to do our best to illustrate these concepts not to be boring. For the general public, the conceptual aspect of a film is always the more difficult to manage. On the other hand, we have what we call the 'factual' sequences in which you show actual human experiences, linked with the film subject. In our case, it may be, for example the filming of fishermen and scientists facing the tropicalization of the Mediterranean Sea. The general public is much more easily interested in these factual sequences, but if we put too many of them in a film, we can easily loose the theoretical basis behind the movie. So we could say that, like in many areas dealing with the environment, the success of a project is due in large part to our ability to establish a subtle balance between different forces that apparently oppose themselves.