



Le Magazine

EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN EUROPE

Issue 17 - 2002

The fabulous DESTINY of European cinema

Challenges for an EU audiovisual policy



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Europe at the service of the audiovisual industry, from creation to distribution

Cinema is an essential form of expression of our cultural diversity. This is borne out by both the great film heritage of our countries and today's screen talents. Television, with 1,500 channels in Europe, has become the main means of bringing information, entertainment and culture into the home.

To promote the circulation of European audiovisual works, the MEDIA Plus programme had its budget increased by 30% for the 2001-2005 period. MEDIA Plus supports the development, distribution and promotion of European films, whereas the i2i-audiovisual initiative supports SMEs in the sector, the modernisation of larger companies and the creation of European venture capital funds.

Accounting for some 950,000 jobs and contributing around €65 billion to Europe's GDP, the audiovisual industry stands apart from others. Over and above its role of providing entertainment, it has public interest objectives that must be guaranteed. The democratic and cultural issues linked to cinema and TV explain the special interest in this sector shown by the public authorities, national and European alike.

With these support policies, with the talented young people trained in European film schools and thanks to a number of other factors, the film industry appears to have been improving its performance in Europe over the past few years. However, this effort must continue. It is vital to ensure ever greater freedom of movement for European films in the EU.

So I have decided to establish a Europe-wide celebration of cinema, CinEd@ys, as an incentive, notably for young people, to discover the treasures of Europe's cinema heritage. Starting this year, on 15-24 November, the annual CinEd@ys event will be linked with Netd@ys, the latter focusing on the theme of images for the occasion.

On the European level, various support instruments and a regulatory framework, consisting essentially of the 'Television without Frontiers' Directive, are in place. The main EU assistance mechanisms are the MEDIA programme (2001-2005) and i2i-audiovisual, an initiative of the European Investment Bank. Put simply, their goal is to strengthen the audiovisual industry in Europe. The European Union intervenes in tandem with national audiovisual support policies. The necessity of these policies is so evident that their durability is guaranteed by the Commission, internally through a generous system in terms of authorised national aid, and externally through a refusal to negotiate on the audiovisual sector in the WTO.

During this European Cinema Heritage Week, under the patronage of Pedro Almodovar, I expect over a million Europeans to discover the masterpieces of our diversity in special programmes at cinemas and on television, and that more than 30,000 schools will participate in Netd@ys.

With a stable legislative environment, appropriate support to encourage the modernisation of the industry and the work of our creative artists and special events like Cinema Week, Europe is taking measures to help its audiovisual sector make progress and to safeguard our diversity.

While Europe is bursting with talented creative artists, they still need to gain recognition outside of their country of origin. Obstacles of an economic, legal or cultural nature still stand in the way of free movement of European works in the Union, whereas American films enjoy a broadly open market in Europe.

Viviane Reding
*Member of the European Commission
responsible for education and culture.*

The fantastic renaissance of European cinema



Following in the footsteps of Amélie Poulain, the heroine of the film by Jean-Pierre Jeunet who has already enchanted over 13 million viewers in Europe and 3 million in the United States, European films enjoyed a fabulous year in 2001. This success, far from being isolated, gives added weight to a cultural industry facing stiff competition from major Hollywood productions.

With 920 million entrance tickets sold in 2001, cinema in the European Union has bounced back to attendance levels last reached in the early 1980s, the European Audiovisual Observatory reports. Even though cinema is a highly cyclical industry, subject to the vagaries of the economy and to public fads, this is good news. In 2001, four European films performed exceptionally well on most European markets, reaching the box office top 20. While *Bridget Jones' Diary*, *Amélie* and *The Others* may be a bit isolated amongst the box office leaders, dominated by giant American productions like *Harry Potter* or *The Lord of the Rings*, the market share of American films has dropped for the first time in five years, from 73.7% in 2000 to around 66% in 2001.

From a decline to a rebound

The Hollywood dream factory produces a mixture of fascination and exasperation in analysts of the world of cinema. Pitting intellectual and arthouse films from Europe against American films overflowing with action, money and special effects, many denounce what they see as a trade war, imperialism and a cultural bulldozer all in one. From year to year, the deficit in the balance of services in the audiovisual sector between Europe and the United States has widened in favour of the US, reaching over €8.2 billion in 2000 – a leap of 14% in one year. The earnings of American distributors in

European cinemas amounted to \$1.75 billion, leaving aside their take from the cassette and television markets (\$2.89 and 4.38 billion respectively). In striking contrast, Europeans earned only \$827 million in North America.

The Europeans were nonetheless delighted by the cinema rebound all over Europe last year (French films accounted for 71 million entrance tickets, i.e., 41% of the domestic market), and by the €50 million in earnings achieved by the top two films in the Spanish hit list (*Los Otros*, by Alejandro Amenabar and *Torrente 2*, by Santiago Segura) and even by Karl May's impressive 18% market share in Germany with *Der Schuh des Manitu*. The success of national films on their own markets explains part of the rebound, with a 27% increase in attendance over 2000.

A European viewing market still to be conquered

The circulation of European films on other European markets, outside their home country, remains the primary challenge. In 2000, European films sold 60 million tickets in the EU outside their own national markets. Estimates for 2001 project growth of 9%, not enough to allow them to benefit from the economies of scale offered by the European market.

American films are successful at filling cinemas thanks to the support of a well-organized distribution network, of which United International Pictures (UIP), distributors for the Hollywood studios active in 43 countries, is one of the most visible representatives. Meanwhile, the international career of European films, given the continent's cultural and linguistic differences, hangs on the sum of the decisions of distributors operating on the local level. This is the heart of the European Union's MEDIA programme: pooling these efforts and encouraging distribution campaigns throughout Europe. It is a fact that Europe suffers from a structural problem stemming from the absence of distributors operating spontaneously on a European scale.

A Europe-wide marketing concept, adapted to national situations by networks of national distributors and implementing consistent release and advertising plans, can nevertheless produce European hits. This was brilliantly demonstrated - by UIP! - with the release of *Billy Elliot*, a small-scale joint French and British production whose marketing campaign cost more than its total production costs (\$4 million). Targeting a young public through campaigns adapted to the different national markets, *Billy Elliot* attracted 12 million spectators in Europe and 4 million in the United States, earning over \$100 million - 25 times its production costs.

An uneven battle

However, for the majority of European films the lack of visibility, for want of a sufficient promotional budget and large-scale distribution networks, still constitutes a tremendous handicap. While Hollywood spends over 30% of its budget on promotion, a European film often has to make do with an average of 3-6%. Peter Aalbaek Jensen, the Danish producer of the films of Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg, confirmed this recently: 'An average production by our company has to get by with an international marketing budget of \$50,000. In essence, it has to be fantastic enough to be able to stand on its own without a marketing budget.'

For European films, with an average budget of €4 million, the combat often seems unequal. While Jack Valenti, head of the Motion Picture Association of America, recently welcomed the lower cost of Hollywood films, these still average \$47.7 million, apart from another \$31 million for promotion and printing of copies alone.

The European renaissance

Over the last few years, Europe has distinguished itself by the number of films it has produced, even though the average budget remains inferior to that of American films. The challenge now is to combine the cultural approach of European cinema, respect for the diversity of talents and the smaller-scale production and distribution structure with this determination to reach out to an increasingly wide public across Europe, a public looking for something different and eager to discover other people's tastes. This is the main issue for the European film industry and the challenge facing European and national public authorities.

Entertainment: America's number one industry

Film is a cornerstone of the entertainment industry, which is the driving force behind American growth. With turnover of \$535.1 billion in 2001, this industry accounted for 5.4% of the GDP in the United States and registered annual growth of 7.2%. Contributing \$89 billion to the country's balance of payments, it provides jobs for more than 4.7 million people (1). This, as observed by Jack Valenti, head of the Motion Picture Association, 'represents far more than all the manufacturing industries, whether chemicals, industrial equipment, textiles, electronics or aeronautics'.

The major Hollywood studios, whose films flood box offices, television sets and cassette players in more than 150 countries across the globe, dominate the industry. However, its leading market is still North America, which in 2001 experienced its 'best year in the history of film', with 1.5 billion tickets sold (up 5% over the previous year and 30% in

ten years) and record earnings of \$8.41 billion. This success stems partly from the world's highest rate of attendance, at 5.3 films a year per person, compared to 2.12 for the European Union.

But the image of a flourishing industry does have its shadows: barely one film in ten is profitable on the American market alone, while 40% never break even. Moreover, in parallel with the studios' war machine, there does exist an independent film industry, whose most visible representatives are Scorsese, Allen, Jarmusch, Redford and others. They too have to put up a brave fight to make it to the screens.

The US cinema also has certain worries, particularly with regard to guaranteed access to foreign markets. Hollywood is therefore engaging in tough negotiations with governments to open up the Chinese, Korean and East European markets. American film industry

workers are dubious about the growing trend to shoot films in other countries, such as Canada and the United Kingdom, which offer tax breaks to American producers wishing to cut the astronomical costs of certain films. Thousands of local jobs are lost in the process. Finally, the studios have declared war on piracy (2) and are demanding that Congress impose anti-copying systems in computers, DVDs and other digital players.

(1) E. Siwek, *Copyright Industries in the U.S. Economy: The 2002 Report* can be downloaded from the following site: http://www.iipa.com/copyright_us_economy.html

(2) Counterfeit copies are said to cost Hollywood \$3 billion a year, apart from losses resulting from piracy on the Internet (350,000 downloads a day!).

Interview in two voices

the Hollywood Goliath versus the Old World Davids



Chris Marcich,
Senior Vice-President and Managing
Director, European office of MPA
(Motion Picture Association).



Luckas Vander Taelen,
Member of the European Parliament,
author of several reports on the European
film industry.

What do you think of the frequent opposition between the industrial concept of film, said to prevail in the United States, and Europe's supposedly more artistic concept?

Chris Marcich: This is a simplistic view. There are commercial and artistic elements in cinema on both sides of the Atlantic. Given the huge amount of money it takes to make a film nowadays, it is crucial to attract the general public. I think that European filmmakers are increasingly turning to international audiences and are less inclined to see films as art for art's sake.

Luckas Vander Taelen: Even in American cinema, there are many films that are part of the world's cinematographic heritage. Whether European or American, cinema must not be placed in shackles. I cannot accept seeing European cinema reduced to arthouse films, which would be tantamount to leaving a clear field for American films. But it would be equally disastrous to lose the artistic side that is our strength. In Europe, we dare to make films that Hollywood would never dare make, such as the magnificent *Hable con ella* by Pedro Almodovar. Europe's problem is structural and financial; the European film industry labours under a permanent handicap because it lacks means to develop, produce and promote films with the financial strength of the American studios.

Why do European films have such a hard time travelling on their own market when American films manage to do it?

Chris Marcich: European films based on universal themes travel beyond their own borders quite successfully. Let me give you a few recent examples: *Astérix*, *Amélie*, *Bridget Jones* and *La vita è bella*.

Luckas Vander Taelen: This is not simply a question of quality or of universal themes. There is just no escaping the financial problem. Without the support of an American studio like Miramax, *La vita è bella* would never have performed as well as it did. With more marketing, European cinema would be perceived differently by the public. How many European films never reach the cinemas because the public does not demand them, because the distributor does not see them, or because the press does not review them?

If we could prepare the ground three to six months before the release of a film, we could compete with the Americans professionally. What is missing in Europe is a major exchange like the one in Las Vegas, where cinema operators, distributors and the press can see new productions. This is the first link in the chain.

Does European cinema have anything to learn from the American model or does it need to develop its own specific model?

Chris Marcich: Far be it from me to make recommendations in favour of following the 'American model', but there are aspects that could be taken into consideration. For instance, facilitating producers' capacity to acquire, for fair remuneration, all the rights necessary for effective international distribution of the work.

Luckas Vander Taelen: I have great respect for American cinema and admiration for the professionalism of those who make it work, with their mastery of every aspect of film production and marketing. Without wishing to imitate it or to lose our identity, I think we Europeans need to be more professional in the way we address cinema, considering it a group effort. There is no disgrace in working from the start of a project with a producer, a director, a scriptwriter and a marketing specialist, without any one party having sacrosanct rights over the end product...

Should Europe develop a more coherent and voluntarist approach in its support for cinema?

Chris Marcich: The context differs from one country to another, making a blanket approach to support for cinema difficult, even though there is already a single approach to some degree with the EU's MEDIA programme. Thought could be given to addressing the structural and legal barriers to the free movement of films beyond their national borders. Why is it so difficult to acquire the necessary rights? It would also be useful to facilitate the dubbing of European films at least in the major European languages.

Luckas Vander Taelen: My main criticism of the MEDIA programme – which I appreciate tremendously, I might add – is the low level of resources allocated in Europe to an industry seen by the Americans as a leader. They know perfectly well that cinema exists everywhere in today's world. What is absolutely absurd is to see Europe spending more money on its tobacco farmers! The MEDIA plan should have a financial element, notably for production: the European Union could act as guarantor, with the European Investment Bank, for investors hesitant to inject funds into European cinema.





Continually evolving, cinema has gone from silent films to 'talkies', from black and white to colour, from the studio to outdoor shooting, and will soon be switching from analogue to digital technology. The technology in question is no new phenomenon for the film industry. The entire sound chain and image post-production were converted to the information technologies more than a decade ago. Now, with the development of digital cameras and projectors, it is the turn of shooting and distribution to go digital.

The digital revolution comes to cinema

D*ancer in the Dark* by Lars Von Trier will go down in the history of cinema as the first film shot without film to win the Golden Palm at the Cannes Festival. Nowadays, films are being shot with DV cameras (digital video cameras) the world over. Digital is taking hold at every step of the process, production means are changing hands and the very rules of film-making are being shaken up.

This technology unifies the film production chain, making it possible to have an original image in digital form and the unlimited settings of digital calibration without having to scan the entire film, as was done with *Le pacte des loups* and *Amélie*.

Will digital cinema replace good old traditional cinema? There is likely to be a transitional phase, which is only now getting under way. However, this transition is already marked by several important milestones: the shooting of *Star Wars 2* in digital and the opening of some dozen or so digi-projection cinemas (i.e. without film) worldwide.

In time, cinemas themselves are expected to switch to digital. But projection equipment is 10 times as costly as 35 mm equipment and cinema operators are hesitant to invest such huge amounts.

'Digital cinema must have a reasonable cost, be economically viable and include reliable safeguards against piracy. At the same time, if digital cinema is to keep its promises, it must fulfil filmmakers' aesthetic expectations', observes a representative of Kodak, a firm actively involved in the process of digitalising cinemas.

Digital cinema is a key issue for Europe. According to Viviane Reding, European Commissioner responsible for education and culture, the question of standards is a priority. 'It is a matter of guaranteeing that Europe will not end up with standards developed unilaterally across the Atlantic. This would put its industry at a disadvantage for these new developments, which offer tremendous opportunities, but which do entail certain risks. We intend to adopt an approach similar to that used very successfully in the area of digital television: combining financial support measures with encouragement for the organisation of cooperation schemes by industry.'

Initiatives offering support for digital cinema include pilot projects developed under the MEDIA Plus programme and the financing of research within the framework of EU Research and Technological Development activities.



MEDIA Plus

bringing European cinema closer to a European public



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Dossier

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The MEDIA Plus programme, implemented by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture, intervenes at different stages of the conception of a film, from writing of the screenplay to distribution, with particular importance attached to distribution.

In less than a year, the film by the Belgian-Bosnian director Danis Tanovic, *No Man's Land*, has amassed a wealth of awards: best scenario in Cannes, Golden Globe from the foreign press in Hollywood, Caesar for the best film in Paris, Oscar for the best foreign film in Los Angeles and, most recently, the MEDIA 2002 Prize (see page 11). This first feature film by a young European director, unanimously praised by critics, received distribution assistance from the MEDIA Plus programme. The success of Tanovic's film is no isolated case. At the presentation of the Caesar awards in Paris, five of the winning films had received distribution support from MEDIA: *Amélie*, *La pianiste*, *No Man's Land*, *Le pacte des loups* and *Le Peuple migrateur*. In 2000, Lars Von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark*, winner of the Golden Palm at the Cannes Festival, had also received support from the European Union's MEDIA programme, both for development and for distribution.

Frédéric Fonteyne, director of *Une liaison pornographique* and winner of the MEDIA 2001 Prize, acknowledges that without help from Europe, he might not have made films at all. 'If the European

aid did not exist, I would go cycling, play ping-pong or do tap-dancing, but certainly not make films. This co-production system enables us not only to hold our own against the Americans, but to create another market, with its own public.'

On every front

MEDIA Plus support can be granted to whole catalogues of projects or to one project at a time. The amount of aid generally does not exceed 50% of the development budget (writing, finding partners, establishing financing, marketing and distribution plans, and so on). When the development of a project is co-financed by MEDIA Plus and the film goes into production, the recipient is obliged to reinvest the same amount in the development of one or more production projects.

To strengthen production capacity even further, it is also important to encourage the development of European training centres, to enable professionals in the audiovisual industry to increase their

skills on the international market. MEDIA Training is based on close cooperation and the sharing of know-how by different partners involved in training: film and television schools, specialised training centres, production and distribution companies and the like.

Most importantly, the MEDIA programme spends 60% of its funding on the distribution of European audiovisual works and films in cinemas, on video, in digital recordings and on television. Aid is also provided for the creation of cinema networks active in promoting European films and organising festivals (70 a year).

In its promotion and distribution support for the 2001-2005 programming period, MEDIA attaches particular importance to developing the potential of countries or regions with low production capacities and/or relatively small linguistic and geographical areas. Belgian film-maker Marion Hansel, who directed *Clouds*, was able to release it in four different language versions thanks to support from the MEDIA programme. For Jan Rastelli, who operates cinemas in Leuven (Belgium), there is a real need for promotion. 'Cinema is not a question of nationality. My experience convinces me that there is a future for a cinema of regions and cultures, but the public still has to find out that it exists.'

This observation motivated the Commission to finance the networking of European first-release cinemas to give them an incentive (1) to programme non-national European films.

Distribution is fundamental for enhancing the value of European works. Thanks to MEDIA, the proportion of European films shown outside their country of origin rose from less than 14% in 1996 to more than 22% in 1999, and over 60% of European films distributed in countries other than the country of production receive support from the programme. This figure is all the more eloquent considering that in 2001 the distribution support system enabled 111 distributors from 11 countries to generate earnings of € 12 million from ticket sales for European films in 2000.



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(1) This support is available for distributors provided it is reinvested within two years in the coproduction or distribution of non-national European films.

European audiovisual policy: a responsibility of the EU

EU audiovisual policy, under the responsibility of Viviane Reding and the Directorate-General for Education and Culture, is based on regulations and financial instruments. In a matter of just a few years, this policy has gained a firm footing both internally, with the Television without Frontiers Directive – one objective of which is the promotion of a European audiovisual industry – , the MEDIA Plus programme and the intervention of the European Investment Bank, and externally, with its position in WTO negotiations based on respect for cultural diversity and enhanced audiovisual cooperation with third countries.

Finally, the EU conducts a European competition policy that takes account of the specific nature of the audiovisual sector and recognises the merit of aid schemes for cinematographic and audiovisual creation, as well as the legitimacy of public television services.

Who does what at the Directorate-General for Education and Culture?

Director-General:
 Nikolaus VAN DER PAS

Director for Culture, Audiovisual Policy and Sport:
 Jean-Michel BAER

Head of Unit, Audiovisual Policy:
 Jean-Eric de COCKBORNE

Head of Unit, Support for Audiovisual Content (Media):
 Jacques DELMOLY



Spotlighting **young talent**
with the **MEDIA Prize**

No Man's Land, the film by Danis Tanovic, is the 2002 winner of the MEDIA Prize, worth € 25,000. It is a fable denouncing the cruelty and absurdity of all wars, beyond the conflict in former Yugoslavia. This Slovenian, Belgian, Italian, British and French co-production has already been seen by 460,000 people in Europe. Sponsored by the European Commission, the MEDIA Prize rewards the first or second feature film by a young director which has been distributed in the largest number of European countries outside its country of origin and which has received distribution support from the EU MEDIA Plus programme



The MEDIA Prize is now in its third year. Its purpose is not so much to promote tomorrow's stars as to put the spotlight on talented young directors capable of touching the public's emotions, after years of work often accomplished in the shadows. Danis Tanovic was thus rewarded for his first feature-length fiction. His film won the Best Scenario Award at the Cannes Festival, not only as a result of his talent and training at the Sarajevo Film Academy and at INSAS in Belgium, but also because of his experience in the Bosnian army. Placed in charge of the army's film archives, he was able to shoot a number of documentaries on the front lines.

with Nathalie Baye and Sergi Lopez, was seen by nearly 900,000 people in Europe, an impressive score for this Belgian, Luxembourgish, French and Swiss co-production. It was distributed, with the support of the MEDIA programme, in 12 countries in addition to the four involved in its production. 'This film was expected to do well on the French market, but in fact the opposite happened. It was very successful in every European country, except for the co-producer countries', observed Frédéric Fonteyne, delighted that such a simple film, dealing with feelings and emotions, could win over such a large public.

The first two MEDIA prizes went to Damien O'Donnell for *East is East* (2000) and to Frédéric Fonteyne for *Une liaison pornographique* (2001).

Damien O'Donnell, the young Irish director of *East is East*, was already a laureate of the Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Festival before receiving this European award. His first feature film, developed by British production companies, relates in a humorous vein the life and generation gaps of a Pakistani family living in a small town in northern England in the early 1970s. *East is East* received support from the MEDIA programme both for development and for distribution. It was released in 10 European countries outside the United Kingdom.

In 2001, the MEDIA Prize was awarded to a film that had already been seen by a huge number of viewers. *Une liaison pornographique*,



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From 15 to 24 November 2002, Europe will celebrate its cinema heritage and, in parallel, Netd@ys will explore cinematographic, photographic and digital images. CinEd@ys Europe 2002 will present two large-scale projects to give young Europeans a rare opportunity of acquainting themselves with European images. A week is doubtless too short a time to get a real taste of Europe's impressive cinematographic heritage, given the scope and diversity of works produced on this continent since the 1950s. Perhaps CinEd@ys is best described as a foretaste... likely to delight youthful viewers whatever their age.



CinEd@ys 2002: a week focused on European cinema and images

Launched by the European Commission this year, this inaugural version will enable young people in particular to discover films that are no longer in circulation. According to its developers, it will provide an opportunity to share not only emotions, but also ideas both on European cinematographic creation and, more broadly, on the meaning of images in a society where they now represent the primary vector of information and knowledge.

This European week will involve both public and private partners, from film archives to certain television channels, in an effort to reach the largest possible number of viewers, especially pupils and students, its objective also being educational. Some 50 European towns and cities will present a selection of films, using a variety of approaches, through the 'Europa Cinemas' network (some 900 cinemas showing a majority of European films), which enjoys the support of the MEDIA Plus programme, or the European network of film archives (ECA). Big names in the film world are acting as patrons of the initiative, including Spanish director Pedro Almodovar.

'We have encouraged other European film archives to make a special effort to present European cinema to young people, especially the classics no longer being shown', explains Emmanuelle De Schrevel, of the Cinémathèque royale de Belgique (whose director, Gabrielle Claes, chairs the ECA). These are films that many young people have never had a chance to see because they date from the '50s, '60s or '70s, and are no longer in circulation. Yet these works are part of the continent's cultural diversity and history.

There are any number of means for catching the attention of young people, whose age range may vary, moreover, from one screening to the next. 'They can be reached through schools, youth movements or all sorts of actions', observes Emmanuelle De Schrevel. 'Some film archives, for example, have highly structured screening schedules that they will adapt to our programme. Others can organise a long weekend. If schools are part of the target public, afternoon sessions will be planned.'

The event will last from 15 to 24 November, overlapping with Netd@ys, being held from 18 to 24 November. This timing is no coincidence: Netd@ys 2002 will focus on images, including those traditionally projected onto screens. 'We have a network of national correspondents in the Member States and in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Israel and Switzerland. They have been mobilised to deal with this year's theme of images, which includes not only cinema but also photography, video and digital images', explains Loïc Bestard, a member of the Netd@ys team. 'The ties with the Cinema Heritage Week can take the form of online discussions with cinema professionals (directors and others), contests, quizzes and so on. We shall try to stimulate creativity by inviting participants to make short films using digital technology. We hope in this way to get young people to give real thought to the importance of images! Indeed, Netd@ys is based on a process linking discovery, understanding and action ('watch it, read it, make it'). In other words, the project will show youngsters images and teach them how to decode them and understand the messages they carry, so that they can then create new images themselves.

In contrast with Netd@ys, initiated in 1997 (and which registered more than 300 projects last year), the European Cinema Heritage Week is being inaugurated this year. Its organisers hope this will be the first of a long-lived annual event for budding and confirmed film lovers alike.



Information at the European Commission Netd@ys

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The EIB lends a hand



The European Investment Bank (EIB) is making an estimated € 500 million available to the European cinema and audiovisual industry. This invaluable aid will be used to help respond to the challenges facing creation in Europe: competitiveness, development of transnational initiatives, participation of banks and adaptation to the digital age.

In 2001, the EIB and the European Commission announced plans to develop cooperation. With their respective initiatives, i2i-audiovisual (around € 500 million) and the MEDIA Plus programme (€ 400 million), the EIB and the Commission allocate around € 1 billion to the audiovisual industry. The two institutions are thus responding to the sizeable needs of the cinema sector in terms of financing small and medium-sized audiovisual enterprises. This commitment reflects the willingness of the EIB and its chairman Philippe Maystadt to take risks, as investment in the audiovisual sector has little in common with a conventionally prudent approach to investment.

In concrete terms, four lines of action have been set in place:

- To finance small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) involved in audiovisual creation or technologies and subcontractors in this sector, as well as audiovisual distribution firms and cinema operators, the EIB is making credit lines (or 'global loans') available in certain specialised banks.

- Large private or public television, audiovisual production or distribution groups can also receive EIB assistance for investments in infrastructure (studios, digital installations, broadcasting stations, etc.) or creation (production of film 'bouquets', distribution of works or catalogues). This action takes the form of structured financing with reimbursement conditions partially tied to the success of the financed projects. The support has two objectives: to compensate for certain industrial weaknesses in the sector compared to global competitors and to create activities with a positive impact on the numerous SME subcontractors.

- The EIB is also conducting actions jointly with the European Commission in support of cultural creation or development of the audiovisual industry, with the goal of guaranteeing greater complementarity between its banking resources and the Community subsidies of the MEDIA Plus programme.

- Finally, the EIB is acquiring shares in venture capital funds specialised in the creative and other industries.

Commenting on these decisions in December 2000, at the signature of the agreement between the EIB and the European Commission, Philippe Maystadt highlighted the importance of guaranteeing the future of the European audiovisual industry: 'Europe must assume its rightful place in the audiovisual industry. For cultural and economic reasons alike, it is essential to offer appropriate financing to European creators.'



A dozen contracts already signed

The i2i-audiovisual programme, with resources of € 500 million for loans and share acquisitions in venture capital funds over the next three years, is part and parcel of the Innovation 2000 initiative. Comprising both industrial and cultural measures, i2i-audiovisual aims to support the volume of activity, strengthen the financial stability of Europe's small and large audiovisual firms and favour their pan-European dimension. It is doing this just when the imbalance between the United States and Europe risks being accentuated with the introduction of digital technology. The EIB intervenes on venture capital markets through the European Investment Fund.

Since being launched, i2i-audiovisual has already resulted in the signature of a dozen contracts worth a total of € 407.7 million. Danish public radio and television will be modernising their production installations; the Spanish firm Retevisión has extended its cable network and funds have been allocated to production projects and the adaptation of Italian cinemas to digital technology. Several venture capital funds investing in the audiovisual industry, notably in the creation of content and multimedia products, are also beneficiaries of i2i-audiovisual funding.



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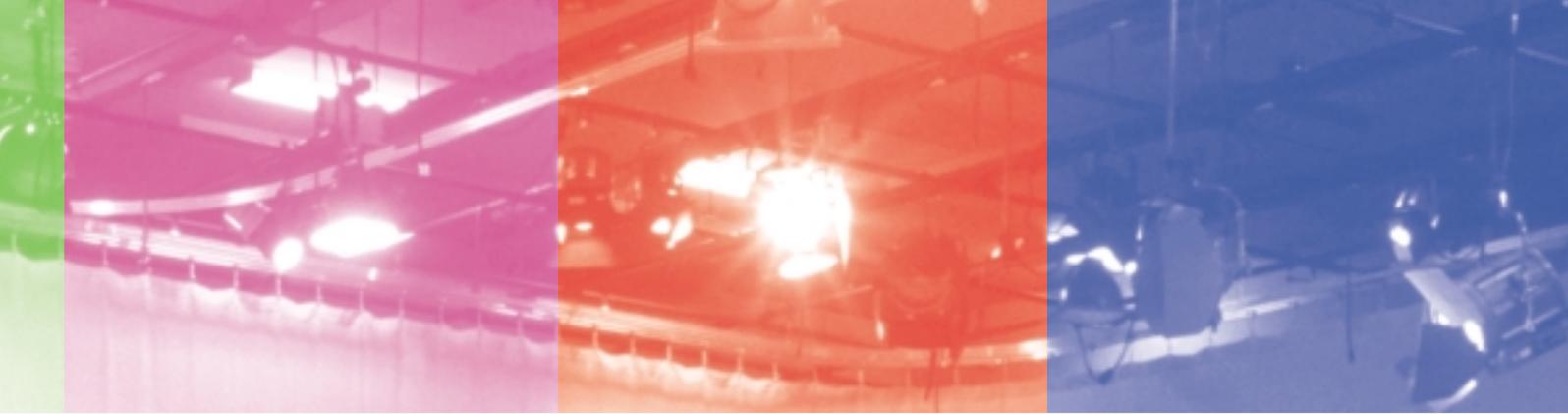
Television ^{and} the European Union

The history of European integration is such that the European Union does not yet have a cultural policy in the 'classic' sense, and even less so in the modern sense. Certain 'actions in the field of culture' are its only margin of manoeuvre. However, the audiovisual sector has acquired privileged status in recent years, receiving more sustained support (through legislation and development programmes). Those who consider European integration to be primarily an economic undertaking may see commercial motives here (the huge sums of money handled in the audiovisual sector). Yet even if the motives were economic alone (which is not the case), their effects are clearly cultural and social. Television plays a key role in shaping the collective imagination. Is political responsibility (endorsed by democratic processes) needed for this sector of culture, or is self-regulation by the market sufficient? Can such responsibility be limited to the national level or must it be accepted on the European level? While the answers are self-evident, should we be satisfied with what is being done at present or, given the challenges on the horizon, should we raise the question of the need for further reflection and decisions?

The liberalisation of television in the European Union has resulted in the creation of huge media groups, creating a very diversified supply complementary to that of public television. Pay TV, using decoders and broadcast by cable or satellite, now exists side-by-side with general services, creating a TV-scape that is very varied but complete. Virtually all genres are now seen on home screens, including films, documentaries, sports events, cartoons, news and entertainment. However, the audiovisual sector is no stranger to the phenomena of editorial concentration and the cumbersome practices this entails. In spite of their apparent strength, the giants in the field have feet of clay, and the role of representing and defending European cultures they can legitimately be expected to play risks being jeopardized by restructuring schemes imposed by market forces. The Kirch and Canal Plus cases were a shock not only to those in the sector but also to citizens aware of the issues involved in terms of European identity.

A study commissioned by the European Parliament on globalisation of the media industry and its possible threats to cultural diversity (1) points out the dangers linked to the dominant position an operator can assume and the need to monitor mergers, in both the media and film industries. To secure protection from American hegemony, which is itself highly protectionist, but without hindering broadcasting in Europe of American productions, prized by Europeans, national markets need to be more open to productions from other European countries. Such programmes are still rare on TV screens. It is also important to encourage co-productions with these countries, especially those with limited production capacities, as well as with the United States and other non-European countries. There is no lack

(1) Directed by Dr Maria Teresa La Porte Alfaro and Dr Teresa Sabada of University of Navarra (Pamplona, Spain), EP 296.704/Final Study, July 2001, 100 pp., report in English; summary of options and outline in all languages of the Union, 6 pp., can be downloaded from http://www.europarl.eu.int/stoa/publi/default_en.htm



Viewpoint contributed
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of producers and directors, whether independent or with ties to the major studios, who are more interested in their art than in profits.

The production and broadcast quota system introduced by the Television without Frontiers Directive, adopted on 3 October 1989 and amended on 30 June 1997, has made it possible to favour national production, to varying degrees depending on the country and the supplementary legislation passed. Nevertheless, inequalities between Member States still exist. This situation highlights the essential role of public television, whose role is more cultural than that of many commercial television channels. Some have gone out of bounds in terms of content and advertising; they must therefore be obliged to respect quantitative and qualitative obligations established by the national authorities. The use of public funds to finance such services – at least in part – is warranted only if they provide services of general interest; otherwise, they risk creating unfair competition with the private sector, geared more to entertainment and funded by advertising. National or European regulatory authorities play a vital role in guaranteeing respect for this fragile balance between public and private television, especially at a time when rights management and the growing number of broadcast media lead to very costly investments .

The question of sports rights raises a number of problems, including television access and the public domain. The cost of access has become exorbitant, even for private stations that have made their name through sport, and the public is the hostage of agreements between event promoters and the media. When broadcast exclusively by private stations, events whose titles suggest they belong to everyone (world, European, national, etc.) are off limits to certain viewers. Moreover, the Television without Frontiers Directive gives the Member States the possibility of establishing a list of major events, notably in sport, which must be broadcast in unscrambled form, even if exclusive rights have been acquired by pay stations. The advent of digital technology will oblige stations to review their positions on such events and it is to be hoped that it will not be competition in terms of shares in the advertising market that will win the day in the face of the Internet.





'TELEVISION WITHOUT FRONTIERS'...

in the age of the Internet

Developed in 1989 in the run-up to the single market, the Television without Frontiers Directive aimed to create a regulatory framework favourable to the free movement of television programmes across Europe. At the time, this was considered the best means of developing a truly European audiovisual industry and of strengthening a feeling of European identity among television viewers.

Thirteen years later, in the light of developments and trends in terms of markets, technology, advertising and distribution and production of European works, has Europe attained its goals? Since adoption of the directive, the European audiovisual landscape has evolved tremendously, notably with the mushrooming via cable and satellite of theme channels devoted to cinema, sport, news, children's programmes, music and the like, a development seemingly favoured by the directive which, as the Union faces enlargement, is already being applied in 26 European countries.

Most players on the market acknowledge that the policy of quotas for European works (see below) has made it possible to support the production of local works and thus to consolidate the programme industry. According to the latest Eurofiction poll, national works account for 75% of TV fiction broadcast during prime time in France, 56% in Germany, 51% in Spain and 43% in Italy, even though American productions still represent half the market for the day's broadcasts as a whole. But there is a hitch: the market remains difficult to penetrate, if not entirely closed to foreign programmes, which have great difficulty in moving freely within the EU. For every 10 episodes of *Julie Lescaut* or *Navarro* on French channels, how many Italian, Spanish or Danish serials are shown?

New technological changes are now looming on the horizon – widespread use of digital, new advertising technologies, and view-on-demand, even on the Internet – which will change the existing order and raise the

question of the need to adapt the regulatory framework. But as European Commissioner Viviane Reding pointed out recently, 'technology alone is not enough to make markets evolve. The decisive factor is human behaviour, which is rather unpredictable.'

Given such uncertainties, it is difficult to build consensus among audiovisual professionals on how regulations should evolve. The European Commission has therefore proposed the preparation of a work programme to develop a solid concept serving as a foundation for possible amendment of the directive.

A fundamental directive

The Television without Frontiers Directive (89/552/EEC), adopted on 3 October 1989 and amended on 30 June 1997 by the European Parliament and Council Directive 97/36/EC, establishes the legal frame of reference for the free movement of television broadcasting services in the Union, so as to promote the development of a European market in television and related activities, such as television advertising and the production of audiovisual programmes.

To this end, it provides for Community coordination of national laws in the following areas:

- laws governing television broadcasting;
- promotion of the production and distribution of European works;
- public access to major (sports) events;
- television advertising and sponsorship;
- protection of minors;
- right of reply.

Concerning the promotion of production and distribution of European works, the directive lays down the bases for a quota system in its Article 4, which states that 'Member States shall ensure [...] that broadcasters reserve for European works [...] a majority proportion of

their transmission time, excluding the time appointed to news, sports events, games, advertising, teletext services and teleshopping'. Article 5 establishes that 10% of transmission time, or 10% of broadcasters' programming budgets shall be reserved for 'European works created by producers who are independent of broadcasters'.

Member States have the right to strengthen these provisions for broadcasters under their responsibility. In point of fact, a majority of Member States have implemented stricter provisions in support of their programme industries, on the strength of the European legal framework and Europe's protection in the international commercial arena.



A sample of projects ▶▶



▶▶ Visa for the world of volunteers

During summer and autumn 2002, dozens of television stations around the world will be broadcasting a programme as entertaining as it is instructive: *The Volunteers' Odyssey*. For four months, seven teams of three young filmmakers criss-crossed the globe in search of volunteer projects. Corresponding to each of the seven stages of the journey, a four-minute report was produced, giving a total of 49 reports on volunteers working on five continents in areas as basic as health, education, democratisation or the environment, often in the background, and sometimes in difficult or even dangerous conditions. The idea for the project came from Prospective Internationale and it was implemented in 2002 with the support of the EU Youth programme.

Combining profit with pleasure, the journey takes the form of a televised game show, geared to a young audience. In the course of its 49 programmes, an equal number of quiz questions will be put to viewers, who can win a trip to one of the sites visited. But this is not the public's only interaction with the programme. Viewers will also be asked to act as a jury, giving points, by telephone or e-mail, for each report. After the 49th programme, the team scoring the most points will win the funding needed to make a feature-length film. For project leader Georges Drouet, 'it was time for television to give young viewers a chance to learn about sustainable development, whether involving voluntary service or not. Over and above its playful aspect, the programme is meant to make the work of these millions of volunteers known to a broad public.'

Prospective Internationale invested its own funds and voluntary work in *The Volunteers' Odyssey*, but it also received assistance from the youth unit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture, which was immediately interested in the project. 'In addition to the €20,000 from the UN used to cover the costs of video equipment, we received €80,000 from the Commission for logistics in order to produce reports on the European Voluntary Service.'

While the primary intention of Prospective Internationale is to interest young generations in volunteer activities, in the longer term it intends to repeat the operation on subjects associated with UN and European Union theme years. 'In coming years, we hope to promote several other development policies in the media. We are already working on a *Fresh Water Odyssey* for 2003 and we plan to put together a *Micro-Loans Odyssey* in 2005.'

The Volunteers' Odyssey also has an Internet site (<http://3-1416.org/Odysweb>). It includes links to each of the participants: government and non-governmental organisations, television channels, cinema schools, sponsors, etc. Information is also available on each of the volunteer project sites visited and, for those who miss a programme, mini-videos will repeat the quiz questions.



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Log books

Two examples from the 49 reports filmed
in 43 countries across the globe...

Burkina Faso

The godchildren of Ouagadougou

Roaming the streets of the capital of Burkina Faso, day in, day out, are five to seven thousand children who are not receiving any type of education. While the great majority of them go back home to their families at nightfall, others are under the control of organised gangs. These children have no family, social or educational references.

Since 1997, the Red Cross of Belgium has been offering a training programme for these children. For six months, most often simply by playing with them, youth workers first try to create a lasting relationship with the youngsters and gradually to build up a climate of confidence. Only then do the 'godparents' explain why they are there and tell the children about the training available at the Red Cross Centre.

Once the most motivated children have gone to the centre, educational, social and play activities are organised. The goal of being 'godparents' to these children is to help them, through training, to rediscover the fundamental values of life in society and to consider rejoining their families.

Greece

Lake Stymphalia

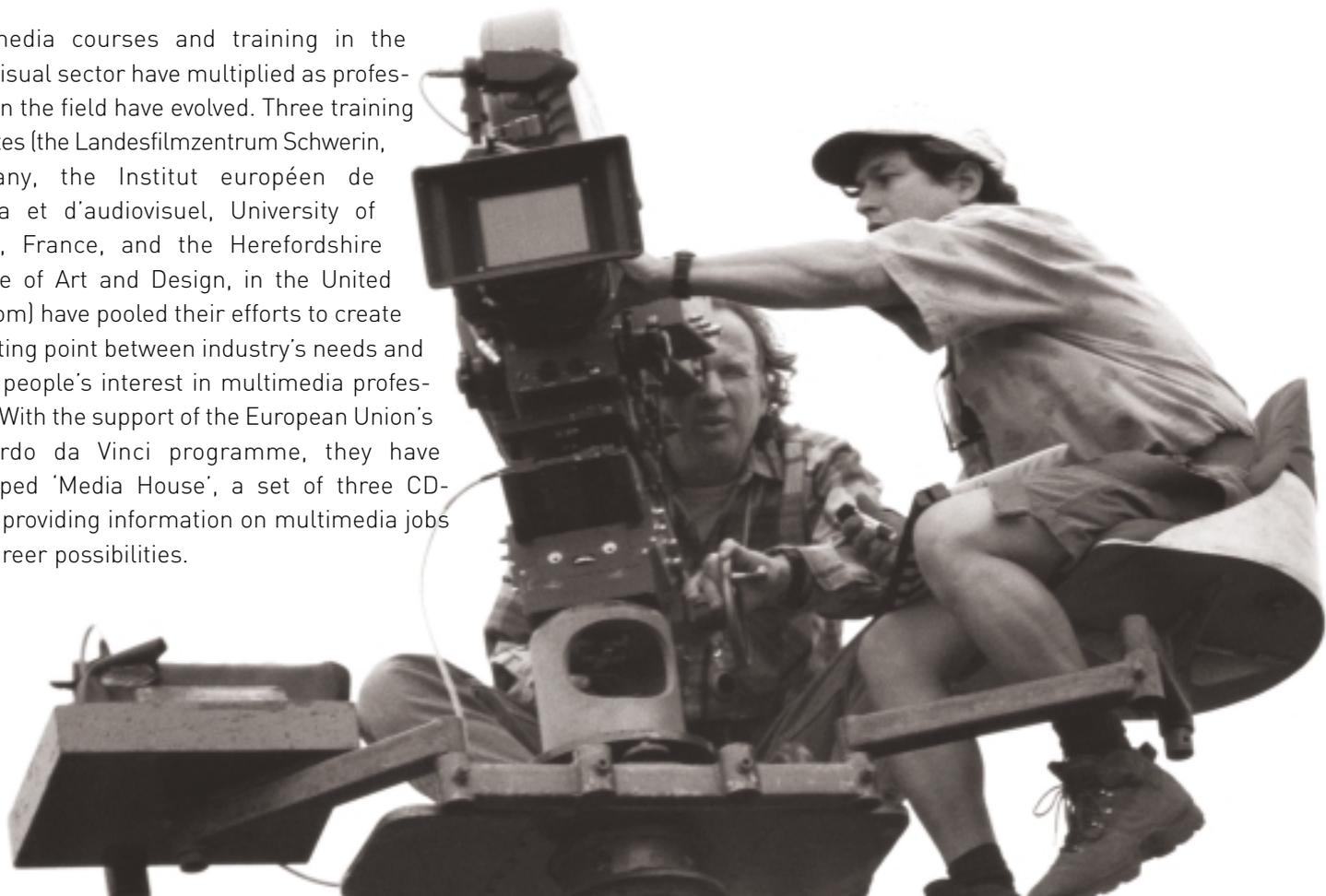
Lake Stymphalia's renown is linked more to Greek mythology than to the wealth of its flora and fauna, exceptional though it is. The ancients recounted that it was at Lake Stymphalia that Hercules did battle with the Stymphalian birds, who had decimated man and beast in the region. Over the ages, however, the situation has been reversed to such a point that today it is the birds in the area that fear man, and hunters in particular.

A few years ago, the site was declared a nature reserve and placed under the protection of the European programme NATURA 2000. Due to a lack of resources, the local authorities turned to volunteers, and in particular the European Voluntary Service, to carry out the task of protecting the lake and its biotope. A number of interesting initiatives have been launched, including creating an environmental education centre and establishing ecology paths around the lake.

In the future, even greater use of Greek and foreign volunteers is expected to be the rule, notably for the production of exhaustive documentation (printed matter, films, photos) on how to reconcile tourism and ecology in the region, and particularly around the lake.



Multimedia courses and training in the audiovisual sector have multiplied as professions in the field have evolved. Three training institutes (the Landesfilmzentrum Schwerin, Germany, the Institut européen de cinéma et d'audiovisuel, University of Nancy, France, and the Herefordshire College of Art and Design, in the United Kingdom) have pooled their efforts to create a meeting point between industry's needs and young people's interest in multimedia professions. With the support of the European Union's Leonardo da Vinci programme, they have developed 'Media House', a set of three CD-ROMs providing information on multimedia jobs and career possibilities.



▶▶ Media House, a guided tour of multimedia careers

'According to market studies commissioned by the publishers, there was no product comparable to ours on the market', explains Hans Joachim Ulbrich, initiator of the Media House project. 'And yet, in the last few years there has been a boom in the number of multimedia training courses, and young people's demand for this type of training is growing continually. We thought it would be important to give those wishing to pursue a career in this field the means of becoming informed, of understanding what multimedia jobs are about and of making a well-informed choice of the career most likely to fulfil their expectations. This sector is growing quickly and there is a need to help young people to seize opportunities that present themselves.'

Created in 1996, Media House received €200,000 in support from the Leonardo da Vinci programme (i.e., a third of its total budget). It consists of three CD-ROMs in three languages (German, English and French). The first concerns television and cinema, the second the audio sector and the third multimedia. Each CD-ROM is divided into three parts: descriptive accounts of all professions linked to multimedia, a data base linking each profession described in the records with a multitude of education and training institutes, and finally a set of video self-portraits of professionals in the field. The interactive CD-ROMs also contain simulations enabling users to learn the techniques of cinematographic lighting and rules for sound tracks.

'The first CD-ROM contains 50 descriptions, some 30 self-portraits and over 400 references to education and training institutes. The first two CD-ROMs are already available on the market. The third will be released soon', adds the project promoter.

Situated in the Land of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the Landesfilmzentrum Schwerin is a long way from the major media centres of Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne and Munich. However, it has teamed up with a giant in the industry for its distribution needs. 'Bertelsmann distributes our product. The CD-ROMs will be distributed primarily to education and training institutes, ministries, vocational reintegration centres and the general public', explains Hans Joachim Ulbrich. For their part, the French and British partners in the project have yet to sign agreements with a well-known distributor to ensure the success of the project in their respective countries.



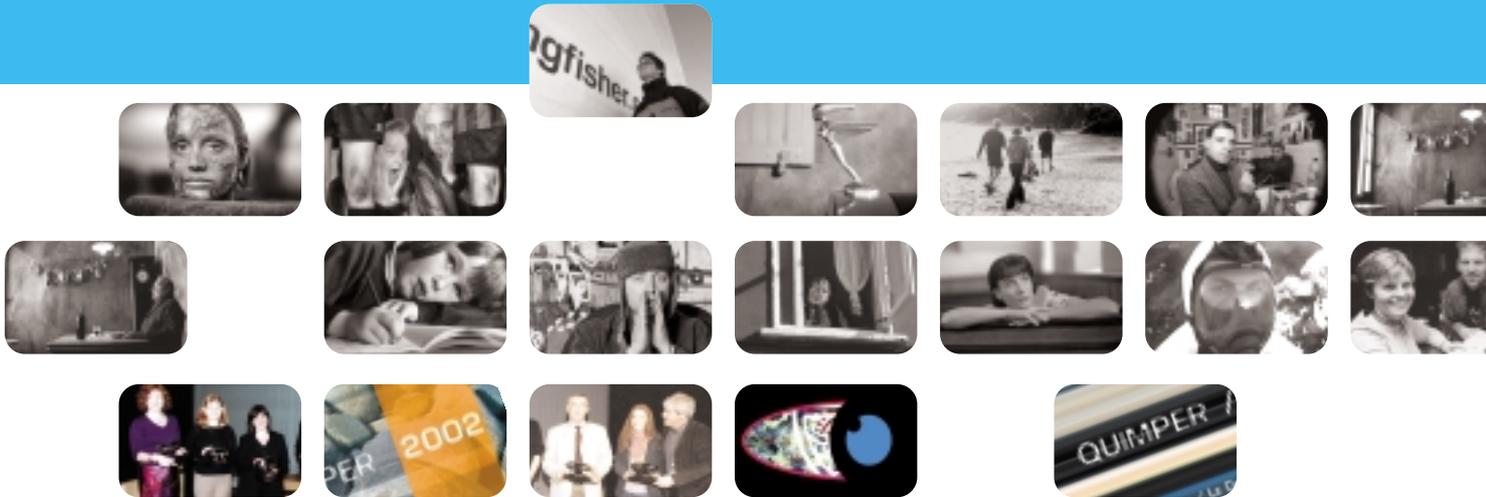
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Celtic reunion

Since its inaugural edition in the Hebrides (Scotland) in 1980, the Festival of Celtic Film and Television, which this year received support from the European Union's MEDIA Plus programme, has slowly but surely become a favourite rendez-vous for cinema, television and radio professionals and, more recently, for those in the new technologies. Producers and broadcasters from Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, Brittany, Galicia and both parts of Ireland seem to value this travelling festival, which gives them an annual opportunity to get to know the Celtic audiovisual sector even better. Lights, camera, action!



Last March, over 400 professionals came together in Quimper (Brittany, France) for the 23rd festival. The general public was also there, eager to discover the 88 works competing in different categories and rewarded by 19 prizes, including 16 bronze torcs (1). 'This festival makes it possible to compare audiovisual experiences in the different Celtic regions', points out Xavier Perrin, director of this year's festival in Quimper. 'The fact that it takes place in a different location every year facilitates meetings between artists, producers and broadcasters who do not necessarily have the chance to get away every year. The festival has nevertheless managed to build up a group of faithful professional participants and it draws a regular public.'

In conjunction with the screenings, exhibitions, visits, excursions and musical evenings, the Quimper festival set up a career and training forum with workshops and master-classes for students, young professionals and, more broadly, the general public. There were also 15 seminars on audiovisual themes, either technical (such as the prospects offered by digital terrestrial wireless broadcasting, with a growing number of channels allowing simultaneous broadcasting

in several languages) or more general, such as the place of minority languages in audiovisual production. 'These seminars revealed that certain regions and countries have allocated resources for the development of productions in minority languages, notably in Ireland and Scotland', explains Xavier Perrin.

The surprise guest at this year's 'family reunion' was Galicia. 'We decided to expand our circle by inviting this new minority region. We particularly wished to see how Galicia had managed to produce, with *El bosque Animado* (The Animated Forest), the first feature-length digital animated Spanish film, a work of quality that is starting to make a name for itself around the world.' Thanks to its business meetings bringing together experts, producers and broadcasters, the Celtic Film and Television Festival is also a programme exchange, like Cannes or Berlin. This year's market enjoyed support from the MEDIA programme, in particular its promotion system. 'This label represents recognition of the work we have accomplished over many years and valuable assistance, notably through the programme's network of information offices', commented the director of the festival. 'We were able to reach a wider public, making the festival a means of

promotion and a springboard for the discovery of other cultures.'

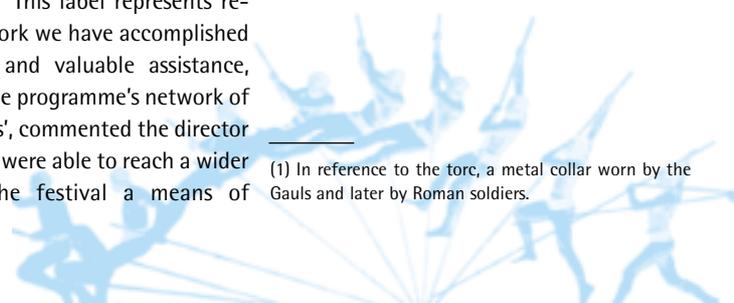
After Quimper, next year's festival will be held in Belfast.



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(1) In reference to the torc, a metal collar worn by the Gauls and later by Roman soldiers.



Dubbing ^{or} subtitles ?

That is
the question

For the European film industry, this issue represents a battle between respect for the original work and commercial imperatives. While a film such as *Todo sobre mi madre* (All about my mother) loses some of its Hispanic charm when dubbed in English, dubbing is sometimes unavoidable for breaking into international markets. The dilemma is further complicated by the problem of language learning in Europe. Yet viewing a subtitled film can be a fun and effective way of learning.

In 2001, the European Year of Languages, a major language-learning campaign, encouraged Europeans to take up a language no matter what their age or previous experience. The goal was to encourage all European citizens to speak two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue (1). A wide range of local and regional initiatives pursued this objective during the year, not only by organising free classes in different languages, but also by urging the public to watch films in their original version, with subtitles.

Europeans still prefer dubbing but increasingly appreciate subtitles

While the European Commission provides support for both dubbing and subtitling, adapting audiovisual policy to rules in force and to the habits of each country, it is interesting to take Europeans' preferences into consideration. As part of the European Year of Languages, a Eurobarometer poll carried out in autumn 2000 shed light on the linguistic practices of European citizens.

The survey revealed that 30% of Europeans prefer to see foreign films and programmes in the original version with subtitles. The Eurobarometer also revealed that Europeans often watch television or films and listen to the radio in other languages, thus making use of their foreign language skills. In a number of European countries (2), this is the most frequently used means of keeping up language skills, coming second after spending holidays in another country.

Moreover, interest in subtitled films has been growing in recent years in countries where dubbing is the dominant practice (France,

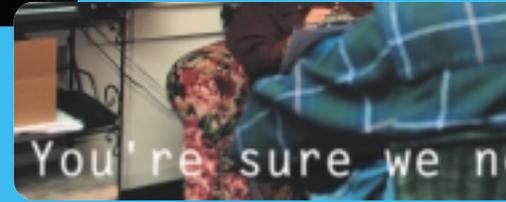
Germany, Italy and Spain). These countries are increasing their proportion of subtitled films: of 10 prints released, 8 are dubbed and 2 subtitled, whereas just a few years ago, only a dubbed version was released.

What is more, the cost of releasing subtitled films is only one third of that for dubbed films. In the least populated EU Member States, moreover, it is the financial aspect that is the decisive factor in favour of subtitled films.

In view of this economic argument and the definite advantage subtitles represent in language learning, the future of European cinema, at least as far as European distribution is concerned, could therefore involve greater use of subtitling. The only missing factor may be awareness of the role of films as a means of improving European citizens' language skills.

Subtitled films, or language classes without the effort

There is no longer any doubt as to the benefits of subtitling in terms of learning. Even if we are still in the stage of research into the implications of subtitled programmes and films in language learning, it has already been demonstrated that they lead to an extremely active form of learning. A recent study conducted in the Netherlands (3), for example, demonstrated the positive effect of subtitled films on language learning by primary school children at home.



The study also revealed that youngsters learn a language (in this case, English) by reading subtitles, without the stated goal being to learn the language. Their motivation to understand the meaning of the words and of the sound track is so great that it makes one wonder whether it may not be more effective than classroom language learning. The effect is multiplied if the television programme itself represents a source of information or a centre of interest for the viewers. In addition to the informative aspect, there is the learning of the other language (basically, the acquisition of new vocabulary) along with reading practice in the mother tongue. And to top it all off, these three different skills are acquired during what is perceived as a relaxing and pleasurable activity.

So even though most Europeans may not realise their value, the advantages of subtitles cannot be overstated. To repeat a key message of the European Year of Languages, everyone is concerned and learning is accessible to all, because the opportuneness of learning a foreign language is definitely not limited to children and young Europeans alone. For adults who lack time to improve their language skills, subtitled films can be a reliable means of keeping them up without any special effort.

In the history of the media, television programmes were often subtitled for economic reasons, before being replaced by dubbing. So is it realistic to hope for a return to subtitled television programmes? ARTE serves as an example of the difficulty of maintaining a policy of broadcasting films in their subtitled original version. But there is some hope after all: the development of new technologies may enable Europeans to choose for themselves in the future. If television programmes are broadcast simultaneously in two languages on two different channels, to subtitle or not to subtitle would then be up to individual viewers.



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(1) See also the Council Resolution of 14 February 2002 on the promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning within the framework of implementing the goals of European Year of Languages 2001.

(2) Denmark, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Finland and Sweden mention films, television and radio as the second most frequent means used for maintaining language skills. France and Belgium place them in third position.

(3) 'Children's Vocabulary Acquisition in a Foreign Language Through Watching Subtitled TV Programmes at Home', Cees M. Koolstra, Leiden University, Johannes W.J. Beentjes, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

EN



The European Commission and audiovisual policy

The site of DG Education and Culture, housed by Europa, contains a section devoted specifically to EU audiovisual policy. It includes an overview of audiovisual policy, information on the regulatory framework, links to the Media Plus programme and other support measures, studies and statistics. The section exists in three language versions: English, French and German.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/index_fr.htm

A European culture portal

In March 2002, the European Commission placed a culture portal online. Designed and managed by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture, it covers the cultural actions of the European Union and also artistic activities organised in the scope of other European policies and programmes. Five language versions are available: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/>



Education and Culture at a Glance

Every two months, the online newsletter *Education and Culture at a Glance* offers an overview of policy developments, programme implementation, key events and publications in all the areas covered by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

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