Community participation in the European Audiovisual Observatory

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This Commission staff working document accompanies the report from the Commission on the implementation of Council Decision 1999/784/EC of 22 November 1999 as amended by Decision 2239 /2004/EC of the European Parliament and the Council concerning Community participation in the European Audiovisual Observatory.

The working document comprises 4 chapters which concern the following issues:

Chapter 1: Dissemination of publications: the report reveals that after a decline of sales by the end of the 1990s, the total sale of publications stabilised from 2001 to 2003 and increased again in 2004 and 2005. The report includes an overview of the geographical pattern of the distribution of sold copies of the Observatory publications for the year 2006 (January to end of August) as well as a breakdown of the categories of purchasers.

The Observatory has been commissioned by Marché du Film/Festival de Cannes (MIF) to prepare synthetic statistics on world film market trends. These statistics are printed, published and mainly distributed by MIF under the name "FOCUS" at the Cannes film festival to all accredited professionals (about 8500 copies). "FOCUS" is largely identified with the Observatory, which also disseminate about 2000 copies among its customers, professional partners and members.

The study "Public Funding for film and audiovisual works in Europe – A comparative approach", published in 2004, is considered to be a commercial success: by August 2006, 601 copies were sold and some 550 copies where distributed free of charge. For the report "Film Distribution Companies in Europeis", which is expected to be launched by fall 2006, marketing plans foresee a distribution of 450 copies free of charge and a minimum sales target of 200 copies.

Chapter 2: main Observatory reports concerning market and financing issues: 17 Observatory reports were published concerning market and financial issues.

Chapter 3: main Observatory reports concerning legal issues: a number of reports were published by the Observatory.

Chapter 4: online activity: from 1999 to 2003, the Observatory systematically published certain publications on its Internet portal. All publications, reports, papers and notes published on the Observatory's Internet site are accessible free of charge.

By August 2006 the Observatory counted three databases:

- "LUMIERE" launched in May 2002 provides for a systematic compilation of available data on admissions to films released in European cinemas since 1996;
- "KORDA" launched in May 2003 provides for a compilation of available information on public funding for film and audiovisual production and distribution in Europe. The database includes profiles of national, regional and pan-European bodies, as well as information on individual funding schemes;
- "IRIS MERLIN" has been fully operational since May 2003 and is a database on legal information relevant to the audiovisual sector in Europe.

The decline of visits which can be observed in spring 2006 is due to an unfavourable reindexing of the IRIS Merlin database by major search engines, which render the identification of content of the database for a potential user more difficult.