# Audiovisual industry: MEDIA II 1996-2000, development and distribution of European works

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Pending the opinion of the European Parliament, the Council held an initial discussion on the two proposals for decisions concerning the MEDIA II programme (1996-2000). At the end of the discussion, the Council instructed the ad hoc Working Party on the Audiovisual Sector and the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue examination of the Commission proposals in the light of the views expressed, so that the Council could take action at its June meeting. The Presidency noted that the following points in particular would require special attention in the course of examination: - the objective of a high Community added value and complementarity with action at national level; - the need for concentration of resources in the areas of development and training as well as that of distribution including cinema programming, while taking into account cultural and linguistic diversity and the circumstances of Member States with limited capacity in this respect; - establishment of management arrangements clarifying the respective roles of the Member States, the Commission and professionals in the field; - the need for effective interaction between the support provided by the MEDIA programme and the financial mechanism announced by the Commission; - organisation of a smooth transition from the actions carried out under the present programme. The MEDIA programme, the first phase of which has been running since 1991, is intended to encourage and develop the audiovisual programme industry in Europe . The Commission proposal provides for three main forms of support: training (the first proposal, based on Article 127 of the Treaty), development and distribution (second proposal, based on Article 130 of the Treaty). The second phase of the programme - MEDIA II - would have a funding of ECU 400 million for 5 years. Aid would be granted in the form of loans of up to 50% of the cost of the actions (except for aids to training, which could be as much as 75% and would be granted as non-refundable subsidies).