Towards a better distribution of European films in the internal market and the candidate countries

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Luckas VANDER TAELEN (Greens/EFA, B) on achieving better circulation of European films in the internal market and the candidate countries. The report pointed out that, in the year 2000, the market share of European films in EU cinemas fell to its lowest recorded level, 22.5%, as compared to 73.7% for films from the USA - even though Europe produced more films than the USA. Moreover, in the same year European films achieved only 26% of their box office takings from sources outside their country of origin, largely due to the imperfections of the distribution system and the lack of funding for marketing and promotion. The report called for an ambitious, integrated, multiannual plan - above and beyond the MEDIA programme - to make the European film industry more competitive. It urged the Commission, the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund, when implementing the i2i initiative, (intended to support the film and broadcasting industries), to focus in particular on funding for transnational distribution channels for European films. It also called on the Commission to devote attention, within the 6th Framework Research Programme, to research into digital film distribution and projection techniques (e-Cinema) so as to enable several language versions of a film to be produced easily. The committee believed that, when revising the directive on Television without Frontiers, the Commission should look into the desirability and feasibility of requiring television broadcasters to devote a minimum proportion of their air time to promoting European films, to programme a minimum number of non-national European works and to invest part of their turnover in the film industry. The committee also proposed breathing new life into the European Film Awards and setting up a European Cinematic Heritage Foundation to safeguard the heritage of European cinema.