Television broadcasting activities. 'Television without frontiers'

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This Communication consists of the fifth report from the European Commission on the implementation of Articles 4 and 5 of the "Television without Frontiers" Directive to promote the broadcasting of European works, including those of independent producers. The first general conclusion concerns trends in the number of television channels in Europe: the total number of channels10 of all types in Europe (the European Union Member States and the EFTA Member States participating in the European Economic Area) was around 550 in January 1999 and 670 in January 2000. The total number of channels as at January 2001 was around 820. The number of channels concerned by Articles 4 and 5 of the "Television without Frontiers" Directive continued to increase overall compared with the previous period (1997-1998) and within the reference period of this report (1999-2000), reflecting the dynamism in European audiovisual supply. This increase was considerable in most European Union countries, and particularly so in countries such as Spain, France, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The second conclusion concerns the average transmission time reserved for European works by the channels with the highest viewing figures: - the average transmission time of European works for all European channels, in all Member States, was 60.68% in 1999 and 62.18% in 2000, representing a 1.50 point increase over the reference period; - depending on the Member State in question, the average transmission time varied between 52.94% and 71.46%15 in 1999 and between 55.33% and 71.18% in 200016, with the exception of Portugal17 (48.7% in 1999 and 49.5% in 2000) and Luxembourg (100% in 1999 and 2000); - the trend in the broadcasting of European works, in terms of number of channels, was upward in 12 Member States. It was stable in one Member State and (very slightly) downward in the other two. The third conclusion refers to the total number of channels which achieved or exceeded the majority proportion of their transmission time of European works over the reference period: - the average compliance rate for all European channels in all Member States was 68.58% in 1999 and 72.50% in 2000, representing a 3.93 point increase over the reference period. This is a particularly impressive figure given the considerable increase in the number of channels, essentially special-interest channels, over the same period; - the compliance rates for all types of channel varied, according to the Member State under consideration, between 55% and 100% in 1999 and between 53% and 100% in 2000, with the exception of Italy which did not meet the majority proportion of transmission time (42% in 1999 and 49% in 2000); - the average compliance rate, in terms of number of channels of all types, rose in nine Member States, was stable in four and fell in two. The overall trend was therefore positive. The fourth conclusion concerns the general trend, in terms of number of channels of all types, in the scheduling of European works over the reference period, the report shows that the national reports revealed an upward trend in 14 Member States, the level in the fifteenth remaining stable. To resume, for the reference period 1999-2000, the national reports reflect generally satisfactory application by the European Union Member States of the provisions of Article 4 (European works) and Article 5 (European works created by independent producers) of the "Television without Frontiers" Directive. Detailed examination of these reports by the Commission reveals, for both Articles 4 and 5, a positive and dynamic trend in the broadcasting of European works, including those by independent producers, in the context of a general increase in the number of channels over the reference period. Only some of the minority channels in certain Member States are presenting difficulties. In this regard, the Commission would remind the Member States concerned of the need for increased control and monitoring of these channels and the importance of ensuring, where practicable and by appropriate means, that these television broadcasters meet the proportions laid down by Articles 4 and 5 of the Directive.