European audiovisual Observatory, Strasburg 1992: Community participation

1999/0066(CNS) - 11/03/1999 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: provide a legal base for the Community's involvement in and contribution to the European Audiovisual Observatory. CONTENT: The European Audiovisual Observatory was established in 1992 upon the initiative of 29 member countries (including the EU 15) with the objective of improving the transfer of information within the audiovisual industry and to promote a clearer view of the market and a greater transparency. The Observatory was to 'focus in the first instance on the main categories of information requested by the professional'. The European Commission has been a member of the Observatory since its foundation and is represented in its constituent bodies (the Executive Council and the Advisory Committee), as well as its various functional organs such as the Financial Committee and the Editorial Board of IRIS (the legal information newsletter). It has contributed to the Observatory's operating budget since its inception according to a financial weighting which puts the Commission on a par with the larger Member States i.e. 12.25% of the overall budget (thus the Commission's contribution in 1999 will be 200,000 euros). Several of the Member States and the European Parliament have called on the Commission to put forward proposal to establish a legal basis for the Community's contribution to and participation in the Observatory. This position is motivated among other things by the European Court of Justice's decision of 12 May 1998 on legal bases. The proposed Decision seeks to provide a harmonised framework for the Member States' efforts in order to make best use of them and reap the full benefits of synergy. This Decision is designed to encourage the necessary adjustments in the different Member States to ensure that optimum use is made of existing statistics and that suitable information is obtained about the various audiovisual markets. By virtue of the principle of subsidiarity, the objectives of the proposed action can be achieved only by a Community legal act, as only the Commission is in a position to coordinate the requisite harmonisation of information at Community level. There is consensus that Eurostat's activities and those of the Observatory are complementary and strengthen each other, and regular contacts between the Observatory and Eurostat have resulted in the conclusions of a 'modus operandi' on 15.09.1998.