

Audiovisual sector: implementation of a programme of support for this European sector, MEDIA 2007

2004/0151(COD) - 14/07/2004 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a programme for the European audiovisual sector (MEDIA 2007.)

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: this proposal comes about due to the Commission's assessment that the European audiovisual sector is fragmented in terms of both its production structure and the cultural framework in which it operates. Whilst it is clear that this fragmentation has resulted in a culturally diverse and highly independent production industry, providing a voice for the different cultural traditions that make up our European heritage, it has, however, prevented European industry from achieving a larger market share with respect to non- European imports both within the Union and worldwide. The European audiovisual industry struggles to match the high competitiveness of its American counterpart. New Community action for the audiovisual industry should contribute to translating European cultural values into a competitive worldwide industry, by overcoming the obstacles that prevent operators from benefiting from the advantages of the Internal Market for non-national audiovisual productions. A more competitive audiovisual industry will have positive effects on growth and employment for the whole Union and will consolidate the European cultural values at the basis of European citizenship.

The new programme will focus on supporting the creative process at all levels of the production chain with the objective of enabling the sector to fully exploit the economic and cultural potential of the European Internal Market. Community action will therefore be integrated into a single programme intervening in the pre-production and in the post production phases in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

MEDIA 2007 will have as global objectives, to:

- 1) Preserve and enhance European cultural diversity and its cinematographic and audiovisual heritage, guarantee its accessibility for European citizens and promote intercultural dialogue;
- 2) Increase the circulation of European audiovisual works inside and outside the European Union;
- 3) Strengthen the competitiveness of the European audiovisual sector in the framework of an open and competitive market.

The programme will take into account four horizontal priorities:

- the importance of the creative process within the European audiovisual sector and the cultural value of Europe's cinematographic and audiovisual heritage need to be integrated within the actions proposed.
- strengthening of the production structures of the SMEs, which constitute the core of the European audiovisual sector, as a means of enhancing its competitiveness. This will mean contributing to the spread of a business culture for the sector and facilitating private investments in the sector.

- the programme will reduce the imbalances between countries with a high production capacity and countries with low production capacity or a restricted linguistic area. This priority responds to the need to preserve and enhance cultural diversity and inter-cultural dialogue in Europe.

- the programme will follow and support market developments with regard to digitisation. The programme will put in place measures to accompany the changes that digitisation is producing in the audiovisual sector at all stages of the production and distribution chain as well as in terms of new competencies for the professionals of the sector.

With regard to specific objectives:

Acquisition and improvement of skills in the audiovisual sector: the programme will support projects aiming at improving the creative and management skills of European audiovisual professionals as well as adapting their technical skills to digital technologies.

Development: the programme will support the development phase of production from independent SMEs in the documentary, animation and drama genres as well as multimedia. It will provide grants to independent production companies for the development of single projects. It will support the development of a catalogue of works both for companies with a limited investment capacity and for companies with higher investment capacity.

Distribution: Community action will concentrate its efforts on transnational distribution support, in line with the principle of subsidiarity and as a complementary approach to Member State support mechanisms.

Promotion: the programme will encourage the circulation of European cinematographic works and television programmes within the framework of professional markets within Europe and world-wide.

The budget for implementing this programme is **EUR 1 055 million**.

For a more detailed assessment of the budgetary implications of this proposal, please refer to the financial statement.