

Cannes Declaration 2008

Europe Day at the Cannes Festival – 19th May 2008

Declaration of European Audiovisual Affairs Ministers and of the European Commission member responsible for the Information Society and Media

At the joint invitation of Viviane Reding, member of the Commission responsible for the information society and media, and Gilles Jacob, President of the Cannes Film Festival, and in the presences of Mr. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, the ministers in charge of audiovisual matters in the European Union and the EFTA countries have adopted the following declaration together with the European Commission:

The audiovisual sector falls squarely within the Lisbon Agenda objectives. It contributes to the reinforcement of training, prosperity, growth and employment. This role forms the basis of the support given by the European Union to the audiovisual industry.

EU support takes a number of different forms, such as the MEDIA 2007 programme with its Europe-wide role, and geographically targeted initiatives like EUROMED Audiovisual II and the support programme for cinema and audiovisual in ACP countries. Moreover, the Council of Europe provides a funding programme (Eurimages) whose principal aim is to facilitate intra-European co-productions. These European initiatives complement national aid schemes, which focus primarily on production and distribution on domestic markets.

Such initiatives were not, however, designed to fully address the challenges and opportunities unleashed by the growing internationalisation of audiovisual markets. This situation must be improved insofar as closer co-operation and deeper exchanges with third countries will reinforce the competitiveness of the European audiovisual sector. Such enhanced cooperation will generate significant added-value in terms of improved promotion, better market access and greater exposure of European audiovisual works in third countries. The external dimension of audiovisual policy is therefore taking on increasing importance.

For these reasons, the meeting:

- welcomed the European Parliament's initiative on the MEDIA International preparatory action, intended to reinforce audiovisual cooperation between European industry professionals and industry professionals in third countries;
- encouraged the Commission to pursue the development of this initiative and to examine the desirability and the possibility of presenting , before the end of the year, a proposal for a support programme to promote cooperation between European audiovisual industry professionals and industry professionals in third countries for the mutual benefit of all participants;
- acknowledged the utility of reinforcing audiovisual cooperation measures in the cooperation and trade agreements concluded between the European Union and third countries;
- took note of the new possibilities for promoting cooperation with third countries that share a common vision of cultural diversity and in particular of the possibilities offered by the amended definition of European creative works resulting from Article 1 (n) (i) 3rd indent of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, on condition that it is applied in such a way as to take account of the specificities of each international negotiation;
- invited the Commission to take due account of any imbalances in these exchanges as well as the mutual benefits to be derived from them.