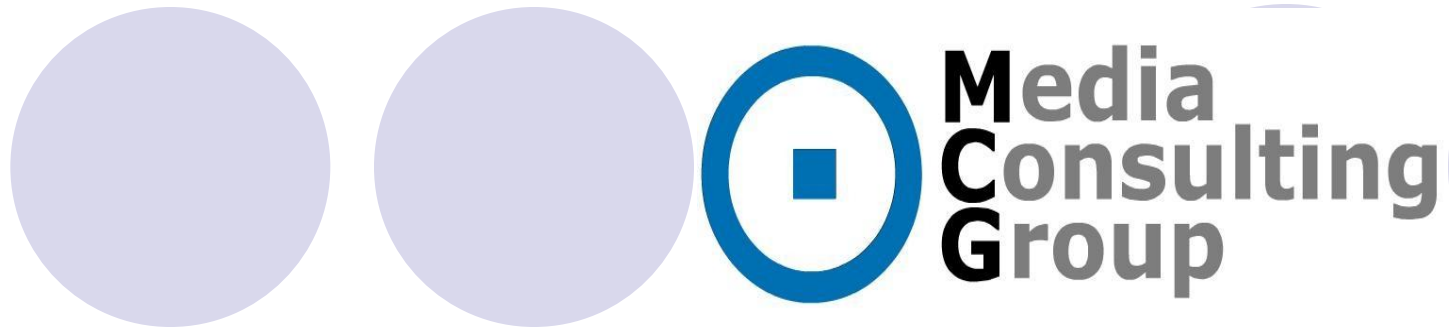


Study on dubbing and subtitling needs and practices in the European audiovisual industry



European Commission Conference *Subtitling for better understanding*, Prague –
28 April 2010

Purpose of the study

- **Assess** the current dubbing and subtitling needs and practices
 - in the 31 countries participating in the MEDIA 2007 Programme.
 - According to the MEDIA 2007 Programme objectives
- **Provide recommendations** regarding measures to implement at European Community level in order to:
 - Encourage linguistic diversity
 - Reduce obstacle to the circulation of AV works in the international market

Language transfer practices in cinema and television in Europe

The Europe map of language practices

- It is generally represented as two large blocs (dubbing countries vs subtitling countries), **but it is in fact far more complex.**
- Language transfer practices vary in terms of
 - language areas,
 - distribution vehicle (cinema, television or DVD) and
 - target publics (general public, 'arthouse' public, young public or viewers with accessibility problems – blind, sight-impaired, deaf and hearing-impaired).
- Furthermore, dubbing and subtitling are not the only means of translating an audiovisual work from the original language. Voice-over is used to a large extent in certain Eastern European countries.

The map of Europe according to language areas

- In **common language countries**, distributors and broadcasters' policy in the smaller countries depends on the purchasing policy of companies in the language area's lead country.
- A few examples of language areas:
 - *French-speaking countries*: France (lead country), French-speaking Belgium, Luxembourg and French-speaking Switzerland
 - *German-speaking countries*: Germany (lead country), Austria, Liechtenstein and German-speaking Switzerland
 - *English-speaking countries*: United Kingdom (lead country), Ireland and Malta
 - *Italian-speaking countries*: Italy (lead country) and Italian-speaking Switzerland
 - *Greece* (lead country) and *Cyprus* are also closely linked.

The map of Europe according to distribution vehicle

Theatrical release (cinema)

- Dubbing remains deeply rooted in Italy and Spain
 - In Italy, very few original version with subtitles - almost exclusively limited to arthouse cinemas.
 - In Spain, only 2 to 5% original version with subtitles. The situation has nevertheless evolved in the last few years with 15% of films screened only in the original version with subtitles (ICAA). In addition, at cinemas in large Spanish cities: choice between the dubbed and subtitled versions.
- In all the other traditionally dubbing countries (France, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Czech Rep), box office release practices are changing faster and more perceptibly, with subtitling coming into increasing use.

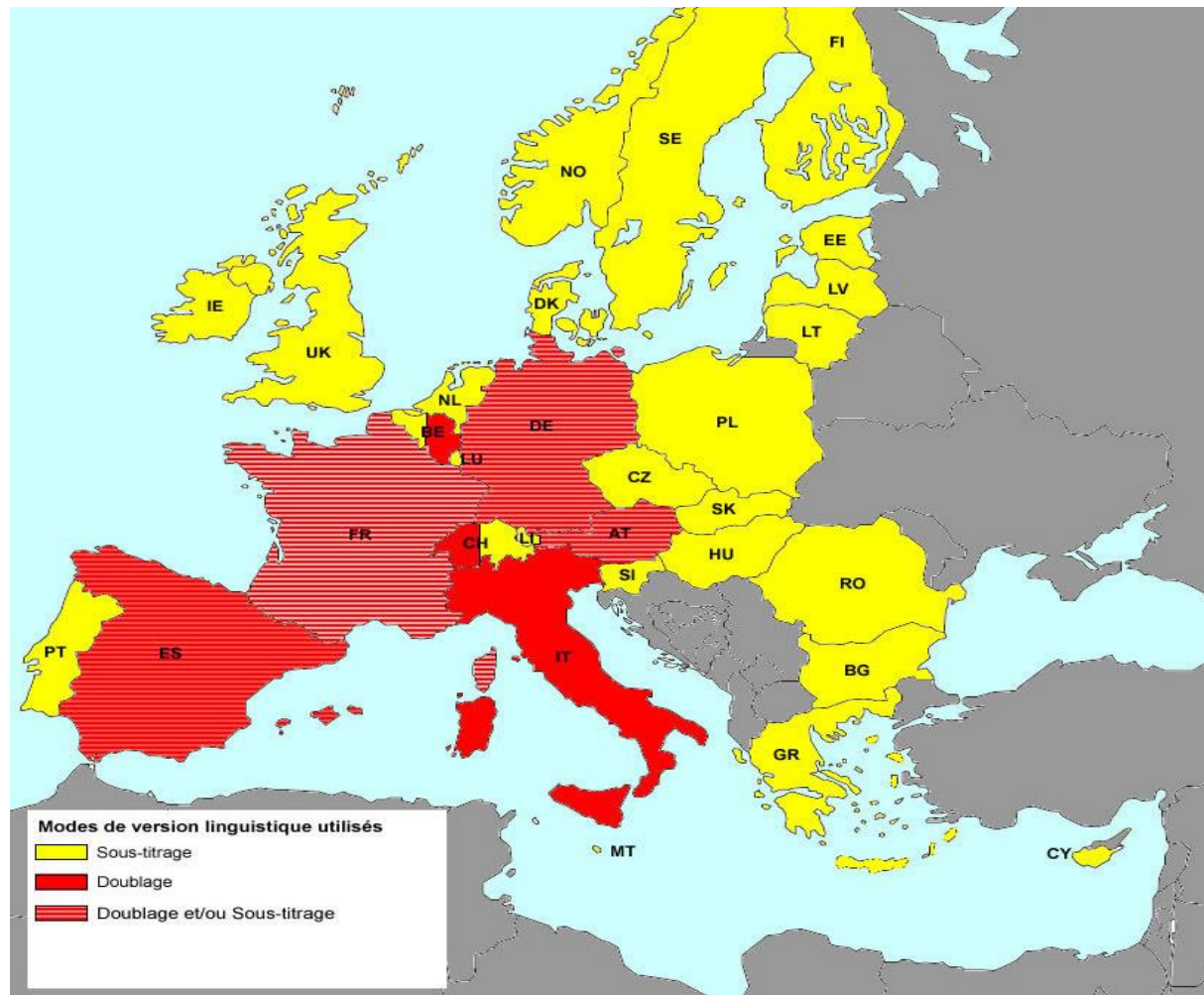
The map of Europe according to distribution vehicle

Theatrical release (cinema)

- The subtitling countries do not constitute a uniform bloc:
 - Bilingual subtitling is used in Belgium (French and Flemish), Finland (Finnish and Swedish), Luxembourg (French and Dutch or German) and Switzerland, for subtitled versions in French- and German-speaking Switzerland (French and German).
 - Switzerland is a special case because dubbing is generally preferred in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland, whereas subtitling is the preference in German-speaking Switzerland. A number of films are also released in their original version, with distribution limited to their language region (French films in the French-speaking areas, German or Austrian films in German-speaking areas and Italian films in Ticino).

Map of language-transfer practices for Cinema works screened in Europe

Theatrical release



The map of Europe according to distribution vehicle

Television broadcasting

- Dubbing is still the dominant practice in 10 countries: Germany, Austria, Spain, France, Hungary, Italy, Czech Rep, Slovakia, Switzerland and French-speaking Belgium.
- Voice-over is used in 4 countries: Bulgaria, Poland, Latvia and Lithuania.
 - It is also used to a lesser extent in Estonia, (1/3 of programmes are broadcasted in voice-over version and the rest with subtitles).

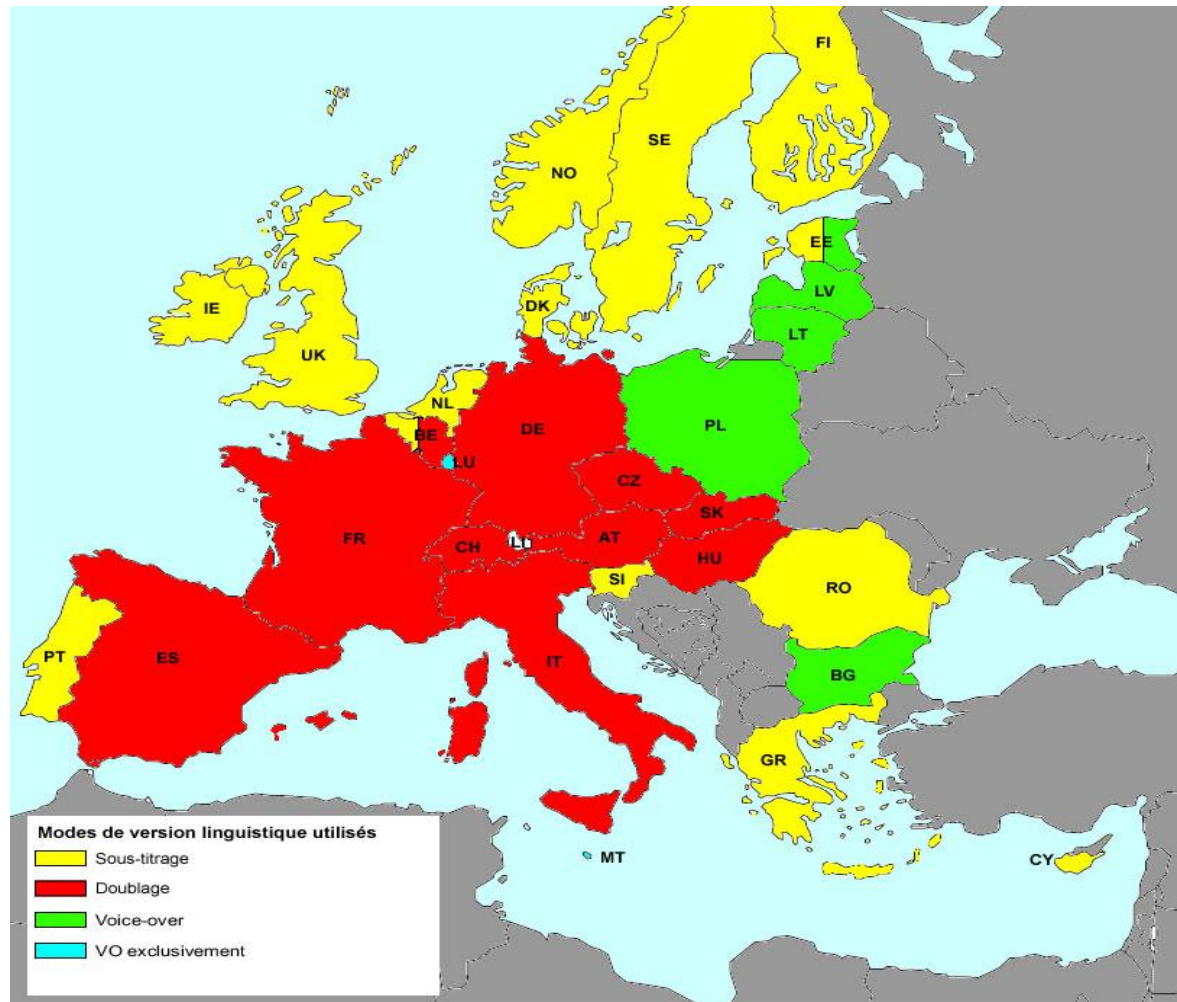
The map of Europe according to distribution vehicle

Television broadcasting

- **Subtitles are used in 14 countries:**
 - Flemish-speaking Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Norway, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, The United Kingdom, Slovenia and Sweden.
- **Luxembourg and Malta are in a class of their own.**
 - In Luxembourg, RTL Letzeuberg is the only channel that broadcasts films (co)produced in Lux. in the original version.
 - In Malta, works are broadcast in Maltese; foreign films are broadcast directly in the English version (or in the Italian version on Italian channels).

Map of language-transfer practices for audiovisual works broadcast in Europe

TV
distribution



The map of Europe according to genre

- In virtually all of Europe, *children's films* are screened in dubbed versions both in cinemas and on television. To give pre-school children access to audiovisual works European distributors and broadcasters provide dubbed versions of foreign works.
- *Documentaries* are also sometimes a separate genre. Non-national documentaries are often screened in voice-over or with a mix of voice-over and subtitling.
- *TV fictions* generally follow the same practices as films released at the box office.

The map of Europe according to target public

- The young public (pre-school children) only has access to dubbed films and other audiovisual programmes
- Viewers with accessibility problems require adapted transfer modes: audiodescription for visual disabilities, subtitling for the hearing-impaired.
- For box office release in countries where dubbing and subtitling exist side by side, there is sometimes an obvious difference between large cities, where the public prefers subtitled versions of films and smaller towns, where dubbing is generally preferred.

Problems relating to multilingualism

- Illiteracy and audiovisual consumption
 - No correlation whatever the indicators used.
- Multilingualism, cinema and television
 - The profile of the average multilingual is not the same as the profile of the average TV viewer, who is older, more female and more socially isolated.
 - Living in a country that favours TV dubbing does not correspond with a lower level of linguistic proficiency
- **MCG - with prof. Hayssam Safar (University of Mons), Carlo Eugeni (University of Macerata) and prof. Yves Gambier (University of Turku) - has just been entitled by the EAC DG to carry out a *Study on the use of Subtitling - The potential of subtitling to encourage foreign language learning and improve the mastery of foreign languages.***



Alain MODOT, Vice President

am@mediacg.tv