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O P I N I O N S

- of the Committee on Budgets
(in letter form)
- of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and
Industrial Policy
Draftsman : Mr HOPPENSTEDT
- of the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology
Draftsman : Mr PORRAZZINI
- of the Committee on External Economic Relations
Draftsman : Mr DE VRIES

for the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, the Media
and Sport

on the Commission's proposals to the Council for

I. a decision concerning the implementation of an action
programme to promote the development of the European
audiovisual industry (1991-1995)

and

II. a Council decision concerning the implementation of a
Community vocational training measure in the audiovisual
sector

(COM(90) 132 final + final/2 - C 3-221/90)

A Series: Reports - B Series: Motions for Resolutions, Oral Questions - C Series: Documents received from other Institutions (e.g. Consultations)

Rapporteurs:

Mr BARZANTI

Mr ELLIOTT

Cooperation procedure (second reading) which requires the votes of a majority of the current
Members of Parliament for rejection or amendment

*

= Consultation procedure requiring a single reading

**I

= Cooperation procedure (first reading)

= Parliamentary assent which requires the votes of a majority of the current Members of
Parliament

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OPINION
of the Committee on Budgets

Letter from the Chairman to Mr Barzanti, Chairman of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, the Media and Sport

Luxembourg, 8.11.1990

Subject: the Commission communication to the Council accompanied by two proposals for Council Decisions relating to an action programme to promote the development of the European audiovisual industry
'MEDIA' 1991-1995

(COM(90) 0132 final - C3-0221/90)

Dear Mr Barzanti,

At its meeting of 6 and 7 November 1990 the Committee on Budgets considered this Commission proposal.

The Commission estimates the financial implications to be 250 m ECU in all over the period 1988-1992. The estimated requirements for 1991 and 1992 under the Financial Perspective amount to 84 m ECU (1991 : 34 m, 1992 50 m ECU). At first reading of the 1991 budget Parliament entered a sum of 33 m ECU.

In view of Parliament's decisions on first reading of the 1991 budget and the proviso in the Commission proposal that resources shall be determined in the framework of the budgetary procedure, the Committee on Budgets has adopted a favourable opinion.

Yours sincerely

Thomas von der VRING

Members present: von der Vring, chairman; Arias Cañete, Goedmakers, Langes, Lo Giudice, Kellett-Bowman, Marques Mendes, Miranda da Silva, Theato and Wynn.

O P I N I O N
(Rule 120 of the Rules of Procedure)

of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy
for the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, the Media and Sport

Draftsman: Mr. Karsten Friedrich HOPPENSTEDT

At its meeting of 17 July 1990 the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy appointed Mr Hoppenstedt draftsman.

The committee considered the draft opinion at its meeting of 5-7 November 1990 and adopted its conclusions unanimously.

The following took part in the vote:

Beumer, Chairman; Hoppenstedt draftsman; Peter Beazley, Braun-Moser (for Lulling), Cassidy, Dalsass (for Merz), Ernst de la Graete, Friedrich, Hoff, Mattina, Mihr, Patterson, Randzio-Plath (for Rogalla), Read, Siso Cruellas, Tongue, and von Wogau.

I. Introduction and general assessment

The Commission's proposal aims to strengthen the position of European audiovisual production and distribution firms on the European and world markets. The endeavour to promote the development of the audiovisual industry and vocational training in that sector is a useful one and should therefore be welcomed.

In keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, the Community's programme is not designed to replace public support measures in the Member States but to complement them. The financial autonomy of the parties to the contract is guaranteed in that they must contribute under joint financial arrangements at least 50% of the total cost of each measure (see Article 6 of the proposals). For the major projects, the Committee of Experts rightly recommends that these should aim to achieve financial autonomy as part of MEDIA 92 within five years.

In view of rising production costs, the aim should be to achieve profitability and refinancing of audiovisual products beyond national markets. At present, 80% of European films do not cross the frontiers of their country of origin. The structural difficulties of the programme-making industry are related to the fact that they have only developed regionally, in a national context or in homogeneous linguistic and cultural areas. The resultant problems of variations in the size of undertakings, the lack of a Europe-wide distribution network and unregulated training facilities can only be resolved by Community measures.

In addition, different public subsidy and support mechanisms at national level have produced structural disparities in competition which are further exacerbated by differences in fiscal legislation. It should be noted in this context that, in some countries in the Community, state support for the film industry, in particular, is not based on the principles of the market acceptability of audiovisual productions but gives precedence to their value as 'cultural assets' when decisions to grant subsidies are taken. The Community's action programme should take steps to offset the resultant distortion of competition, especially on the international markets, even if it is not intended to compete with national support measures.

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy calls on the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, the Media and Sport as the committee responsible, to take account of the following conclusions in its amendments and to adopt the amendments put forward.

II. Conclusions

1. In the light of the aims pursued under Articles 2 and 3 and the measures to be taken under the action programme, each individual project should be examined to ensure that it is necessary, appropriate and is adequately funded.
2. In supporting the programme-making industry, the cultural identity of the individual countries must be preserved. Regional projects must have priority. These principles must be ensured through an appropriate committee procedure.
3. The limited financial resources must be concentrated on a few select support measures, having regard to the principle of subsidiarity, and there should be no expectation of these producing a multiplier effect on employment, an improvement in audiovisual production structures or any effect as regards trend or image to attract further investment by third parties.
4. The representatives of the industry in the Member States and the countries invited should be involved as experts in an appropriate manner and according to their expertise when deciding which measures to support. Panels of experts are to be attached to the Commission's advisory committees provided for in both proposals and should consist of an equal number of representatives from the private and public sectors of the programme-making industry.
5. In preparation for vocational training measures, a report should be drawn up on the situation regarding vocational training in the audiovisual industries in the Member States. The report should give details, in particular, of existing training schemes in the individual countries and their respective industries and of the various training and funding plans on which these schemes are based. The report should also highlight structural, planning or financial inadequacies in the training sector and recommend possible areas for support.
6. In order to improve competitiveness, co-production and exchange of programmes in the Community, the various copyright, social insurance and tax laws should be harmonized. Disadvantages suffered by national audiovisual industries as a result of structural disparities must be taken into consideration in allocating funds under the Community programme.
7. Together with production and distribution facilities, artistic and creative potential in the Community is of crucial importance in securing popular acceptance of audiovisual productions on national and international markets. It is therefore necessary to coordinate job market data in this sector at Community level through appropriate measures and to afford the national industries access to this market through comprehensive exchange of data.
8. To create a 'second market' through the use of existing archives in the Community calls for particular support for audiovisual companies dealing with the synchronization and restoration of archive material. Only this will give archives the chance to gain access to the Community and international markets.

9. The audiovisual industry in the Community is undoubtedly capable of reinforcing the effect of the action programme and other Community measures by creating appropriate productions itself. In this context, particular encouragement should be given to the setting up of a European TV news channel.

III. Amendments

- A: Action programme to promote the European audiovisual industry, 'MEDIA'

Commission text

Text as amended by Parliament

(Amendment No. 1)
Article 1

An action programme to promote the development of the European audiovisual industry, called 'Media', is hereby adopted for a period of five years from 1 January 1991.

An action programme, called 'Media' to promote the development of the European audiovisual industry, its range of products and their competitive marketing is hereby adopted for a period of five years from 1 January 1991.

(Amendment No. 2)
Article 2, second indent

- to stimulate and increase the capacity of European film and audiovisual programme makers to supply on competitive terms, with special regard for the role and requirements of small and medium-sized businesses, the legitimate interests of creators and the position of countries in Europe with smaller audiovisual production capacities or less widely spoken languages;

- to stimulate and increase the capacity of European film and audiovisual programme makers to supply on competitive and market-acceptable terms, with special regard for the role and requirements of small and medium-sized businesses, the different legal position of private and public sector industries, the legitimate interests of creators and the position of countries in Europe with smaller audiovisual production capacities or less widely spoken languages;

Commission text

Text as amended by Parliament

(Amendment No. 3)
Article 2, fifth indent

- to promote and enhance the value of the new European communications technologies in the production and distribution of audiovisual material;

- to promote and enhance the value of the new European communications technologies in the production and distribution of audiovisual material; to promote, research and set up international joint ventures in the field of technology development,

(Amendment No. 4)
Article 2
After the fifth indent, insert a new indent

- to promote central coordination of the job market in the audiovisual industry and to ensure systematic exchange of data to improve know-how transfer;

Commission text

Text as amended by Parliament

(Amendment No. 5)

Article 2

After the fifth indent, insert a new indent

- to promote audiovisual productions capable of bringing the countries in the Community closer together and increasing the exchange of information;

(Amendment No. 6)

Article 3, second indent

- the improvement of the production environment, with particular reference to the development of screenplay-writing and pre-production, the application of new forms of technology, including high-definition television, the development of specific sectors such as animation and the creation of a 'secondary market', notably by making use of archives;
- the improvement of the production environment, with particular reference to the development of screenplay-writing and pre-production, the application of new forms of technology, including high-definition television, the development of specific sectors such as animation and the creation of a 'secondary market', notably by making use of and controlling access to archives and by promoting those programme sectors which make use of and adapt existing material;

(Amendment No. 7)

Article 3

After the second indent, insert a new indent

- the establishment of a central coordinating body to cover the job market in the audiovisual industry and to provide services to employment agencies operating in the Community;

Commission text

Text as amended by Parliament

(Amendment No. 8)

Article 3

After the second indent, insert a new indent

- the establishment of a European TV news channel jointly financed by public and private sector programme producers from Community countries;

(Amendment No. 9)

Article 3

After the second indent, insert a new indent

- the drafting of a uniform copyright for the Community;

(Amendment No. 10)

Article 7, paragraph 2

After the first paragraph, insert a new paragraph:

A panel of experts shall also be attached to this committee, consisting of an equal number of representatives from the private and public sectors of the audiovisual programme industry.

Commission text

Text as amended by Parliament

(Amendment No. 11)
Article 7(2), second paragraph

The representative of the Commission shall submit to the committee a draft of measures to be taken. The committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft within a time limit which the chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote.

The representative of the Commission shall submit to the committee a draft of measures to be taken. This draft shall also contain proposals for support measures submitted by members of the committee and the panel of experts to the Commission. The committee shall deliver its opinion on the Commission's draft within a time limit which the chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote.

(Amendment No. 12)
Article 7(2)
After the second paragraph, insert a new paragraph:

The panel of experts shall be consulted by the committee on the draft of measures to be taken before an opinion is delivered to the Commission.

(Amendment No. 13)
Article 7(3)
Add a new final indent

- the report of the panel of experts.

(Amendment No. 14)
Article 8
Add a new final paragraph

The committee and the panel of experts shall contribute to both reports on aspects within their remit. The Commission's reports shall also be forwarded to the other Community bodies for their opinion.

B. Vocational training in the audiovisual sector

Commission text

Text as amended by Parliament

(Amendment No. 1)
Article 2

The aim of the Community measure shall be to help, in particular by improving the skills of audiovisual professionals in the Community in economic and commercial management, to establish conditions in which undertakings in the sector can derive maximum benefit from the dimension offered by the single market.

The aim of the Community measure shall be to help, in particular by improving the technical and journalistic skills of audiovisual professionals in the Community and their skills in economic and commercial management, to establish conditions in which undertakings in the sector can derive maximum benefit from the dimension offered by the single market. Regional projects shall be given priority.

(Amendment No. 2)
Article 3

To attain the objective referred to in Article 2 transnational vocational training schemes in economic and commercial management shall be developed in the sectors of film and audiovisual programme production and distribution.

To obtain the objective referred to in Article 2 transnational vocational training schemes designed to impart technical and journalistic skills and skills in economic and commercial management shall be developed in the sectors of technical and journalistic film and audiovisual programme production and distribution.

Commission text

Text as amended by Parliament

(Amendment No. 3)

Article 7(1)

After paragraph 1, insert a new paragraph:

In preparation for implementing the measure, the Commission shall arrange for a report to be drawn up on the situation of vocational training in the audiovisual programme industry in the countries of the Community.

The report shall, in particular, give details of existing vocational training schemes in the individual countries, their respective industries, public-sector and other institutions and of the various training and funding plans on which these schemes are based.

(Amendment No. 4)

Article 7(2)

The Commission shall be assisted by a committee of an advisory nature, consisting of the representatives of the Member States and chaired by the representative of the Commission. The committee shall be the one provided for in Council Decision 90/EEC to assist the Commission in implementing the action programme to promote the development of the European audiovisual industry (1991-1995).

unchanged.

A panel of experts shall also be attached to this committee consisting of an equal number of representatives from the private and public sectors of the audiovisual programme industry.

Commission text

Text as amended by Parliament

(Amendment No. 5)
Article 7(2), second paragraph

The representative of the Commission shall submit to the committee a draft of measures to be taken. The committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft within a time limit which the chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote.

The representative of the Commission shall submit to the committee a draft of measures to be taken. This draft shall also contain proposals for support measures submitted by members of the committee and the panel of experts to the Commission. The committee shall deliver its opinion on the Commission's draft within a time limit which the chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote. The panel of experts shall be consulted by the committee on the draft of measures to be taken before an opinion is delivered to the Commission.

Commission text

Text as amended by Parliament

(Amendment No. 6)
Article 7(3)

3. The matters on which the Commission consults the committee shall include the following:

- the criteria for selecting contractors;
- financial contributions within the meaning of Article 4;
- exceptions to Article 6;
- the evaluation of the programme for the purpose of drawing up the report provided for in Article 8.

3. The matters on which the Commission consults the committee shall include the following:

- the criteria for selecting contractors;
- financial contributions within the meaning of Article 4;
- exceptions to Article 6;
- the evaluation of the programme for the purpose of drawing up the report provided for in Article 8;
- the evaluation of the results of the report referred to in Article 7 ... ,
- the explanatory statement to the committee's opinions including any minority votes,
- the report of the panel of experts.

Commission text

Text as amended by Parliament

(Amendment No. 7)
Article 8

After the measure has been in operation for two years, the Commission shall present a report on the results achieved to the European Parliament, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee.

At the expiry of the measure, the Commission, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 7, shall send a report on the implementation and results of the programme to the European Parliament, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee.

After the measure has been in operation for two years, the Commission shall present a report on the results achieved to the European Parliament, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee for their opinions.

At the expiry of the measure, the Commission, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 7, shall send a report on the implementation and results of the programme to the European Parliament, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee for their opinions.

The committee and the panel of experts shall contribute to both reports on aspects within their remit.

OPINION
(Rule 120 of the Rules of Procedure)

of the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology
for the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, the Media and Sport

Draftsman: Mr PORRAZZINI

At its meeting of 17-19 September 1990, the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology appointed Mr PORRAZZINI draftsman.

At its meeting of 6-8 October 1990 it considered the draft opinion and adopted the conclusions unanimously.

The following took part in the vote:

La Pergola, chairman; Sälzer, vice-chairman; Porrazzini, draftsman; Falqui (for Bettini), Goedmakers (for Desame), Linkohr, Robles Piquer, Samland (for Schnizel) and Seligman.

The underlying reasons for the MEDIA action programme are strategic and the context against which it must be seen is complex and fast moving. Summed up very briefly, the MEDIA programme is intended to create a genuine European audiovisual area; the aim is to encourage the European audiovisual industry to play a leading rather than a secondary role in a rapidly expanding Community market that is currently dominated by US and Japanese products, and a world market where EEC countries' audiovisual output is extremely poorly represented. For example, the European industry accounts for barely 2% of the market in the US, whereas American products and distributors account for over 50% of the market in Europe; consequently, the EC countries have a commercial deficit of 1.3 billion ECU in that sector. The proposed five-year MEDIA action programme is the culmination of various pilot projects successfully developed in the preliminary phases in 1988-1990 for the purpose of encouraging the development of the Community's audiovisual industry. While Community action in this field must be based on Article 235, in the absence of specific powers of action conferred by the treaties, the passage from a one-year pilot phase to the MEDIA programme represents a qualitative leap in the development of measures to promote the Community audiovisual industry. The MEDIA programme's field of action is very broad and complex and involves a series of integrated measures. It is of interest to the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology mainly from the following point of view: the development of the programme industry requires increasing expertise in new technologies, both in order to achieve economies of scale and to develop and launch on the market new audiovisual services. At the same time, practical experience in and commercial application of new European technologies in the field of audiovisual production and broadcasting can contribute greatly to their development, to Community research and development in general and to the professional skills of all those involved. The technologies involved in programme production range from computerized graphics to composite techniques (such as the simultaneous display of real and synthetic images), digital television, interactive systems and high-definition TV. The latter (HDTV) is a sector to which the MEDIA programme rightly attaches particular importance in the context of support for Audiovisual EUREKA. So the MEDIA programme also extends the measures to promote the application of new European technologies undertaken by the MEDIA Investment Club in collaboration with the recently created EEIG 'Vision 1250'. The new communications technologies range from interactive communication on videodisc to broadcasting via satellite or new cable networks, and pave the way for the introduction of new specialized services such as 'subject' channels in areas such as training, tourism, news etc., with the additional prospect of innovative developments in audiovisual communications between private individuals. It is obvious that the development of new technological know-how for the European audiovisual industry means that the MEDIA programme interacts with other important research and development programmes included in the third framework programme (ESPRIT, DELTA, RACE). Links could also be formed between the MEDIA programme's BABEL project, which aims to overcome linguistic barriers to European audiovisual products and the EUROTRA programme.

The crucial importance of the development of new production and communications technologies for the success of the MEDIA programme should persuade our committee to propose an increase in the modest (25 million ECU) funds proposed to extend the field of action of the MEDIA Investment Club, but above all to emphasize the need for appropriate liaison with other research programmes and instruments, by calling for greater financial contribution from the large industrial conglomerates and public and private broadcasting authorities that belong to the Club.

Finally, we propose adding a new specific item under the section on the MEDIA programme's 'other measures' (Point 4, annex I). This concerns corporate video communications networks. It is a relatively new sector, in that instead of being confined to large public and private concerns it now extends across the whole range of innovative and dynamic small and medium-sized undertakings that, increasingly, require the production of corporate audiovisual material to promote their own image on the advertising market. Large public institutions, social associations and cultural institutions also use video communications to publicize their activities and promote the services they can offer in the relevant market (public administration, tourism, trade, arts, etc.).

The information and publicity material produced by firms, public institutions and other organizations is not intended as ephemeral or 'one trip' material but as suitable for storing in archives or databanks that can easily be consulted by potential users by means of interactive systems and hence could give rise to the development of a new market. Experiments could be carried out in the field of hybrid products involving a combination of text, fixed or moving images and sound. The effect would be to develop electronic publishing, a sector in which the US is well on the way to dominating the world market. The production and post-production of optical storage systems are currently controlled in Europe by a very small number of specialized centres concentrated in the major cities.

This is a field which could expand in a more balanced fashion in the short to medium term, and would provide a very promising field for investment and restructuring; not least because the big firms that have their own audiovisual production units tend to relegate these activities to tertiary services situated outside the area in which they are based. To achieve a considerable expansion of this sector (which has increased by 200% in the last five years) it will be necessary to promote a corporate communications culture within the small and medium-sized undertakings sector. That is why the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology should propose that corporate video communications should be specifically mentioned under Point 4 of Annex I of the MEDIA programme.

Conclusion

The Committee on Energy, Research and Technology requests the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, the Media and Sport to incorporate the following amendment in its report:

Commission text

Amendment

(Amendment No. 1)

Annex I, Article 4, add the following indent:

- promotion of corporate videocommunication and corporate communications in the context of the SMU system;

O P I N I O N

(pursuant to Rule 120 of the Rules of Procedure)

of the Committee on External Economic Relations

Draftsman : Mr Gijs DE VRIES

At its meeting of 28 September 1990, the Committee on External Economic Relations appointed Mr De Vries draftsman.

At its meeting of 6 November 1990, the committee considered the draft opinion. It adopted the conclusions unanimously.

The following took part in the vote : De Clercq, Chairman; Stavrou, second Vice-Chairman; Moorhouse, third Vice-Chairman; De Vries, draftsman; Braun-Moser, Ceyrac, da Cunha Oliveira (deputizing for Bird), Magnani Noya, Peijs, Porto, Randzio-Plath, Sainjon, Titley and Visser (deputizing for Benoit).

I. Introduction

The European Parliament has been consulted on two proposals for a Council Decision, one concerning the implementation of an action programme to promote the development of the European audiovisual industry (1991-1995), the other concerning the implementation of a Community vocational training measure in the audiovisual sector. Both programmes are aimed at overcoming the fragmentation of the European audiovisual industry, to develop Europe's audiovisual capacity in order to take full advantage from the internal market and to improve its competitiveness both inside the Community and on the world markets. The programme accounts for 250 Mio ECU to be spent during a five year period. The main priorities are to improve the distribution mechanism, the production conditions and the professional skills, as well as to stimulate financial investment.

II. Human rights aspects

Although the action programmes are aimed at strengthening the European Community's audiovisual sector - notably its programming industry - they do have certain implications for non-member States. Before discussing these implications it should be mentioned that audiovisual productions - film, broadcasting, video - fall under the protection provided by Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and by Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on Civil and Political Rights. These articles guarantee one of man's most fundamental rights : the right to freedom of information regardless of national borders.

The Community has included an explicit reference to this human right in its Directive on Television Without Frontiers. So far, however, the promotion of the right to freedom of information does not figure prominently among the priorities of the EC's external relations policy. There are several ways in which the Community could contribute to the realization of this right in its relations with third countries : through the European Political Cooperation, in relations with other European and Mediterranean countries, and in relations with its partners under the Lomé Convention.

a) **European Political Cooperation**

A serious problem as regards the freedom of access to and of production of audiovisual services such as radio and television consists in censorship by public authorities in many countries throughout the world. The Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Twelve, meeting in European Political Cooperation (EPC), occasionally agree on diplomatic initiatives to protest against censorship of the media. A case in point has been the stance taken by the Twelve in recent years against the muzzling of the press, radio and television in South Africa. It would appear, however, that violations of the right to freedom of information are not being dealt with by EPC on a systematic basis.

Recommendation : In their annual memorandum to the European Parliament on EC human rights policy, the Twelve should list the actions taken against censorship and other violations of the right to freedom of expression (such as torture, "disappearances" and political executions of journalists). For its part, the European Parliament should monitor these violations and the response of the Twelve on a systematic basis, e.g. in its annual report on human rights in the world.

b) Relations with other European and Mediterranean countries

In December 1986 the Member States of the Council of Europe decided to institute common policies to encourage European cooperation in audiovisual production. They have since agreed on a Convention on Transfrontier Television, which to a large extent has been modelled after the EC Directive on Television Without Frontiers.

Recommendation : To give the European Community a say in the implementation of the Convention with the aim of achieving maximum synergy between the Convention and the Directive, the EC should in the near future seek to become a party to the Convention.

Another platform for international cooperation is the audiovisual Eureka programme. This programme also aims to improve the conditions for co-production between its 26 participating countries (EC Member countries, other Council of Europe Member States, Poland, Bulgaria, USSR, Yugoslavia). Having regard to the multiplicity of similar programmes (Eurimages, Audiovisual Eureka) it is necessary to ensure complementarity between all of them and to avoid useless repetitions.

Recommendation : The Commission is to take the necessary steps to achieve complementarity notably between MEDIA and EUREKA.

The first draft Council decision provides explicitly for the participation of professional circles in Central and Eastern Europe to promote audiovisual cooperation. The opening of the Media Programme to participants from countries outside the Community has to be welcomed. By improving the professional skills in the audiovisual sector the EC might contribute towards strengthening the respect of freedom of information in these countries and to a greater understanding between the peoples of Europe.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has recommended that representatives of the media be encouraged "to facilitated access to the media for the most important associations of migrants and ethnic minorities" (Recommendations 1089 (1988), paragraph 21.IX.B). This is an important proposal, not in the least in view of the growing ethnic diversity of many Community countries, which for a large part is the result of immigration from Mediterranean countries into the EC. Freedom of information, which includes access to the media, should not in practice be reserved to those inhabitants of the EC that are citizens of an EC country. In a similar vein, the Community should improve audiovisual cooperation with Mediterranean countries.

Recommendation : The Commission should initiate contacts with representative associations of migrants and ethnic minorities in order to promote, on a voluntary basis, a more adequate participation of these groups in the MEDIA Programme. It should also report on the initiatives it intends to take to improve audiovisual cooperation.

c) Relations with developing countries

Similar programmes for cooperation in audiovisual production and distribution as well as for vocational training could be envisaged for ACP countries. The Lomé-IV Convention provides an adequate framework for such cooperation : its articles 148 and 149 deal with cooperation in cultural events, information and communication.

The Community could notably support centres for mass communication and institutes of journalism in ACP countries, either directly or through non-governmental organizations based in the EC. The necessary financial means for these purposes could be allocated from the European Development Fund.

Recommendation : The Commission should report on the initiatives it intends to take to improve audiovisual cooperation with ACP countries.

III. Audiovisual services and GATT

Any audiovisual policy vis-a-vis third countries must take into account the principles of the multilateral trade system as laid down in GATT as it is at present under negotiation in the Uruguay Round.

For the purpose of these negotiations, the Community distinguishes between two aspects of audiovisual services : first, the transmission of broadcast signals and, secondly, the content of these signals, i.e. the audiovisual product. The first aspect determines the inclusion of audiovisual services in the telecommunication sector which are therefore the subject of liberalization in the Community in the same way as other telecommunication services.

The second aspect of audiovisual services introduces, on the other hand, a sectoral specificity as concerns the cultural content of audiovisual services, since this is subject to rules in the Community and in its Member States as well as in third countries having regard to the role played by broadcasting as a vector of cultural identity.

During the negotiations for a General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) the dichotomy between liberalization of telecommunication services and specific treatment of audiovisual services for cultural identity reasons surfaced again. On the one side, the United States argue that audiovisual services should be regarded as other services, to be covered by a general agreement without any exemptions as concern most-favoured-nation treatment, market access, and national treatment. On the other side many developing countries namely India and Egypt, but also Canada are asking for the general exemption of audiovisual services. The position of the EEC lies in between both extremes. The Community seeks

to negotiate a special annex to the general agreement providing for specific exemptions for audiovisual services from the most-favoured-nation treatment, market access, and national treatment, as far as the origin of a work determines the cultural content, and for audiovisual services to serve cultural policy objectives. Whether the position of the EEC is in fact an in-between-one and therefore a basis for compromise depends to a large extent on how precisely the notion of "cultural content determined by the origin" can be defined.

IV. Technological aspects

Freedom of access to audiovisual services as regards production, distribution and reception (consumption) depends to a certain extent on technical conditions. Of specific interest for a free circulation of these services is the development in the field of High Definition Television (HDTV). To avoid new technical barriers for communication being erected, the countries - the EEC, United States and Japan - whose industries are mainly engaged in the development of HDTV should try to elaborate world wide standards ensuring compatibility for production, transmission and reception of audiovisual products of HDTV.

Recommendation : The Commission should step up its efforts to bring about a world-wide solution for HDTV standards.

V. Conclusions

The Committee on External Economic Relations invites the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, the Media and Sport to examine the following amendments to the two Proposals for a Council Decision :

Proposal for a

Council Decision

concerning the implementation of an action programme to promote the development of the European audiovisual industry (1991-1995)

Text proposed by the Commission

Text amended by Parliament

(Amendment no. 1)

Recital 1

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 235 thereof,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 235 thereof, and Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

(Amendment no. 2)

Recital 11 A (new)

Whereas a Community policy for audiovisual services shall duly take into consideration its consequences on third countries;

(Amendment no. 3)

Recital 13 A (new)

Whereas the Community programme should be open as well to professional circles from Eastern Europe.

Proposal for a
Council Decision

concerning the implementation for a Community vocational training measure in the audiovisual sector

Text proposed by the Commission

Text amended by Parliament

(Amendment no. 1)

Article 3

To obtain the objectives referred to in Article 2 transnational vocational training schemes in economic and commercial management shall be developed in the sector of film and audiovisual programme production and distribution;

To obtain the objectives referred to in Article 2 transnational vocational training schemes in economic and commercial management, also open to participants from third countries, shall be developed in the sector of film and audiovisual programme production and distribution;