

(English translation from the original French version)

**Statement of Prague**  
**Audiovisual seminar on**  
**"Audiovisual policies and cultural diversity in an enlarged Europe"**  
**– Prague, 5-6 October 2000 –**

The seminar on "Audiovisual policies and cultural diversity in an enlarged Europe" was held in Prague on 5th and 6th October 2000.

This seminar, which was organised jointly by France and the Czech Republic in the context of the European Conference and the French Presidency of the European Union with the participation of the European Commission and the contribution of Audiovisual Eureka, brought together more than 200 political, institutional and professional heads from the audio-visual field from the 15 Member States of the European Union, the 13 candidate countries and Switzerland.

Through the detailed examination of several successful experiences presented by European professionals the debate aimed at identifying the challenges and opportunities created by the establishment of an enlarged European audio-visual market, as well as enunciating concrete proposals, able to accompany this process.

Within this framework, the participants underlined the importance of the following points:

1/ They emphasised the specific nature and the prominent role of the audio-visual sector in the preservation and the promotion of the diversity and the richness of European cultures, in the context of the construction of an enlarged Europe Union.

2/ In this context, they insisted up on the importance of an adequate legal framework for the development of the audio-visual sector on both national and European levels in order to create a coherent audio-visual European area.

Those applicant States which have not yet completed the adoption of the Community "acquis" in the audio-visual field reaffirmed their determination to do so as soon as possible.

In order to encourage the adoption of the Community "acquis", where this has not yet been completed, and to enhance the effectiveness of its implementation, the necessity to utilise the PHARE programme was underlined.

3/ The participants raised the question of the further development of an European audio-visual area, which is a major challenge – not only in cultural terms, but also from a political and economic point of view – for the development of cultural exchanges and for a better understanding between the people of Europe, as well as for the reinforcement of the competitiveness of European audio-visual actors in the context of the digital revolution.

The existence of a dual system in which a strong public service and a dynamic private sector coexist is the keystone of audio-visual Europe. It has to be reinforced by legally securing the financing of public channels. The latter will enable them, in particular within the remit of public service and alongside with the other actors of the sector, to take full advantage of the new opportunities offered by the development of information technologies (thematic cable and satellite channels, digital terrestrial television, the Internet and radio services).

The development of national and European tools – within the framework of the PHARE and MEDIA programmes, and EBRD, EIB and EIF. In order to stimulate production, development, distribution, promotion of culturally diversified programmes is also a key element to reach these goals.

The forthcoming participation of candidate countries to the MEDIA programme being an essential aspect of the pre-accession process, participants ask for the establishment of accompanying measures, in particular in the framework of the PHARE programme, in order to guarantee the balance in that programme and its accessibility to all professionals concerned.

The participants considered that it was essential that, in accordance with the European Union Treaty, the implementation of competition law takes into account the cultural specific features of the audio-visual sector and allows the formation of major European groups with a view to creating a real European "cultural industry" in a world-wide competitive audiovisual market. Pluralism should continue to be respected on each of the markets concerned.

The participants reaffirmed the legitimacy of public aid for the creation and broadcasting of cinematographic and audiovisual works, in accordance with the rules of the European Union treaty. They requested the European Commission to clarify its response to this question, which is a deciding factor for the strengthening of cultural diversity.

And finally, the participants strongly affirmed that the capacity to define and develop national and Community policies to safeguard and to promote European cultural diversity should be rigorously promoted within multilateral bodies.