

EUROPEAN FILM DIRECTORS RALLY IN SUPPORT OF THE MEDIA PROGRAMME

FERA, the Federation of European Film Directors, notes with concern the latest reports on the future of the MEDIA Programme, which in its 20 years of existence has played a crucial role in improving the competitiveness of the audiovisual sector in Europe. By greatly enhancing cross-border cooperation and exchange, the successful MEDIA support schemes have contributed to forging the basis for the emerging digital single market, and improved investment in high quality audiovisual content for which there is today a tremendous consumer demand.

If the European Union is serious about putting creativity and innovation at the centre of the agenda for the coming decade, as stated in the EU 2020 Strategy, there must be political courage to take targeted legislative action that actually fosters and promotes creation.

FERA was glad to see that the Commission in the EU 2020 Strategy wisely maintained that *“even in a time of necessary fiscal consolidation, the Stability and Growth Pact allows room for investing in the future”*.

The European Commission study on the Economy of Culture in Europe published in November 2006 underlines the key role of culture to the Lisbon strategy with a contribution of the cultural sector estimated to 2.6% of the EU GDP and with a growth rate 3 times higher than the growth of the European economy in general. But culture currently receives less than 0.05% of the EU budget.

In order to truly reflect the political priorities in our public budgets, FERA calls on the Commission to invest in the future of Europe’s creators and creative industries by preserving and reinforcing the MEDIA Programme, an essential factor in achieving the political ambition to *“unleash our creative and innovative potential”* (EU 2020 Strategy).

Artistic creation is increasingly recognized as a key element in creating public value, culturally, economically and socially. The range of human, material and technical resources in the cultural fields contribute significantly to income and employment, and to social inclusion. Europe’s citizens have the right to access culture and deserve a flourishing European audiovisual industry.

The human experience portrayed in audiovisual works represent a universal language that transforms the “them and us” into “you and me” and strengthens the European “we”. The works we create hold up a mirror to modern society and are the cultural heritage of tomorrow, conveying meaning and identity locally and globally.

FERA would like to remind President Barroso of his statement on Europe’s need to “put in place the right conditions for creativity and innovation to flourish”¹, and that the MEDIA Programme is one of those conditions.

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¹In his Political Guidelines for the next Commission September 3, 2009