

## **Self-efficacy and self-esteem in a knowledge-political battle for an egalitarian epistemology in Wikipedia**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to present a documented and critically-oriented subject that promotes the exploration of the terms for shaping and developing European policy on audiovisual media, highlighting the creation of a European audiovisual-cultural area in which Greece is an active participant.

The vital questions that are analysed and explored are the following:

- What is the European policy on audiovisual media?
- Which programmes, measures and actions has the EU developed in the fields of audiovisual media?
- What are the results of this specific European policy and the consequences arising from its implementation in Greece?

### **Introduction**

This study deals with the ever increasing – both for political and economic reasons – emphasis that the EU places on the cultural dimension of European integration, which it analyses and evaluates by focusing on the philosophy, political-ideological premises, aims, content and effectiveness of its policies on audiovisual media. More specifically, it is a case study that concentrates on the consequences of implementing the said Community policy in Greece, and assesses its contribution and effectiveness in relation to its cultural and economic goals. In this way it encourages any critical consideration of European cultural policy, as well as of the corresponding national policy, linking its creation, development and implementation to its historical, political and economic context.

More specifically, in the audiovisual sector all interest is focused on the “Television without Frontiers” Directive<sup>1</sup> - which constitutes the legislative framework for the free movement of audiovisual services -, the MEDIA programmes (MEDIA I, MEDIA II, MEDIA PLUS, MEDIA 2007-2013) – which constitute the basic mechanism for the support and strengthening of the European audiovisual industry – and EUROMED AUDIOVISUAL (I and II), an action of the programme for “Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation”.

At the same time, the manner in which the Greek media are managing Community funds for audiovisual media, the structure, typology and origin of Greek television programmes, the compliance of the channels

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<sup>1</sup> On 29/11/2007 the European Parliament approved the “New Directive on audiovisual media services without frontiers”.

with the said European policy, domestic film production, the system for the distribution and utilisation of movies, the "invasion" of American productions, as well as the presence of Greece in the field of audiovisual media in Europe are all being studied. The situation in the Greek audiovisual sector is simultaneously being recorded, which constitutes a special aspect of the broader cultural field and is the driving force behind the undertaking of initiatives that ensure the continuance of the Greek cultural identity and the dissemination of the Greek cultural heritage throughout Europe.

### **Television without Frontiers' Directive: Implementation in Greece**

The single European market is one of the biggest achievements of European integration, and applies to television broadcasts as much as anything else. Thanks to the Single Market, EU citizens have a much greater choice of goods and services. We can watch TV channels from all over Europe. In this way, broadcasters can attract greater audiences and viewers can profit from a bigger choice of channels. This single European TV market needs, however, a minimum set of common rules – for things like television advertising, the production of audiovisual programmes and the protection of minors.

The cornerstone of the European audiovisual policy is the "Television Without Frontiers" Directive (TVWF [http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/index_en.htm)) was adopted in 1989 ([Directive 89/552/EEC](#)) and subsequently revised in 1997 ([Directive 97/36/EC](#)) and in 2007 to become the "Audiovisual Media Services Directive" to provide an up-to-date regulatory framework for the European audiovisual sector. The new Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2007/65/EC has been published in the Official Journal n° L 332 of 18 December 2007 and entered into force on 19 December 2007. Member States shall transpose it into national law by 19 December 2009 at the latest. In the meantime the provisions adopted in application of the TVwF remain fully applicable.

The 'Television without Frontiers' Directive has been transposed into Greek legislation and applied as conscientiously as possible by TV stations. Specifically, Law 2328/1995 placed on the Greek statute book the provisions of Directive 89/552.EEC<sup>2</sup>. Law 2328/1995 was introduced in order to regulate the licensing system and to ensure transparency and quality in radio and TV broadcasting; it is now the main legislative framework within which Greek private radio and TV must operate. In 2000, Presidential Decree 100/2000 was issued, incorporating the revised Directive 97/36/EC of the European Parliament and the Council on 'Television without Frontiers'. The provisions of this Decree are implemented across the whole range of

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<sup>2</sup> This is the Directive on 'Television without Frontiers' whose provisions were transposed originally into Greek law by means of Presidential Decree 236/1992. Law 2328/1995 'Legal framework governing private television and radio, regulation of issues in the radio and TV sector and other provisions' (Gov. Gazette I 159), codifying in a sense these provisions, resolved the interpretative questions which have arisen from time to time.

radio and TV services (public and private radio and TV, free and subscriber reception) and have made a vital contribution to strengthening the statutory framework for the quality of these services. The regulations in question are complemented by the provisions of the codes of ethics of the National Radio and TV Council.

The commitment deriving from the 'Television without Frontiers' Directive is that there be a quota in the broadcasting of European programmes (this concerns audiovisual works apart from sports, information and special content broadcasts, as well as news bulletins). For their part, the TV station managers have been particularly careful in maintaining the European origin of their programming in recent years. In fact almost all the Greek channels regularly offer a schedule of programmes produced within the frontiers of the European Union – often broadcasting a larger proportion of European programmes than the Directive actually requires. Of course the Greek TV networks tend to demonstrate an extreme polarization in their schedules – consisting on the one hand of purely Greek (not made elsewhere in Europe) programmes, and on the other of material from the States (Serafeim, 2005).

Thus the provisions of the Directive have been fully incorporated into Greek law, and reinforced by national legislation. These provisions involve respect for human dignity, protection of the individual and privacy, protection of minors, ensuring a plurality of views, advertising, sponsorship and teleshopping, the proper use of the Greek language, the rights of special audiences (e.g. the deaf and dumb) or vulnerable population groups (e.g. religious minorities), and the right of access of the public to events of major importance to the community.

Nevertheless, a large number of complaints have been lodged with the European Commission – most of them from consumer groups – concerning alleged failures to comply with the rules on advertising and sponsorship, in respect of time limits. The problems have involved especially the practices implemented by certain TV companies in Greece. In respect of execution of the provisions of Directive 89/552/EEC, action has been initiated for violation on grounds of inadequate implementation. The allegations involving Greek TV companies have been the subject of investigation. The Greek authorities have monitored the issue and initiated the process of taking corrective measures [COM (2002) 778]. The fourth report on implementation of the 'Television without Frontiers' Directive [COM (2002) 778] indicated which member-states have taken measures more rigorous than those required by the Directive in terms of advertising rules. Greece is the second most strict of all the member states, after Sweden, banning the advertising of toys from 7am to 10pm.

The provisions on protection of minors from unsuitable TV programmes are thus now clearer and more stringent. The Greek Presidential Decree requires that 'Radio and TV stations must not broadcast programmes which might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, and

especially programmes containing scenes of pornography or gratuitous violence; nor must they show on their news bulletins scenes of actual violence unless this is necessary to inform the public of some event. Dramatic re-enactments on news bulletins are not allowed. It is forbidden to show juvenile witnesses or victims of criminal actions or accidents on TV news or other informational programmes. Such exposure is permitted only in exceptional cases, when necessary in the cause of public information and not causing pain or harm to the minor in question, and only when the written consent of parent or guardian has been obtained. Juvenile perpetrators of criminal acts or minors who have caused accidents may not be shown in any circumstances’.

For the first time the Greek TV stations are obliged to classify all their output depending on the degree of adverse impact it may have on the personality and mental and spiritual development of minors. For the first time the Presidential Decree introduces a mandatory system of programme labelling: ‘Each category will be designated by a special symbol, which shall appear on the screen throughout the entire programme. The same symbol must appear next to the title of programmes in any publication, advertisement or schedule appearing in the press’. The category into which programmes of fictional content (film, serial) are placed will determine the time at which they can be broadcast (Greek Min. Decision 6138/E/17.3.2000)<sup>3</sup>.

The same ministerial decision also determines the hours at which programmes may be broadcast and the period of time for which the symbol must be displayed, depending on the category into which the programme has been placed. It also sets out the procedure for classifying programmes, the process being conducted by a panel of experts to be set up at each TV station. As for advertising, Greece has stricter limits in place than other member states, especially when the product being advertised is a children’s toy. Broadcasting of commercials for toys is prohibited between the hours of 7am and 10pm (article 14 para. 8 of Law 2251/1994). The Greek Presidential Decree 100/2000 also introduced specific measures to provide a right of redress for persons offended by TV programmes. It lays down also that Greek television companies must ensure at least 51% of their overall scheduling consists of audiovisual material of European origin.

One very important provision concerns the screening of TV programmes originating from other member states of the European Union to prevent the broadcasting of irresponsible material. According to the Presidential Decree in question, ‘the Minister for Press and Media may, with the consent of or on the recommendation of the Radio and TV Council, order a ban, using any necessary technical means’ on the transmission of specific programmes in the following cases: First, if their content ‘blatantly and grossly

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<sup>3</sup> The symbols for each category and the permitted broadcasting hours were determined by decision of the former Minister for Press and Media, see the Greek Min. Decision 6138/E/17.3.2000.

violates the rules and principles of child protection'. Secondly, if the programmes 'incite hatred on grounds of difference in race, religion, nationality or gender'. The Decree states that for the preventive ban to be imposed, the TV operator in question must have violated the above conditions at least twice in one year.

The European Council Recommendation of 24<sup>th</sup> September 1998 on the protection of minors and human dignity is the first legal framework – on the EU level – to define the content of direct-link audiovisual services and information services made available on the Internet. The report on implementation of this Recommendation, published in 2001, showed that in general terms its execution was already fairly satisfactory. Open telephone lines and information campaigns were launched in almost all the member states, including Greece, while codes of ethics were also introduced. The industry has worked to create reliable Internet filters and the Commission has increased the level of international cooperation in the sector, since a large volume of illegal and harmful material comes from outside the European Union [COM (2003) 784 final].

Two of the most important points of the TwF Directive, are the articles 4 & 5 which reflect the cultural aspect of the TwF Directive because they promote the circulation of European audiovisual works and thus they enhance the cultural diversity. Cultural diversity, here is considered to include both the ability for different cultures to make audiovisual works and their ability to share these works.

As far as the cultural impact of the TwF Directive is concerned:

- Almost all the channels regularly offer a schedule of programmes produced within the frontiers of the European Union – often broadcasting a larger proportion of European programmes than the Directive actually requires;
- 25% of qualifying transmission time should be for works produced in Greek;
- Regulators perform additional monitoring or sampling to check returns;
- Television companies ensure that at least 51% of their overall scheduling consists of audiovisual material of European origin;
- The average ratio of European works in qualifying transmission time of the channels reaches almost the 70% of the programme;
- The average proportion of independent productions in qualifying transmission time for the major channels has overpassed the 10%;
- Greece, a Member State with a national average of European works greater than the EU average, is also among the most prescriptive in the way that applies Articles 4 and 5;
- National regulations relating to programme production in Greek language act as a barrier to intra-Community trade in programme production (Serafeim, 2005).

When studying the reports of the European Commission on the implementation of the "Television without Frontiers" Directive, as well as the programme structure of the Greek private and public television, one

discerns a certain harmonisation of the Greek TV stations with the provisions of the Directive regarding the origin of the programme being broadcast. As of 1991 there has been a substantial change in the profile of these programmes, which have gone from being American-centred to being European-centred. That is to say that the number of programmes produced within the EU has increased, while at the same time the imported transatlantic productions have been losing ground. It is worth noting that based on the data of the European Commission on the implementation of the said Directive in the year 2000, 71.18% of programmes on Greek television were of domestic or European origin (Skouras, 2003; Paschalidis, 2005). However, this is in actual fact not a realistic image, since the concept of the so-called "European programme" encompasses national productions, which include TV series (sitcoms, drama), soap operas, game shows, morning and afternoon magazine programmes, talk shows, reality shows, Greek films, children's programmes, news bulletins, sports and current affairs programmes. Thus, it is not so much an increase in the number of programmes coming from other EU countries, but an increase in domestic productions. At the same time, a large part of prime-time television continues to be dominated by Hollywood productions or American soap operas, series and romantic comedies, whereas only a small percentage of European productions are broadcast. Public television channels are the exception, as they broadcast a high percentage of European productions, amounting to an average of 90%.

If we consider the ratio between domestic and foreign programmes on Greek television from 1989 to date (2004), we will discover that in the period between 1989 and 1993 there was a significant increase in foreign – mainly American – programmes, and from 1993 onwards a certain stability can be discerned, or rather, a decreasing tendency. With the emergence of private television, the ratio between domestic and foreign programmes increased in favour of domestic productions. The ratio between Greek and foreign programmes in the 1987-1988 television period was 61% to 39% of the total broadcasting time. The ratio between Greek and foreign programmes in the 1992-1993 television period reached up to 70% to 30% (Papathanassopoulos, 2000).

As regards the typology of the Greek programme, certain basic categories of television programmes have been established (news, morning current-affairs programmes, morning magazine programmes, daily series, sitcoms, drama, reality and talk shows), which are broadcast in specific TV time slots, thus resulting in a uniformity of television programmes. The relative emphasis on news programmes on various private television channels varies significantly, with their average duration over the last decade corresponding to about 1/3 of the overall broadcasting time of the 4 largest television channels. More or less the same applies to ET1; however at NET<sup>4</sup> this percentage reaches approximately 2/3 of the overall

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<sup>4</sup> ET 1 & NET belong to the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT S.A.) and are the 2 main channels of the Greek public television.

broadcasting time. The disproportionately heavy emphasis placed on news programmes throughout the spectrum of television is to a large extent due to the establishment of extensive morning current-affairs programmes on all channels with the exception of ET1 (Paschalidis, 2005). On the other hand, the general conclusion regarding TV series is that they take up approximately 1/4 to 1/5 of the overall programme of private television stations. ET1, which is the only public TV station that broadcasts television series, dedicates 1/6 of its time, whereas many of the series it shows come from Europe. Furthermore, public television dedicates 8% of its time to the screening of European films. On the contrary, commercial Greek and foreign films take up 1/5 of private stations' television programmes, with the only exception being STAR channel, which dedicates about 25%-30% of its programme to exclusively American-produced films. The programme patterns of Greek TV stations have essentially remained the same over the last few years. However, reality shows, which are distinguished for their relatively low production costs and high adaptability to the Greek television reality, have consolidated their role in the programme structure of high-viewership stations among the TV fiction productions. More specifically, the prime-time slot is taken up by "first run" TV fiction of national origin, while imported – mainly of US origin – fiction continues to cover the other slots dedicated to these productions. The presence of European non-domestic TV fiction and feature films has remained quite limited. As of 1997 there has been a significant change in viewer preferences in favour of Greek productions, which now dominate the prime-time slot<sup>5</sup>.

From 1989 onwards, the Greek state (public) channels have been playing more of a supplementary role; they are more complete and maintain genre types (e.g. documentaries, art and culture programmes) that cannot thrive in private television, which functions competitively (Papathanassopoulos, 2000). On the other hand, the Greek private television stations do not favour such programmes due to their low appeal in television terms; instead they focus their interest on the sphere of entertainment (sitcoms, soap operas, movies) and on talk shows and cartoons that bring in high viewer ratings and, consequently, an inflow of advertising revenue. The paradox is that although there is a significant increase in the number of programmes on private television, these programmes are in their overwhelming majority informative and entertaining in nature, and they are produced domestically (not coming from other EU countries). At the same time one notices a significant decrease in the number of cultural and educational programmes, as well as children's programmes, excepting cartoons, which flood the morning slots of private TV stations on weekends. So, by making a comparison between the typology of the programmes of public and private television, one notices that the programmes of state channels are more multifarious, whereas private channels move between current affairs, entertainment and sports programmes. Once again, the domestic

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<sup>5</sup> Up until 1997 the prime-time slot was taken up by foreign productions.

TV product prevails over the European television product (Papathanassopoulos, 2000).

With regard to the allocation of the programme, from the emergence of private television to date there has been an increase in the category of current affairs programmes and in the volume of the Greek entertainment programme. The foreign entertainment programme is still taken up by American productions. The presence of European films is rather limited, while Hollywood movies prevail in the prime-time slots of TV stations. Consequently, the percentage of European programmes – non-domestic – is essentially low and the Greek television stations do not in fact entirely comply with the commitment arising from the “Television without Frontiers” Directive regarding the broadcasting of European films, excepting news bulletins, sports, current-affairs and other programmes of a specific content. That is to say, the profile of domestic television is primarily Greek and secondarily American, not European. Thus, the image of the contemporary domestic television reality of Greece in terms of its European profile is unreal. The same applies to the remaining European countries.

Despite the fact that the reports of the European Commission on the overall implementation of the provisions of the “Television without Frontiers” Directive – and specifically of articles 4 and 5 concerning the percentage of European films that are to be broadcast – are satisfactory, European programmes are nevertheless rare on Greek television, as is the case in the other European countries, while there is an overabundance of domestic television productions which, in a wider sense, come under the productions of EU member states. This is the weakness of the Directive: it does not clearly define the origin of the “European programme”, resulting in Greece, as well as other EU countries, including national productions in this framework. This particular Directive was established in order to deal with the problem of the invasion of American television products in the European market and to boost European films. Of course, domestic TV series now form the main body of the entertainment programme, prevailing over American series. This change is included among the positive results of the Community policy on the support of European audiovisual productions and co-productions, as well as on the smooth circulation of television broadcasting services.

### **The financial support mechanism: The M.E.D.I.A. Programme**

The MEDIA Programme has been operating to encourage the development of the European audiovisual industry since January 1991. There have been four multiannual programmes since 1991: MEDIA I (1991-1995) (90/685/EEC), MEDIA II (1996-2000) (95/564/EC & 95/563/EC), MEDIA Plus (2001-2006) (2000/821/EC & 846/2004/EC), MEDIA Training (163/2001/EC & 845/2004/EC) and MEDIA 2007 (2007-



2013) (1718/2006/EC). The new MEDIA 2007 programme is the fourth multi-annual programme since 1991, with the participation of 30 member-states. Each of these programmes includes measures to support the European film industry, make it more competitive and foster the circulation and production of European audiovisual products.

The general orientation of MEDIA is to:

- strengthen the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry both in European and international markets by supporting the development, distribution, dissemination and promotion of audiovisual works;
- promote the development of the independent production and distribution sector with special regard for the small and medium-sized enterprises, with the development of the a/v sector in countries and regions with a low audiovisual production capacity and/or restricted geographical or linguistic area;
- promote the cultural and linguistic diversity of the EU Member States and to enhance the European audiovisual heritage, setting both as priorities through programme evolution.

MEDIA 2007 is the new programme of the European Union that will be spending 755 million euros to support the European film industry over the next seven years. Approximately 65% of the overall budget will contribute to expanding the circulation of European films to other countries in Europe and the rest of the world (Media Desk Hellas, [www.mediadeskhellas.eu](http://www.mediadeskhellas.eu) ). MEDIA 2007 facilitates access to financing, especially for SMEs, and increases the use of digital technologies, thus making the European audiovisual sector more competitive.

#### *The MEDIA programme results in Greece*

The implementation of the MEDIA II, MEDIA PLUS & MEDIA Training in Greece contributed significantly to the revival of the Greek film industry, by financing domestic productions and promoting them to the cinemas. Remarkable is the continuously increasing progress that is taking place the current period, with the concretization of the programme MEDIA 2007-2013.

The impact of the first MEDIA programme was poor due to the fact that none of the 19 professional management structures were located in Greece. Following the "golden era" of the Greek film industry - where the domestic star system was developed and an important economic activity took place in the fields of production, distribution and exploitation- a huge crisis came, which was worsened with the appearance of television. The appearance of television changed the whole picture radically, as most private producers turned to television series, which resulted in filming activity - mainly commercial cinema - losing valuable

private funding sources. Just in 1995, the domestic cinematographic production started making its presence vivid, inside Greece, and many Greek films "travelled" abroad and were nominated (IOM, 2003; Serafeim, 2005).

During MEDIA I, professionals' contacts with the programme were sporadic. Moreover, the lack of ability to efficiently cover the wide range of needs, especially of a "small country" was obvious. With a new architecture and an increased budget, MEDIA II, instituted by two Council Decisions [MEDIA II – Development and distribution (1996-2000): Council Decision 95/563/EC (10 July 1995), MEDIA II – Training (1996-2000) Council Decision 95/564/EC (22 December 1995)], targeted Commission's support on three key-sectors in order to increase the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry: development, transnational distribution & dissemination, including the promotion of audiovisual works and training of professionals.

According to Council decisions, MEDIA II disposed of a budget of €310 million, i.e. 55% higher than MEDIA. There has certainly been an increase in the programme's financial resources for the five-year period 1996-2000. Nevertheless, according to the opinion of the Greek delegation in the MEDIA Committee, the budget of the unique overall support mechanism for the European audiovisual industry could justify even higher financial means based on the objective to obtain structural results (IOM, 2003). The MEDIA II programme could be considered as a new programme, in relation to the previous five-year period, due to the structural change that consisted in identifying individual fields for action-intervention, as well as initiating a different structure from that of the previous five-year period. Its aim was to gain the maximum degree of access and transparency in managing the valuable support expected by European audiovisual professionals. Furthermore, the experience from the initial phase of the programme, caused MEDIA II to have as its chief purpose the creation of structural results, both on a medium and long-term basis, by rejecting any fragmentary choices (IOM, 2003).

According to the estimations of the Greek delegation in the MEDIA Committee (Hellenic Audiovisual Institute of the Ministry of Press & Mass Media, Ministry of Culture) and of other delegations from "small countries", positive discrimination must produce even more essential results, especially after the programme's expansion to the wider European frontiers, in order to realise a minimum level of coherence in the European audiovisual economy. For the first time in 1997, the 12 delegations from the "small countries" participating in MEDIA and the representative of the European Commission, met in Athens, under the initiative of the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute (IOM), with the objective to systematise support towards the interests of their audiovisual professionals, especially through the implementation of the positive discrimination principle (Hellenic Audiovisual Institute (IOM), 2001).

The Greek audiovisual professionals followed a long course in trying to approach the MEDIA programme,

which can easily be revealed by referring back to its first five-year period, when their contacts with the programme were sporadic and were often the result of the insightful skills of some new creators, rather than the programme's ability to efficiently cover the wide range of needs, especially of a "small country". In the case of Greece, the impact of the first MEDIA programme was poor due to the fact that none of the 19 professional management structures were located in Greece. During MEDIA II, Greek professionals expressed a strong and consistent interest over time, which was also supported by the activities of the Greek information office «MEDIA DESK HELLAS». The total amount contributed by MEDIA II to support Greek enterprises and professionals in the form of subsidies and loans is estimated at 7 million € (IOM, 2003; MEDIA Programme). The tendency of the Greek audiovisual sector to adopt professional standards for business activities at European and international level was expressed with the participation of more than 630 professionals (producers, directors, scriptwriters) in vocational training on script-writing techniques, financial management and the new technologies for the production of audiovisual programmes (IOM, 2003).

From 1990 until today, regardless of the programme's individual returns for Greek professionals and despite various critical comments, their gain is essentially connected to the reality of being small and medium-sized businessmen from a country of low audiovisual capacity and restricted geographical and linguistic area. The actual gain from the operation of the MEDIA programme is mainly related to its role as a lever, to the benefits gained from everyday practice and from networking in a supranational business environment that offers multiple opportunities.

The implementation of European actions and particularly the MEDIA programme, as a lever for the development of the European audiovisual industry, has also played an important role in Greece, especially as regards the distribution of European non-national films. In fact, in 1996 when MEDIA II was launched, only 14% of all European films were distributed beyond their national borders to other European countries. In 2000, when MEDIA II was completed, this percentage had risen to 23% (Viviane Reding, EC, 5 October 2001).

In the framework of the Community Programme, the Europa Cinemas<sup>6</sup> network (Europa Cinemas, 2003), which was created in 1992 thanks to the financing from the MEDIA Programme of the European Union and of the Centre National de la Cinématographie, Europa Cinemas and has become the first cinemas network with a mainly European programming, has also had a positive impact by supporting cinema halls predominantly with European film programming. The network provides a financial support to cinemas that

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<sup>6</sup> Thanks to the support of Eurimages and the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the activity of Europa Cinemas has extended to eastern European countries. Thanks to the support of Euromed Audiovisual of the European Union, the network has been set up in 12 Mediterranean countries, offering support to the promotion, distribution sector as well as to the exhibition of European and Mediterranean films. EUROPA CINEMAS : 43 countries, 439 cities, 758 cinemas, 1945 screens

commit themselves to the programming of a significant number of non-domestic European films and to the organisation of promotional activities concerning European films for young audiences. The network's effort, with the participation of 23 Greek cinema-halls with 27 screens in 10 cities, is appreciated by the Greek public, which is now given the opportunity to become acquainted with various film-making approaches within the broader European spectrum. It is noteworthy that, from 2003 until 2007, 99 feature films have been produced<sup>7</sup> ([www.europa-cinemas.org](http://www.europa-cinemas.org)).

As far as the exploitation is concerned, the best Greek films in the Greek cinemas, members of the Europa Cinemas Network (admissions) are the following (Greek Film Center):

2007:

- I Psyhi sto stoma - Soul Kicking (Yiannis Economidis)
- Sugartown : Oi Gabroi (Kimon Tsakiris)
- El Greco (Yannis Smaragdis)

2006:

- Loufa kai parallaghi (Nicos Perakis)
- O Psillos (Dimitris Spyrou)

2005:

- Omiros (Constantine Giannaris)
- To Oneiro Tou Skilou (Angelos Frantzis)
- Nyfes (Pantelis Voulgaris)

2004:

- Triloyia : to livadi pou dakryzi (Theo Angelopoulos)
- Delivery (Nikos Panayotopoulos)
- Politiki kouzina (Tassos Boulmetis)

It is noteworthy that since 1991, with the support of the MEDIA Programme and within the framework of "Europa Cinemas" network, 266 Greek films were produced and distributed in the members of the

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<sup>7</sup> Feature Films Produced: 15 (2007), 20 (2006), 23 (2005), 18 (2004), 23 (2003)

network<sup>8</sup> ([www.europa-cinemas.org](http://www.europa-cinemas.org)). Moreover, many Greek films were nominated, received special awards and were distributed in the E.U.

**Table 1: Number of Greek films distributed in "Europa Cinemas" network, by year**

<b>1991</b>	5
<b>1992</b>	5
<b>1993</b>	6
<b>1994</b>	3
<b>1995</b>	8
<b>1996</b>	14
<b>1997</b>	4
<b>1998</b>	24
<b>1999</b>	16
<b>2000</b>	-
<b>2001</b>	37
<b>2002</b>	25
<b>2003</b>	30
<b>2004</b>	13
<b>2005</b>	21
<b>2006</b>	30
<b>2007</b>	24
<b>2008</b>	1

Up until now there was a difference between the member states. The five large member states were always interested in distribution, because that is where they made the most money. The small member states, which currently amount to 22 (that is 22 and 5, whereas previously it was 10 and 5), are interested in how they can develop their productions so that they can have a vehicle of their own culture in all member states and around the world. Thus, the smaller member states are exclusively interested in development. Perhaps "exclusively" is too strong a word, so let us say they are more interested in development than they are in distribution.

Greece has not realised its full potential. There is still plenty of room for Greece to develop many more projects. We have seen that Greece is among the countries that have been present since the outset of the

<sup>8</sup> The number of Greek films which have been financially supported since the beginning of the MEDIA programme is larger than 266.

Programme in 1988, including the MEDIA pilot programme and all subsequent phases.

To give you an example, from 2001 to 2005 a total of 41 proposals have passed on to the development stage. Out of the total number of 110 development proposals that were submitted to MEDIA, 19 were deemed ineligible from the start, 50 were rejected and 41 were financed.

Now as regards the years, one sees that some years are truly better than others. The best year was 2002, in which 19 proposals were submitted, out of which 12 were financed. This translates into a percentage of 63%, which is exceptional in comparison not only to the Greek participation, but also compared to all other participations. In 2004 we achieved a percentage of 44%, which is also extraordinary. That is, 12 out of the 27 proposals that were submitted went through.

Many say that a large number of the projects that receive funding are French. By counting how many were submitted and how many were eventually selected, one discovers that the percentage of French projects is much smaller for the simple reason that the French have made many more proposals. So, if they make 500 proposals and 100 of these go through, then we have a success rate of 20%. Therefore, it is clear that the figures are relative (Serafeim, 2005).

American predominance over the wider European cinema market is also confirmed as an enduring reality in Greece, inclined towards intensifying over time. To a large extent, this situation is explained by the powerful mechanisms used by the U.S.A. for the distribution and promotion of their cinematographic products. There is a huge supply of films of a standardised form and the public seems to have become addicted to films that are "easy to digest" and find their way to movie-theatres without difficulties. In Greece there are several companies –subsidiaries of American multinational groups– which import films and receive a commission on revenue thus limiting distribution risk to a minimum. It is worth mentioning that out of the 180-200 films screened on average in cinemas each year – always considered in proportion to the international film market and the success of films based on box-office results – 65-70% of these films are distributed by three companies –out of a total of eight in Greece– which represent the major U.S.A. companies in the country, namely Fox, Disney, Columbia, Warner and others (Media Desk Hellas, 2000, 5: 15). On the other hand, the smaller presence of European cinema in Greece is mainly due to the intense competition and high financial risk involved, since no European subsidiaries exist and screening depends on the acquisition of film rights. As it is well known, one of the main obstacles in the transnational distribution of European films, is the issue of language that almost prevents movies from other small countries, such as Denmark or The Netherlands, from entering Greece (IOM, 2003).

An enormous problem, yet to be resolved, for all Greek films produced and screened in the country is distribution beyond national borders. The main reason is the limited outreach of the Greek language, also true for many other so-called "small countries", combined with the absence of a solid, co-ordinated

distribution and promotion system.

### **The EUROMED AUDIOVISUAL Programme: Euromed Audiovisual - Euro-Mediterranean Audiovisual Co-operation**

In April 1997, the second Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers in Malta chose the audiovisual sector as one of the priority areas for the social, cultural and human Chapter of the Barcelona Process. Much has been achieved since then in the way of audio-visual co-operation between the two sides of the Mediterranean within the Euromed Audiovisual Programme.

The Programme, which finished by the end of 2008, aimed to create new forms of cooperation between European and South Mediterranean operators in the audiovisual sector. The programme supported regional multi-annual cinema projects particularly in the following areas: development and promotion, training and distribution and circulation of Mediterranean and European audiovisual products. Its specific objectives were:

- to develop the audiovisual sector in the Southern Mediterranean region via cooperation between operators;
- to promote the transfer of technology and know-how through vocational training;
- to encourage cooperation between producers and distributors at Euro-Mediterranean level;
- to protect the region's audiovisual and film heritage to encourage the promotion and distribution of films in the EU and the Mediterranean ([www.euromedaudiovisuel.net](http://www.euromedaudiovisuel.net); Serafeim, 2005).

Euromed Audiovisual aimed to contribute to mutual understanding among the peoples of Europe and the South Mediterranean region, by emphasising common values and the richness of the region's cultural diversity and promoting Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. The Programme played a key role as part of the social, cultural and human Euro-Mediterranean partnership as it addresses all aspects of audiovisual policy, seeking to promote the circulation of Euro-Mediterranean productions, highlight these productions, to ensure that those working in the sector can compete internationally and to facilitate understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil society.

In 2000, the first Euromed Audiovisual Programme, with a €20 million budget, resulted in six projects. In four years (2004), the MEDA funded Euromed Audiovisual Regional Programme had achieved significant results in film distribution, the preservation of the Southern Mediterranean's audiovisual heritage, the training of professionals, and the production of cartoons and documentaries. Audiovisual professionals

from the 27 countries and territories (now 35) cooperated in the six projects building networks that have the skills needed by the different sectors of the audio-visual industry.

The programme's second phase, Euromed Audiovisual II, with a €15 million budget for 2005-2008, has four priority activities (Serafeim, 2005; Euromed Audiovisual II):

- Development, distribution, promotion and exploitation of audiovisual projects;
- Restoring and archiving audiovisual productions;
- Raising awareness among Mediterranean Partners of the regulation concerning the protection of audiovisual projects;
- Support to vocational training.

While the Euromed Audiovisual I Programme was more geared towards supporting production so as to bring about the emergence of a Mediterranean film market, Phase II has as a priority, throughout 2005-2008, to improve coordination in all the pre-production and post-production stages and between Euro-Mediterranean audiovisual professionals, in partnership with their European partners.

The selected projects provide training, offer technical assistance to put in place new legislation, and refocus the aid for the promotion, distribution and exploitation of Mediterranean films in the ten Mediterranean countries and in Europe and of European films in the MEDA region. Another objective is to support initiatives which reinforce audiovisual legislation in cooperation with the national authorities of the 10 Mediterranean countries. To protect films against piracy, technical assistance in the form of workshops is provided to raise awareness amongst the Partners' public administrations on measures that can be taken, including legislative ones to protect the films and the rights of authors.

The television services of the Mediterranean region possess a heritage amounting to several million hours of programmes. They are faced with the same problems and challenges. Moreover, their situation is aggravated by difficult economic conditions, a consequence of their well-known geographical and political situations, and the very variable interest shown by those making the decisions in respect of the future of these archives, often reflected in the lack of human, technical and financial resources available.

Among the regional projects that had been financed by the Euromed Audiovisual I, were "Europa Cinemas" and "CapMed". Two new contracts, involving "Europa Cinemas", were signed with the European Commission, as part of the Euromed Audiovisual II programme.

#### *EUROMED AUDIOVISUAL I: The CapMed Project*

The Euromed Audiovisual programme, by selecting and financing the CapMed network project, is helping



create the necessary awareness of the dangers that threaten this heritage, and helping to provide the prerequisite conditions for saving and preserving these collections.

The aim of the CapMed network was to collect all the Mediterranean public television archives, while having as an objective the protection of television heritage and the facilitation of its diffusion and exhibition. Faced to the weakness and emergency of the disappearance threats that hang over the oldest archives, protection plans of television archives were implemented. The first step consisted in maintaining or substituting necessary transfer equipment of archives on modern and readable formats. Southern television channels were provided with equipment for transfer from old video formats (2-inch, 1-inch and 3/4-inch), film restoration units and film cleaning machines. This disposal, in addition to the training of film restoration technicians, enabled the transfer of thousands of documents on modern formats. CapMed also improved the documentary treatment of these archives through the training or further training of documentalists and the spread of specific computer tools ([www.cap-med.net](http://www.cap-med.net); Serafeim, 2005).

The archives offered are based on the archives of the 13 partners and are sorted according to subject in a data base, which can be accessed in many languages (French, Arabic, English). At the end of the year 2004, more than 4.000 archive documents of great cultural interest, including, more than 3.000 hours of programmes could have been consulted on-line. The CapMed database enables the user to make a selection among a large thematic list, covering the main contents and dealing with the Mediterranean countries: Landscapes, History, Economy, Science, Culture, Civilisation, Life styles, Politics, Sports... Each document is composed of a few pictures, a text description and a short digital extract. The regional project, CapMed, arose from a common will of networking and common work. Following the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel's initiative, supported by the Euromed Audiovisual programme (4 million euros), the CapMed network collaborates with public television stations from many Mediterranean countries, including: Algeria (ENTV), Cyprus (CyBc), Egypt (ERTU), Greece (ERT), Italy (RAI), Jordan (JRTV), Malta (PBS), Morocco (2M & TVM), Palestinian Authority (PBC), Tunisia (ERTT) and Turkey (TRT), as well as two statutory members: the MMSH (maison des Sciences de l' Homme) and the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute (IOM). CapMed jointly offers this unique and full of differences, Euro-Mediterranean heritage<sup>9</sup>.

In Greece, partners of the CapMed project were the public tv station ERT (Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation) and IOM (Hellenic Audiovisual Institute). The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute participated in the project CAPMED of the EUROMED AUDIOVISUAL I, by proposing a thematic Action entitled: "Mediterranean Diaspora: Images of a multicultural and multilingual encounter through the audiovisual archives", which was finally accepted (IOM, [www.iom.gr](http://www.iom.gr)). The implementation of EUROMED

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.euromediaudiovisuel.net/general.aspx?menu=1&treeID=5618&lang=en&documentID=5621>

AUDIOVISUAL I led to the creation of "The Audiovisual Historical Archive of ERT" (ERT, <http://www.ert-archives.gr>). 250 hours of film and 500 hours of video material - out of a total of 1.136 different television programmes, as well as 5.000 images from ERT's extensive body of material and rare archive footage - were saved, documented and digitalized, within the framework of this project (ERT's historical audio-visual archive comprises 70% of the country's total audio-visual material). ERT allows free access to all those interested in its archives ([www.ert.gr/archives](http://www.ert.gr/archives)) which are categorized according to thematic areas, country and type of archive. The Audiovisual Archive mainly consists of material of an informative nature, as well as documentaries and music programmes.

## **Conclusion**

The situation in the Greek audiovisual sector is simultaneously being recorded, which constitutes a special aspect of the broader cultural field and is the driving force behind the undertaking of initiatives that ensure the continuance of the Greek cultural identity and the dissemination of the Greek cultural heritage throughout Europe. The consequences of implementing the a/v Community policy in Greece is assessed positively and its effectiveness is in relation to Greece's cultural and economic goals. The programmes, actions and measures that have been established and implemented by the European Union in the sectors in question have been incorporated in the Greek law and order, and their positive effects are evident. However, despite the successful efforts to preserve the Greek cultural heritage with the aid of audiovisual media, and the promising forecasts regarding the development of the Greek audiovisual industry to the extent that it will be capable of competing with the European industry, questions are being raised as to the manner in which Community aid is being utilised in Greece, with the results often being contrary to the efforts made.

Television constitutes the most virtual means of communication, since it has the ability to enter the viewer's home and show images from every corner of the world. Especially in the EU, the television industry plays a catalytic intercultural role. In a community where the citizens of 25 member states with different cultural backgrounds coexist, it is necessary to cultivate a cultural foundation that will bring together, without assimilating, the unique characteristics of every nation and promote unity through diversity.

Television in the EU is the most important contemporary cultural industry and is justly used as a medium for implementing cultural policy. Apart from the "Television without Frontiers" Directive, which determines the legislative framework for the free, cross-border circulation and provision of television broadcasting

services, it is necessary for television itself to act as a cultural intermediary contributing to the distribution of television programmes and the mutual knowledge of other peoples.

As regards Greece – which belongs to the so-called “small countries”, namely those countries that have a limited geographic and linguistic area, as well as audiovisual production –, the EU policy on audiovisual media has started a series of discussions and controversies. The Greek audience rarely comes across programmes of European origin on Greek television. If Greek private television stations, which attract the largest number of viewers, do not broadcast a reasonable number of European programmes, then how will Greeks get to know their fellow Europeans? How will they grasp and understand their way of life, traditions, mores, history and culture? Conversely, how will the Europeans pass on the Greek culture if the participation of Greek productions in the programme structure of European television networks is so limited? How will the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe – a principle underlying the “Television without Frontiers” Directive – be promoted when many of the films that are broadcast are dubbed? Do dubbed television products come under domestic productions? Is it perhaps true that only the second compound of the term “audiovisual” is European, since the first compound does not maintain the original language? How can the “cultural mission” of the European television industry – which also has a wider economic dimension – be achieved, while simultaneously being attacked by its transatlantic opponent?

- In what way will this “cultural mission” –with the wider economic dimensions- of the European audiovisual industry be accomplished?
- If not a satisfactory percentage of European programmes is not transmitted or shown on the Greek TV, if not a satisfactory number of European films is not distributed in the Greek cinemas, how will the Greek people be able to be acquainted with their European partners, their cultures, their way of life, their customs?
- How will the rest of the Europeans be participants of the Greek culture if the Greek programmes and films do not travel around Europe?
- How will the linguistic and cultural diversity be promoted?

In 1992 the Maastricht Treaty encouraged cultural cooperation between member states, which resulted in the creation of a “European cultural model” that tries to find a balance between respect for the unique cultural expression of every nation and the interplay between them, as well as for the forms of cooperation which feed and enrich diversity.

The audiovisual sector of every country is inextricably bound to its culture. Especially with regard to the European Union, the audiovisual industry has a dual – cultural and economic – dimension. Its main aim is to highlight the uniqueness and cultural diversity of the member states, which constitute the main features of the European reality, and to promote the competitiveness of the European cultural and audiovisual

industry. Thus, the role currently played by audiovisual media creates the need to ensure a balance, on the one hand at the national level between the forces of the market and public interest, and on the other hand at the European level between maintaining the cultural diversity of Europe and supporting employment and competitiveness. Particular emphasis was therefore placed on the establishment and implementation of a common European policy on culture and audiovisual media.

The EU Audiovisual Policy, in reality, reflects two cultural policies: one, largely implicit, which drives towards a European cultural identity another which protects national identities. There is an implicit cultural dimension in the economic objectives of the EU audiovisual policy, even if its development relies on the stimulus of market harmonisation. The development of a European cultural identity is helped by access to programming and cinematographic films from other European countries and, perhaps, by co-productions. The fact that the momentum towards a harmonised market has faltered should be a matter of concern, while acknowledging the importance of cultural diversity. A more integrated market could provide stronger competition for the US, by allowing for higher budgets and production values and stimulating the artistic exploration of a European identity.

The philosophy, political-ideological premises, aims, content and effectiveness of the EU policies on audiovisual media and culture certify the ever increasing emphasis that the EU places on the cultural dimension of European integration, both for political and economic reasons. The EU Policies on Audiovisual Media play a catalytic role in strengthening the unity in diversity and in enhancing the "European Culture" which derives from the "Europe of Cultures".

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