

Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso

**President
European Commission**

B-1049 Brussels

BELGIUM

Paris, February 17 2011

Subject: MEDIA 2013

Mr President,

We are writing to you on behalf of the European networks and international producers', distributors' and exhibitors' organizations because we have just learnt that the very existence of the MEDIA Programme has been questioned. In this context, the members of the networks and organizations concerned would like to underline their commitment to this programme which has been a life saver for the industry over the last 20 years. Some days ago in Berlin we were proud to take part in the 20th anniversary of MEDIA; it has been for us an opportunity to evaluate all the work that been achieved in Europe thanks to the programme: training, support to development of the production sector as well as to distribution and exhibition. The extension of MEDIA via MEDIA MUNDUS is a formidable tool to show to a worldwide audience the forms of expression of our cultures, the values they convey and to build new economic relations between Europe and other continents and countries.

All professionals agree today on how important, effective and efficient the MEDIA budget has been on the audiovisual industry. If it was not for MEDIA, we would not be able today to even talk about a European audiovisual industry because this industry would not have been able to offer the non-national European cinema and TV contents in the various audiovisual market places of the European Union and associated countries.

Every support scheme of the MEDIA Programme targets a specific area but takes part in a more global logic that aims at improving the competitiveness of the European film business and promoting European cultural diversity, both essential in the successful construction of the European Union and its identity.

Since its beginning, the MEDIA Programme has enabled European producers, distributors and exhibitors, and especially the independent companies, to develop their structures and hire staff despite their risky activities. It has promoted a favourable financial environment for them to produce, acquire, release and screen European films.

Without this strong support from the EU, most European talents, who are today the pride of the European identity, would not have been discovered and brought to large European and non-European audiences. To quote only a few : Ken Loach, Michael Haneke, Wim Wenders,

Lars Von Trier, Nanni Moretti, Pedro Almodóvar, Roman Polanski, Jacques Audiard, Theo Angelopoulos, Aki Kaurismäki, Krzysztof Kieslowski, François Ozon, Stephen Frears, Manoel De Oliveira, Danis Tanovic, etc., all of them supported by MEDIA.

Moreover, the MEDIA Programme has always encouraged the emergence of European networks which are today a reality of the market and embody the very idea of Europe. These networks enable the gathering of professionals from all over Europe and the exchange of skills, experiences, information at European level. In this sense, they increase the competitiveness and strength of the European film industry as a whole. Professionals from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK meet regularly, co-produce and buy films together, share costs on European releases and more than anything learn from each other and use each other's experiences on various topics (like VoD, digital, new business models, viral marketing, action against piracy, international co-production, market trends, pan-European strategies, young audiences policies) in order to better face the market mutations and to keep on promoting Europe's cultural diversity.

We now ask the European Commission to at least maintain in the future the MEDIA Programme on the European audiovisual industry as it exists. We believe that the suppression or even any cuts to this programme's budget will most certainly lead to a dismantling of the European audiovisual industry with related immediate and significant impact on economic growth and jobs and inevitably weakening Europe's cultural diversity. Without cultural diversity and circulation of European works, the EU will lose one of the foundations of its identity. In the end the European viewers would be the real people to lose from this withdrawal of commitment.

It is now a fact: with its 1.2 million employees, the European audiovisual sector is important but fragile. These people are competent, skilled and the result of their works is, technically, on a world wide standard. Thanks to MEDIA our companies have been supported in hiring staff: over the years the number of jobs in our industries has increased.

We may add that films and audiovisual works are probably the best artistic way of expression to improve the knowledge among European citizens about the cultures of the European countries and the value of democracies they convey. The images, either telling a story or presenting facts through a documentary, are easily accessible by men and women of Europe and outside Europe, whatever their age or level of education and without the issue of the 'language barrier'. It is also the best advertisement for our way of life, technologies and European products that are seen through the world.

We respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss this further.

We thank you for your time and attention,

With our best regards,

(list of signatories on the next page)

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CICAE – Confédération internationale des cinémas d’art et d’essai – 12 rue Vauvenargues – 75018 Paris – France – contact: Sylvie da Rocha - cicae@art-et-essai.org

CEPI – European Coordination of Independent TV Producers – Avenue Livingstone 26 – 1000 Bruxelles – Belgium – contact: Elena Lai – cepi@europe-analytica.com

EAVE – European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs – 238c rue de Luxembourg – L-8077 Bertrange – Luxemburg – contact : Kristina Trapp – tina@eave.org

EFA – European Film Academy – Kurfürstendamm 225 – 10719 Berlin – Germany – Yves Marmion, chairman – contact: Marion Döring – mdoering@europeanfilmacademy.org

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EPC – European Producers Club – 42 rue du Faubourg du Temple – 75011 Paris – France – contact : Alexandra Lebret – alexandra.leclub@wanadoo.fr

FIAD – Fédération Internationale des Associations de Distributeurs de Films - 74 avenue Kléber - 75116 Paris – France - contact : Antoine Virenque – virenque@fnfd.org

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