



# a newssheet for journalists

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EUROFOCUS wishes its readers a Happy New Year  
and presents them its best wishes for 1989.

Mailed from: Brussels X

# EUROFOCUS

**AUDIOVISUAL: A fund to support European scripts for television and film**

Sir Richard Attenborough helps launch SCRIPT.

The European SCRIPT Fund was launched in Brussels officially by the European Commissioner for cultural affairs, Carlo Ripa di Meana, and Sir Richard Attenborough, the Fund's President, more widely known as the director of such films as "Gandhi" and "Cry Freedom".

SCRIPT is the acronym for Support for Creative Independent Production Talent. The aim of the Fund, set up within the framework of the European Community's "MEDIA 92" programme, is to (1) provide financial support to authors, directors and producers so as to allow them to develop fiction scripts for the cinema and television and (2) finance their pre-production.

The importance of the pre-production phase is obvious. It is equally obvious that the multiplication of television channels and the increase in broadcasting time will result in a growing demand for programmes, especially of fiction. Europe is rich in talent, but unless steps are taken to support the writing and development of quality scripts, and to help them reach the final stage of production, it runs the risk of being unable, once more, to meet the challenge.

The facts speak for themselves. More than 70% of fiction programmes - films and serials - shown on television in the 12 European Community countries are imports, while 60% of the films distributed in the Community come from the United States.

How to fill the gap in a market which is expanding continuously, thanks to the arrival of new private television stations, the development of direct broadcast by satellite and cable television and the widespread use of video recorders? How to maintain a balance, at the same time, between the major European audiovisual companies, which are competitive at the world level, and the plurality of creative small and medium-sized enterprises? And, finally, how to safeguard the image of Europe on film when confronted with the awful pressure to standardize ways of life and thought?

These are the numerous challenges, economic as much as social and political, which the European Commission has both identified and sought to meet, as Mr. Ripa di Meana underlined in his remarks to press. And to meet with success, as was shown by the achievement at Cannes of EURO-

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AIM and the success of other initiatives taken in the framework of the "MEDIA 92" programme. Thus, from the EURC-AIM stand, European producers were able to sell some 400 hours of programmes for roughly ECU 3mn.\*.

SCRIPT has been launched in the framework of concrete actions. It will dispose of an annual budget of ECU 2mn., half of which will be provided by the "MEDIA 92" programme and the other half by several British television and film institutes. SCRIPT will be based in London\*\* and will have a 14-member Board of Governors: one from each of the 12 Community countries, plus the European Commission's representative and the President, Sir Richard Attenborough.

The Fund will begin operations from 1 January 1989. Applications will be welcome from all Community countries, but more especially the smaller ones. In order to qualify, projects will have to be of a high standard and of interest to at least two Member States to stand a good chance of reaching the production stage.

Projects presented by a team consisting of authors and directors or producers will be given priority over those submitted by authors alone. A development budget must accompany the application for funds. SCRIPT will meet 50% of this budget, with a maximum of ECU 37,500. The funds will be provided in the form of loans repayable on the first day of principal photography, should production actually take place.

\* 1 ECU = UK£0.66 or IR£0.77

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**INTERNAL MARKET: Eliminating frontier controls**

A European Commission report in the perspective of 1992.

The twelve European Community governments have not been slow to put forward both reasons and excuses why frontier controls on people should be continued. Nor has there been a shortage of proposals and initiatives aimed at reducing these controls. It has been left to the European Commission to put some order into the burgeoning file on the Community's internal frontiers. A report it sent to the EC Council of Ministers at the beginning of December is aimed at getting the Twelve to move towards the area without internal frontiers which is foreseen for 1992.

Progress towards the free movement of persons has been slower than in the case of goods and capital. True, the problems in question seem complex and involve various authorities at not only the national and European level but also the international and, at times, even the regional.

The points at issue range from laws on the detention and transport of arms to legislation on the definition of illegal drugs, and include the right of asylum, the status of political refugees and policy as regards visas for nationals of non-EEC countries. The extradition of an individual wanted by another Member State poses similar problems. This was seen recently in the disputes between Britain and Belgium over a priest suspected of belonging to the IRA and between Greece and Italy, over a Palestinian accused of terrorism.

In its report the Commission stresses that all these problems must be resolved "in such a way as to ensure a climate of mutual confidence between all the Member States."

At Rhodes the Community's heads of state and government decided that each of their countries would appoint someone to coordinate the work being done by different bodies. This should lead to much greater simplification. Even so, the Commission considers that "the overall political responsibility for the realisation of the internal market belongs to the EC Council of Ministers." It has therefore asked the latter to see to it that those appointed by the Twelve cooperate with each other and display the "political will" needed to attain the 1992 target.

In its report the Commission notes that, with the elimination of the Community's internal frontiers, the controls at its external frontiers should be both more effective and cheaper.

**CARS: 70 projects to improve road safety**

DRIVE to get the green light in early 1989.

The use of a "black box" to record accident data and automatic toll payment systems are among the ideas which the European Community's R&D programme, DRIVE\*, will be pursuing from the beginning of 1989. They are among the 70 projects selected by the European Commission from a total of 190.

With a total budget of ECU 100mn.\*\*, DRIVE will allow some 1,100 scientists and technicians to carry out projects lasting from one to three years. Half the cost of each project will be met by the Community, the rest by the participants themselves: car manufacturers, companies engaged in information technology, automobile associations, research institutes, the national telecommunication authorities and various public bodies.

DRIVE will cover various aspects of road safety, including the safe distance between motor vehicles, hazard warning, traffic regulation through intelligent signalling systems and providing information to drivers. DRIVE will also make it easier to draw up and adopt European technical standards.

**CARS: Trans-border discounts**

The EC Commission puts an end to discrimination between potential buyers.

Should you buy a car in Belgium, with the intention of having it registered in Britain or Ireland, the Belgian dealer must treat you like a local customer when it comes to discounts and promotional offers. The European Commission recently enforced this principle in a case involving Citroen's Belgian subsidiary.

The company had launched a month-long promotional campaign in September 1986. However, only customers living in Belgium or Luxembourg could take advantage of it. This was also the case as regards other promotional campaigns launched by Citroen Belgium until last August.

The European Commission pointed out to the company that this practice, which was embodied in the agreements it has concluded with its distributors, restricted trade between Community countries. The agreements themselves could therefore be banned. At the beginning of December, Citroen announced it had eliminated discrimination based on the country of residence.

\* Dedicated Road Infrastructure for Vehicle safety in Europe (DRIVE).

\*\* 1 ECU = UK£0.66 or IR£0.77

**COMPETITION: Franchising and the Single Market**

The European Commission adopts two regulations.

Franchise operations and know-how agreements are multiplying throughout the 12-nation European Community. The European Commission regards these activities as beneficial for the economy, for consumers and for the Community's technological development. It therefore adopted two Community regulations at the end of November, which make both activities subject to Community rules in the perspective of the 1992 Single Market.

Franchising refers to a practice developed by some of the leading names in trade and services. It was launched in the United States by companies such as McDonald, in the fast food sector, Hertz (car rentals) and Computerland (microcomputers), and it allows independent firms to market the goods or services of well-known companies from premises which conform to a design set by the latter. Together these "franchisees" form a network, and in Europe include such household names as Pronuptia, Yves Rocher, Lacoste and Benetton.

The agreements that link franchisor and franchisee are covered by the European Community's competition rules. But the European Commission has decided to grant all such agreements exemption from these rules under certain conditions, as allowed by the Treaty of Rome, the Community's "Constitution". It has taken the view that franchising both encourages the spread of independent firms and benefits consumers.

The Commission has exempted know-how agreements in similar manner from the operation of the competition rules. Under these agreements a firm in possession of technical information which is not covered by patents authorizes another to use this information to produce goods or offer a service.

By this means the Commission plans to facilitate the spread of technological innovation, guarantee genuine competition for technically new products and allow the free movement of these products in the Single Market of 1992. The new regulation is also designed to prevent companies which possess know-how from dividing the market into water-tight compartments.

**UNEMPLOYMENT: Women, its major victims**

The Member States' commitment to solving the problem is weak.

Between 1984 and 1986 male unemployment was stable at around 9.3%. But female unemployment, already higher to begin with (12.5% in 1984) continued to rise, reaching 13.2% in 1986. The gap widened further in 1987. There was a slow but steady decline in male unemployment (down 3% in September 1987, as compared to the previous September), while female unemployment went up by 2.2%.

The situation varies a great deal from country to country, of course; but the fact remains that the problem is becoming increasingly serious, because of the very inadequacy of the measures taken by Member States. This in fact is the conclusion reached in a European Commission report on actions to combat unemployment among women, drawn up in the framework of the Community programme on equality of opportunities (1986-1990), which provides for regular progress reports from the Commission.

But there are no signs of "progress" as yet, judging from the statistical and other information contained in the Commission's report. If all the Member States have taken measures in the field of training, some, including Britain, Ireland, Spain and Portugal, have not found it opportune to adopt specific measures against unemployment in general or the worrying situation in public finance.

In certain cases they have preferred to concentrate their efforts on managing unemployment rather than preventing it, as in France, Belgium and Ireland. There is a feeling in Britain, where female unemployment otherwise has fallen by 17.1% between 1986 and 1987, that additional legislation would not lead to the desired results. Other countries, such as Germany, Greece and France and Belgium, have adopted different laws in the matter, while Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands and Greece have introduced quotas or made it easier for women to join training programmes or take up jobs.

Britain, as well as France and Denmark, have also stressed measures in favour of certain categories of more disadvantaged women. Other Member States, such as Italy and Spain, have at last introduced the possibility of part-time work for women or, as in Germany, have improved working conditions in this sector of the economy.

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As this in-depth enquiry confirms, the problem is still being posed, especially in countries such as Spain, for example, where female unemployment rose by 17.3% in the 12 months to September 1987. The information available to the European Commission points to the inadequacy and limitations of actions undertaken in this field - and even to the existence of legislation in favour of women which in fact represents an obstacle to the fight against female unemployment. The problem is all the more serious, given that not all women who are jobless have registered at unemployment exchanges.

#### ENVIRONMENT: Quieter aircraft in two years' time?

The European Commission seeks a ban on noisy aircraft.

A ban on aircraft certified before 1977 using European Community airports would reduce noise levels by as much as half, in the European Commission's view. It therefore wants the Twelve to introduce just such a ban from 1 November 1990.

Civil aircraft in use around the world fall into one of three categories as regards noise levels. Group 1 includes nearly all aircraft certified before 1969. They are extremely noisy and have been banned from the Community since the end of 1987. Aircraft certified between 1969 and 1977 are in Group 2. Only a shade less noisy than Group 1 aircraft, they are still in service in the EC and include various models of the DC-9 and the B-727, 737 and 747.

Adoption of the Commission's proposal would mean that airlines serving Community countries would be unable to add to their "European" fleet aircraft listed in Group 2 after 1 November 1990. Only Group 3 aircraft - i.e. those certified after October 1977 - could use Community airports. Aircraft used on short and medium-haul flights tend to be noisiest.



**UNEMPLOYMENT: The fall continues**

10.1% in October, down from 10.2% in September.

The decline in unemployment in the 12-nation European Community, which began in September, seems to be continuing. Just 10.1% of the work-force was unemployed at the end of October, according to the EC's statistical office, Eurostat, as against 10.2% in September.

But postal strikes made the task of Eurostat more difficult: the machinery for collecting statistics was at a standstill in France and worked only intermittently in Britain. The experts were reduced to making estimates for the two countries. They put at 15.5mn. the number of registered unemployed in the EC at the end of October, as compared to 15.6mn. the month before.

The unemployment rate did not rise in any of the Member States in October. It was stable in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal and declined everywhere else. Although there were fewer jobless among both men and women, as in September, female unemployment was much higher at 13.3%, as compared to 8% for men.

**ANIMALS: Protected against a new Chernobyl?**

The EC Commission proposes standards for animal feed.

Animals too have the right to protection against radioactivity in the event of a nuclear accident. At the end of November, the European Commission proposed to the Twelve a ban on the sale of animal feed if the level of radioactivity exceeds 2,000 becquerels per kilo.

The EC Council of Ministers took a series of emergency measures after the accident to the Soviet nuclear power station at Chernobyl, in the spring of 1986. In December 1987, it set maximum permitted radioactivity levels in foodstuffs for human consumption, to be applied uniformly throughout the EC in the event of a nuclear accident. It was agreed at the time that the European Commission would propose maximum permitted radioactivity levels for animal feed. This it has done now.