Advisory Panel to the CDMM on Media Diversity (AP-MD): Report on Transnational Media Concentrations in Europe

At the 62 meeting of the CDMM (Steering Committee on the Mass Media) from 2 to 5 November 2004, the AP-MD submitted to the Steering Committee a report on transnational media concentrations in Europe. The report examines the different aspects of the phenomenon of transnational media concentrations. It looks at economic, legal and technological aspects of transnational concentrations, as well as their impact on audiences and media content. In its analysis of the phenomenon of transnational media concentrations, the Panel adopts a very broad approach, considering the following as part of transnational concentrations: a) media companies/conglomerates distributing their products in many countries, including broadcasts targeted specifically at countries other than their country of origin; b) companies operating on the media market of more than one country; c) companies, individuals or groups of individuals owning media companies in several countries. Whilst recognising that transnational concentrations are growing rapidly and that the consequences of this phenomenon are still hard to measure, the report describes the current situation and expresses concern about the inadequacy of competition law at both national and European levels to deal with the impact of transnational concentrations on freedom of expression, pluralism and cultural diversity in a given country. According to the report’s conclusions, “the diminishing diversity of content production and the reduced contribution of commercial European media outlets to the public sphere” are particularly worrying. In order to prevent the negative impact that transnational concentrations could have on media pluralism, the Panel sets out a number of recommendations to the Council of Europe, the member states and media companies. In particular, it suggests that the Council of Europe initiate ongoing monitoring of transnational media concentrations and publish the conclusions of this monitoring in an annual report. It also recommends that the Council of Europe urgently study the appropriate means, including a convention, to prevent the negative impact of this phenomenon on pluralism and, if necessary, draw up a convention.

- Transnational media concentrations in Europe, report prepared by the AP-MD (Advisory Panel to the CDMM on media concentrations, pluralism and diversity questions), AP-MD (2004) 7

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