[FR] Report on France's Arrangements for Support for Cinematographic Production

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On 3 February Jean-Pierre Leclerc, member of the Conseil d'État and administrator of France Télévision, submitted to the Minister for Culture and Communication his report on the necessary development in the system of support for cinematographic production. His analysis of the current situation indicates that the problem of financing is still that of its distribution among the various categories of film rather than the overall amount, although this is threatened in coming years by uncertainties in the advertising market and the unfavourable development of Canal+.

The report proposes defining more closely the contribution obligations of the television channels, more particularly by putting forward the idea of requiring the channels to spread their investments over a number of films that should not be less than a minimum determined by their convention or terms of reference, once the CNC (Centre national de la cinématographie - national film centre) has given its opinion. In the same line of thought, Mr Leclerc feels that, for the sake of clarifying the channels' obligations, it is desirable to exclude them from receiving aid from the support fund when they co-produce works, except where these are qualified by the regulations on "cinema channels" and Arte; their specific objectives probably justify the maintenance of cinematographic co-production. Thus the report clearly questions the production activity of the major general-interest channels. These have been quick to react, complaining that it is the channels that contribute much to the support funds that are the first to be left out when the public subsidies are allocated (France 2 Cinéma). "If the resource constituted by the support fund ceases, we would give preference to films that could boost viewer figures and not those likely to be a success in cinema theatres." (M6)

The report also proposes basing the contributions of channels on their sponsorship resources, which are developing faster than income from conventional advertising. Thus it proposes amending the law in such a way as to include all of this revenue (in the order of EUR 23 million) in the basis for calculating the channels' contributions, which would provide the support fund with an extra EUR 8 million. Mr Leclerc also suggests levying a tax, as of 1 July 2003, on the purchase or rental of video cassettes based on the retail price, which would represent a gain for production of EUR 5 to 7 million on average.

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The professional cinema organisations, such as the ARP and the UPF, consider these proposals "stop where there should be the start of an analysis of the regulation of the entire cinematographic sector with a view to the interdependence of the parties involved". Thus the "unbalanced report delays the commencement of essential thinking that is needed among the professional organisations and all the parties concerned, under the auspices of the public authorities".

The Minister has asked David Kessler, the Director General of the CNC, to analyse the proposals contained in the report and to gather the reactions of the professionals concerned in order to draw up a summary that would enable the Minister to reach decisions on the measures he is to put to the Government.

Jean-Pierre Leclerc, Réflexion sur le dispositif français de soutien à la production cinématographique

http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/actualites/rapports/leclerc/rapportleclerc.pdf

Jean-Pierre Leclerc, Consideration of France's arrangements for providing support for cinematographic production

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