Common Declaration by European Film Institutes

IRIS 2003-4:1/6

Willemijn Heeringa
Institute for Information Law (IViR), University of Amsterdam

The national film institutes of the 15 Member States of the European Union have made a common declaration on the importance of State aid for European films. This is the first time the film institutes have made a common statement.

The national film institutes are publicly funded and were founded to support national and European film culture. In this common declaration the institutes express their concerns regarding the necessity for State aid for European films. The institutes are worried that the audio-visual sector in Europe will be left solely to the chances of free market forces. In the declaration, the institutes refer to the Commission's Cinema Communication of 26 September 2001 (see IRIS 2001-9: 6). The Communication examines, inter alia, State funding for cinema and its compatibility with EC competition law. The national film institutes emphasize that the rules for the approval of State aid, laid down in the Communication, undermine the effectiveness of State aid for film. For example, the current rules only allow State aid for films that are considered to be "cultural", and State aid is limited to a maximum of 50% of the costs of films. These regulations do not take into account the special character of the sector. Another problem that has been identified is the short duration of the Commission's approval of the current national State aid schemes, which is only valid until 2004. This makes it impossible for States to create a long-term policy.

The institutes claim that a powerful European film culture can only develop in the right conditions. The position of national film culture will have to be strengthened and expanded before a European film culture can ever exist. The institutes ask their national governments to work together with the European Commission to make sure that the future of European film is secured.

Déclaration commune des organismes publics européens en charge du cinéma du 17 mars 2003

http://www.cnc.fr/b_actual/fr_declaration.htm

European National Film Agencies Common Declaration of 17 March 2003

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