

European Commission: Commissioner Monti in Favour of Harmonising National Media Ownership Rules

IRIS 1995-9:1/22

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On 26 September 1995, Mr Mario Monti, member of the European Commission responsible for the functioning of the Internal Market, announced that he is personally in favour of harmonising national media ownership rules. He made his announcement in a meeting of the European Parliament's Committee on culture, youth and sports.

Given the multiplication of transfrontier media activities, the risks of circumvention of national laws increases, which makes these laws ineffective and may thus provoke serious conflicts between national authorities. Furthermore, when media undertakings, notably with a view to the development of the information society, seek to develop themselves and to invest across frontiers, there is a need to create a level playing field so that they can benefit from the opportunities offered by an area without frontiers to promote the growth and competitiveness of the European media industry. Finally, given the fact that different Member States have launched projects to modernise their national rules on media ownership and media activities, the Commissioner believes that the time has come to coordinate media ownership rules at the level of the European Union so as to prevent that the Internal Market being refragmented.

Commissioner Monti announced that he had asked his services to prepare a draft Directive for the co-ordination of national media ownership rules with a view to present it to the Commission in the first three months of 1996. Mr Monti did not specify whether the draft Directive would only propose the harmonisation of national cross media ownership rules or also ownership rules relating only to the television, or radio or press sectors. He did say, however, that any future provisions should in any case be strictly limited and proportional to what is essential for the functioning of the Internal Market. He also indicated that they should establish, in regard to access to media ownership, a high and equivalent level of protection of pluralism between the Member States. Finally, they should offer the necessary legal security for the investments of a competitive European media industry.

Discours du Commissaire Monti au Comité du Parlement Européen pour la Jeunesse, la Culture et les Sports.

Commissioner Monti's presentation to the European Parliament's Committee on youth, culture and sports.

