Forthcoming meetings of different groups of specialists

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At its third meeting (19-20 March 1996), the Group of Specialists on Media in a Pan-European Perspective (MM-SEP) continued its elaboration of draft guidelines on the guarantee of the independence of public service broadcasting. The aim of the guidelines is to provide Member States with orientations on the provisions to be included in domestic law with a view to avoiding any interference in the day-to-day management and operation of public service broadcasters. The draft guidelines cover a range of issues such as the status and the respective competences of the boards of management and supervisory bodies of public service broadcasting organisations, the status of their staff, their funding, etc.

The Group of Specialists on New Communications Technologies (MM-S-NT) will organise on 13 May a hearing with representatives of organisations involved in the development of new communications services (telecommunications operators, broadcasting organisations, etc). The aim of the hearing will be to review together with the professionals the issues raised by new communications technologies from the point of view of the protection of human rights and democratic values. The conclusions of the hearing will contribute to the preparation of the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy, which will be held in Greece in the second half of 1997. The general theme of the Conference will be "The Information Society: a challenge for Europe".

The Committee of Experts on Media Concentrations and Pluralism (MM-CM) will organise on 6 June a contact meeting with the national correspondents apppointed by the member States to provide the Committee with information on the evolution of media concentrations at the national level. The aim of the hearing will be to take stock of the development of media concentrations at the pan-European level and to determine, as appropriate, whether any concerted initiative should be taken at the level of the Council of Europe to guarantee the maintenance of pluralism.

Furthermore, the Committee has commissioned a study on the impact of new communications technologies on media concentrations and pluralism. The final version of the study should be available in the autumn. A seminar on "Copyright and neighbouring rights in the digital era: new challenges for rights holders, rights management and users" will be organised in Oslo on 28 and 29 May, in co-operation with the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Information on the seminar may be obtained from Mr Alfonso de Salas, Media Section, Directorate of

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