

European Commission: Report on the Challenges for European Film Heritage

IRIS 2010-9:1/4

*Christina Angelopoulos
Institute for Information Law (IViR), University of Amsterdam*

On 6 June 2010 the European Commission's Information Society and Media Directorate General published a study on the challenges for European film heritage from the analogue and the digital era. The study constitutes the second implementation report of the 2005 Recommendation on Film Heritage, which calls for EU Member States to improve conditions of the conservation, restoration and exploitation of film heritage and remove obstacles to the development and full competitiveness of the European film industry. Member States are encouraged to inform the Commission every two years of action taken in response to the Recommendation. The first implementation report was released in August 2008.

The current report is based on a questionnaire circulated by the European Commission and covering all aspects of the Film Heritage Recommendation, as well as two additional questions: the challenges and opportunities for European film heritage which arise from the transition from the analogue to the digital era and the link between film funding policies and film heritage. These issues therefore also form the subject matter of the report and are organised into three chapters: I. Analysis of the situation of film heritage in Europe in those areas covered by the Film Heritage Recommendation; II. Challenges and opportunities of the digital era for film heritage institutions; III. Access to European film heritage. The report suggests that Europe's film heritage institutions should take a new approach to the way they safeguard and provide access to Europe's film heritage. The traditional model of conserving fragile film materials in vaults cannot guarantee preservation for posterity nor accessibility. A move should be made from the old "sealed box" approach to a new "full access" model. The report further suggests that amendments to the existing legal framework might be necessary so as to permit such access, particularly the efficient cultural and educational use of the films and related film material. Finally, best practices collected from among the Member States for dealing with the challenges of analogue and digital film heritage are highlighted.

The report is only a first evaluation of the situation in this area. Further action is foreseen: this summer the Commission launched an invitation to tender for an independent study which will look in detail into the question of the challenges of the digital era for film heritage institutions. On the basis of the study the Commission intends to consider whether a new Communication or a revision of the existing Film Heritage Recommendation will be necessary to bolster efforts in

the field. Meanwhile, the next application report by the Member States is due by November 2011.

Commission Staff Working Document on the challenges for European film heritage from the analogue and the digital era, Brussels, 2 June 2010, SEC(2010) 853 final

http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/docs/reg/cinema/report_2/2010_853.pdf

Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2005 on film heritage and the competitiveness of related industrial activities, [2005] OJ L 323/57

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:323:0057:01:EN:HTML>

