[FR] Launch of Plan for Restoring and Digitising Heritage Films

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On 9 May 2012, a new decree on aid for digitising heritage cinematographic works was to allow the practical implementation of a wide-ranging plan to digitise cinematographic works embarked upon by the French State last year (see IRIS 2011-7/23). The aim of the plan is to assist rightsholders in restoring, using and conserving works with a view to promoting their wider circulation. The action programme is in two parts. Firstly, it involves investing alongside catalogue holders through a major national loan system. A first agreement has just been signed with Gaumont, under which it should be possible to restore 270 feature films over a four-year period. The second part of the programme involves public aid from the national centre for cinematography (Centre National de la Cinématographie - CNC), with supplementary arrangements in support of the digitisation of cinematographic works in favour of the most heritage-related part of the sector, namely films that offer serious artistic and cultural content but for which profitability is not assured. Implementing the plan required authorisation from the European Commission, however, and this was issued on 21 March 2012, as the plan was deemed compatible with the EU rules on State aid. The authorisation means that things can now start moving. The decree of 9 May 2012 has now created selective aid in favour of restoring and digitising heritage cinematographic works. The text lays down the conditions and criteria for granting the aid, particularly with regard to works and beneficiaries. The aid will take the form of subsidies or loans to be repaid over a very long period, and may cover as much as 90% of the total cost in exceptional cases. Expenditure taken into consideration will include the cost of actual restoration that may be necessary prior to digitisation, the cost of digitisation and digital restoration, the cost of calibration and producing a digital file, and if necessary the return of digital elements restored in this way to film, for conservation purposes.

For CNC Chairman Eric Garandeau, “This is the first initiative on such a scale in Europe; it will enable us to keep our cinematographic heritage in public use, using up-to-date technologies.”

Décret n° 2012-760 du 9 mai 2012 relatif à l'aide à la numérisation d'œuvres cinématographiques du patrimoine, JO du 10 mai 2012

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Decree No. 2012-760 of 9 May 2012 on aid for digitising cinema heritage works, published in the Journal Officiel of 10 May 2012

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