

Italy: a Creative Media Nation

23 November 2011, European Parliament, Brussels

“ITALY: A CREATIVE MEDIA NATION”

A study by IsICult, Istituto Italiano per l'Industria Culturale

«SAFEGUARDING ORIGINAL CONTENT IN A RESPONSIBLE AND PLURALISTIC INTERNET»

TV and Web convergence: advocating the case for a responsible internet

On Wednesday, 23 November, at the European Parliament in Brussels, a study commissioned by Mediaset and carried out by the independent research centre IsICult will be presented together with a preview of the results of the Spanish research “Spain: a Creative Media Nation” by Steiberg Comunicación. The presentation will be followed by a panel debate - moderated by Lisbeth Kirk, EUobserver Editor-in-Chief - among the following discussants:

- Philippe Delusinne – ACT President & CEO RTL Belgium
- Chris Marcich - President & Managing Director, Europe, Middle East & Africa, Motion Picture Association
- Mario Mauro – MEP
- Gina Nieri – ACT Vice President and Member of the Board, Mediaset Group
- Anthony Whelan - Head of EC Vice-President Neelie Kroes' Cabinet.

The study - which comes at a timely juncture, after the consultation on the European Commission's *Green Paper on the online distribution of audio-visual works in the EU: opportunities and challenges towards a single market* - presents a set of data on the pivotal role played by television in a multi-media, convergent market-place.

Television remains the most popular medium in Italy, as also in the world at large, with more than 3.7 billion daily viewers. Consumption in terms of viewers and time continues to increase: in Italy from 2000 to 2010, a period that witnessed new media developments, tv-audience rose from 8.9 million to 9.8 million (daily average per minute).

The web is offering increasingly more television content, and such content has now become the internet users' most popular and frequent choice. But such online original content are the result of the work, creativity and investments of editors, broadcasters, majors and independent producers.

Mediaset's website offers the programmes of its generalist and themed channels, legally and free of charge. Moreover, it has launched a new on-demand service, Premium Play, with over 2,000 different programmes, also viewable in HD: cinema, TV drama, cartoons, documentaries, football and catch-up services. Premium subscribers have free access to Premium Play, both on TV and on the internet. In addition, Mediaset is about to launch TGC24, a 24-hours news service with 100 journalists

ensuring live coverage of current affairs in Italy and worldwide, available on TV, computers, tablets and smartphones.

TV and web are two converging systems, but creativity comes at a cost. Mediaset employs more than 8000 workers in Italy as between its own employees and the employees of associated industries, produces half of its programme schedule in house (12 thousand hours per year on free-to-air channels, comprising 5000 hours of news) and invests more than 1.2 billion euro, each season, in original content. In 2010, Mediaset's investments in Italian TV-drama and Italian cinema amounted to € 212 million and € 100 million respectively.

On the other hand, the majority of the net aggregators, namely those companies that make the greatest use of unlicensed professional video content - parasitically exploiting television production - fail to make any meaningful contribution to content production. This phenomenon is jeopardising the business model upon which the creative industry's growth is premised: the remuneration of intellectual property and the possibility of acquiring exclusive rights.

The conference will state that freedom in the internet is a necessary value. However, clear rules are necessary, in the digital world as in everyday life: a situation that the G20 defined as a "responsible internet": what is unlawful offline, in civil society, should also be considered unlawful within the web. Safeguarding content will not compromise the digital freedom of individuals. Users, social networks and user-generated content will not be affected. Instead, the aim is to safeguard original, professional audio-visual production so that it may continue to supply both the television and the internet: safeguarding original content on the web means safeguarding cultural diversity and granting freedom of expression so that new talents may emerge and succeed.

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