
7^{ème} Conférence Annuelle
EUROPA CINEMAS
7th Annual Conference

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Compte-Rendu
Report

Friday, 22 November 2002

2:00-3:00 pm OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

Claude Miller, President of Europa Cinemas

Agnès Jaoui, Director, Actress

Christophe Girard, Deputy Mayor of Paris, in charge of Cultural Affairs

David Kessler, General Director of the Centre National de la Cinématographie

Jean-Michel Baer, Director of Culture, Audiovisual Policy and Sport, European Commission

Claude-Eric Poiroux welcomed participants to this, the seventh Europa Cinemas Annual Conference and announced the programme for the day. He introduced the opening panel : Claude Miller, David Kessler, Agnès Jaoui, Jean-Michel Baer and Christophe Girard. The afternoon discussion theme was "Cinema and young audiences: education, protection and censorship", beginning at 3 pm. There would be two distinct panels for this discussion, the first between 3 and 4.30; the second, after a fifteen break, from 4.45 to 6.30. At 8.30 pm, Jean-Jacques Aillagon, French Minister of Culture and Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Culture and Communication, would host a reception at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (French National Library). Two films would be premiered at 9.45, *24 Heures de la vie d'une femme* ("24 hours in the Life of a Woman") directed by Laurent Bouhnik and *Junimond* by Hanno Hackfort numerically projected. Finally, he introduced the next speaker, Claude Miller.

Claude Miller explained the historic nature of this conference, which marked the tenth anniversary of Europa Cinemas. There were participants from 41 different European and Mediterranean countries, showing that the Europa Cinemas network was a genuinely international body supporting film-makers. Claude Miller then thanked panellists for their attendance: Christophe Girard, representing the City of Paris; David Kessler, director of the French CNC, a founding partner of Europa Cinemas and Jean-Michel Baer who, with Jacques Delmoly, had devoted increasing budgetary resources to support the distribution of European films. He was also delighted to welcome Agnès Jaoui who had come to support Europa Cinema.

Agnès Jaoui explained the nature of her commitment to the exhibitors. She had travelled widely with her film, *Le Goût des Autres*, in many theatres and this had given her the opportunity of discovering many interesting films she had never seen before. She had met audiences who were eager to view European films and devoted exhibitors who were true Resistantists.

Claude-Eric Poiroux emphasized the fact that Agnès Jaoui played in *24 Heures de la Vie d'une Femme* and introduced Christophe Girard.

Christophe Girard welcomed in the name of the Mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, the European participants to this Conference. He said that Claude-Eric Poiroux' work, supported by Claude Miller, was a remarkable achievement. He shared their convictions in favour of the European films and as Deputy Mayor in charge of Cultural Affairs, he defended a policy of support for film-makers' work and for film distribution.

David Kessler congratulated Europa Cinemas on their work which had fulfilled its promise and spread far beyond just Europe. He wanted to use this opportunity to emphasize the value of Europe's film heritage and the importance of showing this work through Cined@ays. He stressed the fact that the number of films produced in Europe is roughly the same as the number of films produced in the United States. It was the issue of distribution and circulation which was crucial.

Jean-Michel Baer quoted Pedro Almodóvar, Cined@ay's patron. The Spanish film-maker had said that the future of European cinema lay in its diversity, in innovation and difference. That future lay in the hands of theatre owners and managers. Jean-Michel Baer felt that Europe had recognized this by supporting Europa Cinemas. The idea was gradually to encourage and reward theatres for showing a preponderance of European films. Amongst those films, there must be a substantial proportion of non-national productions. That was the quantitative goal. Today, in addition, a number of new, qualitative goals had been set, such as involving young audiences in European film-viewing and facilitating their access to heritage works. Which is why Europa Cinemas had joined the Cined@ays partnership, through which more than 1,500 films would be shown in 250 European cities.

Claude-Eric Poiroux gave notice of three workshops scheduled for the next day and that Jacques Delmoly would be joining the conference on Sunday for a discussion on Europa Cinemas' partner relationships. He then introduced Pascal Rogard, who would chair the discussion on the first conference theme, which was Censorship and Protecting Young Audiences.

3:00-6:30 pm **SESSION I. CINEMA AND YOUNG AUDIENCE : EDUCATION, PROTECTION, CENSORSHIP**

- How can young people be protected from violence in films and on TV?
- How do official regulations for monitoring and censorship compare across Europe?
- Economic consequences of censorship on the circulation of European films.
- How does the diversity of European films correspond to what young audience is looking for?

Discussion chaired by **PASCAL ROGARD**, ARP, *Managing-director*.

1st part - Participants :

Robin Duval, British Board of Film Classification (UK), *Director*

Wim Bekkers, NICAM (Holland), *Director*

Patrick Olivier, Commission de Classification des oeuvres cinématographiques, *Vice-Chairman (France)*

Claude Miller, film director and Europa Cinemas, *Chairman (France)*

Blandine Kriegel, philosopher (France)

Ruth Hieronymi, MEP (Germany)

Pascal Rogard introduced the panel. In order to illustrate differences between the various film classification systems in Europe, he quoted three films which had been classified differently in different countries. *The Pianist* (under 14s in Italy, under 15s in Sweden and Finland, under 16s in Holland and in France, under 18s in Britain, Hungary and Portugal). *Amélie Poulain* (Universal in France, under 6s in Denmark, under 7s in Germany and Sweden, under 11s in Finland, under 12s in Portugal and under 15s in Britain) and *Le Goût des Autres* (Universal in France, under 12s in Portugal and under 15s in Britain). Pascal Rogard then introduced Robin Duval.

Robin Duval stressed that there was a consensus in Europe and throughout the world in favour of protecting young people against the effects of violence on TV, on video and in movies. It is widely recognized that young audiences may be affected by what they see. This is why the British Board of Film Classification seeks the advice of consultants such as psychiatrists, psychologists and other adolescent or adult behaviour experts. As far as he was concerned, harmonizing classification systems would demand a great deal of work because its aim was going to be the reconciliation of a variety of different points of view and premises. He went on to enumerate the differences between differing European systems: liberal in France, strict on violence in Germany and in Scandinavia, sensitive to bad language in the UK and to sex in Spain. For this reason, a film might be classified as "Universal" in one country and banned for under 18s in another. He quoted the example of Sam Mendes' *American Beauty* which was "Universal" in France and banned for under 18s in the UK. One plausible solution was that adopted in the field of video games, where a single European Code of Standards and Classifications was applied. Robin Duval felt that this code would prove effective because video games are by definition transnational. On the other hand, he felt that a similar scheme in the field of cinema would have to take into account the most restrictive standards. Europeans would therefore have to agree on a series of age limits for bans, covering under 12s, under 15s or under 16s and under 18s for some films. He recognized however that such a system of classification would not be applied by everyone in the same way.

Wim Bekkers explained the Dutch system, called NICAM (Netherlands Institute for the Classification of Audiovisual Media), a joint self-regulation initiative by the Dutch audiovisual industry. This scheme was supported by the government, at least for an initial three years. NICAM was founded by public and private broadcasters and by cinema, DVD and video-game professionals. The aim was to provide a single information source according to which parents might determine whether or not a programme was suitable for their children. The scheme was on an advisory basis and was definitely not censorship-based. Various factors had contributed to the founding of NICAM: in the last fifteen years, the supply of audiovisual material had increased; a European directive had required Member States to act on youth protection; and a majority of Dutch parents had been in favour of an across the board classification system for all media. The system had been developed by independent experts. It took sex, violence, fear, discrimination, language and drugs into account. Broadcasters were responsible for classifying material. The classification was the same for all media (theatrical release, TV,

DVD...) Four age-based classifications had been decided upon: "Universal"; 6 and over; 12 and over; 16 and over. The last two classifications had a direct impact on films in that could not be broadcast before 10 pm. Audiences were able to express a view on classification decisions reached by professionals.

Patrick Olivier explained the workings of the French Board of Film Classification, which is a consultative body representing various Ministries, Professionals, Youth Bodies and Experts. It has no fixed criteria. Each decision is the subject of internal discussion, even though the final decision lies with the Minister of Culture. On the whole, decisions are reached by consensus. Various bans are possible, under the age of 12, under 16 and, more recently, under 18. Other classifications in existence are not much used, such as "X", on grounds of pornography or violence and an outright ban, which is perceived as archaic. The Board will not consider imposing cuts. Films are judged as submitted. Patrick Olivier accepted that the Board's policies might be qualified as "liberal", but only in as much as they reflect society as a whole. Its classifications tend to be more indulgent than those of neighbouring countries. As far as Patrick Olivier was concerned, harmonizing classification systems on a Europe-wide basis was impossible, since classification systems varied widely from one country to another, as indeed did culture in general.

Pascal Rogard then introduced Blandine Kriegel, whose recent report on television violence had provoked some controversy in France.

Blandine Kriegel expressed gratitude for this opportunity of defending the views expressed in her work. She wanted to clarify two points in the report, on television news and on cinema. She went on to explain that she had never intended to suggest that television news should be censored. Reporters broadcasting violence as it occurs throughout the world are only doing their job. They should, however, in order to avoid a deterioration of standards, publish ethical guidelines. She then went on to discuss cinema, specifying that cinema had never been central to the work of the committee which she had chaired. The idea had not been to forbid the broadcasting of films prohibited for under 12s before the 10.30 pm watershed, but only films banned for 16s or 18s. The committee had merely suggested introducing some form of regulatory system, which did not exist in France. To this end, it had heard many different people (directors, writers, broadcasters, producers and representatives of family viewing associations). An evaluation was then conducted which proved the effects of violent performances on child behaviour, regardless of social background or family context. The committee's motto was, "preserve freedom, trust in responsibility". The difficult thing, of course, was to reconcile creative freedom, which was fundamental, with protection for young people, which was something equally important. The best solution would be to get all the parties concerned around the same table: to get everyone involved in the Board of Film Classification and also in an Evaluation Committee, under the aegis of the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel* (Office of Broadcasting Standards), whose function would be to judge the effects of programmes after they have been broadcast. As far as Blandine Kriegel was concerned, this was only a very modest proposal. She went on to explain that her committee had also suggested, in its report, that the Board of Film Classification's remit should be extended to other audiovisual media and that its classification decisions should approach the European mean.

Claude Miller spoke to say that the controversy surrounding Blandine Kriegel's report was a reflection of a great French anomaly : the unnatural pairing of cinema and television. As far as he was concerned, it was wise to maintain the existence of supervising and youth protection boards specific to cinema, in the Board of Film Classification, and to television, in the Office of Broadcasting Standards. He was wary of any amalgamation. He reminded the audience that in France, cinema is economically dependent on television and should not be made even more so. If this happened, then "different" or subversive films, which ensure the rich ecology of French cinema would be threatened, as would French cultural exceptionalism as a whole.

Jean-Michel Frodon, a "Le Monde" newspaper correspondent, asked to speak because he felt that the distinction between films theatrically released and films broadcast on television was an important one. He explained that the Board of Film Classification must not be opened to broadcasters whose economic and political influence would immediately make itself felt, ensuring that films were considered in view of their future broadcast potential. Jean-Michel Frodon also felt that the opposition between the interests of films in a theatrical context and films for broadcast was as tense as the opposition between American and European films. He concluded by saying that he felt Europa Cinemas was a means of ensuring that cinema and television were not amalgamated.

Ruth Hieronymi firmly stated that the European Parliament opposes any harmonization in the area of cultural policy. According to the Treaties, culture and the media remain specifically under the remit of Member States. Two projects had

been launched, within the limits of what was possible at a European level. These were: the television directive and the MEDIA Programme, the latter falling under the heading of promotion, and not regulation. These projects marked the distinction between film and television quite clearly. With regard to protecting youth in the domain of cinema, Ruth Hieronymi was of a view that there was currently no need for the European Parliament to intervene in this area. A problem did however exist with respect to new media and the Internet, whose content was not always suitable for young people. This specific area was therefore under consideration. It was necessary to work with various relevant associations, as well as professionals and Member State authorities. The answer was to share responsibility between Member States and not Europe-wide harmonization.

Béatrice de Mondenard, a journalist with "Le Nouvel Observateur", asked Wim Bekkers how NICAM worked.

Wim Bekkers replied that 600 complaints have been lodged since NICAM was created in February 2001. These relate to cinema, but also to video and to television. Usually, plaintiffs were disagreeing with NICAM decisions. Complaints relating to the mechanics of the system given careful consideration. He felt that the European Parliament supported this initiative - in principle at least, because economically-speaking NICAM is an industry-based initiative.

Marianne Piquet, cinema manager in Chatenay-Malabry and former member of the Board of Film Classification, asked Patrick Olivier to name all his colleagues on the Board in order to prove its pluralistic nature.

Patrick Olivier named the various different sections, beginning with representatives from the Ministries of Justice, Education, Interior, Social Affairs, Youth and Sports. He went to mention experts appointed by these Ministries. Then he listed youth representatives. Finally, he named the large Professional Section, which reflected the full range of audiovisual crafts.

2nd part - Participants :

Olivier Snanoudj, managing director, French National Cinema Federation, France'

Mattias Nohrborg, distributor and cinema owner, Suède

Ahmed Attia, producer, Tunisia

Andrea Occhipinti, distributor and cinema owner, Italy

Christophe Rossignon, producer, France

Raja Amari, director, Tunisia

Danis Tanovic, film-maker (No Man's Land), Bosnia-Herzégovine

Pascal Rogard presented the second part of the discussion, relating to potential consequences of film classification and the role of industry professionals' in protecting children and teenagers. He went on to introduce the panel and asked Olivier Snanoudj to begin.

Olivier Snanoudj outlined theatre owners' experience of classification. In France, it is the owner (or manager) who is bound to apply the law and ensure that audiences obey classification rules. Owners and managers are responsible before the law for the protection of minors. Olivier Snanoudj emphasized the fact that cinemas are, in today's climate, the place in which young audiences are best protected against unsuitable images because access is restricted according to film type. According to him, the Board of Classification tries to act responsibly. The diversity of its composition ensures a rich variety of points of view. It must take into account both the views of audiences reluctant to admit that access to theatres should be restricted at all and the views of family audiences who rely on forewarning to ensure that children do not see films they should not see. Olivier Snanoudj also stated that Europe-wide harmonization is unrealistic because there is considerable social and cultural disparity between the various member-states. A Europe-wide system would not facilitate film distribution in Europe.

Mattias Nohrborg spoke next. He expressed his hostility to any form of censorship. The Swedish system of classification is in fact the oldest in Europe. It was introduced in 1911. It offers several different ratings: universal; for 7 year-olds and

above; 11 year-olds and above; 15 year-olds and above. The main thing is that it is only applicable to theatrical distribution and this gives rise to certain absurdities. For instance, about ten years ago, *Dog Bites Man* was banned in cinemas in Sweden, though it was available through video clubs. Recently, *Irreversible* got into hot water with the Swedish censors. Paradoxically, he said, the system is growing more liberal. Outright bans are now rare. Similarly, it is unusual for cuts to be imposed. On the other hand, Mattias Nohrborg did see certain illogicalities in Board of Classification decisions regarding minimum age requirements. Also, he felt that self-censorship is much too widespread. Wary of public reaction, television companies avoid purchasing controversial films, which makes life difficult for some distributors of European films. Mattias Nohrborg further emphasized the political nature of censorship, expressing the view that as the political Right is growing increasingly influential, so the Swedish classification system is liable to be used by the Right for political purposes.

Ahmed Attia pointed out the paradoxical nature of Tunisian censorship, contrasting the relative liberalism of film censorship with the stricter television regime. In the 1980s, Tunisian film-makers ran into considerable difficulties with the Board of Censors when showing male or female nudity, though European and American films were not concerned. Examples were *Sabots d'Or* and *Halfaouine*. The problem was the absence of legislation. Board decisions rested upon the vaguest of criteria and could be appealed by applying to the Minister of Culture. These days, most films are examined directly by the Minister, in order to avoid the kind of controversy that accompanied the release of *Halfaouine*. Regarding Raja Amari's *Satin Rouge*, which he had recently released, he had been worried that a highly realistic love scene involving a woman and her future son-in-law had made the film vulnerable to being banned. For this reason, he had directly contacted the Minister, who had imposed neither a ban nor cuts. Getting the film broadcast was likely to prove more difficult. On the other hand, it was to be hoped that increasing permissiveness would enable *Satin Rouge* to be broadcast as *L'Homme de Cendre* had been. In general, Tunisian television seemed to be moving towards greater permissiveness, probably because local channels needed to compete with foreign satellite channels for audiences. The only lasting taboo in Tunisia was in the realm of politically-sensitive material, which was still liable to be cut or banned outright. Ahmed Attia quoted the example of a documentary series which he had produced called *Les Cités d'Orient*. One of the films was about Cairo and consequently contained an interview with Nasser. This sequence was cut when the film was broadcast on Tunisian television.

Andrea Occhipinti outlined the nature of the Italian classification system which includes eight different bodies responsible for viewing films, composed of judicial figures, psychiatrists and representatives of family viewing associations. Each of these bodies has its own field of interest. Some deal principally in issues of violence, others with language. There are three grades of classification: "Universal"; 14 and above; 18 and above. Outright bans are possible, but rare. Andrea Occhipinti did quote one example of a film which had been banned, *Toto che visse due volte*. This is not a violent film but it does deal with religion. Certain scenes had resulted in a blasphemy suit. According to Andrea Occhipinti, Italian distributors find the "14 and above" and the "18 and above" categories more problematic. The first means that a film cannot be broadcast on prime-time television. The second means that a film can only be shown on pay-channels. Ideally, a distinction would be made between theatrical and broadcast classification systems. Especially as TV drama currently escapes classification obligations.

Christophe Rossignon outlined the impact of censorship rules on his work as a producer. He quoted Matthieu Kassovitz' *Assassin(s)* as an example. He had known from the start that this film, which denounces violence, would be classified as unsuitable for people under the age of 16. He chose not to inform TF1 of this when they bought the film on the basis of its screenplay. Then, when *Assassin(s)* went before the Board, as expected it was classified as unsuitable for people under the age of 16. TF1 reacted sharply, arguing that this had not been what was expected. Christophe Rossignon agreed to re-negotiate the pre-sale contract at a reduced rate. But, he said, the real problem is a moral one not a financial one. He felt that there should be a different system of classification for theatrical release and for broadcast. Some films classified for "Universal" distribution, such as *Gladiator* or *The Patriot* were shown in the early evening (8.50 pm) as a matter of course, whereas according to him they were not suitable for children's viewing.

Raja Amari pointed out that, in Tunisia, there was a difference between TV censorship, which relates to quite simple matters such as a kiss, and film censorship which basically covers political matters. She felt that *Satin Rouge* would never be shown on Tunisian television, whilst recognizing that she had encountered no censorship when the film was released in Tunisia. The only trouble encountered was during a film festival at Damascus in Syria. The love scene had been "masked". Raja Amari stated that she would not agree to producing a "soft" version of the film. As far as she was concerned, the work's integrity must be respected. She felt that the most common form of censorship was self-censorship, as many

directors felt unable to evoke difficult subject-matter and hence exercised a form of censorship at the writing stage. She felt that this form of self-censorship was, in terms of cinema, the most serious, at least in Tunisia.

Danis Tanovic explained that he had censored himself when making *No Man's Land* as he did not want to show the full horror of war as he had witnessed it. Consequently, he had tried to find other ways of suggesting the horror, other ways of saying what war was like. This had not stopped his film from being banned for people under the age of 15. He felt that the principal reason for the ban was over-coarse language. His own feeling was that, though *No Man's Land* was tough viewing, it remained suitable for 13- and 14 year-olds. As far as he was concerned, audiences should be allowed to see whatever they chose, precisely because entering a cinema is a matter of choice. Which was the main difference between cinema and television. Censorship should be a matter for artists, who ought to be fully aware of the content of their work. He quoted *Saving Private Ryan* as an example. The first twenty minutes were the most realistic war scenes ever produced. He felt that it was important that teenagers used to seeing American action movies in which 350 people are killed in the first 30 seconds should be able to view Steven Spielberg's film. He stated that he could not tolerate that one of his films might be censored. Which is why he had chosen to live in France, where the law protected authors.

Ginette Dislaire, managing an art-house theatre in Le Havre, pointed out that it was not possible to prevent young audiences from having access to certain movies which they could always see by other means, such as the Internet, whatever the censors said. Control was increasingly difficult. As far as she was concerned, the main issue was educating people to know what an image is. Teachers and parents need to help young audiences make up their own minds about what they see. Young audiences could be trusted. They were capable of making choices and reaching their own individual views as to the value of a work.

Pascal Rogard agreed that teaching young people to view images properly was more important than controlling access to them.

Mohamed Chouikh, an Algerian producer and director, expressed a desire to share his feelings about these issues. Regarding film and television censorship, he stressed that censors were conscious of the fact that film-goers paid for their seats, whereas TV viewers received images in their homes. He then raised the matter of the harmonization of classification in Europe. He felt that this was not possible, because it would involve establishing a single European model which could be exported without offence, something incompatible with the fundamental diversity of European culture.

Danis Tanovic intervened again to point out that the single model to which Mohamed Chouikh referred existed already. As soon as a film is classified as "18 and above", it could not survive because parents would take their children to see something else. This was a form of censorship which imposed constraints in writing. The danger was that films would be tailor-made for teenagers.

Antoine Virenque, representing the National Federation of French Distributors, wanted to return to the issue of education. He felt that educating grown-ups was as important as educating youngsters. Many adults are unable to view films with any kind of detachment. Discussion sessions held in theatres after a screening were helpful because they encouraged the education of adult audiences.

Nicole Cornut, managing an art-house cinema in St-Etienne, asked about a French law banning children under three from theatres and film theatres. This law is often breached by owners and managers, especially since films are now being made for tiny tots. Nicole Cornut felt the law should be amended, so that very young audiences could discover a dream-world, a world of the imagination, as early as possible.

Olivier Snanoudj replied that this law does not in fact exist. There is no rule against bringing children under three into a theatre.

Michel Humbert, art-house manager in Metz and Nancy, spoke on the question of harmonizing European classification systems, which was a matter of considerable concern. According to him, this would not help young audiences who are left to their own devices, and thus made vulnerable or destabilized.

Pascal Rogard brought the discussion to an end at this point.

Saturday, 23 November 2002

9:30 am-5:00 pm **SESSION II. CHOICE OF 3 WORKSHOPS :**

WORKSHOP 1 : DISTRIBUTION AND EXHIBITION IN EUROPE : THE NEW DEAL

- How do current economic upheavals affect distribution and exhibition in Europe?
- Developing European strategies for film releases.
- Networking of distributors and exhibitors on a national and European level.
- The emergence of DVD: impact on attendance in film theatres.

Discussion chaired by **PATRICK FRATER**, *Editor, Screen International (United Kingdom)*

Panel:

Martin Kochendorfer, *distributor, Concorde Films (Germany)*

Valerio de Paolis, *distributor, Bim Distribuzione (Italy)*

Laura de Casto, *distributor, Metro Tartan Distribution (United Kingdom)*

Eliska Fuchsova and Blanche Neumann, *distributors, Artcam, (Czech Republic)*

Olivier-René Veillon, *MK2 (France)*

Marcin Piasecki, *distributor and exhibitor, Gutek Film Ltd (Poland)*

Jean-Paul Commin, *France-Televisions Distribution, Managing-Director, IVF (France), Chairman.*

Nurit Shani, *exhibitor and distributor, Shani Films (Israel)*

Werner Lanneau, *distributor and exhibitor, ABC Distribution & Cinemien (Belgium)*

Eva Matlok, *exhibitor, AG Kino (Germany), Managing-Director*

Henk Camping, *exhibitor, Utrecht (Holland)*

André Lange, *Observatoire Européen de l'Audiovisuel (France)*

Patrick Frater outlined the topics to be discussed during the workshop. He introduced Werner Lanneau.

Werner Lanneau explained that the number of screens in Benelux countries was insufficient in relation to the number of films on offer. This situation penalized independent distributors, some of whom were destined to fold. Also, he stated that it was now increasingly hard to sell European films to broadcasters, especially pay-channels.

Marcin Piasecki gave an overview of the evolution of the Polish market over the course of the last few years. Before the collapse of communism, leisure industries had been underdeveloped. Going to the cinema had cost almost nothing. Box office entries had therefore run very high, at some 200m entries annually. Now, the Polish economy had been in recession for five years, a fact which had repercussions for the film industry. Between 1997 and 1998, ticket prices had gone up and box office entries had gone down from 24m to 20m. During 1999, the box office had gone up by 35%, due to two national hits, Polish literary classics adapted for the screen. In the absence of strong Polish films the following year, the box office had slumped. In 2001, it had recovered on the back of major national releases. The first multiplexes had appeared in 1998. Today, there were thirty multiplexes and these accounted for some 60% of the national box office.

Patrick Frater asked Marcin Piasecki to specify what films were on offer in Polish multiplexes.

Marcin Piasecki explained that some 200 per year were released in Poland, an average of four per week. Multiplexes had at least 10 screens each, so they found themselves obliged to release almost every film if they were to supply all their screens. Art-house films did well, specially in multiplexes. Thus, *Amélie* had seen by 750,000 people, twice the number that had seen *Spiderman* or *Mission Impossible 2*. *Mulholland Drive* had attracted an audience of 200,000 and *No Man's Land* had ended up being seen by 100,000 people.

Patrick Frater introduced André Lange.

André Lange outlined the Observatoire Européen de l'Audiovisuel's latest findings concerning the market for film and the state of the industry. But first, he specified the three data-bases upon which these findings were based: "Lumière", which provides a country-by-country listing of box office entries for every film distributed in Europe; "Corda", which contained information about nearly 500 different public subsidy programmes for the audiovisual industry; and "Amadeus", which supplied financial information on some 6 million companies, 30,000 of which were active in the audiovisual field. Andre

Lange went on to explain that the financial results of the 50 top firms in the sector were tending to worsen, even though box offices were improving throughout Europe. Profit margins had thus deteriorated from 4% in 1997 to 0% in 2000. Similarly, the return on shareholders' funds had gone from 8% to 0% over the same period. Cinema exhibition was today the worst-hit area: average profit margins had deteriorated from 9% in 1998 to -5% in 2000.

Patrick Frater asked André Lange to expand on the subject of the exhibition sector, whose condition was alarming.

André Lange quoted Germany as an example of oversupply. Cinemaxx, for instance, was proving unable to recover its investment as quickly as it had hoped. He also mentioned the Belgian group, Kinopolis, which was having trouble making its Polish multiplex profitable. He also referred to Odeon, the British circuit, which had lost money in 2000.

Patrick Frater asked André Lange whether the Observatoire's insights related only to major circuits or whether they also had access to information about independent exhibitors.

André Lange said it would be possible to obtain more detailed results once databases improved. He stressed that he was in the process of listing Europa Cinemas' screens.

Patrick Frater introduced Valerio de Paolis.

Valerio de Paolis explained that he had worked in distribution for some 20 years. He felt that theatrical distribution was not the main problem because over the release of some 20 to 30 films it was possible to obtain a return on investment through theatrical release alone. As far as he was concerned the main problem lay in relations with public and pay-tv broadcasters. The future of many film productions was dependent on whether or not they were purchased for television. And though public broadcasters in Italy and elsewhere did purchase films in order to fulfil their quota obligations, they broadcast their acquisitions in late evening or night-time slots. In this way, they were able to purchase such films at low cost. Prime-time budgets always went to US productions.

Marcin Piasecki spoke to say it was not difficult selling films to Polish television. Art-house distributors were optimistic and thought that in future broadcasters would buy more films.

Werner Lanneau stressed that the most successful auteur films, such as those of *Almódovar* or *Polanski* were today released in multiplexes and not just on art-house screens.

Patrick Frater wondered if, in the end, independent art-house theatres might not find themselves restricted to less profitable productions.

Michel Humbert, exhibitor in Metz and Nancy, spoke next. He explained that art-house theatres sometimes found themselves having to share films with multiplexes. This resulted in a blurring of their image and thus a loss of identity. They did not have sufficient capital to combat multiplex competition. The solution was to offer an unusual and welcoming environment, with plenty of special events. Which was where public subsidies came in.

Jean-Jacques Schpoliansky, of the Balzac Cinema in Paris, agreed that special events were the key to preserving a theatre over time. It was essential that audiences obtained a clear view of a theatre's particular image. He had taken a decision never to screen any films that were available elsewhere in the Champs-Élysées area, where his theatre is located.

Jacques Le Glou, film sales, felt that the question of circulating work was essential. He noted that competition between distributors was fiercest in larger markets and not in smaller ones. In large markets, competition forced distributors to overbid for films. Then, if they wanted a return on investment, they had to incur heavy promotional costs in order to give the films they had bought every chance of success. Which was why such distributors worked in precarious economic conditions. He also noted that young audience's attitudes to art-house productions was evolving. Today, art-house productions were well-released on DVD, which meant that cinephile audiences were now staying at home.

Someone in the audience spoke to say that the energy displayed by art-house theatres in their programming was nonetheless remarkable, thanks in part to the work done by Europa Cinemas.

Ahmed Boedjhal, a European film festival organizer from Turkey, felt that the main problem with European cinema was quite simply that it wasn't good enough.

Patrick Frater asked André Lange to conclude the first session of the day.

André Lange explained that Observatoire Européen de l'Audiovisuel was designed to analyze the market and not to predict the future. He did however feel that there was a need for more commercial European productions and to support distribution of auteur films. He noted the importance of the work done by Europa Cinemas and the fact that most European films obtained the majority of their income from theatres participating in the network.

Patrick Frater started the next session on DVD and its impact on the box office. He introduced Jean-Paul Commin, Chairman of the International Video Federation and Deputy Managing-Director of France Television Distribution.

Jean-Paul Commin considered that the DVD sector was now economically significant. It offered technical possibilities which facilitated access to films. The wealth of bonuses on offer made DVD viewing a rewarding experience. Jean-Paul Commin was in fact convinced that DVD was complementary to and not subversive of theatrical distribution. He felt that DVDs made a contribution to the diversity of the offer and that the impact of the DVD sector in general would be to enhance people's interest in European film.

Olivier-René Veillon then spoke. He explained that MK2 considered that DVD releases were an essential component in a cultural approach to cinema. Theatrical release remained a crucial part of MK2's activities, but DVD was a precious tool because it could help people discover a film. Specifically, releasing a film on DVD might incite people to go to the cinema to see it. He gave Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* as an example, which MK2 had released on 120 screens in October 2002 prior to its release on DVD four weeks later. Far from undermining the film's career, release on DVD had enabled this film to reach a new audience.

Jean-Paul Commin agreed that there was a cultural dimension to DVDs.

Olivier-René Veillon stressed that the policy adopted in the case of *The Great Dictator* had also been applied to the films of François Truffaut.

Jean-Paul Commin noted that a DVD release required as much promotion as a theatrical release. Support for video and DVD releases could be improved. He also felt that DVD releases might contribute to film production costs.

André Lange considered that there was a real problem of transparency in the video sector. He congratulated the International Video Federation on its work but noted that sales and rental figures on a title by title basis were inadequate. He asked Jean-Paul Commin if he was going to improve access to such information.

Jean-Paul Commin replied that the lack of transparency was a fact but that it was not the result of any deliberate decision. It was a corollary of the nature of the video market in which, unlike in the case of theatrical release, audience sizes proved very hard to determine. He noted that the only country that could provide adequate figures was the United Kingdom, which had audience surveys and polls.

Khaled Alkamici, Egyptian producer and distributor, explained that in some Mediterranean countries, such as Egypt, DVDs were banned because they could not be censored.

Valerio de Paolis explained that it was difficult to establish universal marketing policies that worked for all European countries. For instance, in the case of François Ozon's *8 Women*, the promotional campaign had had to be geared specifically to the Italian market. He had thus altered the title to "8 Women and an Enigma" and added a reference to Agatha Christie in the trailer. He regretted that he had been unable to obtain interviews with any of the actresses, even telephone interviews. He felt that producers and international sales' companies needed more power to coordinate European releases. He raised the need for a centralized organization to coordinate actors' promotional trips throughout Europe. He felt that actors' presence was the best way to attract media interest. He congratulated UGC on its support for the Italian release of *Amélie*.

Henk Camping explained that he had only had to mention François Ozon's name in his monthly bulletin to guarantee the success of *8 Women* in his theatre in Utrecht (Holland). His audience knew the director's work because his previous films had been programmed.

Marcin Piasecki explained that he had had to organize a major promotional campaign to ensure that *8 Women* was successful in Poland because François Ozon's name alone had not been enough to attract audiences. He felt that in the absence of Europe-wide releases, it was important for professionals to communicate each other's experience in releasing a film. In this way, he had been able to coordinate with his Italian colleagues François Ozon's trip from Rome to Warsaw.

Nurit Shani spoke about the Israeli release of Pedro Almodóvar's *Hable con Ella* which had sold 300,000 tickets. In order to achieve this, she had copied the Spanish release which had included a major premiere with an audience of 3,000 and a significant partnership with the Madrid FNAC. She had thus persuaded the Jerusalem Film Festival to show the film to an audience of 10,000 on its opening night. The screening had been preceded by a flamenco show. Consequently, the release of *Hable con Ella* had become a major event, with widespread press coverage.

Ahmed Boedjhal thought that if American studios were able to distribute their worst films in Europe and obtain successes, perhaps they should be the ones to distribute European movies.

Valerio de Paolis felt this was not the best solution. He illustrated this by referring to *Y Tu Mama Tambien*, a Mexican production which Fox had released in Italy unsuccessfully because no major had known how to release this film properly.

A French professional pointed out that it was important to strike a balance between the costs of releasing a film and the potential return. This was often difficult because competition from American productions often led independent distributors to spend a great deal of money in order to raise the profile of European productions.

Rene Reiss, a Swedish theatre manager in Stockholm with thirty years' experience, felt that there was also a lack of coordination between European professionals, not just distributors but also exhibitors. It was up to the latter to know their audiences.

Patrick Frater resumed the workshop with the thought that European distributors and exhibitors must work together for greater efficiency. He then introduced Martin Kochendörfer, a German distributor.

Martin Kochendörfer explained that it would be helpful if professionals learnt to exchange views on films. The films released in France, in Germany or in Italy were the same. He had tried to coordinate distributors, but contact had proved difficult. He suggested that the European Commission help put distributors in touch with each other.

Patrick Frater then asked Laura de Casto to say a few words about Virtual Circuit, a United Kingdom Film Council initiative.

Laura de Casto explained that the Film Council had decided to establish a £15m fund, over three years, to help circulate foreign films in the United Kingdom. According to her, £1m of this would go to distributors and the remainder to exhibitors. This fund was reserved for existing theatres, even though the United Kingdom was famously lacking in art-house screens. She felt there was a need to build new theatres. She quoted the example of UGC which was launching new multiplexes and screening foreign films as it did in France.

Patrick Frater introduced Henk Camping.

Henk Camping presented the Movie Zone project which was designed to show European films on Friday afternoons in at least 30 Dutch theatres. In Utrecht, he welcomed about 50 teenagers to each Movie Zone screening. He also mentioned the Docu Zone scheme. Supported by the Dutch Film Fund, this had allowed the purchase of 10 Barco digital projectors, which had been loaned to 10 theatres in exchange for a promise that they would screen a documentary film twice a week. Finally, he spoke about the European Films Crossing Their Own Borders project which involved showing 7 Dutch films that had no distributor in several European cities. In exchange, 7 French, German or English films were screened in the Netherlands.

Patrick Frater then invited Eva Matlok to present various circuits' work in Germany.

Eva Matlok began by presenting Kino AG, whose brief since its establishment in 1972 had been to defend the interests of art-house theatres. The Association boasts a membership of 200 exhibitors owning or managing 300 screens, most of which were part of the Europa Cinemas' network. In 2000, Kino AG had extended its membership to art-house distributors. So far, 18 distribution companies were taking part. AG Kino had also set up a congress of exhibitors and distributors called Film Messe Leipzig, which had first met in Leipzig in September 2001. On this occasion, distributors had screened their art-house productions. Each screening was followed by a discussion with exhibitors as to potential audiences and marketing strategies. The aim was to set up a true collaborative process between exhibitors and distributors in order to improve the visibility of art-house productions.

Jean-Jacques Schpoliansky spoke to remind the audience that establishing audience networks was also an important factor. He quoted the Club des Amis du Balzac, with its 1200 members, as an example.

Patrick Frater brought the discussion to an end.

WORKSHOP 2 : SETTING UP THE DIGITAL PILOT PROJECTS IN THEATRES

- Preparing your theatre for the transition to digital cinema : technologies and financing.
- Keys to share the investment costs between distributors and exhibitors.
- Training theatre staff and informing the public.
- Digital media for films : cable, satellite, telephone, internet.

Discussion chaired by **PATRICK v. SYCHOWSKI**, *Screen Digest (United Kingdom)*

Panel:

Costas Daskalakis, *European Commission, Media Programme, Deputy Director*

Ken Legargeant, *AND Cinema (France), Project Manager*

Silvio Borri, *Orpheus (Italy), Project Manager*

Ute Schneider, *Road Movies Factory (Germany), Producer*

Mario Haddad, *exhibitor (Lebanon)*

Harri Ahokas, *Finnish Film Foundation (Finland), Head of Distribution*

Kees Ryninks, *DocuZone (Netherlands), Director*

Alain Rémond, *Barco (France), Manager*

Kim Ludolf Koch, *RMC Medien Consult (Germany), Consultant*

Oliver Debande, *European Investment Bank (Luxembourg), Economist*

Jörg Brüggem, *T-Systems (Germany), Digital Cinema Manager*

Antoine Virenque, *International Federation of Distributors (FIAD), General Manager*

Patrick V Sychowski began by listing various instances of theatrical screenings of a digital version of Star Wars Episode II, organized by DocuZone, the Dutch-based group. He used this to illustrate the numerous possibilities offered by the technology. He then introduced the first speaker of the day, Costas Daskalakis.

Costas Daskalakis brought the audience up to date on the European Commission's pilot scheme concerning digital technology. He explained that the goal was to initiate a scheme which would illustrate how the Media Programme might account for developments in the field of digital technology. Contracts with film theatres were established on a one year basis. A further one-year extension was allowed.

Harri Ahokas summarized various digital screening initiatives which had been introduced in Finland over the last few months. He reminded the audience that Star Wars Episode II had been released digitally on one Finnish multiplex screen. George Lucas' film had been remained on this screen for a ten-week period. The projector used was a Barco, supported by an EVS server. The only problem had been regarding sub-titling, which was not technically feasible. The same screen had then been used for a digital screening of two World Cup football matches. Audiences had been invited to vote by mobile phone on which team was likeliest to score the first goal. Voting results had appeared instantaneously on the giant screen.

Harri Ahokas drew participants' attention to the question of picture quality which had been much discussed during the European Digital Cinema Forum.

Olivier Debande spoke next to present the activities of the European Investment Bank (EIB), which he described as the European Union's financial institution. The EIB's traditional business did not include investing in the audiovisual sector, but rather financing energy and telecommunications' infrastructure projects. Then, in 2000, the EIB had committed itself to supporting the audiovisual sector, in the form of production, distribution and possibly exhibition. Three loan funds had been established specifically with this in mind: a BNL loan in Italy which had, amongst other things, permitted refurbishment of some cinemas and the funding of three film productions; a loan fund with the Catalan finance fund, ICF, relating, for the most part, to film and TV serial production in Spain; and a loan fund with the HVB group in Germany, which was designed to support smaller investment projects in the audiovisual sector. A line of credit had also been set up in conjunction with COFICINE and COFILOISIRS in France, with a shared risk provision. Olivier Debande made the point that the EIB had not had occasion to finance any digital cinema development project but he felt that this was obviously something which it might consider under the heading of its audiovisual activities, whether at an industrial level, or in association with distributors and exhibitors.

Mario Haddad asked Oliver Debande if the EIB would extend its field of activity to the Mediterranean area.

Olivier Debande replied that initially the EIB's activities were restricted to the European Union, but that they had now been extended to candidate and Mediterranean countries.

Patrick V Sychowski resumed the session, introducing Kim Ludolf Koch.

Kim Ludolf Koch felt that before exhibitors could invest in a digital projector, they must have an assurance there would be enough films to show in this format. He quoted the example of the Cinedome in Cologne. One of the screens in this multiplex was equipped with a digital projector, and this was used for no more than 20% of performances. He also pointed out the problem of technological evolution. In the field of digital technology, there was a rapid obsolescence, whereas a 35mm projector might last for 20 or 30 years if it was properly maintained. He also felt that multiplexes would face a heavy burden of investment because they could not just offer digital screening in one theatre and keep 35mm for their other screens. Finally, he stated that digital screening was currently suitable for medium-sized 300- or 400-seat theatres, but major hits needed to be shown in larger theatres where it was hard to obtain a picture-quality equivalent to that of 35mm. So it seemed obvious that exhibitors would not invest a penny in digital projection until they were certain of potential returns.

Patrick V Sychowski then introduced Ute Schneider.

Ute Schneider explained that she was employed by Road Movies Factory, a subsidiary of Road Movies Film Produktion founded 25 years ago by Wim Wenders. In 2001, Road Movies Factory had produced three low-budget films using a variety of digital techniques such as mini DV or the new Sony 24 PHD camera. Ute Schneider felt digital technology was wonderful tool with which young film-makers might express their ideas, and to make low-budget films possible. She did however recognize that this technology was more beneficial to producers, who did not need to supply a 35mm print, than to exhibitors who faced the high cost of purchasing projectors.

Patrick V Sychowski underlined the paradox that low-budget films shot digitally faced high transfer costs to 35mm whereas high-budget productions, shot on 35mm, also faced high-transfer costs before they could be screened digitally. He felt that this made no sense.

Ute Schneider felt this was a technical issue. The best digital camera was only two years old and was liable to further improvement. But a digital shoot was cheap and comfortable. For instance, crews could see their rushes without delay, they could see what had been obtained immediately.

Patrick V Sychowski introduced Antoine Virenque.

Antoine Virenque stated that it was important that the profession should establish standards if the term "digital projection" was not to be debased by unsatisfactory technical quality. Audiences should not be cheated. When they attend a performance, they expect high-quality projection, at least as good as 35mm projection. Antoine Virenque also felt that the system required legal guarantees against piracy. He reminded participants that piracy was a real problem in the film industry, especially the American film industry. He noted that the distribution sector's financial health was not at its best and he did not see how distributors could fund the transition from 35mm to digital. According to him, the development of digital projection technology would not change the essence of a distributor's job, which was to convince audiences that a film was worth seeing.

Patrick V Sychowski asked Kim Ludolf Koch to speak about the American studios' commitments in the field and their intentions concerning the European market.

Kim Ludolf Koch replied that seven majors had formed a group to define standards. Few films had been screen digitally because the majors were waiting until the technical discussion phase was complete. Ken Ludolf Koch quoted the example of Buena Vista which was considering paying the cost of adapting screens to digital if this was likely to generate profits. If it did, theatres equipped with digital projectors might release films earlier than 35mm theatres. Kim Ludolf Koch hoped that exhibitors would show solidarity if this happened, in order to prevent an individual player's decision forcing everyone else to follow suit. He felt that for projector manufacturers such as Sony and Barco, who made the bulk of their profits selling

home-cinema equipment, digital screening was like Formula 1 motor-racing. For these companies, digital screening was R&D, an area in which they could perfect innovations for the retail video market.

Ute Schneider disagreed. She felt there was no relationship between digital screening and the home cinema market. The reason audiences attended theatrical performances was to see films on the big screen.

Antoine Virenque tried to synthesize Kim Ludolf Koch and Ute Schneider's positions: picture quality was excellent in the home, but audiences still attended theatrical performances in order to see films collectively. Cinema was a night out. Antoine Virenque was insistent that digital screening must be defined in such a way that picture quality remained very high, otherwise audiences would be disappointed by what they saw.

Stephane Landfried of the French National Film Theatres' Federation spoke to point out that the issue was no longer a technical but a financial one. He felt that it was important to avoid having a two-tier system in which low-budget films would be shown in conditions that did not fully match true digital screening standards.

Ute Schneider replied that it was indeed important to ensure that every type of production could find a place in the digital market, without damaging the interests of exhibitors.

Kirstin Delgad, a Danish distributor, spoke to ask if art-house films would benefit or suffer from the transition to digital technology.

Ute Schneider replied that digital projection by satellite would enable American films to have access to a larger number of screens. Also, art-house theatres might not benefit from digital technology if this was part-funded by American majors, who did not show their pictures in such cinemas.

Patrick V Sychowski began the afternoon session by introducing Kees Ryninks of the Dutch Film Fund.

Kees Ryninks presented the DocuZone initiative which for three years now has enabled documentaries to be projected digitally in ten Dutch theatres. The basis for this initiative was a simple fact: if the 15 documentary films supported by the Dutch Film Fund, only three had been released theatrically. The releases had been ill-funded; the films in question had not acquired sufficient visibility; and so had not been a success. DocuZone had been set up to remedy this failing. The Dutch Film Fund had lent Barco projectors to 10 Dutch theatres, located throughout the Netherlands, in exchange for which the exhibitors concerned had undertaken to screen a number of documentaries. The operation had been a success: DocuZone attracts some 25,000 people a month. It might now be extended to other Dutch theatres. The Dutch Film Fund was also seeking partners in Europe to export this initiative.

Patrick V Sychowski introduced Jörg Brügger.

Jörg Brügger explained that the debate about the cost of digital technology and how to fund it was only just beginning. Moreover, a secure system would have to be established to avoid piracy. He then listed the various supply sources for digital screening: satellite, ATM, DSL and DVD.

Patrick V Sychowski asked Alain Rémond, who represented Barco in France, to speak.

Alain Rémond emphasized that he was speaking as a partner in Europa Cinemas and not as a manufacturer come to promote product. He went on to outline the history of this type of projection, explaining that it had really begun with the release of *Star Wars Episode I* in May 1999. George Lucas' film had been screened numerically in four American theatres. Since that time, there have been a variety of different initiatives throughout the world using different sorts of projectors. Today, there are two systems: E-Cinema and D-Cinema. D-Cinema is currently the only technology recognized by cinema professionals as being as good as 35mm. The number of films released on digital is increasing year-by-year. Every American studio has released at least one film in this format. But only two European films have used the technology: *Les Rivières Pourpres* and *Pinocchio*. Alain Rémond noted that Europe was relatively backward in this field. He also pointed out that digital film technology was now widely used in post-production. Digital grading had become a genuine creative tool. As far as costs were concerned, the price of projectors had halved in two years. In the two coming years, it should decrease further, enabling development strategies to be introduced.

Patrick V Sychowski introduced Ken Lagargeant.

Ken Legargeant explained that he became interested in digital technology some six or seven years previously because he was certain it could be made profitable in the context of a small, independent theatre which did not always have access to the prints it wanted. As early as 1998, he had organized a children's film festival with 11 other European cities during which the films had been transmitted by satellite. He went on to present the various goals of the digital technology pilot scheme: to adapt digital technology to the requirements of European theatrical distribution; adapt practice to the law in order facilitate cross-border circulation of films; adapt the cost of digital technology to make it compatible with the economy of the film industry; establish means to train exhibitors in the technology of digital distribution. Ken Legargeant also named the partners involved in the pilot scheme: ARP (French Society of Authors, Directors and Producers), Barco, the Senior Technical Committee on Image and Sound (CST), Éclair Studios and Europa Cinemas.

Patrick V Sychowski introduced Silvio Borri.

Silvio Borri rapidly presented the Orpheus initiative, which was designed to supply European content suitable for digital projection, as distinct from American product. In this context, Silvio Borri mentioned E-Cinema, in which the initial E stood for European. The French distributor, UGC, the Cinecitta holding company, the United Kingdom-based BBC were already participating in the Orpheus initiative. Two European classics, one of which was Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*, and four operas (Aida, Carmen, Orphee and La Traviata) would constitute an initial offering. This initiative was complementary to other schemes currently being developed in Europe and it would thus help launch digital projection as a concrete possibility.

Patrick V Sychowski introduced Mario Haddad.

Mario Haddad felt that there was no hurry. He felt that digital screening was definitely the future, but that it was necessary to wait and see what the American majors would do with the technology. European cinema would have to follow the American lead because it could not go against what was the principal source of supply for exhibitors worldwide.

Patrick V Sychowski brought the session to an end and thanked those who had taken part.

WORKSHOP 3 : HOW TO TEACH YOUNG AUDIENCE ABOUT THE MOVING IMAGE

- Educating for the moving image : the role of government authorities, exhibitors and broadcasters.
- Teacher training : national models
- Training youth workers and exhibitors.
- Film heritage : the role of cinemas and cinemateques.

Discussion chaired by **EUGENE ADREANSKY**, *Enfants de Cinéma (France)*, Director

Panel:

Ingeborg Havran, *Institut für Kino- und Kilmkultur (Germany)*, Project Manager

Adriana Vita, *Centro Studi Formazione Superiore (Italy)*, Project Manager

Julie Roberts, *Film Education (United Kingdom)*, Education Manager

Nathalie Bourgeois, *Cinematheque Francaise, (France)*, Education Manager

Vincent Adatte, *Lanterne Magique (Switzerland)*, Director

Eric Briat, *Action Culturelle et Territoriale, CNC (France)*, Director

Julia Andrews, *BFI, (United Kingdom)* Education Manager

Odette Dessart, *exhibitor, Ecran Large sur Table Noir (Belgium)*

Ole Björn Christensen, *exhibitor, Filmporten (Denmark)*

Eugene Andreanszky opened the debate by saying that taking children to the cinema was to provide them with a unique experience: it was a means of opening them to the world in general and to art in particular. He introduced Nathalie Bourgeois who was responsible for education at the Cinematheque Francaise.

Nathalie Bourgeois presented the Cinematheque Francaise's Education Service, which worked essentially in the Paris region and was now extending its activities to the rest of the country. It had been a partner in the Cinedays. The Service's goal was to help young and school audiences obtain access to the Cinematheque's collection of 35,000 films, as well as to its "non-film" collections, meaning sets, costumes and screenplays. Screenings were arranged every Wednesday and every Saturday, with qualified presenters. Nathalie Bourgeois went on to say that the Cinematheque's most typical approach was to work with schools to establish workshops relating both to the collections and to film-related themes. These workshops involved showing extracts relating to a specific theme such as fear on film, or crowd representation. She felt collaboration with other institutions and other European archives was most important. She went on to say that a new book list was being launched, aimed at teachers and youth workers, in order to provide material for working with young people. The first two publications were a book about Roberto Rossellini's *India* and one about Jean Vigo's *L'Atalante*. Nathalie Bourgeois reminded the audience that, in addition to the Cinematheque's own programmes – which were on offer to partners outside the Paris area – there was also a whole range of activities in partnership in with the Ministry of Education and local authorities, including art workshops and film courses. Finally, she raised an issue which she felt was crucial: since 1995, a research group had been established to look into how film could be taught. This was a nationwide initiative bringing together film archives and cinemas involved in youth awareness schemes. The main thing was that it offered primary and secondary schools a yearly theme. It established working relationships between various cultural partners, film technicians and teachers. In 2002, 28 such workshops had been organized in 9 different regions around France. The theme had been, "How actors fit into a director's work".

Geneviève Troussier, manager of the Café des Images cinema in Normandy, said she was familiar with the Cinematheque's work. She felt it was important to establish exchange programmes between European theatres with a view to improving visual education.

Pierre Duculot of the European Coordination of Film Festivals found the Cinematheque's work most interesting. He did wonder though how Nathalie Bourgeois managed to reach young audiences outside a school context.

Nathalie Bourgeois replied that establishing a regular relationship with young audiences outside a school context was indeed difficult. She said she relied on word of mouth, as the success of screenings for young audiences at the Grands Boulevards screen in Paris had shown.

Ginette Dislaire, theatre manager in Le Havre, suggested that there ought to be an itinerant young persons' programme circulating throughout Europe. The rights involved could be cleared collectively with the owners. Negotiations with distributors could lead to prints being made available. Ginette Dislaire also felt that it might be possible to work on DVD and on paper with young audiences.

Nathalie Bourgeois stated that DVD had come up in a joint working group between the Archives du Film (National Film Archive), the BIFI (National Film Library) and the Cinematheque.

Eugene Andreanszky introduced Odette Dessare, an exhibitor, who was going to present the "Ecran Large sur Tableau Noir" (Wide Screen on a Blackboard) scheme.

Odette Dessart said that it was important to train tomorrow's audiences today. That was the main point of youth programmes. The "Wide Screen on a Blackboard" scheme had been around for twenty years. The idea was to show current – and not heritage – films to young audiences. Screenings were provided with educational materials for teachers' use. In Liege, 36,000 students took part in the scheme. This represented 12% of the box office at four screens, the Churchill and the Park, which had a combined box office of 300,000 entries per annum. The Belgian government subsidized the scheme to the tune of 18%. It has now been extended to 10 cities in French-speaking Belgium. During 2001, some 113,000 Belgian students had participated.

Marianne Piquet, manager of the Rex at Châtenay-Malabry did not believe that children should be seen as tomorrow's audience, but rather as part of today's. She regretted that heritage films were not included in the programme.

Olivier Demay, of Les Enfants du Cinema (Children of Cinema) agreed that heritage films were as important as contemporary productions.

Pierre Duculot emphasized that getting hold of heritage films was a real struggle.

Eugène Andreanszky asked Odette Dessart how films were selected for "Wide Screen on a Blackboard".

Odette Dessarre replied that the Churchill and the Park cinemas employed people specifically on an educational brief: they were the ones who selected the films according to qualitative and thematic criteria. They also produced dossiers for teachers.

Ginette Dislaire, theatre manager in Le Havre, explained that she screened current films for young audiences when she felt the films in question were suitable. She also worked with a school in which 6 to 11 year-olds participated in a joint cinema project. They had established a film festival which was now in its fourth year.

Nicole Cornut, theatre manager in St Etienne, felt there were two pitfalls to be avoided when analysing films for young audiences: the analysis should neither focus too heavily on form, nor on content. There was a happy medium to be found.

Ingeborg Havran introduces the Institut für Kino und Filmkultur in Cologne, which she works for. She explains that the institution's aims include awakening audience interest in cinema. Various projects have already been developed, such as Cinema against violence, Cinema for tolerance... However, the project that Ingeborg Havran wishes to address in more detail is LearnArt Kino, which seeks to educate school pupils in how to look at images. This project, launched in November 2001, gives teachers an opportunity to take their classes to see films in cinemas. It targets all classes, from primary right through to secondary school. Brochures analysing the films are made available to teachers. 72 of these brochures are currently available. The public and education authorities fund the project together with the film industry. Ticket prices have been set at 2.50 € and distributors have agreed to provide films without requiring a minimum guarantee. The scheme encompasses four categories of films: literary adaptations, foreign-language films in the original language, German classics and films linked to important topics such as the family, violence or foreign affairs. In the largest German land to run this scheme (North Rhineland), 127 film theatres welcomed several thousand school pupils together with their teachers.

Eugène Andreanszky introduced Adriana Vita who was going to outline the activities of "Children of the Third Millennium" in Italy.

Adriana Vita explained that the mission of "Children of the Third Millennium" was to heighten schoolchildren's awareness of film. The first step had been to send out a questionnaire for primary schools and film theatres. The questionnaire focused on their experience of visual education programmes and also on the films which 5 to 10 year-old children could or should see. On the basis of replies received, 23 geographical zones had been defined. A number of coordinators – one to four – from each zone was appointed from amongst the teachers and one coordinator per zone from amongst the exhibitors. These coordinators worked together zone by zone to develop the project and circulate information to colleagues. Concurrently, a catalogue of films had been drawn up. The hard part had been to obtain prints, especially as in Italy all prints are dubbed. The coordinators were then asked to participate in a training seminar, where the project had been defined and where the availability of prints had been outlined. Teachers and exhibitors had been able to compare experiences during this encounter. Teaching aids were produced and sent out to all participating schools.

Ginette Dislaire congratulated Adriana Vita on her work in Italy. She stressed that this had been inspired by a French programme entitled "School and Cinema, Children of the Second Century". She added that perhaps Europa Cinemas should devote more time to the theme, Childhood and Cinema. She felt there was a need to develop joint projects at a European level.

Someone asked Adriana Vita to explain the role of exhibitors in her project.

Adriana Vita replied that the project was coordinated by exhibitors. In each town, one exhibitor had been appointed as a coordinator and he or she represented the others.

Eugene Andreanszky introduced Eric Briat.

Eric Briat represented the French National Film Centre (CNC) and the French Ministry of Culture which, in the early 80s, had launched a series of schemes to develop visual education inside and outside schools. He outlined the four principal schemes established to facilitate a meeting between young audiences and cinema, relating equally to repertory films, foreign films, documentaries and shorts. These schemes were "Indispensable Teaching", established in 1986 and operational in 72 French Departments; "Secondary Schools at the Cinema", established in 1989 and operational in 81 French Departments; "Primary Schools at the Cinema", established in 1994 and operational in 71 French Departments and lastly, "Sixth Forms at the Cinema", established in 1995 and operational in 6 French Regions. A total of 815,000 children participated in these various schemes, which corresponded to 2.3m box office entries. In 2002, the Ministry of Culture and National Film Centre invested some 6m Euros in these schemes. They had five points in common: they were developed in partnership with exhibitors; teachers' and education authority officials' participation was on a voluntary basis; there had to be a gradual rise in the level of local authority implication; there must be a gradual process of decentralization reaching down to the local level; there must be a link with broader cultural policy, including a range of non-school-based activities. Eric Briat went on to explain the likely evolution and future guidelines of these four schemes. Firstly, they would be extended in geographical terms. Content and budgets would be revised. In conjunction with the Ministry of Education, an effort would be made to raise the profile. Finally, the teaching aid component would be increased. Eric Briat also stressed the establishment of regional visual education poles bringing together local authorities - particularly at a regional level - exhibitors and the body of schools' coordinators. There were two reasons for these regional poles' existence. Firstly, they would provide an information, documentation and resource centre on available teaching materials. They would also train youth leaders by bringing them into contact with professionals. He felt that it was important for European film professionals to compare notes on the various different national experiments.

Ginette Dislaire proposed that the CNC should organize, in conjunction with Europa Cinemas, a conference of exhibitors in order to try to establish a Europe-wide visual education scheme.

Eric Briat felt that European cooperation would be helpful.

Ian Christie, Vice-Chairmen of Europa Cinemas, spoke to remind the audience that the Europa Cinemas network already provided support for youth awareness schemes. He went on to raise the issue of translating teaching materials from one language to another. He also pointed out one difficulty, which was that not all films were available in all countries at the

same time. Consequently, translations of teaching materials sometimes arrived too late. In addition, he stressed that teaching materials inevitably reflected the specific characteristics of the country producing them and this was not always something easy to translate.

Eric Briat asked if it might not be possible to organize a working-group, sponsored by Europa Cinemas, to look into such questions.

Florence Dupont, programmer of a youth audience film festival to be held in Auvergne in 2003, also representing the European Children's Film League and the International Centre for Children's and Youth Films, felt it important to remind the audience that festivals too played an important part in visual education and produced a large number of educational tools.

Vincent Melilli, Audiovisual Attaché at the French Embassy in London, explained that he had set aside funds in his 2003 budget for the establishment of a commission on French and British experiences of visual education. In time, this could generate concrete proposals.

A German teacher spoke to say that it would be helpful if teaching aids could be made available in the original, as well as in translation, internationally. He explained that it would be helpful for a French or an English teacher in Germany to have access to documents in English or in French to set classes working on films from those countries.

Eugene Andreanszky started the second part of the discussion introducing two British participants, Julia Andrews, Education Manager at the British Film Institute and afterwards Julie Roberts, Education Manager at Film Education.

Julia Andrews presented the British Film Institute (BFI) which was founded in 1933 and includes a range of activities, such as the National Film and Television Archive, the National Film Library, the London Film Festival, a distribution arm and a book- video- and DVD- publishing arm. She stated that education lies at the heart of the BFI's concerns, which had just set up a pilot project called BFI Cine Club. The idea was that students should both view and make films. In order to ensure that students know about the project, it was decided to work in conjunction with schools and to establish links with Local Education Authorities. Screenings illustrated the various stages in film-making. From the start, teachers' commitment had been vital. Teachers had participated in various courses through the year during which they had been provided with teaching materials, information on screenings and how films were prepared. Films made by students were then publicly screened.

Julie Roberts presented Film Education which aims to heighten awareness of film in schools and amongst younger audiences generally. Film Education is a small, non-profit organization set up by the industry in 1985. It is London-based but works throughout the United Kingdom. It employs both teachers and media professionals. She felt that the point was not just to show young audiences that film was an art-form but also to help teachers get this message across. Film Education worked in conjunction with exhibitors and with distributors. For instance, when the most recent James Bond film was released, a DVD was produced containing two half-hour programmes on how James Bond films were made and about the Bond phenomenon in general. Students could re-cut a scene from the film. Film Education had 16,000 contacts amongst Primary Schools and 12,000 amongst Secondary Schools.

Eugene Andreanszky next introduced Olivier Demay who was going to present Enfants de Cinema and its "Schools and Cinemas" scheme.

Olivier Demay explained that "Enfants de Cinema" works in two ways. On the one hand, it develops and supports the "Schools and Cinemas" scheme. On the other hand, it provides a space in which to conceive and realize schemes aimed at young audiences. The thinking is that cinema is an art-form to be discovered, to be enjoyed and shared. "Schools and Cinemas" is aimed at 5- to 11-year-olds. The goal is to introduce to these children to films in a theatrical context, and on the basis of that experience initiate a classroom process aimed at understanding cinema. The association offered a catalogue of demanding art-house productions (one third French, one third American, one third from the rest of the world), covering a range of different genres, periods and styles of yesterday and today. The association conceived and published tailor-made teaching materials which were distributed amongst students and teachers. Olivier Demay explained that within the context of "Schools and Cinemas", the association tries to organize courses for teachers along side participating theatre managers and owners. He pointed out that half the French Europa Cinemas network participated in "Schools and Cinemas". He also mentioned that a commission had been set up including film-makers and researchers specifically on the subject of visual

education. Partnerships had been established with a variety of bodies such as AFCAE (Art-House Cinemas Association), GNCR (National Research Exhibitors Group) and the Agence du Court-Métrage (Short Film Agency). He said that his association was looking to develop contacts elsewhere in Europe, perhaps with a view to establishing a European young audiences' catalogue.

Eugene Andreanszky introduced Ole Björn Christensen, Danish exhibitor and distributor.

Ole Björn Christensen explained a system established by Danish art-house theatres in order to fight multiplex competition since multiplexes were showing more and more auteur films like *All or Nothing* or *Hable con Ella*. The idea was like a club called Filmporten in which members had a right to view ten – mostly European – films per year at half-price. This club was specifically aimed at younger audiences. The club member was entitled to bring his family. The operation was subsidized by the Danish Film Institute.

Eugene Andreanszky introduced Vincent Adatte, who was going to present the Magic Lantern, a Swiss project.

Vincent Adatte explained that the Magic Lantern was a cinema club for – to 11-year-olds. It was founded in Neuchâtel in 1992. Ten years later, it was represented in 62 Swiss towns and has a membership of 25,000. The scheme had had to be adapted to the three official language, German, French and Italian. The Magic Lantern was a private, non-profit organization. Participating children were invited to see nine films per year between September and June. Three different types of film were offered: three films to make children laugh, three to make them dream and three to make them cry or be frightened. The aim of the founders was to privilege an emotional approach. The first film in each group was a heritage film, often a silent picture. The second dated from the 50s to the 70s. The third was of course a more recent production. Each screening followed the same format. First, the child was given a magazine-format presentation of the film he or she was about to see. Then, the screening was introduced by two presenters in a theatrical way. Finally, the film was shown. The concept had been exported to Belgium, to Spain, to Italy and to Germany, especially, where some fifteen towns had taken it on. It had also been adopted outside Europe, in Ethiopia and in the Phillipines. Vincent Adatte went on to answer questions asked about the mechanics of the Magic Lantern. He thus explained that the screenings were non-commercial; they took place outside school hours. It was not always easy to send a complete programme from one country to another. If films were not available, then suitable equivalents must be found to maintain the coherence of the whole.

Eugene Andreanszky brought the discussion to a close.

Sunday, 24 November 2002

9:30-11:00 am Screening of European and Mediterranean film trailers.

11:00am-1:30 pm **SESSION III. EUROPA CINEMAS : ENLARGEMENT, UPCOMING ISSUES, PROSPECTS**

- MEDIA Plus : extension to Eastern and Central European Countries. New guidelines.
- Eurimages and French Ministry of Foreign Affairs : changes in the partnerships with Europa Cinemas.
- Euromed Audiovisual : interim results and prospects.
- European and international upcoming issues.
- Conclusions of the Conference

Participants:

Jacques Delmoly, Head of MEDIA Plus Program, European Commission

Johannes Gehringer, Euromed Audiovisual, Manager

Valérie Panis, Administration of DG EAC, European Commission

Hugues Dewavrin, Project of Reconstruction of Cinema Theatres, Kabul, Afghanistan

Claude-Eric Poiroux, Europa Cinemas, Managing Director

Claude-Eric Poiroux welcomed the participants to this, the last discussion forum of the weekend: Jacques Delmoly, Johannes Gehringer and Valérie Panis. He announced that several people would be speaking from the floor.

Jacques Delmoly was pleased to see such excellent attendance. He felt that this conference was an opportunity for Europa Cinema members to meet as well as a means of keeping up to date with the mechanics of the programme; and with the role of theatre owners and managers within a European and a world cinema context. He summarized MEDIA Plus' record, insisting on its most innovative aspects. He explained that the new two-year contract was a more comfortable device for managing grants to theatres. He announced that the contract for 2003/2004 would be signed within the next few days and that it totalled some 10 million Euros. Jacques Delmoly then raised the matter of the digital technology pilot project with which Europa Cinemas was associated. As far as he was concerned, this was a crucial industrial and political test in order to ascertain the difficulties, the benefits, and the advantages of digital projection; and define those areas in which further improvements would be required before such technology might prove commercially viable. He referred to the enlargement of the MEDIA Programme. In 2002, five new countries had joined MEDIA Plus: Poland, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Estonia and Bulgaria. He explained that certain adjustments would have to be made to take theatres in these countries into account. These theatres already received Eurimage support, in some cases more than they would be eligible for under the MEDIA Programme. This discrepancy seemed paradoxical, indeed unfair. Eurimages and Europa Cinemas would need to put their heads together in order to solve the problem, which was an unacceptable one. Jacques Delmoly then announced deadlines for 2003: the programme would be extended to December 2006, in order to bring it into line with European Union budgetary perspectives. This would give time for a general assessment and permit certain adjustments to be made, as well as allow proposals for a future programme relating to the period after 2006. This future programme would be adopted according to a new procedure, involving qualified majority decision-making and shared powers between the Parliament and the Council. Finally, he pointed out that convergence and potential synergies between MEDIA and Euromed Audiovisual were being discussed, including possible joint management of the two programmes.

Claude-Eric Poiroux thanked Jacques Delmoly for supporting Europa Cinemas and for the information he just given participants. He stressed the different guidelines of MEDIA Plus, which referred to "European non-national" performances and those of Eurimages which simply spoke of European screenings in a broader sense. He also emphasized that the amounts attributed to theatres under the two programmes diverged. For instance, single-screen theatres received less under the MEDIA Programme (15,000 Euros, as opposed to 19,000 Euros under Eurimages). Discussions were being held with Eurimages in order to account for any problems theatres might have. Claude-Eric Poiroux went on to discuss adjustments to MEDIA Plus guidelines. He reminded the audience that Europa Cinemas criteria were increasingly strict, particularly as regarded the percentage of European non-national screenings. Far from hindering the network's expansion, this had in fact accelerated it. More and more theatres were seeking to join and participating theatres' programmes were improving. A proposal had been put forward to the European Commission that the European non-national content should amount to 33%, and not the current 30%. As a counterpart, the entry threshold for two- to five-screen complexes would be held at 22% European non-national content and would drop to 20% for complexes of more than 6 screens. Also, support for youth awareness programmes would be more important as it would be raised from 20 to 33%. Claude-Eric Poiroux also

insisted on the need for the network to be visible to audiences. In this context, he mentioned the new Europa Cinemas trailer which is shown before screenings in network theatres, as well as new logos, cardboard presentation stands and even T-shirts. Finally, he reminded the audience that any suggestions to help improve the network's visibility were always welcome. He then introduced Johannes Gehringer, manager of the Euromed Audiovisual Program.

Johannes Gehringer congratulated the Europa Cinemas' team on its work. He explained that the Euromed Audiovisual programme was designed to promote Mediterranean regional integration. The programme consists of six projects, the total budget for which was 20 million Euros, four million of which related to Europa Cinemas. There was support for film archives, production, co-production, distribution and circulation. Euromed Audiovisual was financing the extension of Europa Cinemas into Mediterranean countries. He was going to let Claude-Eric Poiroux give figures for this activity.

Claude-Eric Poiroux announced that 108 European and Mediterranean film releases had been supported since March 2000, covering some 21 film distribution companies. This support was necessary because theatres required suitable films if they were to apply to join the network. Films supported had total 1.7 million box office entries. About one hundred screens in 35 theatres had joined Europa Cinemas. Support for theatres had enabled some of these to start refurbishment programmes which were sometimes sorely needed. As far as Claude-Eric Poiroux was concerned, a movement had been launched in the market which was a place of inter-cultural exchanges. He was pleased to see that Mediterranean films were now circulating more easily through the Mediterranean area.

Johannes Gehringer felt that the project had attained its goals. A market for European films had been created in Mediterranean countries and film distribution was becoming increasingly professional. A genuine spirit of North-South and South-South cooperation existed and evidence for this was to be seen in the increasing market-share of "Mediterranean non-national" films. Several focal points were emerging, namely Morocco, Lebanon and Israel. Johannes Gehringer mentioned a few initiatives such as Moroccan distributors' and theatre-owners' efforts, supported by the Moroccan Film Centre, to supply to recent Moroccan productions to a cinema in Ramallah, in Palestine and the mini-film market organized during the Third Euromed Audiovisual Film Conference in Cairo, where 12 European sales companies had showed their catalogues to about forty Mediterranean theatre owners. About twelve films had been or would soon be purchased. Johannes Gehringer announced that the next Euromed Audiovisual Conference would be held in Marseilles in September 2003. He stated that the extension of the European Commission's contract with Europa Cinemas would be debated. An assessment of the programme was currently under way. The results should be released towards the end of January 2003. They would help define guidelines for the 2nd Euromed Audiovisual programme which should be launched officially in 2004. The Commission had set aside 15 million Euros for this. Finally, Johannes Gehringer mentioned the possibility of a presentation during the next Cannes Film Festival to advertise the European Union's support for cinema in different regions of the world.

Claude-Eric Poiroux emphasized that European theatres were eligible for support for showing Mediterranean production. In 2001, 91 theatres had received such support.

Ahmed Attia thanked Europa Cinemas, Euromed Audiovisual and the European Commission for their support. He explained that a Maghrebi coordinating body had been set up during this conference. He read a press release announcing the fact: "On the occasion of the Europa Cinemas Annual Conference, held in Paris from 22nd to 24th November 2002, distributors and theatre owners from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia met to establish a coordinating body aimed at attaining better distribution of their films in the region. The stated objectives were: shared acquisitions, notably in Europe; mutual support regarding the circulation of prints and publicity material; and developing a common approach to various outside partners including public institutions. Participants appointed a provisional management committee of seven members, two from Algeria, three from Morocco and two from Tunisia, including the speaker. The management committee appointed the speaker, Ahmed Attia, Chairman and Messrs Hachemi Zertal and Majid Benjelloun Vice-Chairmen. M. Kishin Chandiramani was treasurer and M. Malek Ali Yahia deputy treasurer. Ms Lilia Charfi was Secretary and Mr Mohamed Alaoui El Hassani Deputy Secretary. The Management Committee had felt impelled to appoint a permanent correspondent in Paris, in the person of Jacques Le Glou."

Claude-Eric Poiroux welcomed this joint initiative which would help improve the coordination of actions for a better circulation of films between various Mediterranean countries.

Gilbert Grégoire spoke to say that he would like to join any deliberation on improving circulation of Mediterranean films in Europe. He also asked Jacques Delmoly when the MEDIA Committee could be expected to fix levels of grants under the automatic grants' scheme for the ten countries soon to join MEDIA Plus.

Jacques Delmoly replied that the matter was on the agenda for the MEDIA Committee meetings and should be dealt with during the first or second term 2003.

Claude-Eric Poiroux mentioned that he had received a letter from Mr Ben Barka, the Director of the Moroccan Film Centre renewing his invitation that a future Europa Cinemas conference should be held in Marrakech. He went on to raise the question of Europa Cinemas activities' supported by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Discussions were being held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to develop activities in the former Soviet countries where he stressed that there were an increasing number of participant theatres and distribution companies in countries such as Russia and the Ukraine. He said that it was important that European cinema should be promoted in those countries. He then introduced Christian Boudier, incoming Director of Cinema at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Christian Boudier explained that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been carried out for 8 years with Europa Cinemas a policy of support for theatres of the former Soviet countries, Baltic countries and Balkans. This initiative had been determining at a time when national support policies were disappearing in these countries and the film theatres were there threatened. He also explained that an assessment was under way to audit eight years of this activity in Eastern Europe.

Claude-Eric Poiroux insisted upon the fact that it was important to give professionals in this part of Europe the means to become fully-fledged partners. He reminded the audience that Europa Cinemas had always been open to other countries interested in European cinema. He quoted the example of the three Ex Centris theatres in Montreal which joined the network symbolically last May. They received no financial support, but their inclusion showed the importance of work done by certain North American professionals in favour of European cinema. He added that contacts had been made in Latin America. Possible courses of action in that part of the world were being assessed. He then introduced Hugues Dewavrin who was working on behalf of European cinema in Kabul in Afghanistan.

Hugues Dewavrin thanked Europa Cinemas. He explained the nature of his activity in Kabul. As far as he was concerned, recovering freedom was, in Afghanistan, a cultural issue. Many Afghans were illiterate. Cinema had the power to bring people together, educated them and open their minds. All the cinemas in Kabul had been destroyed by taliban missiles. A body called "Un cinéma pour Kaboul" had been set up. It brought together a number of professional bodies such as ARP and Europa Cinemas. Frederic Namur, an architect specializing in film theatres, was currently in Kabul studying needs and conditions. The theatre proposed for restoration was called the Ariana. It had had 750 seats before it was destroyed. As far as Hugues Dewavrin was concerned, European theatre owners' support need not be financial. It might take the form of practical assistance, such as sending seats.

Claude-Eric Poiroux spoke of the appointment of François Da Silva, formerly responsible for programmes and manager of theatres belonging to the Europa Cinemas network in Marseilles, to the post of managing director of the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes. He explained that a partnership would be set up between the Directors' Fortnight and the Europa Cinemas network.

François Da Silva explained that this partnership was in two fields. The first related to making it easier for Europa Cinemas' members to enter Directors' Fortnight screenings so that they could see films of their choosing. The second related to the creation of a Europa Cinemas' label to be awarded by a jury of theatre owners and managers to a European film in the Directors' Fortnight selection.

Claude-Eric Poiroux emphasized that Europa Cinemas would draw up a list of European Films eligible for this label according to MEDIA Programme criteria. He then introduced Valeria Panis who is at the Commission in charge of issues dealing with the World Trade Organization.

Valerie Panis explain the importance of defending cultural diversity, notably at the WTO (World Trade Organization), if projects such as Europa Cinemas were to develop. She defined "cultural diversity" which is a stated policy of the European Union. To expand on this idea, she used the metaphors of the mirror and the window, cultural diversity having two aspects. The mirror represented access to one's own culture; the window represented access to other cultures. During WTO

negotiations, the European Union intended to defend its room for manoeuvre in the audiovisual field, in order to protect programmes such as the MEDIA Programme and the Television Without Frontiers Directive, and also in order to enable it to introduce similar new initiatives. This posture did not imply a closing of the European market, but a refusal to remove barriers whose removal would be detrimental to European culture. Valerie Panis pointed out that international awareness of the importance of cultural diversity was increasing.

Claude-Eric Poiroux introduced Juliette Francequin of CIS Euro Cine who had worked on modernizing the Europa Cinemas web site.

Juliette Francequin explain that Europa Cinemas' main preoccupation was that the web site should be as useful a tool as possible in terms of information and communication. She went on to present the site's content.

Claude-Eric Poiroux concluded the Seventh Annual Conference, thanking participants and panel members.

END OF THE CONFERENCE