

European workshop organized by La fémis

Poitiers, March 16-18, 2005



INTRODUCTION

Some twenty European filmschools – GEECT members – met in Poitiers last March to discuss the forms of cooperation they wish to develop.

This very rich meeting has been an opportunity to identify a number of possible tracks and has brought to light a strong desire for cooperation. This desire is reinforced by the impressive and great diversity of film schools, which will enhance the benefit of all cooperations.

At the end of the seminar, the participants wished to sum-up their preoccupations in two points to be submitted to the European Commission.

On the one hand, they want to express their enthusiasm for the proposal made by Mrs. Viviane Reding in 2004 that the future MEDIA programme should support cooperation actions between European filmschools; they are glad to note that the Commission has understood that the Socrates/Erasmus programmes could not fully answer their needs.

On the other hand, they have outlined the major cooperation areas for which they wish to seek support from the next MEDIA programme.

1. THE NEED FOR SUPPORT FROM THE MEDIA PROGRAMME

The schools want to emphasize their role in European cinema, in particular in the new member countries, where film schools are sometimes the only representatives of the domestic cinematography.

The discussions have pointed out the extent to which the lack of financial means was restraining the schools' spontaneous desire for exchanges. Mrs. Reding's proposal to open MEDIA to schools seems to be the best possible answer.

In their presentations of different recent cooperation projects, the participants have underlined how rarely European programmes such as Socrates /Erasmus were used.

As a matter of fact, most schools belong to the world of cinema rather than that of universities, which is familiar with Socrates and Erasmus. A certain number of filmschools depend from the Ministry of Culture of their countries and from the Ministry of Education. And nearly all of them have a more professional vocation than an academic one, their diploma leading directly to jobs in the film industry.

A great majority of filmschools are not registered with Erasmus because of the form of their degree course. And particularly, a number of them do not use the ECTS system and will not adopt it before many years at the earliest.

On the other hand, most of the proposed cooperation projects today cannot be supported by the existing programmes, either because of their nature, their duration (generally less than 3 months) or their cost. It has to be reminded here that the professional training of cinema as taught in these schools require much more important financial means than most of the traditional forms of higher education.

2. WHAT THE FUTURE MEDIA PROGRAMME SHOULD SUPPORT

This very rich debate was an opportunity to evoke a number of practical tracks. They could be grouped in five main categories :

— the co-production of student films by multinational crews. Such films would be natural laboratories for a true European cinema.

Practically speaking, it would mean forming, around a project initiated by a school, a working crew composed of students coming from one or several other schools. This formula has already been experimented on a small-scale by two schools and it requires real financial means. Its implementation should rely on systems of forums on the web and workshops organized by particular schools, and regular meetings in European festivals and markets.

— The mobility of groups of stu-

dents from one school to another to attend part of a course. There is a double goal here: to learn ways of creating and making films in other countries, and to discover other training methods. Such mobility could also apply to teachers.

— The design of common curricula between two of several schools: seminars, workshops, travelling courses, summer schools. Some of them could also be open to students outside the E.U., thus forming a true European alternative to the growing offer of US cinema universities to emerging cinematographies.

— The organisation of internships in a European country other than the student's country of origin and the creation of grants for students who wish to attend courses that are not available in their own country.

— Setting up specific actions for recent film graduates (graduated in the last 24 months) through the distribution of their film, festivals, markets. More generally, some specific programmes could be set up for recent graduates in order to support this category of new film professionals in European cinema.

For all these categories of new actions, the future Media programme should offer financial contributions in the form of school subsidies. Schools will use them to organise education, setting-up of translation systems, linguistic levelling of students, creation of dedicated websites, payment of living allowances for students abroad, travelling expenses, organisation of meeting times between students and teachers, etc. These sums will not be used of course to finance the existing structure of schools.

Such financial support should be accessible as soon as two schools are involved.

The rate of subsidies should not be limited to 50% as is the case for other MEDIA programmes dedicated to commercial companies that are required to invest a considerable amount of money. In fact, it should be underlined that contrary to the MEDIA support to distribution, professional training or other sectors, initial training projects do not generate any income that could be added to the subsidies received.

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