

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

"Complementarity between broadcasting and online media services to promote cultural diversity"

Mr. Jean Réveillon, EBU Director General,
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm very glad to be here today at this conference organised by the Slovenian Presidency of the EU and give you the viewpoint of Europe's public broadcasters, which I represent as the Director General of the European Broadcasting Union, on this important topic of discussion.

I have always held the view that in life – as in politics or the arts - it is variety and colour that adds flavour. The world would be a very dull place indeed if we were all the same.

We all, of course, have an idea of what cultural diversity is, or should be. But what do I mean by the phrase?

I believe it is more than just tolerating other cultures. Cultural diversity should include active acceptance of the way other people live. And, for broadcasters it means, doing your best to reflect that in your output.

The European Broadcasting Union with its 75 (seventy five) active member organisations from 56 (fifty six) countries in Europe, and 45 (forty five) associate members around the world, is a 'living' example of cultural diversity and media pluralism. The history of the EBU, over more than 50 years, reflects this. And it illustrates the creativity and diversity of our members' work.

We actively promote the principle of cultural diversity on a daily basis. Firstly, through our member's programmes, to a weekly audience of 600 (six hundred) million viewers, but also within the EBU itself. It is part of our public service mission to foster cultural diversity in **all** programmes, television, radio, or online. These include domestic programmes which reflect the cultural, social and political realities of each society, and programmes which improve the understanding of other cultures and societies. In addition, we work hard to reflect cultural diversity of our public, not only in the content of our programmes, but also in our on-screen personalities.

What is our challenge today? Broadcasters are experiencing big changes in the media landscape. New technology has given European citizens many ways to access, and consume audiovisual content: digital TV and radio, HDTV programmes, mobile services, broadband and open internet services. Our public service mission is to promote local content on traditional media, radio and television as well as for online services.

Future generations will look at any type of screen (internet and/or TV), searching for quality content, wherever it comes from, as long as it speaks to them. It is of paramount importance that quality content is made available and easily accessible, and that it reflects the local environment as well as the diversity of other parts of the world. It is equally important that this quality content is offered in a consumer-friendly manner, so that it can be enjoyed anytime and anyplace.

The EBU and its Members are committed to continue to offer the best content across all significant platforms in order to meet audience expectations today, and in the future.

Having said that, I must underline that these challenges can be met only if there is an appropriate **copyright framework** in Europe. I know that this topic is currently being discussed in another room right now, but the "complementary roles of broadcasting and online media services" cannot be realised without the necessary copyright rules.

Copyright rules are needed, for example, in order to exploit fully public broadcasters' **archives**. Made up of millions of productions, from the very early beginnings of radio and TV, these archives provide a most comprehensive picture of Europe's cultural

heritage; yet they are doomed to remain on dusty shelves unless European countries resolve the copyright issues involved. Some countries, like Denmark, have already found a solution, but others will need to follow soon. The benefit of resolving copyright issues will be a richer on-line offer of European content, but also a more competitive Europe in the online media sector.

This year- the **European Year of Intercultural Dialogue**- many activities across Europe promote intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and media pluralism. The Slovenian Presidency has paid due attention to the provision of public interest programming, cultural diversity and media pluralism in the digital environment.

For our organisation, every year is a year of intercultural dialogue. For more than ten years, the EBU has promoted intercultural dialogue through the activities of its **Intercultural Diversity Group**. The purpose of this Group is to bring together Heads of Diversity and people in charge of programmes dealing with minorities, from EBU Members, in order to share experience and knowledge.

The latest success of the Intercultural Diversity Group has been the publication of a “**diversity toolkit** for factual programmes in public service television”. The toolkit, based on public service broadcasting values, gathers real news clips from across Europe- including the new Member States- and illustrates the difficulties encountered when reporting on minorities. The toolkit also includes examples of good practice activities, case studies, recommendations on training, recruitment and progress evaluations.

Finally, the Group has also contributed to the organisation of international **conferences** on immigration, integration and diversity. In November 2006 the German channel WDR organised a high-level event in Essen while more recently France Télévisions led the discussions on integration and diversity. Preparations for a third conference in the Netherlands are underway.

Last but not least, cultural diversity and the media’s crucial role for its dissemination, are widely recognised today by the **UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity**.

The Convention defends the principles of cultural diversity and media pluralism, which are also pertinent to the digital world. Public Broadcasters of course strongly support the Convention. The EBU has closely followed its development and now calls upon its Members to push governments to ratify the Convention as soon as possible.

The topic being discussed- cultural diversity- is highly demanding, and the discussion is far from over. We, the public service broadcasters, must try to light the way, without indulgence, and with particular attention to all sectors of society, and promote a society that is more open, and a world that is more tolerant.

I hope that my brief speech and this conference will contribute some momentum to achieve these aims.

Merci!

