



PRE-SCREENING OF 'THE TEAM' EU POLICY FACT SHEET

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EU POLICY AND 'THE TEAM'

The launch of *The Team* is not only a ground breaking moment for European public service media. It also comes against the backdrop of a number of important policy developments at EU level which will shape the future of the audiovisual sector in Europe.

The new European Commission is expected to unveil an ambitious strategy this May to achieve the Digital Single Market in the EU. Commission Vice-President Andrus Ansip and Digital Economy Commissioner Gunther Oettinger have been asked to steer through an array of policy initiatives to boost the way digital content, notably films and TV series, are created and distributed in Europe.

Re-investing around EUR15 billion in European productions every year, the EU TV industry is constantly seeking to develop innovative content, as well as new experiences like Ultra HD TV. In recent years, TV series like 'Borgen', 'Real Humans' and 'Sherlock' have had a global resonance. Made by public service media organisations in collaboration with local producers and actors, these series' success has shown that today's gold on the global audiovisual market can also be made in Europe.

'The Team' represents a new step when it comes to making a genuine "European TV series". Co-produced by 11 media organisations from different EU Member States and co-funded by the EU's Creative Europe MEDIA programme, this gritty crime series is shot on locations across the continent, involves a multinational and multilingual cast and award-winning European screenwriters. It will be aired on channels across Europe from February.

Today's pre-screening of the new series takes place in the capital of the EU, which is no coincidence. Everyone wants to see digital single market policies spur on the success of more major European TV series like 'The Team'. So how could the measures planned under the digital single market help?

The EU copyright review

A modernization of EU copyright and licensing rules has been on the EU's 'to-do' for quite some time. The European Commission has hinted that a proposal can be expected around summer 2015.

Issues at the core of audiovisual business models will be up for discussion. Considering that on average a European public service broadcaster negotiates roughly 70,000 contracts per year with rightholders, streamlining the licensing process with technologically-neutral and future-proof licensing rules is crucial and offers a way forward to facilitate the cross-border availability of TV programmes and related online content .

The AVMS refit exercise

With audiovisual services now available on many different devices, via many different means and platforms, "convergence" has raised a number of questions about the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMS), the backbone of EU legislation for the audiovisual single market.

The AVMS Directive has established crucial principles which support media pluralism and a healthy European audiovisual landscape, enabling TV viewers to watch channels from other EU countries thanks to the "country-of-origin" principle. The regulatory assessment of the AVMS to be undertaken this year should in particular seek to see how EU rules can enable European audiovisual players to better compete in the single market and beyond against fast-growing global competitors.

Communication on European Film in the digital era

The European Commission's policy communication of May 2014 identifies several key areas of action, ranging from more financial support for distribution and marketing, more systematic subtitling to overcome linguistic differences, to the digitisation of audiovisual material to preserve and bring back to light valuable heritage. The European Parliament is in turn preparing its report expected this April.

Public Service Media organisations are following this initiative with great interest as key investors in European film and original series like 'The Team'. They notably contributed to the production of 63% of the European movies composing the official selection of the 2013 Cannes Festival and of 75% of the European movies composing the Venezia Mostra 2013 selection.

The Creative Europe Programme of the European Commission

The Creative Europe programme MEDIA strand has brought essential financial backing and fostered the distribution of many successful European film productions for the best part of two decades. As part of the updated programme adopted in 2014, new calls for proposals exploring innovative initiatives will be published in the months to come with renewed focus on digital exploitation, reaching out to new audiences and a better circulation of works via subtitling and dubbing.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

The European audiovisual sector quasi-unanimously requested to be excluded from EU-US free trade negotiations last year, underlining that crucial acquis and support mechanisms, which are vital for the sector in Europe, would be seriously at risk if they were put for discussion.

The plea was heard by the EU Institutions, which accepted not to cover audiovisual services during the ongoing trade negotiations. With the European Commission entering an 8th round of negotiations this February, the audiovisual sector will be following the negotiations as closely as possible to ensure that European business models and regulatory mechanisms can be preserved and further developed without undue external pressure.

Adopting the Single Telecoms Market

The Single Telecoms Market proposal for a Regulation is currently under discussion in the Council of Ministers. Addressing several different aspects of telecoms rules, the Regulation could in particular lead to the implementation of genuine net neutrality principles in the EU.

For European cultural and creative industries, a strong net neutrality framework would offer long-term safeguards to pursue investment and innovation in new original content.

Radio Spectrum Policy Programme

TV remains the most popular outlet for films, sports and series in Europe, and Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) the most widespread way of making TV reach European households, used by 250 million Europeans. In turn, DTT heavily relies on the availability of radio airwaves. The sum of this is that radio spectrum is a crucial building block of the European audiovisual model.

Following up on a high-level group chaired by former WTO Director Pascal Lamy, the European Commission and the EU Member States will make crucial choices this year on how spectrum is allocated for DTT ahead of a global World Radiocommunication Conference summit this November. DTT will in particular need appropriate spectrum to widely distribute Ultra HD content.