

## Swiss film industry joins EU MEDIA programme

***From tomorrow onwards, Swiss film professionals will be allowed to participate in the MEDIA programme of the European Union. Swiss producers, distributors, sales agents, film training centres and festivals will apply to MEDIA funding under the same conditions as the other 29 participating countries. The MEDIA programme aims at strengthening the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry through support to development, distribution, promotion and training. The current MEDIA programme runs until the end of this year and has a budget of 513 million euro. Switzerland will pay an annual contribution to the MEDIA programme. The European Commission had proposed to increase the budget substantially by granting € 1.055 billion to MEDIA between 2007 and 2013. The European Parliament and the Member States are currently negotiating a final budget for MEDIA.***

“By joining the MEDIA programme, Switzerland clearly indicates that it shares and commits itself to promote the circulation of audiovisual works within Europe and to support a proactive policy in favour of cultural diversity”, said Viviane Reding, the European Commissioner for the Information Society and Media. “Swiss films, like other European films, still miss huge opportunities because of the fragmented audiovisual market in Europe and of the lack of a more proactive approach on new markets worldwide. The EU trade balance on audiovisual services remains a worrying issue. We need to improve Europe’s strategy on film exports at a time where digital distribution and film online offer new possibilities and to look at new markets such as Brazil, South Africa or China. I am working on this,” she added.

The film industry in Switzerland is climbing one peak after another. After steady improvements over the past decade, the share of Swiss productions in the national market climbed, in the first quarter of 2006, to an unprecedented high of 16 percent – up from 6 percent a year before. Over the past 10 years, Switzerland has conducted a proactive support policy, tripling the level of state subsidies and encouraging investment in production equipment, infrastructure and distribution.

In 2005, the MEDIA programme invested € 100 million in European cinema. Among other actions, MEDIA financed more than 1,500 distribution projects, enabling European films to be seen outside their territory of origin. MEDIA supports today the distribution of 9 out of every 10 feature films in Europe that are distributed outside their home country. Through an increase in investment in distribution supported by the new “MEDIA 2007” programme, the policy target is to raise the market share of non-national European films from 10 to 20% over the next 7 years. MEDIA has a strong knock-on effect in terms of investments in the audiovisual sector since each euro from the Community budget generates € 5.75 in the industry. This “leverage” effect ranges from a factor of x 2.38 in training to x 7.2 in distribution. MEDIA therefore draws in considerable supplementary amounts of private and public investment in a sector that employs today already more than 1 million people in the EU.

**Key figures on the Swiss film industry:**

- Country:	7.2 million inhabitants
- Swiss productions per year:	~ 50 (25 feature films, 25 long documentaries)
- Infrastructure:	220 cinemas with 540 screens
- Ø price for cinema entry:	€9
- Revenue 2005:	€150 million
- Total visitors 2005:	15.5 million
- Market share 2005:	USA 58 %
	Europe 29 %
	Switzerland 6 % (1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2006: 16 %)
	Rest 7 %
- Films > 100,000 visitors:	My name is Eugen (510,000)
	Grounding (350,000)
	Handy Men (170,000 – still in theatres)
	Vitus (110,000 – still in theatres)

**More information:**

Link to the MEDIA website:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/media/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/media/index_en.html)

Link to the MEDIA Desk Swiss website:

<http://www.mediadesk.ch/>