



European Coalitions for Cultural Diversity

M. José Manuel BARROSO
President of the European Commission
Rue de la Loi
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 7 May 2009

Dear Mr President,

The undersigned 14 European professional organisations active in the fields of audiovisual and culture are extremely worried that the European Commission pursues the negotiation of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Korea without taking into account the deep concerns of the European cultural and audiovisual sectors regarding the annexed Protocol on Cultural Cooperation.

These concerns have been expressed to DG Trade and DG Education and Culture on several occasions. The most important one is that both the way this protocol is negotiated and its current content bring culture and audiovisual back into trade negotiations, whereas the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, ratified by the European Community, favours autonomous discussions in these fields.

The European cultural and audiovisual sectors are calling for a disconnection of the discussions on the Protocol from the general negotiations of the FTA. Indeed, it is essential to safeguard the autonomy of the cultural and audiovisual discussions so as to protect them from the pressure of other economic sectors whose interest might be to conclude an agreement rapidly, with no due account of the content of the Protocol.

Should the European Commission disregard the European cultural and audiovisual sectors' legitimate request to disconnect these negotiations, the Protocol should, at least, not contain any measure whose impact has not been assessed, particularly when such measures constitute a preferential treatment to a country with well-developed cultural and audiovisual industries.

Therefore, the undersigned 14 European professional organisations urge the European Commission to limit article 5 of the Protocol on audiovisual co-productions to general provisions encouraging the negotiation of new and the implementation of existing co-production agreements between the Community Member States and Korea. In addition, they wish to insist on the need for a real strategy as regards EU international cultural cooperation, apart from trade negotiations and in the framework of a partnership with Member States and civil society stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,

Europa Distribution

Presidents: Antonio Medici and Régine Vial
adeline.monzier@europa-distribution.org
www.europa-distribution.org

European Animation Workgroup

Contact: Christian Davin
cdavin@cdparticipations.com

European Coalitions for Cultural Diversity

President: Beat Santchi
contact@coalitionfrancaise.org
<http://www.coalitionfrancaise.org/eng/index.php?r=>

European Coordination of Independent Producers - CEPI

President: Klaus Hansen
cepi@europa-alytica.com
www.cepi.tv

European Grouping of Societies of Authors and Composers - GESAC

President: Bernard Miyet
secretariatgeneral@gesac.org
www.gesac.org

European Music Office - EMO

President: Otto Donner
info@emo.org
www.emo.org

European Producers Club - EPC

President: Martin Moszkowicz
alexandra@europeanproducersclub.org
www.europeanproducersclub.org

European Visual Artists - EVA

President: Christiane Ramonbordes

info@evartists.org

www.evartists.org

Federation of European Film Directors - FERA

President: István Szabó

info@ferainfo.org

www.ferainfo.org

Federation of Screenwriters in Europe - FSE

President: Christina Kallas

info@scenaristes.org

www.scenaristes.org

Global Union for Media, Entertainment and Arts - UNI MEI

President: Heinrich Bleicher-Nagelsmann

contact@uniglobalunion.org

www.uniglobalunion.org

Independent Music companies Association - IMPALA

Presidents: Michel Lambot, Patrick Zelnik and Horst Weidenmüller

info@impalamusic.org

www.impalosite.org

International Federation of Actors - FIA

President: Agnete Haaland

office@fia-actors.com

www.fia-actors.com

International Federation of Musicians - FIM

President: John Smith

office@fim-musicians.com

www.fim-musicians.com

Cc : Commissioner Catherine Ashton
Commissioner Jan Figel
Commissioner Viviane Reding