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**MEDIA**

# European Cinema JOURNAL

MEDIA SALLES

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The European Commission has recently presented the proposal for MEDIA PLUS, a follow-up to MEDIA II, to the Parliament and the Member States of the EU. The programme will be worked out during the course of the current year and become operational from 2001 onwards. On 16 May, during the meeting of the Council for Culture, chaired by Portugal, the Member States will have their first opportunity to declare whether they are in favour of the proposal. The rationale behind MEDIA PLUS will not undergo any basic changes, since the three strategic sectors, i.e. Training, Distribution and Development, will continue to form the main axis for priority action by the Programme, although with Promotion seen as a sector in its own right. The support mechanisms have, however, been reviewed, to take into account the new digital systems of distribution. Positive weighting has been introduced in favour of operators in countries or regions with low production capacity or limited linguistic or geographical areas. Consequently, community intervention increases from 50% to 60% for projects from these countries, both in the field of development and as regards the system of automatic support.

As regards the overall budget, it has increased by 30%, rising from 310 million Euros to 400 million Euros. Accordingly, the budget for Training rises to 50 million Euros, and for Development, Distribution and Promotion to 350 million. As to the returns expected from MEDIA II, they should bring the overall budget to 450 million Euros, without taking into account the contribution of countries from the European economic area and candidates for entry who are invited to take part in the programme.

The MEDIA PLUS Programme places particular emphasis on Distribution and Promotion, which are MEDIA's spearhead. Indeed, one of the essential objectives of this programme is to encourage the circulation of European works outside their home territory and to promote cultural diversity. MEDIA's traditional mechanisms, such as automatic and selective support and support for cinemas, remain, since they have produced significant results. Four years ago only 12 out of 100 European films were circulating in a European country outside their country of production; last year, instead, this proportion had risen from 12% to 20%, which promises well for the future. The Commission's aim is to raise this figure to 40%.

Moreover, within the context of these mechanisms, particular attention has been dedicated to the new technologies and their pilot projects, which will allow for more flexibility. The Commission thus proposes to launch five types of pilot projects in the fields of the conservation and exploitation of cultural heritage, the digitisation of European audiovisual programme archives, networking by copyright owners, the programming

## Ticket Prices in European Cinemas

During the third edition of "The Big Screen in Lombardy", the meeting that on the 19 October gathered in Milano the cinema professionals of the Region, a research study regarding ticket prices in European cinemas was presented. The research was promoted by AGIS/ANEC Lombardy – the regional office of the Italian Association of Cinema Owners – MEDIA Salles and the trade journal Box Office.

The study compared the prices actually paid by spectators for tickets to see the same film, *Shakespeare in Love*, in 106 cinemas in three different towns – the capital, the largest commercial centre and a medium-sized town with at least 200 000 inhabitants and one multiplex – in each of the five main European states. Following these criteria, the following towns and cities were selected: Paris, Lyons and Rennes in France; Berlin, Frankfurt and Erfurt in Germany; London, Manchester and Leeds in Great Britain; Rome, Milan and Brescia in Italy; Madrid, Barcelona and San Sebastian in Spain.

In particular, the study set out to show, in the first week of the film's release in the cinemas, both the full prices paid on weekdays and holidays and the main different types of promotional pricing offered by cinemas in the major countries of Europe.

The full price of a ticket paid in the cinemas under examination during the first week's screening of *Shakespeare in Love*, was compared, town by town, in nominal

of European audiovisual works on specialised digital channels and the development of new on-line distribution services.

MEDIA PLUS is therefore an ambitious programme, one of whose main objectives is to keep track of permanent developments in the market for audiovisuals. In this context, the Commission wishes to acknowledge the quality of MEDIA Salles' work in the collecting and processing of statistics. The *European Cinema Yearbook*, issued each year, does in fact allow for an increasingly thorough knowledge of the European cinema industry. Over the years it has become an essential tool for professionals in the industry and for institutions.

Jacques Delmoly  
Head of the Support Unit  
for the European Audiovisual Industry

## MEDIA Salles coming events

### 50. Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin, 9-20 February 2000

MEDIA Salles is present on the MEDIA Program stand, site P-Q 18-20, in the "European Film Market" area, Tel. + 49 30 25 94 33 05

### Presentation of the European Cinema Yearbook - 1999 edition and of the Source Document

14 February 2000, at 10 a.m. at the Grand Hyatt Berlin Hotel

in terms, converting the price in local currency into Euros. It was also compared to the price of a Big Mac, both prices being shown in local currency. From the comparison *in nominal terms*, the main findings are that:

- *in the afternoons, up until 7 p.m. on weekdays*, the lowest ticket price is that of Milan (3,6 Euros). This is followed by the ticket prices found in the Spanish towns and in Rome. The most expensive cities appear to be London, Paris, Manchester and Berlin;

- *on weekday evenings*, the lowest ticket price is that of San Sebastian, both in terms of maximum figures (equal to 4,5 Euros) and considering the average prices recorded in the town's cinemas (equal to 4,3 Euros); these are followed by the prices registered in the other Spanish towns, in Erfurt and in Brescia. In Rome the price proves to be around the average for Europe, and only the London prices are significantly different;

- *in the afternoons, up until 7 p.m. on holidays*, prices are generally no different to the evening prices on weekdays, except for Barcelona and Brescia, where the highest afternoon price recorded on holidays proves to be higher than that paid on weekday evenings, and for Leeds and Erfurt, where, instead, it is lower;

- *on holiday evenings*, the highest maximum prices compared to other price slots are to be found, especially in Berlin, although London, Paris, Lyons remain the most expensive cities.

From a comparison of maximum tick-

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## FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING OF EURO KIDS NETWORK MEMBERS

56 exhibitors from 12 different European countries from Finland to Hungary, from Spain to Sweden, met in Como for the annual meeting of Euro Kids Network members. During the meeting some of the more significant experiences of belonging to the circuit were shared; Silvio Luttazi, ("Nuovo Teatro" cinema of Palombara Sabina, Rome, Italy), illustrated the "Schools Festival" initiative, organised in collaboration with Agiscuola and the schools in the District; Jérôme Sage ("Al-

campo Multicines", "Alameda Multicines", "Multicines Los Arcos" of Seville, Spain), presented the "El Aule de Cine" initiative which gives young people the chance of getting to know the history of the cinema, the different phases by which a film is made, the fictional side and the tricks of the cinema; Pentti Kejonen, ("Studio" of Oulu, Finland), emphasised the importance of collaboration with schools and the organisation of film festivals for young people; Andrew McIntyre,

("Metro" of Derby, UK), presented the initiative for young people with hearing disabilities, which envisages two-monthly screenings accompanied by sign language. The Euro Kids Network members also took part in the seminar on the distribution of films for young people in Europe, organised in collaboration with the ECEA (European Children's Film Association) and with the Lombardy Region; at the opening session of Kid Screen at Villa Olmo in Como; at the presentation of the

et prices *with the price of a Big Mac*, Italian towns emerge as fairly competitive on weekday afternoons, whilst in other price slots they prove to be far more expensive than it would seem from an analysis in nominal terms.

In particular, Rome shows the highest ratio between the maximum ticket price and the price of a Big Mac, coming straight after London, both for holiday afternoons and for weekday and holiday evenings, and is immediately followed by Brescia on holidays. Milan proves to be less expensive than the other Italian towns examined, especially on holiday evenings, when the ratio between the price of a ticket and the price of a Big Mac is lower than in London, Rome and Brescia, but also than in Berlin, Paris and Lyons. It is interesting to note that, as well as being generally higher than in other towns, ticket prices in London also show most variation between the minimum and maximum values recorded in the city's cinemas, especially in the afternoons, revealing a very vari-

able offer as far as prices are concerned. Other cities in which there is considerable variation between minimum and maximum prices are Manchester, Paris, Berlin, Leeds and, on holidays, also Lyons, whilst in Italy the variations tend to be negligible. The inflexible prices found in Italy are largely due to a tax on entertainment (up until 1 January 2000), the abolition of which will now allow Italian exhibitors, like others, to vary their prices with a view to marketing. (In fact the ways the tax was applied, by calculating it as a percentage on the price of the ticket, – apart from a few exceptions involving leisure-time associations – meant that the sum was calculated on the basis of the full price even when reductions were being offered. The result was a further drop in the exhibitor's net box office, who was forced to cover the difference between the tax on the full price and the tax on the reduced price. For these "non-authorised reductions", separate lists of accounts had to be kept, as well as a special supply

of tickets).

As regards the main *different types of promotional pricing*, the cinemas under examination vary greatly as regards the reductions offered, both in the same country and in the same town. The main types of reductions are:

- **reductions given on one or more days of the week**, which make for an important variation in ticket prices, especially in Germany, where they are particularly favourable on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. In Spain, too, there are price reductions on more than one day of the week, in particular on Mondays and Wednesdays. In Italy reductions are only offered on one day of the week, generally speaking on Wednesdays. In France many cinemas also offer reductions for morning screenings not linked to school visits;
- **favourable conditions on account of age or social circumstances.** Con-

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### Comparison of Maximum Ticket Prices (in Euros) Recorded in the Towns Examined (index calculated with the lowest value for the towns examined equal to 100)

Town	full weekday prices				full holiday prices			
	afternoons		evenings		afternoons		evenings	
	maximum	index	maximum	index	maximum	index	maximum	index
Madrid	4,81	132,9	4,81	106,7	4,81	106,7	4,81	106,7
Barcelona	4,66	128,7	4,66	103,3	4,96	110,0	4,96	110,0
San Sebastian	4,51	124,6	4,51	<b>100,0</b>	4,51	<b>100,0</b>	4,51	<b>100,0</b>
Paris	7,77	214,6	7,77	172,3	7,77	172,3	7,77	172,3
Lyons	5,79	159,9	7,62	169,0	7,62	169,0	7,77	172,3
Rennes	7,01	193,6	7,01	155,4	7,01	155,4	7,01	155,4
London	12,76	352,5	13,51	299,6	13,51	299,6	13,51	299,6
Manchester	7,36	203,3	7,36	163,2	7,36	163,2	7,36	163,2
Leeds	5,25	145,0	7,13	158,1	6,75	149,7	7,13	158,1
Rome	5,16	142,5	7,23	160,3	7,23	160,3	7,23	160,3
Milan	3,62	<b>100,0</b>	6,71	148,8	6,71	148,8	6,71	148,8
Brescia	6,20	171,3	6,20	137,5	7,23	160,3	7,23	160,3
Berlin	7,16	197,8	7,16	158,8	7,16	158,8	7,67	170,1
Frankfurt	5,62	155,2	6,65	147,5	6,65	147,5	6,65	147,5
Erfurt	5,62	155,2	6,14	136,1	5,62	124,6	6,14	136,1

Data may be reproduced on condition that the source is mentioned.

research study "Young People and the Cinema: Features and Modes of Cinema-going in Europe" (see article on page 3), and ended their meeting with the visit to the MIFED at the Milan Trade Fair.

The 17 October at Villa Olmo also saw the presentation of the "Euro Kids Network Award", which was given to the animated film "Lucky and Zorba", by Enzo D'Alò, produced by the Cecchi Gori Group Tiger Cinematografica and Lanterna Magica, chosen

from amongst the films for children and young people identified by exhibitors as being the most suitable for international circulation.

The award, presented for the first time, aims to draw the attention of the industry and of European institutions to the necessity for increasing and supporting the production and circulation of films destined for younger audiences.



Romano Fattorossi, President of MEDIA Salles, presents the "Euro Kids Network 1999" award, for "Lucky and Zorba", to Domenico Lucchini, President of the ECFA, standing in for Enzo d'Alò.

considering the different age groups, the lowest price that the public could have paid on average on a weekday afternoon, to see Shakespeare in Love, in the capitals of the countries examined, was that recorded in Madrid, in particular up to the age of 26 and from the age of 65, whilst the highest was recorded in London. In Italy, results showed a lack of any reduction for students in all three towns examined, a lack of reductions for the elderly in Brescia and only a slight incidence of reductions for children in Rome, where only Warner Village offers a reduced price for young people under 12. Reductions for children, which are generally applied in Italy for children up to the age of eight, vary quite a lot in the other European towns, according to the age of the young people concerned, even within the same town. In Berlin, for example, some cinemas offer reductions for young people up to the age of 12, others up to the age of 14 and still oth-

ers up to the age of 18;

- **associative initiatives**, such as the "Vieni al Cinema" membership card promoted by AGIS/ANEC in Italy, which allows the holder to enjoy reductions in several cinemas in the same area. In general, it can be said that in those countries where there are more multiplexes and no legal restrictions on the application of widespread marketing policies, the exhibition companies tend to offer fewer price reductions of an associative nature and more promotional initiatives linked to their own cinemas, obviously in the hope of achieving customer loyalty;

- **pre-paid subscriptions** which, as they foresee a price reduction on a block of several tickets that can be used in all cinemas belonging to an exhibiting company, are a way of achieving customer loyalty. Pre-paid subscriptions do not appear to be in general use in the towns examined but are especially evident in

Paris, where the presence of large cinema circuits seems to act in their favour, such as the Gaumont, UGC and MK2 circuits, which control a total of 67,7% of the screens in Paris. Moreover UGC and Gaumont are the leading two companies in the country in terms of number of screens owned (including booking agreements): this figure is of particular interest, in view of the fact that subscriptions can be used for any screen in the circuit.

As regards the average prices envisaged by the various types of reductions recorded, it can be seen that the towns generally maintain the same difference between one another for reduced prices as for full prices. Of the capital cities, Paris offers the widest range of promotional pricing but with prices that remain the highest after London.

Paola Bensi  
Statistics Expert - Research Project Leader

## Young People and European Films



A research study lasting over two and a half years, based on a questionnaire, and involving almost six thousand young people

in twelve European countries: this is the study carried out by MEDIA Salles in the cinemas belonging to Euro Kids Network and presented in Como on 17 October last during the annual meeting of exhibitors belonging to the circuit. The aim was to analyse the features and modes of cinema-going amongst young people within the wider context of leisure-time activities, investigating in particular how interested they are in seeing films closer to European cultural values and therefore more demanding compared to American-style commercial successes.

From the questionnaires, coming mainly from Italy (41%) and France (23%), the first result to emerge is that 69% of those questioned stated that they were interested in seeing more European films.

But what are the characteristics of this majority? If age and gender do not appear to be significant factors, one first distinguishing aspect is the country they are from. In fact Italy is the country where the highest percentage of young people

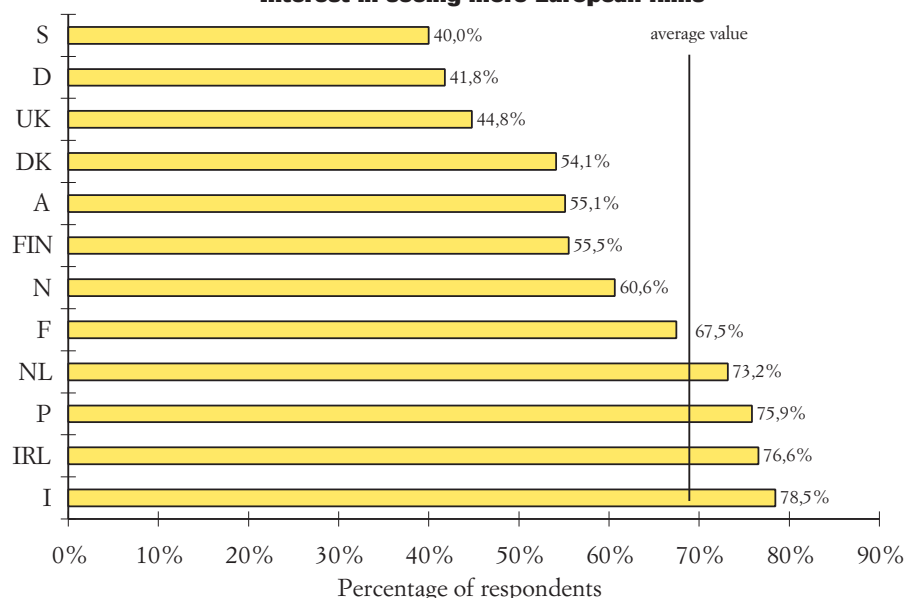
declare that they are interested in the screening of European films (78,5%). It is followed by Ireland (76,6%), Portugal (75,9%), the Netherlands (73,2%) and France (67,5%). The percentage is well below average, on the other hand, in Great

Britain (44,8%), Germany (41,8%) and Sweden (40%).

Moreover, if the nature of leisure-time activities is not a distinguishing factor between those with greater or less interest

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**Interest in seeing more European films**



## "Cinema at the Cinema: Facts and Figures"

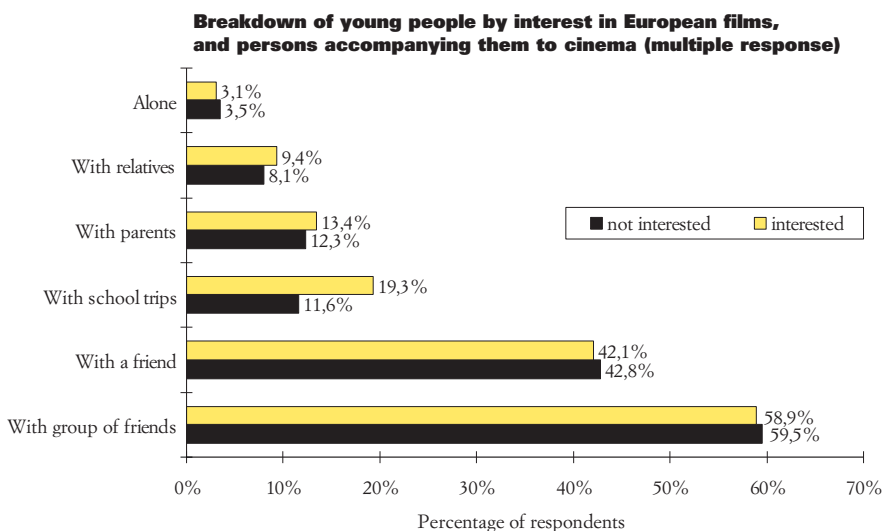
The main results of the research study carried out by MEDIA Salles on cinema exhibition in the United States and on the circulation of European films on the other side of the Atlantic – this is the content of the first of the new "Cinema at the Cinema: Facts and Figures" columns, in the journal *Multisala International*, which will periodically illustrate the results of MEDIA Salles' research into cinema-going in Europe and on the main world markets.

## Subscription to the Newsletter for 2000

If you have received the *European Cinema Journal* by mail, it means that you are on our mailing list and that you will always receive the issues published in the year 2000 free of charge.

If you happened to pick up the *European Cinema Journal* during a cinema event and you wish to be included in our mailing list, please send a message to: newsletter@mediasalles.it, or fax it to: +1 781 9988427

in European films – radio and television being for instance in first place in both cases – the frequency of young people's cinema-going does mark significant differences: amongst these differences is the fact that those less interested in European films also prove to be those who visit their cinemas least frequently, in 44,1% of cases just a few times a year and only in a low percentage of cases (5,9%) one or more times a week. The pattern of cinema-going is very different for those young people interested in seeing more European films: amongst the latter 22,8% do in fact go to the cinema more than once a month and 9,3% one or more times a week. Thus they do go to the cinema more often than their peers, but this is not all: the young people who state that they would be interested in seeing more European films have an approach to the cinema which is in many ways different to that of young people not interested in European products. They more often see films with their schools, choose a film more because of the subject than because of the trailer or other people's recommendations and, although, like the others, they give more importance to recreational aspects, they acknowledge more cultural and educational value in what the cinemas have to offer. A higher percentage of them also appreciate secondary aspects of the service offered by the cinemas, including, in particular, cultural and entertainment activities, the fact that information is mailed to their homes and the availability of specialised bookshops or videothèques



inside the cinema itself. Finally it should be noted that, whilst most of the young people questioned (67,1%) stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the Euro Kids Network initiative, the highest percentage of satisfaction came from those young people most interested in European screenings (73,5% as against 53% of those not interested in European films). This is a piece of information which is important in evaluating the role that Euro Kids Network has assumed in making young people sensitive to the cultural value of the cinema, amongst other things. In fact the higher degree of satisfaction with the Network's initiatives also corresponds to greater frequency in young people's cinema-go-

ing and future cinema-going intentions, to an increase in the number of young people who state that they also go to the cinema with their schools, and to those who acknowledge cultural values in what the cinemas offer and attribute importance to intellectual and entertainment activities organised by the cinemas. Four years from its foundation, the Euro Kids Network thus seems to be well on its way in the task that has distinguished it since its very beginnings: to show young people that the big screen can offer them culture and, at the same time, entertainment. *The results of this research are fully available on the Internet, at the address: <http://www.mediasalles.it/children.htm>.*



Group photo of the Euro Kids Network members on the banks of Lake Como, during the annual meeting (16-17 October 1999).

## Received and Published

### CINEMA ADMISSIONS IN FRANCE IN 1999

155 million admissions, that is an increase of 4% compared to 1997 but a fall of 9% compared to 1998. These are the first figures regarding cinema admissions in France in 1999, published by the FNCF (Fédération Nationale des Cinémas Français), and obtained from estimates calculated on 70% of French cinemas. All in all it is a positive result, bearing in mind the quite exceptional situation which characterised 1998, during which three great French successes (*Le dîner de cons*, *Les Visiteurs II* and *Taxi*) had drawn respectively 9, 8 and 6 million spectators, and the Titanic colossal had drawn a record 20 million. In 1999 only three films achieved more than 5 million admissions: *Astérix et Obélix contre César* with 9 million, *Star Wars - La menace fantôme* with 7 and *Tarzan* with 6 million.

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