



Recommendation 1228 (1994)¹

Cable networks and local television stations: their importance for Greater Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly notes that the development of cable networks, satellite broadcasts and local television stations can foster democracy in the countries of central and eastern Europe.
2. It further observes the development under way in other countries, particularly in the United States, where closer links are being established among telephone and information companies and cable operators.
3. Having examined the situation of cable networks in Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly observes that the level of development of these networks differs from one country to another. Each country has its own problems, particularly on the technical front, but also in respect of legislation and management. Awareness of the importance of the technological, industrial, economic and cultural issues is necessary for the protection of European interests.
4. The Assembly has regard in this context to:
 - 4.1. its [Recommendation 1098 \(1989\)](#) on east-west audiovisual co-operation;
 - 4.2. its [Recommendation 1110 \(1989\)](#) on distance teaching;
 - 4.3. its [Resolution 937 \(1990\)](#) on telecommunications: the implications for Europe;
 - 4.4. its [Resolution 957 \(1991\)](#) on the situation of local radio in Europe;
 - 4.5. its [Recommendation 1147 \(1991\)](#) on parliamentary responsibility for the democratic reform of broadcasting; and also to:
 - 4.6. the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (of 5 May 1989);
 - 4.7. [Resolution 253 \(1993\)](#) on the regional dimension of the European audiovisual area of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE).
5. The Assembly considers that the creation of the European Audiovisual Observatory - now a reality, as proposed by the Committee of Ministers in Resolution (92) 70 - responsible for collecting data on the various forms of communication, is an important step, since availability of legal, economic and programme-related information to professional circles will ensure a more open market.
6. The Assembly, therefore, requests the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to invite the Steering Committee on the Mass Media (CDMM):
 - 6.1. to carry out a survey of cable networks and local television stations in the countries of central and eastern Europe, which findings should assist, in particular, in:
 - a. support for the efforts of cable networks and local television stations in central and eastern Europe through the provision of production and post-production material in exchange for programmes;

1. Assembly debate on 24 January 1994 (1st Sitting) (see [Doc. 6977](#), report of the Committee on Science and Technology, Rapporteur: Mr Bartodziej). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 January 1994 (1st Sitting).



- b. the development of technological exchanges;
- 6.2. to examine ways of encouraging public service broadcasters in central and east European countries to be attentive to the advantages to be gained from cable and other technologies;
- 6.3. to work out proposals as to how the west European countries, in particular public broadcasters in the latter, can be encouraged to help public broadcasters in the central and east European countries to equip themselves with these new technologies;
- 6.4. to set up its own special structure with the following terms of reference:
 - a. helping the countries of central and eastern Europe to frame their national legislation on copyright and neighbouring rights, considering that the introduction in each country of structures for collecting and distributing the royalties accruing from these rights would boost the creation of national or local productions and develop employment in this sector;
 - b. ensuring that national legislation embody protection of certain individual rights and compliance with programming standards, particularly in respect of advertising and identification of sponsors;
- 6.5. to step up its training programmes for professionals in the fields of management, programming, production, technology and ethics of journalism, particularly by means of courses and seminars in western Europe on such subjects as exchanges of technology and programmes and the organisation of co-productions (on the Eurimages model);
7. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
 - 7.1. speed up its work as regards the opening for signature of the draft European convention relating to questions of copyright law and neighbouring rights;
 - 7.2. examine the specific problems of local and regional television services in central and eastern Europe as key elements in the strengthening of democracy. The proposal in CLRAE Resolution 253 for establishing an "observatory or network of regional television services" should be considered in the framework of the European Audiovisual Observatory which has been operating since 1 August 1993.
8. The Assembly also requests the Committee of Ministers to invite the governments of member states:
 - 8.1. to support the audiovisual products of the countries of central and eastern Europe by making a set of concrete proposals concerning the purchase of rights and the copying and subtitling of audiovisual products, and by upholding the principle of lowering the cost of communication and broadcasting by satellite;
 - 8.2. to facilitate the use of cable networks as an ideal vehicle and a natural extension of education and vocational training, whose economic viability could be secured with only a limited number of viewers. A list of training products might be included in an international catalogue;
 - 8.3. to promote the creation of integrated television, communications and information structures in order to ensure that the facilities provided achieve immediate profitability and to avoid the creation of parallel networks;
 - 8.4. to invest in the production of advanced technologies, such as digital systems and optical fibre cables.