

### 3. Analysing public investment in culture: an issue of European importance

by *André Lange*<sup>245</sup>

The study *Gli investimenti pubblici nella filiera culturale* edited by the Istituto di Economia dei Media (Institute of Media Economics) is not only an important contribution to the understanding of cultural policy in Italy but also represents an interesting model for Europe.

Understanding the evolution of cultural policy in Italy (and in particular of film and television policies, which are my field of specialisation as an expert at the European Audiovisual Observatory) has always been a challenge for the non-Italian observer, even when he or she is familiar with the language, the institutions and the protagonists. Political commentaries and the traditional Italian exercise of *dietrologia* are a common practice, but they generally eschew precise references, technical and in-depth presentations and explanations of laws, regulations and public accounting systems. Despite the progress resulting from the online publication of official documents, key reports cannot always be accessed easily. In this context, the present study is invaluable to the foreign observer: it provides a clear and rigorously referenced presentation of a rather complex system.

One of the main qualities of the study is the detailed analysis it provides of regional and local investment in support of culture. In the audiovisual sector, this includes support to regional and local television, but also an increasing amount of regional support to film production. From a European point of view, portraying the regional and local dimension of the audiovisual sector is among the most difficult exercises. I will mention just two examples:

- According to the MAVISE database managed by the European Audiovisual Observatory, no less than 2,900 regional or local television channels operate in the European Union in 2010. However, very little data is available on the public finance sources and revenues of this category of broadcaster.
- In 2004, the European Audiovisual Observatory published a comparative analysis of public funding for film and audiovisual works in Europe. 118 regional and local funding bodies were identified in the report, representing around 248 million euros of support or 19.5% of total public funding in Europe in 2002. Since then, the number of regional and local initiatives has multiplied and a systematic census has become more and more problematic.

In this context, it would certainly be useful to have reports like this one for other European countries, allowing a clear comparative approach to the evolution of public investment in the cultural sector. This would be particularly useful for countries where the regional dimension of public funding is of increasing importance.

---

245 Head of Department for Information on Markets and Financing, European Audiovisual Observatory.