



Association Européenne pour la Protection des Oeuvres et services Cryptés

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Digital TV in Central and Eastern Europe
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Panel: Creating a Secure Pay-TV Market

Closing remarks by Jean Grenier, AEPOC President

- Check against delivery -

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Colleagues from Central and Eastern Europe, I am particularly happy to be here today in Budapest. This city had a special importance during my years at Eutelsat. Coming here on business and within diplomatic missions many years ago, in the seventies and in the eighties, was certainly very different.

Enthusiasm and hope were great, but everything was still to be started from almost zero. Now we hear also from the presentations given this morning and this afternoon how solid and big are today the potentials not only of the Hungarian market but also of all the economies in Central and Eastern Europe: this is a remarkable fact and a monumental satisfaction.

You, we, are in front of an historical occasion not to be lost. But, unfortunately, piracy is putting a serious threat to development and growth

Piracy means less return on investment, therefore lesser new investments are possible. Accordingly piracy means also less competition and fewer opportunities for all the players.

And moreover and even more importantly: less employment, less welfare – and to put it in simple words - less future.

We cannot accept the risk to revert the successful course in progress because of the absence of protection for the legitimate operators who are daily attacked by illegality.

The social and economic achievements of the last two decades are additionally put at stake by global problems such as the skyrocketing rise of energy and food related costs.

Modern and developed economies can face these problems only if all the stakeholders of the society are doing their part in an ordinate and organized manner.

Anarchic economy means nothing and is very dangerous without governance.

Some 170 years ago, Jean-Baptiste Henri Lacordaire said:

"Entre le fort et le faible, c'est la liberté qui opprime et la loi qui affranchit". ("Between the weak and the strong, it is freedom which oppresses and the law which sets free").

Father Lacordaire was not only a relevant religious figure, but also devoted his studies to economy and politics.

His famous epitaph was: "J'espère mourir un religieux pénitent et un libéral impénitent." ("I wish to die a penitent religious and impenitent liberal.").

Liberalism and Freedom are the basic principles of modern society and economy. Freedom is never opposed to the Rule of Law, but it is exactly the law that grants the freedom.

Legislation (and of course the respect of laws) is therefore the pre-condition for the development of any economy-based society.

Deregulation, or worse, No-regulation is never beneficial to the growth and consolidation of any market.

The AEPOC members learned this lesson, many years ago.

AEPOC is the European Association for the Protection of Encrypted Works and Services (Association Européenne pour la Protection des Ouvres et services Cryptés).

It was founded in 1997 by 3 companies: Nethold, Eutelsat and Canal+.

Today its members include 31 of the major players in the European digital television and telecommunications sector.

In particular, AEPOC brings together and represents operators in 4 industry sectors:

- Television platforms and channels
- Providers of Conditional Access and DRM Technologies
- Manufacturers of Hardware
- Suppliers of Transmission Infrastructures

The basic value underlying the Association's activities is the conviction that it is only by promoting information, communication and co-ordination between companies involved as well as between them and the institutional bodies on the national and international levels that it will be possible to properly fight piracy of audiovisual services.

To this end the activities of AEPOC include:

- Constant monitoring of the situation at international level;
- Ongoing analysis of European legislation, of national laws and of the international agreements aimed at safeguarding conditional access services and the audiovisual sector;
- Identification of the weak points in the existing regulations and provide the according lobbying work necessary in order to correct such legislative holes;
- Promotion of new laws in order to cope with the changes in the market and technology;
- Sensitization and education on the problem of piracy both at institutional and at public opinion level.

Therefore the Association's research is aimed at developing adequate and increasingly effective instruments to deal more incisively with piracy.

The involvement of AEPOC's members and other players in the audiovisual industry is essential so that this objective can be properly targeted – and not missed.

It is of the greatest importance that the production and distribution sectors, which have traditionally acted separately and along different lines, should find a common working platform in AEPOC to tackle a phenomenon which is extremely damaging to the whole audiovisual sector.

On 25 June 2004, the AEPOC General Assembly held in Slovak Republic approved the so called "Bratislava Charter".

Such document signed by all the Aepoc members was and still is an important 'Manifesto' showing the common acknowledgement that piracy is a multi-violation crime and needs a multiple and joint effort in order to be successfully fought.

I would like to announce here my proposal to Aepoc members to launch a special action plan focused on Anti-piracy in Central and Eastern European Countries.

I would like to call it 'the Budapest Agenda' based on seven simple and clear points.

Please consider, that clear and simple not necessarily means 'easy to achieve'.

Point 1.

To collect as much signatures as possible to the Bratislava Charter among operators active in CEC Countries.

Point 2.

To set up a networking alliance together with all the existing anti-piracy associations present in the area in order to foster and ease cross border cooperation.

Point 3.

To hold during 2009 the 6th Aepoc International Anti-Piracy Symposium in an CEC Country.

Point 4.

To set in the CEC Countries not only the goal to achieve the ‘acquis communautaire’ in regards to anti piracy laws but also a sufficient level of enforcement and enhancement by the Public Bodies involved such as Police Forces and Public Prosecution Offices.

Point 5.

To achieve in CEC Countries cross industry joint initiatives in order to put in place automatic and industry driven systems of response to piracy threats. Just as it is in progress in France as a further step from the Olivennes Agreement.

Point 6.

To obtain at least from 1 Government among the CEC Countries solid and substantial commitments in order to put in place an advertising campaign in order to create anti-piracy education among Consumers and the Public Opinion.

Point 7.

To schedule at least one Aepoc Board of Directors meeting every year in a CEC Country, hosted by a local AEPOC member (so far it happened only once in Warsaw in 2001 and in Bratislava in 2004).

Of course AEPOC will welcome any other suggestions in order to further increase the scope of this ambitious Budapest Agenda.

Certainly some sceptical persons may say this action plan is not enough radical and might achieve just a little momentum. We don't think so.

We must remember that any anti-piracy action is performing its effects, sooner or later.

Just to mention a relatively funny episode, I would like to remember that Zhou Enlai, deputy of Mao Tse-Tong, asked to give his opinion about the Liberté Egalité Fraternité effects of the French Revolution, said: “It is too early now to give a definitive answer to this question” !

Franky I don't think we need to wait many years in order to understand that we cannot lose any time and that we need to immediately invest our time and efforts in order to fight piracy at our outmost.

Jean Grenier

AEPOC President

Budapest, 24 June 2008