

**ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)
THE REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA
VIENNA**

Freimut Duve

Ceská Televize
Mr. Jiří Janeček
Director General

Fax: +00 420 2 6113 5565

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Dear Mr. Janeček,

within shortly your country will officially enter the European community as a new member and in this capacity will add a new colour to the "concert" of different cultures and ways of life. On the other hand your people will slowly but steadily adapt to becoming strong partners in Europe by contributing specific features and characteristics.

One of the major issues in this moving-into-Europe-phase is developing a new philosophical and societal approach for the broadcaster towards its listeners and viewers. On the one side it will mean to provide them with a new European image, on the other make every possible effort to help preserve one's own culture.

It is no question that this is going to be a longer process where one will have to custom-tailor for the different target-groups. One of the most fragile such groups are children. Children who need to grow up in a healthy media environment. Children, who will be the adults of tomorrow and deserve to be taken serious by the programme responsables.

Children's programming in the new European countries has lost considerable standing during the years following the political turmoil. In some cases this has led to dramatic cuts in budgets as well as air-time. In one specific case a children's departement was shut down for good. A consequence of this development is that those who have been the leading producers of children's programming for a very long time, neither can partner coproductions nor programme exchanges. All they are left with is to produce on a very low-budget level or buy in cheap productions from Japan et alia which have nothing to do with your own culture. As a consequence it is almost impossible to play a decent role in such events as the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL, the most prestigious festival and competition for children's programmes held in Munich, Germany. PRIX JEUNESSE is the very reference point for those aiming at raising quality and helping the young to grow smoothly into the adults' world.

This is not only an embarrassing situation for those who continue to fight for preserving quality in kids TV, it is simply not acceptable for a new member of Europe to ignore that children are the future of each country and will have to be catered for in the most sensitive way.

I thus urge you to focus on children as major consumers of radio and TV programmes and their need for protection and to make children's programming with home-produced productions and decent air-times a priority in your future endeavours to play a leading role in the media environment of Europe.

For your information I include the CHILDREN'S CHARTER as adopted by the First World Summit on Children and Media in Melbourne.

With kind regards,

Freimut Duve