



Leading Director Cédric Klapisch warns of "crisis" for European film

This week saw European "Cultural Diversity Days" at the European Parliament focusing on the European film industry and its contribution to society. The event brought together renowned film directors like Cédric Klapisch ("L'auberge Espagnole") and Radu Mihaileanu ("Go, See, and Become") with MEPs and people from the film business. They had gathered to discuss the role of the industry and the competition it faces from American films. During his visit, Cédric Klapisch spoke to us.

Do you think European cinema is going through a crisis?

Yes it is. A lot of European cinematography has disappeared. Films used to be richer some 20-30-50 years ago. We are doing badly simply because many films don't see the light of day anymore. In my childhood we would go to watch Bergman, Fellini, Swedish or Italian films. Today a 15-year-old can't do that.

The reasons are twofold: American hegemony and the lack of circulation of European films. It is tragic to see that Eastern Europe, for example, has lost its cinematography because film makers have simply fled to the US where the money is.

Why do you support public funding rather than the rule of the market?

In fact, I am totally against both extremes: against public funding and against letting the market rule. In France we have a unique system where there are funds to support French cinema and there is a whole series of aid to encourage budding film makers.

For example, part of the profits from a successful film will go to support film-making in general. A cinema which hosts successful films will have to give part of its profit to the film industry too. Hence not all financial aid is public but it grants more freedom to the film industry.

So you think the French system could be a model for Europe?

Indeed. European cinematography is going through a crisis because it does not try to safeguard itself. If we consider recent successful European films like "Amélie", "La vie des Autres" and "Les Choristes" then I think that we must be more confident in European artistic logic and trust - the European way of seeing things. The two faces of cinema - industrial and artistic or niche films can coexist. Some people like Almodóvar manage to combine these two sides.

Almodóvar helps me understand Spain, Fellini - Italy, Kusturica – countries of former Yugoslavia and Forman the Czech Republic: they talk about things that cannot be said in another way.

You have warned that European film will deteriorate over the next three years. Why?

Due to the digital revolution. I am looking at the political side of things because I am concerned for young film makers. Creativity is not being helped in Europe. If one doesn't help people create, creativity will be lost. It is not easy today for a young film maker to launch into the market but I want to do it for them because if no one had helped me I would not be where I am today.