

Presentation

The audiovisual industry in Europe has been protected as part of the so-called "cultural exception" since the laborious Marrakech agreements of 1994 which gave rise to the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) in the heart of the new World Trade Organization (WTO). In the new framework of trade liberalization, the European Union acts internationally as a cultural body to ensure a system of exceptions for cultural and audiovisual services that was also adopted by a large majority of Member States. Today, with the ten-year period scheduled for renegotiating the agreements drawing near, the issue of cultural exception is more significant than ever, not only in Europe but around the world, where it can be considered the great issue of the cultural agenda for the 21st century.

Issue 14 of *Quaderns del CAC* is dedicated to helping situate and assess the terms of the issue both with regard to Europe and in direct relation to general discussions going on around the world. We have brought together a highly qualified group of researchers and experts in the field to address the topic. From France, Divina Frau-Meigs outlines and reviews the process of negotiations before and after Marrakech. The next set of works contributes information on the issue and particular views of approaches closely linked to the different realities of various places. These works include Ramon Torrent on the situation in Catalonia, Pierre Sauvé on Canada, Dima Dabbous on Lebanon and the Arab States, Stuart Cunningham and Terry Flew on what is happening in Australia, Laura Márquez on Mexico and Mira Desai on India. The monograph closes with collaborations from two internationally recognized experts in trade liberalization – Miguel Rodríguez Mendoza, former deputy director-general at the WTO, and Pascal Lamy, Europe's Trade Commissioner.

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