

**ASTRAL MEDIA**  
**CULTURAL DIVERSITY**  
**ACTION PLAN**

**SUBMITTED**  
**TO**

**THE CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION**  
**AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS**  
**COMMISSION**

**JULY 2002**

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# **ASTRAL MEDIA'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

## **1. REVIEW OF THE CRTC'S EXPECTATIONS**

When it adopted a new policy framework for Canadian television in June 1999, the Commission said it was "*confident that the system, as a whole, can better reflect the presence of minority groups in Canadian society, and in doing so, portray them accurately and fairly.*" It noted that, at the hearing, "*a strong consensus emerged on the responsibility of mainstream, conventional television broadcasters to reflect Canada's cultural diversity*" and indicated that it would expect "*all conventional television licensees (at licensing or licence renewal) to make specific commitments to initiatives designed to ensure that they contribute to a system that more accurately reflects the presence of cultural and racial minorities and Aboriginal peoples in the communities they serve. Licensees are expected to ensure that the on-screen portrayal of all minority groups is accurate, fair and non-stereotypical.*" (Public Notice CRTC 1999-97, paragraphs 114-123)

When it renewed the licences of the major national conventional television networks (CTV, Global and TVA), the Commission, in decisions CRTC 2001-385, 2001-457 and 2001-458, expressed more specific expectations regarding the development and implementation by these licensees of a clear strategy for promoting cultural diversity, as well as mechanisms for measuring the progress made during their new licence term.

In August 2001, the Commission published Public Notice CRTC 2001-88, which proposes the creation of an industry/community task force that would be responsible for examining, and finding ways to improve, the representation of Canada's cultural diversity on television. In particular, in that public notice, the Commission called on the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) to develop a research strategy that would produce qualitative and quantitative baseline data on cultural and racial diversity in Canadian society and the way it is reflected by conventional and specialty broadcasters. It also called upon the task force to identify "best practices" in this area.

At the same time, the Commission indicated in connection with the licence renewal for pay television services owned by Astral Media that it expected Astral "*to contribute to the work of the task force*" mentioned above, and that it further expected the licensee "*to develop and implement a comprehensive corporate plan that explains how Astral intends to improve its representation of Canada's cultural diversity*", a plan that "*should include specific commitments to corporate accountability and to the reflection of diversity in programming, and should make provision for the gathering of feedback on the effectiveness of these commitments. The plan should also set goals for achieving the full, fair and consistent reflection of diversity in Canada.*" (Decisions CRTC 2001-730 and 732, paragraphs 13 and 14.)

In subsequent exchanges with the Commission, Astral Media proposed submitting a comprehensive corporate plan covering the English- and French-language pay and pay-per-view television services managed by its Astral Television Networks division (i.e. Canal Indigo, Family, The Movie Network, Moviepix, Super Écran and Viewer's Choice Canada), and the French-language specialty services managed by Les Chaînes Télé Astral division (i.e. Canal D, Canal Vie, Historia, Séries+, Vrak.tv and Z).<sup>1</sup>

Within this general context, Astral Media assigned the responsibility for developing this action plan to a committee made up of the senior vice-presidents of Programming from each of the operational units, Astral Media's Assistant Vice-President of Human Resources, the vice-presidents of Human Resources from each of the operational units, and the Vice-President of Government and Regulatory Affairs.

## **2. ABOUT ASTRAL MEDIA**

Astral Media adheres fully to the provisions of section 3(1)d)iii) of the *Broadcasting Act*, which stipulates that the Canadian broadcasting system should, "*through its programming and the employment opportunities arising out of its operations, serve the needs and interests, and reflect the circumstances and aspirations, of Canadian men, women and children, including equal rights, the linguistic duality and multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society and the special place of aboriginal peoples within that society.*"

Moreover, Astral Media, a genuinely bilingual and bicultural company having its main offices in Montreal and Toronto, did not wait for the Commission to draw up more specific expectations before meeting these objectives of the *Broadcasting Act*. Currently active in the areas of specialty, pay and pay-per-view television, radio and outdoor advertising, Astral Media has always endeavoured to follow the employment equity policy, integrate Canada's linguistic duality into its operations, and reflect the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society through its programming and its organizational structure.

A committed partner of the Canadian broadcasting system, Astral Media has been an active participant in all industry forums, committees and task forces, including, of course, the task force on cultural diversity, and has habitually shown initiative and determination in responding to the social concerns expressed by the Commission. The programming aired by its French- and English-language specialty, pay and pay-per-view programming services is varied in terms of not only genres, but also target audiences and country of origin. As we will see further on, through concrete examples, this programming is already attempting to meet the diverse needs of Canadian men, women and children and to offer a fair, non-stereotypical reflection of cultural communities and aboriginal peoples.

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<sup>1</sup> MusiquePlus inc., licensee of MusiquePlus and MusiMax, which is owned in equal shares by Astral Media and CHUM Television, will submit its own action plan, which takes into account its particular situation in terms of its programming content, production philosophy and target audiences.

Insofar as all the television programming services of Astral Television Networks and Les Chaînes Télé Astral are national or regional (Eastern Canada) specialty and pay television services, the question relating to the reflection of local communities by local stations that was raised by the Commission in the case of conventional television does not apply. The same is true of the questions relating to the handling of news programs, since none of Astral's programming services offer News/Information/Public Affairs themes. Furthermore, Astral does not produce any programs itself (except for filler programming) for the services managed by its Astral Television Networks and Les Chaînes Télé Astral divisions. It follows a policy of acquiring all its original Canadian programming from a wide range of independent Canadian producers.

These particular aspects of Astral Media's television operations were taken into account during preparation of this action plan.

### **3. CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY**

First, it should be specified that the responsibility for implementing this action plan within the company will be shared by Astral Media's Vice-President of Human Resources (corporate component), who will be supported in this regard by the vice-presidents of Human Resources from each of the operational units, and Astral Broadcasting Group's Vice Presidency of Government and Regulatory Affairs (programming component), who will be supported by the senior vice-presidents of Programming from each of the operational units.

#### **3.1 PRESENT SITUATION**

The President and CEO of Astral Media believes that one of his principal management responsibilities is to ensure that the company can, at all times, count on a competent and diverse work force, one made up of individuals who can grow and develop within the company in an atmosphere of respect for their differences and their integrity.

While *competence* remains the basic criterion for hiring, compensating and promoting workers, *diversity* in terms of their social and cultural background, experience and outlook is seen as one way of ensuring a corporate dynamic that makes it easier for the company to adapt to change and be competitive. Astral Media can be successful only if it creates a work environment that recognizes and rewards competence and, at the same time, encourages all employees to understand, respect and promote racial and cultural diversity.

The commitment of Astral Media's senior management to achieving the diversity objectives is therefore a given. In its public communications relating to offers of employment, Astral Media presents itself as an employer that adheres to the principles of job equity and equal opportunity. All applications are given equal consideration, without any discrimination. Where candidates are equally competent, we give special weight to members of the four designated groups.

The factual data concerning representation of the 4 designated groups on the staff of Astral Television Networks (in Montreal and Toronto, including Family) and Les Chaînes Télé Astral, and on the corporate staff of Astral Media, show that as of April 30, 2002, 277 (67%) of the 412

employees in its divisions were members of the four designated groups, including 55 (20%) in management positions. Female employees numbered 244 (59% of the total work force). There were 30 employees from visible minorities (7%), 3 employees with handicaps and no aboriginal employees.

It should also be noted that a number of Astral Media employees, executives and managers participate in various forums dedicated to the promotion of diversity, such as Innoversity or Canadian Women in Communications, and the company is currently exploring opportunities for collaboration with the Media Awareness Network / Le Réseau Éducation-Médias, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating teachers, parents and young people about the media, and in particular about issues such as the way ethnic and visible minorities and aboriginal people are portrayed in the media.

## **3.2 ACTION PLAN**

### **3.2.1 Expansion of pay equity policy**

Astral Media has developed a pay equity policy guaranteeing equitable remuneration and advancement opportunities for men and women employed by the company. It regularly audits the application of this policy in each of the company's operational units.

Astral Media intends to expand the scope and depth of this policy, to ensure that it considers all factors related to diversity. The objective of this policy will be to ensure that Astral Media employees are *hired*, *promoted* and *remunerated* on the basis of competence and performance, and that no barrier or disadvantage is imposed on the basis of other factors such as sex, age, language or the fact they belong to a racial or cultural minority. It will aim to ensure that no employee is refused advancement opportunities on any ground other than his or her skill or competence, and that no employee from the four designated groups will be subjected to working or pay conditions that are less advantageous than those offered to other employees performing the same duties.

In fiscal year 2002-2003, Astral Media intends to conduct an internal analysis of pay equity, as defined above, within each of its divisions and, in the light of its findings and data from reference studies, take any necessary and appropriate measures to ensure internal and external equitable treatment of all its employees.

### **3.2.2 Education and training**

Astral Media already offers its executives and employees education and training programs that enable them to become more proficient in the other official language, receive further job-related training, develop their management expertise, adapt to new technologies or practices, and so on.

Astral Media intends to include these different education and training programs in a more concerted strategy, in a comprehensive development policy now being developed, one of the objectives of which will be to ensure full awareness of diversity-related issues in the development of the company and its work force.

In a very concrete way, education and training programs will be put in place to, among other things, augment management's expertise in managing diversity when it comes to the hiring, retention and promotion of employees from racial and cultural communities, including aboriginal people. Courses designed to raise awareness of issues related to diversity and respect for differences will also be offered to employees.

With regard to a timeline, we anticipate introducing the training courses for managers in winter 2003, and those for employees in fall 2003. These courses will be part of the comprehensive development policy to be developed between now and then.

### **3.2.3 Decentralization of responsibility for diversity issues**

One of the anticipated results of training managers to deal with diversity issues is a gradual decentralization of the responsibility for such issues, from the Human Resources team to the managers of the different operational units.

In this way, we wish to bring this responsibility closer to the decision-making centres within each operational unit, to ensure that equity and diversity issues are no longer a principal responsibility of the Human Resources section, but are integrated into current operations and taken into account on a daily basis by the managers of each of the operational units, insofar as they are the ones who ultimately play the most decisive role in the recruitment, retention, evaluation, training and promotion of their personnel.

We anticipate that this gradual decentralization of the responsibilities inherent in the implementation of the company's cultural diversity action plan will first become noticeable in fall 2003, after which the pace will pick up. In winter 2004, Astral Media will begin putting in place mechanisms to measure, evaluate and, as necessary, correct its practices in this area.

## **4. REFLECTION OF DIVERSITY IN PROGRAMMING**

### **4.1 PRESENT SITUATION**

Before describing its action plan for the coming years, Astral wishes to present a brief review of its progress to date and the commitments that are already present in the programming policies of its services with regard to the reflection of the racial and cultural diversity of Canadian society, including the presence of aboriginal people.

Given the particular characteristics of each service in terms of source of supply and/or target audience, we have divided our services, for the purposes of this presentation, into three main groups:

- Pay and pay-per-view television services whose programming consists primarily of fiction feature films (The Movie Network, Super Écran, Moviepix, Canal Indigo and Viewer's Choice Canada);

- Pay or specialty television services whose programming is intended mainly for youth/family audiences (Family and Vrak.tv);
- Other specialty services whose programming is intended for adult audiences that vary by areas of interest, sex and age group (Canal D, Canal Vie, Historia, Séries + and Z).

For each of these groups, a summary of the current situation with regard to the reflection of diversity in programming is provided below.

#### **4.1.1 Pay and pay-per-view television (films)**

Our pay and pay-per-view television services offer first-run feature film; there is no in-house production, except for filler programming, and the theatrical feature films they broadcast are not produced specifically for them, in the way that specialty services acquire programs that are produced to meet their specific needs and are exclusive to them.

These channels do, however, accurately portray and reflect the Canadian film production as a whole, in all its linguistic, racial and cultural diversity, since they have made a commitment to broadcast *all* available theatrically released Canadian feature films in the language market they serve and that meet the requirements of the *Pay and Pay-per-View Television and Pay-per-view industry Code of Programming Standards and Practices*.

By airing, year after year, all of Canada's film production, these services are sure to be constantly in step with the level of diversity evident in Canadian films.

And this diversity is real. In recent years, our services whose programming is film-based have acquired the rights to, or have already aired, a number of films that reflect this diversity, including Deepa Mehta's *Bollywood Hollywood*, about an East Indian family now living in Toronto; Denis Chouinard's *Clandestins* and *L'Ange du goudron*, both of which deal with the situation of illegal immigrants or those seeking refugee status; David Sutherland's *Eating the Bones*, for which the entire team, both behind and in front of the camera, was made up of blacks; *Such a Long Journey*, based on the novel by Rohinton Mistry; Clement Virgo's *Love Come Down*; and a number of films produced by aboriginals and/or dealing with aboriginal realities, including *Backroads* by Shirley Cheechoo; *Don't Call Me Tonto* by Annie Frazier Henry, named writer/director/producer of the year at the "Aboriginal Visions and Voices Symposium"; and, of course, *Atanarjuat (L'homme rapide/TheFast Runner)* by Zacharias Kunuk, the first fiction feature film shot in Inuit, which was awarded the Claude Jutra Prize in Canada and the *Caméra d'or* (Golden Camera) in Cannes in 2001.

This diversity is also growing, insofar as the government agencies and programs that provide funding support for Canadian films share the Commission's concerns with regard to a fair and balanced reflection of the diversity in Canadian society. In a document it submitted to the Department of Canadian Heritage in October 2001, Telefilm Canada, which administers the Canada Feature Film Fund, notes its adherence to these objectives and points out that, in 2000-2001, twelve (12) of the thirty-four (34) fiction feature films that it supported financially "*speak*

*to the diverse make-up of Canadian society, be it through the participation of people of varied ethnic descent, the representation of ethnic minority characters or the subject matter".*

It should be noted that Super Écran and The Movie Network, Canal Indigo and Viewer's Choice Canada, directly or through Astral Media/The Harold Greenberg Fund, also help to finance the purchase of options, and the development and production of Canadian feature films. Since its inception ten years ago, the English-language program of this Fund has participated in the development of thousands of scripts by Canadian writers of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and has thus greatly contributed to the level of diversity that is now characteristic of Canadian films. Super Écran and The Movie Network also provide financial support to film schools, including, in particular, the *Institut national de l'image et du son* (INIS) in Montreal and the *Canadian Film Center* in Toronto, both of which help to train new film-makers and have a student body that reflects the changing ethnodemographic make-up of Canada's English- and French-speaking society.

As for Moviepix, which airs classic movies and devotes a large portion of its programming to Canadian content, this channel may be said to benefit indirectly from the initiatives and efforts of those channels in the group that are dedicated to film premieres, since sooner or later most of the Canadian films these channels have supported will be aired by Moviepix.

#### **4.1.2 Services broadcasting youth/family programming**

Family and Vrak.tv are intended for youth or youth/family audiences. Given this target clientele, both were quick to develop programming policies that place a great deal of importance on promoting harmony in intercultural, interracial and intergenerational relations.

Vrak.tv's general programming policy (*Politique globale en matière de programmation*), which was submitted to the Commission at licence renewal time, stipulates that special attention is paid to Canadian programs produced specifically for this service, beginning at the project development stage,

[translation] *"to ensure that boys and girls are not confined to stereotyped roles, that the changing ethnodemographic make-up of Quebec is reflected, that children of all sizes, shapes and races can be represented and, lastly, that a respect for differences and a desire to know and understand others better are included in the program's values."*

The public and educators alike recognize that Vrak.tv's overall programming satisfies these requirements, since it has earned numerous awards over the years for its educational quality and the relevance of the values conveyed. It should be mentioned, as a reminder, that each of our original Canadian series, such as *Radio-Enfer*, *Réal-IT*, *Réal-TV*, *Dans une galaxie près de chez-nous* and soon *Capitaine Crétin*, has at least one main character from a cultural community (Haitian, Hispanic, Asian or other).

Similarly, Family's programming policies and practices (*Politiques et pratiques en matière de programmation*) stipulate as follows:

*"Family wishes to ensure its programming reflects realistically the participation of multicultural minorities in Canadian society. In this regard, we encourage programs to reflect a wide spectrum of Canadian life portraying people of various backgrounds and appearances actively pursuing a wide range of interests."*

Family's policies and practices also stipulate that no program will be approved or broadcast if it contains:

*"any abusive comment or abusive pictorial representation that, when taken in context, tends or is likely to expose, or discriminate against individual or a group or class of individuals to hatred or contempt on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."*

All of Family's Canadian programs and series satisfy these requirements. In particular, we can mention *Are You Afraid of the Dark?*, *The Famous Jett Jackson*, *In a Heartbeat* and *Ripley's Believe It or Not*.

### 4.1.3 Other services

Our other specialty services, all of which are French-language services, are also careful to reflect the ethnocultural changes in Quebec society, through their choice of topics, hosts and announcers, or resource persons.

#### Canal D

Each week since it began broadcasting, Canal D has devoted a two-hour prime-time slot to *Filière D*, which presents a selection of the best NFB and independent Canadian documentaries. A number of these documentaries address topics relating to cultural and aboriginal communities. Some examples are *Les Hassidim du Canada: gardiens de la foi*; *Pakuashipu*, which gives Quebec Crees a voice; *Quatre Femmes d'Égypte* by Tahani Rached; and *Kanata* by the Amerindian film-maker Alanis Obomsawin. Other examples include *Oumar 9-1-1*, *Show Girls*, *Briser la glace*, *Naomi Bronstein: un moment décisif*, *Miroru: Souvenirs d'un exil*, and *Bonjour! Shalom!* Some programs in the *Biographies* series have been devoted to prominent members of visible minorities who have left their mark on the history of Quebec; for example, musician *Charlie Biddle*; or *Max Gros-Louis*, who for many years was the Grand Chief of the Huron-Wendat Nation; or baseball star *Jackie Robinson*. Work is currently under way on some Canadian documentary series featuring Asian protagonists (*Bushido* and *Jongleurs de rêve*) and Inuit protagonists (*L'Arctique*).

#### Historia

At Historia, the service's signature series, *L'Histoire à la une*, has devoted a number of episodes to the story of how various cultural communities became established in Quebec and the active role they played in the development of Quebec society, with particular emphasis on the Irish and the construction of the Lachine Canal; the situation of immigrant domestic servants; the history of *rue Saint-Laurent* and the populating of Montreal; and the history of the Jewish, Scottish and Italian communities. A number of episodes have also been devoted to the aboriginal peoples, dealing with subjects such as Amerindian medicine, the intermarriage of Whites and Amerindians, and Amerindian cosmology. As well, production of a six-episode mini-series on Indian chiefs (*Grands chefs indiens*) is currently in progress. Through its series *Les Tournants de l'histoire*, *Les Artisans de notre histoire*, *Histoires de trains*, and *Les trente journées qui ont marqué le Québec*, programs have been devoted to the creation of the Ministère de l'Immigration du Québec on June 4, 1968 and the resulting openness to receiving new cultural communities; the Oka Crisis; Chinese railway workers; and personalities such as Evelyn O'Bomsawin and Marco Miccone, to mention only Canadians.

Through its international programming, Historia has also contributed to a better understanding of a number of subjects, including the world of Islam, the history of the Balkans, the Middle East situation, the dictatorships that have flourished in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe or Latin America – which have often prompted immigration to Canada – and the history of black leaders (Mandela, Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Malcom X, Lumumba, Mobutu, etc.) or Arab leaders (Bourghuiba, Ben Barka, Atatürk, Hussein, Zaher Shah, etc.)

## Canal Vie

Canal Vie, which reaches a primarily female audience, is careful to ensure that individuals from a number of different ethnic and cultural groups are represented and heard in the various documentary or magazine programs such as *Vivre à deux*, *Maigrir aujourd'hui*, *Quand passe la Cigogne* and *Jeux de société*. The latter series has devoted a complete program to the phenomenon of immigration to Canada and occasionally broadcasts reports on cultural communities. The program *Sortie Gaie* has aired a number of specials on how Quebeckers from different cultural backgrounds deal with homosexuality, in particular where family and community are concerned. In connection with our program *Cuisinez avec Jean Soulard*, we have even included a special show on Amerindian cooking, with guests Michel Noël, the Amerindian author, and Chief T8aminik Rankin.<sup>2</sup>

## Z

Z is intended more for a primarily male young adult audience. This channel explores themes such as science, technology and science fiction. The on-air presence of cultural communities is assured, in particular, through the selection of hosts and announcers for our Canadian series. For example, *La revanche des NerdZ* is hosted by a Quebecker of Armenian origin (Patrick Masbourian), while *Technicité* is hosted by a Quebecker of Spanish origin (Carlos Soldevila). Announcers of Haitian origin regularly contribute to the series *Conquête du futur* (Marie-Anna Murat) and *Technotronique* (Philippe Fehmiu). It should be noted that the same holds true for those involved in our documentary series *Vie sans frontière*, which has benefitted from the expertise and on-screen presence of psychiatrist Michel Maziade, nutrition researcher Ismaïl Fliss, forensic medicine expert Vahé Sarafian, pediatric researcher Dr. Lap-Chee Tsui, endocrinologist Pavel Hamel, and author Elisabeth Vonarburg, among others.

## Séries+

Séries+, for its part, is a special case, since 75% of its programming is non-Canadian and consists of films and drama series, at least 80% of which, by condition of licence, must originate in countries other than the U.S. In particular, this service gives viewers who have recently arrived in Quebec from these countries the opportunity to see dramatic works from France, England, Germany, Australia, South Africa, or New Zealand (including a strong Maori representation) that would otherwise be almost absent from Canadian French-language television. This is another way of depicting cultural diversity and meeting the needs of Canada's various communities.

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Altogether, the Astral Television Networks and Les Chaînes Télé Astral programming services already contribute significantly, through their programming, to the reflection of the diversity in Canadian society, as this is an objective that is already included in the company's values. Astral Media readily admits that there is always room for improvement, and it is with this objective in mind that the action plan described below has been developed.

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<sup>2</sup> 8 is a letter of the Algonquin alphabet.

## 4.2 ACTION PLAN AND FEEDBACK MEASURES

To help systematize its action and the initiatives it has taken to ensure that the programming delivered by its specialty, pay and pay-per-view television services offers a fair, balanced and consistent reflection of the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society, Astral Media intends to adopt and put in place the measures described below.

### 4.2.1 Canadian films

With regard to the airing of Canadian feature films by its pay and pay-per-view television services that offer first window feature films, Astral Media cannot go any further than its present commitments, which already involve broadcasting *all* available new Canadian feature films that are shown in theatres in the language market they serve and that meet the requirements of the *Pay Television and Pay-per-View Industry Code of Programming Standards and Practices*.

However, to help ensure that Canadian films themselves offer the fairest, most accurate and non-stereotypical reflection of the diversity of Canadian society, Astral Media intends to take the following initiatives:

- 1) **organize an annual meeting with the recognized Canadian professional associations of feature film producers, to inform them of Astral Media's objectives where reflection of the diversity of Canadian society is concerned, and to periodically measure the progress made towards the achievement of these objectives.**
- 2) **instruct the vice-presidents of Programming at Super Écran and The Movie Network to take these objectives into account when selecting Canadian feature films, not only for purchase rights but also for investing directly in production.**
- 3) **while respecting their independence, communicate this action plan to the directors of the English- and French-language components of Astral Media-The Harold Greenberg Fund that are dedicated to financing the purchase of options and the development and production of Canadian theatrical feature films, and tell them how important the company feels it is to achieve the plan's stated objectives.**
- 4) **while respecting their autonomy, communicate this action plan to the film schools that receive financial support from Astral Media, and tell them how important the company feels it is to achieve the plan's stated objectives.**

For a number of years, Astral Media has been supporting the major international film festivals that are held in Montreal and Toronto. Over the next eighteen (18) months, Astral Media intends to

- 5) **explore the possibility of providing some form of support to certain thematic festivals of particular interest to Canada's cultural and aboriginal communities, such as *Vues d'Afrique*; the *Présence autochtone* festival; *Reelworld*, which is dedicated precisely to cultural diversity; *FantAsia*; the *Festival du cinéma juif de Montréal*; or Toronto's *Ciné-Franco*.**

Lastly, Astral Media intends to

- 6) **study the possibility of developing, ideally in collaboration with public agencies and funds, tools for measuring changes in the representation of diversity in Canadian films.**

Improving diversity in Canadian films as a whole is a collective responsibility that falls to all those who contribute to their creation, their financing and their broadcasting across multiple windows. Over the next fiscal year (2002-03), Astral Media intends to explore with these different partners, and in particular with public funding agencies such as Telefilm Canada, the possibility of developing tools for measuring changes in representation of diversity in Canadian films.

#### **4.2.2 Other types of programming**

With regard to the other categories of Canadian programs aired by our specialty and pay television channels, Astral Media intends to

- 1) **ask the vice-president of Programming at each channel to incorporate into his or her programming policy some provisions similar to those currently included in the Family and Vrak.tv policies with regard to the reflection of the racial and cultural diversity of Canadian society and fair and non-stereotypical representation, making any necessary adjustments, of course, to suit the nature of the service concerned.**

In terms of a timeline, each programming service must have developed such a programming policy and sent it to the Commission by the end of fiscal year 2002-2003. These policies will also be communicated to the Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec and the Canadian Film and Television Production Association, as well as to each individual producer with whom an Astral Television Networks or Les Chaînes Télé Astral service enters into a contractual relationship for the supply of original Canadian programs as of September 1, 2003.

- 2) **instruct the vice-presidents of Programming of the different services to take Astral Media's objectives regarding the reflection of the diversity of Canadian society into account when selecting original Canadian programs produced specifically for their services, and when acquiring Canadian programs.**

Based on the new general programming policy of each of the services, the vice-presidents of Programming will be asked to make sure that the various original Canadian programs intended

for broadcast by the different services, and Canadian programs acquisition, generally and collectively offer a fair and balanced reflection of the cultural and racial diversity present in the Canadian society that these services have made it their mission to serve. They will be asked to send the Vice-President of Government and Regulatory Affairs at Astral Broadcasting Group an annual report in this regard.

- 3) Instruct the vice-presidents of Programming of the different services to take Astral Media's objectives regarding reflection of the diversity of Canadian society into account when selecting foreign programs that complement the Canadian programming delivered by these channels, with a view to ensuring that, to the extent possible, such foreign programming helps to meet the needs of the various cultural communities present in significant numbers in both the English-speaking and French-speaking segments of Canadian society.**

Astral Media believes that the foreign programming used by its services can also help to identify diversity and meet the needs of the various racial and cultural communities that make up Canadian society, be it the French-speaking or English-speaking segment, by itself being diversified in terms of national origin; by addressing subjects of particular interest to these communities; or by featuring actors, personalities, protagonists and others from these communities.

- 4) Organize an annual meeting with the recognized Canadian professional associations of television producers, to inform them of Astral Media's objectives where reflection of the diversity of Canadian society is concerned, and to periodically measure the progress made towards the achievement of these objectives**

This annual meeting with the recognized professional associations will have three objectives:

a) to inform the producers of Astral Media's objectives regarding a fair and balanced reflection of Canada's cultural and racial diversity; b) to identify the obstacles that producers may encounter while trying to achieve these objectives, and possible ways of overcoming them; c) to assess the progress made during the year towards achieving these objectives.

The first of these annual meetings will be held in fiscal year 2002-03, once the corporate plan has been approved by the Commission.

- 5) while respecting their autonomy, communicate this action plan to the directors of the English- and French-language components of Astral Media/The Harold Greenberg Fund that are dedicated to financing television productions (documentaries, youth dramas, music programs, special events, etc.), and explain the importance of achieving the plan's stated objectives.**

### 4.2.3 Research/feedback

Astral Media is known for the quality and depth of its research services, which are constantly assessing the adequacy of the programming these services offer, by comparing the programming with the expectations of their target audiences. In this regard, Astral Media intends to :

- 1) **put in place mechanisms that ensure cultural communities are represented in the samples selected for surveys commissioned by its different services;**
- 2) **regularly include in these research tools questions that make it possible to gauge the perceived *adequacy* of the reflection – offered by each channel's programming - of cultural diversity in the reference society.**

Thus, tools for obtaining feedback and measuring progress towards the achievement of the objectives will gradually be introduced and will enable Astral Media to adjust the programming delivered by its different services to ensure a fair, balanced, consistent and non-stereotypical reflection of the diversity of Canadian society.

Astral Media also intends to explore opportunities for collaboration with third party organizations, such as the Media Awareness Network / Le Réseau Éducation-Médias, which is dedicated to media education and including to raising awareness of the way ethnic, visible minorities and aboriginal people and women are portrayed in the media. Through such collaboration, we hope to help make teachers, parents and young people more aware of these issues and, at the same time, obtain feedback from them on the way the programming delivered by our services reflects the presence of cultural and aboriginal communities.