

German politicians call for 'European TV'

By Scott Roxborough

Nov 23, 2007

BERLIN -- German political heavyweights, including foreign minister and vice-chancellor Franz-Walter Steinmeier, on Thursday called for true pan-European television to act as a balance to emerging television giants China, India and Brazil.

Speaking at the European Television Dialogue in Berlin, Steinmeier told the audience of TV professionals that those three countries would bypass Europe as the world's most important TV markets.

"It can no longer be taken for granted European lifestyle or European political views will be considered desirable and worthy of imitation" in this new global world, Steinmeier said, making it all the more important for European media makers to talk to one another.

"Sometimes I think we know more about the territory on the moon than about (fellow European) media territories," he said, adding that Western countries were particularly ignorant about developments in Eastern Europe.

But Steinmeier said Western Europe had a role to play in ensuring that the traditions of media independence and press freedom were extended to the countries of the former Eastern Bloc.



Steinmeier's colleague, former German finance minister Wolfgang Clement, went one step further. In a keynote address titled "Vision of a European Television," Clement called on European public broadcasters to join together to create a truly European channel "available in all households in all countries across the (European) Union."

Clement also struck a protectionist note, demanding new laws to cap non-EU ownership of media companies at 25%. Clement said the

move was necessary to maintain a true European media culture.