

InTerView



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**Chief Executive Officer, EBU
(European Broadcasting Union)**

What are the activities of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU)?

JR : Founded on the basis of public service values in 1950, the EBU is present in 56 countries through 120 members (active and associate). The majority is based on public broadcasters but there also are several commercial channels. The EBU assists its members in fulfilling their missions of public service and brings its expertise in four key areas: television, radio, technological as well as juridical and legal (in particular with the main European bodies as the EU or the Council of Europe) issues. In operational matters we also work on images daily casting between all the channels and the acquisition and maintenance of sports rights.

These sports rights are at the heart of a major economical battle. What is the positioning of your consortium on this market?

JR : Our uniqueness lies in our values and our mission of public service. Our wish is to ensure that, firstly, all Olympic sports are broadcast by our members and that,

secondly, sporting events are accessible to all. In this way, the EU directive on public access to sporting events of major importance has helped strengthen our position.

Do the recent negotiations for the OG 2014 and 2016 rights or for the Athletics World championships rights represent a risk as for the access of all the televiewers to these sporting moments?

JR : Regarding Vancouver (2010) and London (2012) OG we will ensure media coverage as we have always done. But in the longer term questions arise. The IOC did not accept the –substantial- offer, we proposed for the 2014 and 2016 Olympics. EBU members then refused to follow the price inflation of rights and decided not to raise this offer. Today the situation is unclear. One thing is clear: the EBU cannot anymore propose to its members the so-called « Olympic concept », which aimed at supporting and broadcasting Olympics sports even outside from OG.

What is the role of media in sport governance?

JR : The interest of the sportsmen and sport values should prevail. Medias should let the sports movement set the rules and should not be able to change them in the name of economical interest. The medias can suggest ideas but these must be subjected to approval by the sport movement. We must remain attentive to developments proposed by federations. The adoption of the plexiglass helmet in fencing -which allows viewers to see the expressions on the faces of the fencers- is a good example. To my mind the idea of suggesting the arrival of the Tour de France in prime time seems conversely totally absurd. I am against the idea that we can change schedules of competitions (as it was the case for example for the swimming events in Beijing) or regulations simply for the sake of television.



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