



A stronger MEDIA programme for better promoting European audiovisual diversity and competitiveness

1. MEDIA: a European success story to be continued!

The MEDIA sub-programme has demonstrated its high EU added-value in strengthening the European audiovisual sector, supporting the creation and circulation of European works. The MEDIA programme is a brand and a label for quality, recognised at international level and has a powerful leverage effect on financing our works on the market.

Complementing national funds, MEDIA has achieved impressive results over the years such as:

- boosting the distribution and circulation of European works in the European Union, exposing and promoting the best of European film across all platforms (theatres, TV and online);
- developing transnational projects on film education, online distribution, festivals, professional training and innovative practices;
- stimulating high quality European cinema and audiovisual co-productions, in particular between non- traditional partners.

This success story is evidenced by several evaluations and reports¹, prizes and market successes.

2. Why is the audiovisual sector so specific?

The European audiovisual sector involves high risks, heavy upfront investments, a complex value chain, a large number of small companies in a context of fragmented markets in particular due to linguistic and cultural differences.

The European audiovisual industry contributes greatly to cultural and linguistic diversity and is crucial for growth and jobs: it is worth €97 billion a year, employs more than one million people and has been growing 2% a year. Cultural and creative industries collectively provide 7.5% of the EU's workforce and generate around 5.3% of the EU's total Gross Value Added (GVA).

Furthermore, in times of visible populism, the contribution of independent European audiovisual creation is of vital importance to bring Europeans together, strengthen the European identity and share our common values. It is a vehicle to promote Europe's ideas of tolerance and freedom throughout the Union and the world; MEDIA is a key tool that allows our different audiovisual art forms to flourish, meet and shine.

¹ Commission Impact Assessment on the Regulation establishing the Creative Europe Framework Programme (2011); Report on a coherent EU policy for cultural and creative industries (2016), rapporteurs MEPs Ehler & Morgano; Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council (2018), Mid-term evaluation of the Creative Europe programme (2014-2020)

Given this, the EFADs welcome the continuation of a dedicated sub-programme in line with the specific needs of a sector that faces new challenges and opportunities. Business models are indeed rapidly changing while the industry needs to adapt to a new European legal framework.

3. A higher budget for a wider range of actions

Taking into account the current context, the EFADs would like to express their support for the proposal to increase the budget of the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027 and in particular the MEDIA sub-programme to €1.081 billion in order not only to strengthen the existing schemes but also to develop new actions. We call on the European Parliament and the Council to secure this increased budget in order to:

- Reinforce successful schemes

Development, Distribution, Networks of Cinemas, Festivals, TV Programming, are some of the MEDIA schemes that have proven to deliver concrete outcomes, fostering pan-European artistic collaborations as well as the circulation of works and co-production. They must be consolidated. For example, the Europa Cinemas network has demonstrated its high added value and should be further supported, by increasing its budget to extend the network in certain countries.

- Develop new tools to facilitate the implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive

New actions and initiatives need to be developed to support the implementation of the new AVMSD and in particular the provisions related to the access and promotion of European works on line. In particular, the EFADs welcome the setting of up of a repository of European films and the schemes supporting marketing, curation and promotion of European works on-demand services.

- Support the distribution and promotion of European works outside Europe

MEDIA should do more for supporting the distribution and promotion of European works outside the EU, building on the successful MEDIA MUNDUS programme. The external dimension of the programme should go beyond training professionals and access to markets actions to focus on growing the audience in third countries via theatrical and online distribution.

- Promote film heritage and film education

A dedicated budget should be created in the MEDIA programme and funding from other EU programmes could be used to feed in to the promotion of cultural heritage (through for example structural funds). Cross border film literacy initiatives should continue to be supported, as they are key to building the new audience in Europe. European countries need to continue their urgent efforts to restore, digitize and exploit our cinematic heritage and make it easily accessible to the wider public all across Europe. Innovative solutions are needed to maximise the use of film heritage in education and to inspire new stories, therefore many member states still need support to establish basic film preservation facilities.

- Integrate new formats and technologies

The MEDIA programme should closely follow new formats arising from the latest technologies; therefore, support for new kinds of content for example (virtual reality, web series and web documentaries, should be envisaged.

- Reinforce financial instruments

The financial instrument launched within the MEDIA programme has started to deliver results. It should be pursued within the framework of EU Invest that must be tailored to the needs of the audiovisual sector.

- Promote gender equality and diversity

Concrete actions to promote gender equality and diversity in order to encourage diversity behind and on the screen should be introduced as well as monitoring (regular statistics at European level), mentoring, training and pilot actions.

4. Key actions for more efficiency and for a good collaboration with Member States

The following actions do not require more budget, but they play a key role in maintaining an efficient programme along with the Member States.

- Organise synergies with the other programmes

Synergies with other European programmes such as Horizon Europe or Digital Europe, external action programmes, should be strengthened.

- Ensure predictability, simplicity and transparency

While the EFADs agree that schemes should be flexible enough to take into account changes in the sector, we would emphasize the needs for: predictable rules, clarity and simplicity of the guidelines, transparency and the quality of the assessments.

- Monitor results, assess the impact and communicate successes

Efforts should be made to better monitor the results of the programme, publicize and disseminate them. The European Audiovisual Observatory could be more closely associated to the collection and treatment of data to capture its economic and cultural impact.

- Ensure regular dialogue with Member States and all stakeholders

The implementation of the new programme should be done hands in hands with Member States, EFADs, and all relevant stakeholders through regular dialogue. The Europe Creative management committee has a key role to play in advising the European Commission when adopting the annual work programmes. It should be reintroduced in the legal basis.

About the EFADs

The EFADs brings together the Directors of European Film Agencies in 31 countries in Europe (EU, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland). We represent government or government associated public bodies, responsible for national funding for the audiovisual sector and with the responsibility to advise or regulate on all aspects of audiovisual policies. In total, the EFADs members and their governments invest around three billion Euros every year through subsidies and tax reliefs with a view to fostering the creation, production, promotion, distribution, and exhibition of European audiovisual and cinematographic works.