European Film and Audiovisual Sector Joint Statement

Regarding the Proposed AgoraEU - MEDIA+ Programme

Brussels, 20th April 2026

We, the European organisations representing the entire European film and audiovisual sector, would like to highlight the pivotal role played by the Creative Europe – MEDIA Programme, which is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year. This milestone demonstrates the programme's value and impact and makes it a true European success story.

Over the past decades, MEDIA has supported and promoted Europe's culture on a global scale, encouraging cultural exchange, artistic freedom, diverse creative voices and independent entrepreneurship across the continent.

The AgoraEU Programme must build on the proven success of Creative Europe MEDIA and its consistent and meaningful objectives, not retreat from it.

Therefore, we respectfully:

- Urge the European Parliament and the Member States to preserve the identity and the core objectives of the Creative Europe - MEDIA programme, reinforce its impact on the entire film value chain and ensure that the "intrinsic and artistic value of culture" remain "at the heart of the programme".

  As recommended by the European Parliament[1] back in January 2024, the MEDIA Programme should remain "the main European instrument providing strategic support to the independent audiovisual sector", supporting and promoting cultural diversity, the creation and circulation of European works, the strengthening of the European film and audiovisual sector, especially its SMEs, including screenwriters, directors, independent production companies, film sales agents, film distributors, cinema operators, festivals, markets, trainings and networks.

  All these elements are essential to preserve the sector's competitiveness and adaptability to the challenges it faces.

- Urge the European Parliament and the Member States to clearly define the objectives of MEDIA+ and the focus on audiovisual strand (article 5) in support of the film and audiovisual industries which are cultural and creative sectors, unlike news media. While fully supporting freedom of speech, independence of journalism and fight against disinformation, we must

[1] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0008_EN.html

stress that the film and audiovisual sector has different missions and business models than news media. Therefore, the film and audiovisual strand must be clearly distinct from news media in budgetary and operational terms.

- Call on the European Parliament and the Member States to secure budgetary predictability for European film and audiovisual professionals, with an identifiable, secured and ring-fenced envelope for the funding allocated to the film and audiovisual sector (article 5). Its dedicated budget must be substantially increased to achieve its objectives and adapt to emerging needs of the film and audiovisual sector (please see below).

- Stress that the flexibility requested by the European Commission should apply only in cases of force majeure, in order to protect the stability and predictability of the programme's support schemes. Flexibility should complement stability, not replace it.

- Request that the European Commission engage in regular, transparent and structured dialogue with representatives of European film and audiovisual stakeholders across the entire value chain, as well as with the European Parliament and the Member States, as recommended in the Creative Europe review. Such dialogue is crucial to ensure that policies remain aligned with market realities and deliver their intended impact.

From MEDIA to MEDIA+ - The various challenges

BUDGET

In budgetary terms, the MEDIA Programme had an earmarked budget of 58% of the total Creative Europe budget, one of the smallest EU-funded programmes (Article 8 - EUR 2.44 billion for Creative Europe in 2021-2027). The significant increase secured by the European Parliament in 2021 was intended to reinforce the programme's highly effective support schemes, which remain extremely competitive and oversubscribed.

The AgoraEU proposal foresees a total budget of €8.6 billion, of which €3.2 billion would be allocated to MEDIA+ covering both film, audiovisual and video games on the one hand (article 5), and the news sector on the other (article 6). Unlike the current regulation, however, the proposal does not provide a dedicated allocation for the support to the film and audiovisual sector (article 5) within MEDIA+.

The European Commission's budgetary proposal for AgoraEU of €8,582 billion corresponds to a 113% increase compared to the 2021-2027 cumulated budget of €4,022 billion for CERV+ and Creative Europe sub-programmes, including support to film and audiovisual (MEDIA strand) and news media (cross-sectoral strand). In particular, the budget allocation for the AgoraEU-Culture strand is proposed to be increased by 115% compared to its predecessor's budget. In line with our call for ensuring predictability and increase of the budget for MEDIA, the support to the film

and audiovisual sector (Article 5) should amount to at least 33% of the AgoraEU budget to maintain the balance of political priorities set out in the current Creative Europe Programme[2].

ACCOUNTABILITY/COMITOLOGY

While the Creative Europe programme evaluation has stressed that support must be accompanied by a dialogue and collaboration with the Member States and the audiovisual sector, the reference to the Creative Europe committee has disappeared entirely from the new proposal.

We believe that structured exchanges are essential to ensure that the programme's objectives remain aligned with the needs of industry professionals and that support schemes deliver a strong positive impact on the sector. Work programmes on an annual basis should therefore be maintained, as well as regular structured dialogue between the European Commission, Member States and industry representatives. As European organisations, we can provide consolidated field feedback, practical insights on how schemes perform in practice, and suggestions to fine-tune implementation.

PREDICTABILITY

The previous Regulation included Annexes detailing the actions to be covered by the Programme. These Annexes have disappeared from the AgoraEU proposal, creating uncertainty on the continuity of the activities that would be implemented each year, in a risk-prone and competitive environment. Although some of these objectives are now reflected in Article 5, they are less detailed and expressed in generic terms. We understand the European Commission's request for more simplification and flexibility. However, it must not undermine precision and predictability and should complement stability - not replace it.

The right approach is to reintroduce the Annexes in the MEDIA+ legal basis, maintain stable objectives and increased budget envelopes, allow targeted and clearly framed flexibility mechanisms, and avoid structural instability in core schemes.

TERMINOLOGY AND LEGAL CERTAINTY

While the current MEDIA programme uses precise terminology to define its objectives and means, key terms and concepts are missing from the AgoraEU proposal. The removal of the Annex has

[2] Article 8 of the Regulation establishing the Creative Europe Programme 2021-2027 (EU 2021/818) and its strands (including support to film and audiovisual, support to culture, support to news media) sets out a budget allocation of at least 58% of its budget for the support to the film and audiovisual sector. On a comparable basis, at least 58% of the proposed €B4,99 budget allocation for both strands Creative Europe Culture (€B1,796) and MEDIA+ (€B3,194) in Section 3.2.1.1. of the Legislative, Financial and Digital Statement of the proposed Regulation 2025/0550 should be directed to the support to film and audiovisual sector, resulting in at least €B2,894, hence at least 33% of the proposed cumulated budget for AgoraEU (€B8,582).

also eliminated a useful description of the actions to be supported, which ensured predictability for prospective applicants. We therefore call for the Annex to be reinstated.

- The proposed Regulation refers to media ("media sector encompasses inter alia content such as films, series, video games, news and information, immersive reality and multimedia,") and audiovisual. The word "film" should be reintroduced, to clearly distinguish the film and audiovisual sector from the broader media sector and avoid confusion that could undermine the specificities and independence of each sector.

- Similarly, references to theatrical distribution have been diluted and appear only in general provisions, rather than in the newly proposed Article 5, where they appear in the current regulation. The same applies to cinemas. MEDIA-supported films are first experienced by audiences in cinemas through theatrical distribution. Removing this reference fails to reflect the reality and success of the programme.

- The reference to European independent audiovisual production companies set out in the current Creative Europe MEDIA Programme should be reintroduced as a mandatory condition for accessing support to development and production at large. Supporting independent production companies – ie. not controlled by an audiovisual media service provider - has always been at the core of the MEDIA programme, as the European independent production companies are key drivers for European cultural diversity and artistic creation, as well as growth and jobs. The independence criteria should be defined in the legal basis for more legal certainty and remain the same as the ones applicable for decades in the various relevant support schemes (co-development, TV and online…) of the present Creative Europe MEDIA sub-programme.

- Last but not least, other important keywords referring to the film industry should be inserted: training, networks, co-production, linguistic diversity, film education, film heritage, and festivals (single festivals and networks).

CONCLUSION

Since its creation the MEDIA programme has played a vital role in fostering innovation, economic growth and skilled jobs in a prototype-driven sector, while at the same time ensuring a sustainable and competitive film and audiovisual ecosystem, mixing large players and thriving SMEs. The MEDIA Programme has always been paramount in supporting the circulation and success of European film and audiovisual works worldwide.

As MEDIA celebrates its 35th anniversary in 2026, it must remain the successful programme that has enabled film and audiovisual professionals to promote cultural diversity, safeguard democratic values, strengthen a shared European identity and foster social cohesion. The beneficiaries of the programme, our members, are the economic strength and soft power of the European Union, an essential asset in today's world.

SIGNATORIES

ATC – Audiovisual Training Coalition

CEE Animation – Central and Eastern Europe Animation

CEPI – European Audiovisual Production Association

CICAE – International Confederation of Arthouse Cinemas

Collective of Film Festivals

EPC **–** The European Producers Club

Eurocinema – Association de Producteurs de Cinéma et de Télévision

Europa Distribution **–** International Association of Independent Film Publishers and Distributors

Europa International **–** Association of European Film Sales Agents

FAME – Film and Audiovisual Markets in Europe

FERA – Federation of European Screen Directors

FIAD – International Federation of Film Distributors' and Publishers' Associations

FIAPF – International Federation of Film Producers Associations

FSE – Federation of Screenwriters in Europe

IVF – International Video Federation

UNIC – International Union of Cinemas

SAA – Society of Audiovisual Authors