



We are united in a desire to secure a future film and audiovisual ecosystem in Europe that is built not only on the imperatives of profitability and marketing but also on a common understanding of the value of creativity and of film as an art form: a beloved narrative format, the cornerstone of European culture, democracy and citizenship and a crucial sector for the creation of economic value, jobs, and the development of skills, in particular for young people¹.

We are united in recognising, embracing, and promoting the cultural and linguistic diversity which lies at the core of Europe’s strength. In order to build on previous successes, the European audiovisual and film sector will continue to reflect and respond to the diverse tastes and expectations of audiences across multiple territories. Each work has a unique production, distribution, and exhibition cycle – its own tailor-made business model catering to its own DNA and reflecting the cultural and linguistic diversity that shapes today’s Europe.

We are united in agreement that the Creative Europe Programme, MEDIA strand, is a European Union success story and delivers on its mission to promote cultural and linguistic diversity, helps bring new audiences to cinema and bolster the competitiveness of the film sector in Europe. Reinforcing the MEDIA strand is essential as it supports our collective objectives for a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable film and audiovisual ecosystem going forward.

With such diversity, a core concept is freedom of choice to take risks on diverse stories and a broad variety of production models, alongside diverse and tailor-made promotion, and distribution strategies. Cinemas constitute a vital part of this ecosystem.

This is an essential factor for preserving the art of cinema as well as the plurality of professionals involved in the creation, production, distribution and exhibition of films in Europe. Other principles uphold Europe’s rich film sector:

¹ <https://avdata4europe.eu/>

- Freedom to produce, distribute and showcase new films in Europe. Cinema is the art of putting on screen stories that we did not know we wanted or needed but which continue to move us, inform us, and entertain us: opening windows on new worlds and shining a light on existing ones.
- Freedom to take artistic and economic risks within an interconnected value chain and to pursue business strategies compatible with the artistic vision of individual stakeholders within the film and cinema sector independent of their size.
- Freedom to deploy tailor-made business plans, including as regards financing and distribution strategies to meet future audiences, as a function of the unique features of each title.
- Freedom to market, distribute and exhibit films and audiovisual content territory by territory, building demand audience by audience, aligning with local tastes, languages, societal debates, and other preferences, including meeting the needs of specific audience groups in a bespoke manner.

Hence, in order to sustain and uphold these values and objectives, we ask for your support in maintaining the film and audiovisual sector's current exemption from the Geo-blocking Regulation and increasing the funding dedicated to the MEDIA Strand of the Creative Europe Programme.

The Territoriality of rights and the tool to ensure it, geo-blocking, are truly essential assets for the film and audiovisual sector to be able to create, produce, distribute and exhibit a diverse offer of films to the European audiences. The abolition of geo-blocking would have a disastrous economic and cultural impact².

The core concepts outlined in this letter are also made possible by the Creative Europe MEDIA Programme. Therefore, in order to nourish the film and audiovisual sector, the budget dedicated to the MEDIA Strand should be increased and certainly not be reduced and targeting similar objectives. The existing MEDIA schemes are essential for film professionals and for film development, production, distribution, promotion and exhibition. A reduction in their respective budget would have dire consequences on the sector as on the creation and circulation of European films and consequentially on cultural diversity, a concept dear to all of us.

The MEDIA Strand has come under immense pressure as it looks to support ever more components of the creative economy. However, it remains essential for the Programme to focus on its core task of supporting the business practices and reality of the film and audiovisual ecosystem. A strategic shift to focus on innovation, VR and AI could detract money from these invaluable schemes and weaken their positive impact on the European film sector. We of course support innovation and the potential benefits AI could bring, but that should not come to the detriment of the European film and audiovisual ecosystem, that deeply needs the support of the MEDIA programme, the only one of its kind. Horizon Europe could be a better fit to grow and improve the skills and competencies of AV professionals regarding AI and other useful innovations.

² [Impact-of-geoblocking.pdf \(oxera.com\)](https://www.oxera.com/en/insights/publications/2017/01/impact-of-geoblocking)