

European movies on the move



Ten actions for better circulation across Europe

Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member States' experts
on improving circulation of European films



European Union

LEGAL NOTICE

Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use that might be made of the following information.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019

© European Union, 2019

Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

The reuse policy of European Commission documents is regulated by Decision 2011/833/EU (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39).

For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not under the EU copyright, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.

Image copyright: iStock Getty, unless marked otherwise.

Cover image: © Zagreb Film Festival / Samir Ceric Kovacevic



Foreword

by Jeanne Brunfaut,

Director of the Centre du cinéma & de l'audiovisuel, Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles

When I was kindly asked to chair this first Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group in the field of cinema and audiovisual, the subject to be discussed with my colleagues from the other Member States emerged at the very first meeting: how to ensure more European films cross Europe's borders. Public funds, regulators, producers and distributors, cinemas and platforms, authors and creators, all want the films they support, screen and create, to be seen by the largest audience possible. Therefore, it is the joint responsibility of all the players in the European audiovisual sector to put all the necessary measures in place to help our films travel in the best way possible and reach an international audience.

At times, one could be forgiven for thinking that audiences only want to see big blockbusters from the US and, whilst these films are popular, we know that there are many people eager to discover European films that tell stories, and have characters and settings, that they relate to and enjoy precisely because they are European. We believe that it is our duty to make it easy for the audience to find and have access to those films.

The recommendations below aim to be a very practical toolkit for policy makers, industry players and creators to be used as a check list before setting up a scheme or launching a new film. I hope that these recommendations based on best practices will be seen as a valuable source of inspiration for the reader as we all know that two heads are better than one!





Introduction

The circulation of European films helps demonstrate Europe's cultural diversity and makes it possible for international audiences to discover and enjoy European audiovisual works. Wider circulation also means better market opportunities for European productions. This in turn improves the sector's overall competitiveness, in particular vis-a-vis non-European players.

The ability of EU audiovisual and interactive entertainment to deliver economic and cultural value has been significantly enhanced by enlightened public policies. These policies have led to a vibrant sector with a dynamic ecology, which includes an unusually rich mixture of public and private companies, an ambitious independent production sector, and large-scale investment by global media companies. This ecosystem has developed very significantly in recent years, facilitated by a range of technological developments and insightful regulation. More recently, the rise of new video on demand services has characterised continuous innovation in European films.

However, according to the European Audiovisual Observatory, European non-national films, i.e. European films showing anywhere in Europe outside their own country, account for 31% of all films shown in European cinemas. For TV on-demand (TVoD), the figure goes down to 19%; for linear TV, it is only 15%¹.

The limited cross-border circulation of European films to other European countries leaves both huge market opportunities for Europe's audiovisual sector untapped and limits the possibility for European citizens to discover the cinema of other European countries.

Recognising the issues, the Council of the European Union in 2014 decided to create an Open Method of Coordination Group of Member State Experts to discuss how to improve circulation of European films.² Twenty-six Member States selected experts for this Group, which held five meetings between July 2017 and June 2018.

The Group was tasked with the drafting of this paper, highlighting in particular good practices and making recommendations to enhance the circulation of European films across the EU, in particular non-national European films.

The Open Method of Coordination

The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is a light but structured way EU Member States use to cooperate at European level, for example in the field of culture. It helps create a common understanding of the challenges and helps to build consensus on solutions and their practical implementation.

Through an exchange of good practices between EU countries, it contributes to improving the design and implementation of policies, without regulatory instruments.³

1 https://www.obs.coe.int/en/web/observatoire/2018-press-releases/-/asset_publisher/qCvKtWMGKlji/content/european-cinemas-are-showing-more-european-films-than-tv-or-vod?inheritRedirect=false

2 The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) Group of Member States' Experts on Improving the Circulation of European Films was established further to a request by the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council. The creation of the Group was included in the 2015-2018 Work Plan for Culture, adopted on 25 November 2014 (<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-16094-2014-INIT/en/pdf>)

3 https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework/european-coop_en



The addressees of this paper – *European movies on the move* – are primarily policy makers at national, sub-national and EU level. However, for the recommendations to have the greatest possible impact, private stakeholders across the whole value chain will need to commit to them and to cooperating both with each other and with public institutions with the goal of enhancing the circulation of European works.

The OMC Group is conscious of the variety in audiovisual works (from television programmes to video games, to new digital formats) and of the importance of such variety for a healthy and competitive European audiovisual sector. At the same time, in line with the mandate outlined in the 2015-2018 Work Plan for Culture⁴, the Group focused its work and recommendations on feature films. Some of these recommendations are however applicable to audiovisual works more broadly.

Whilst fully acknowledging the importance of the circulation of European works outside Europe, the Group decided to concentrate on circulation across European territories, as this is the first step in improving public policies promoting broader circulation of European works.

The Group is aware, of course, that for its recommendations to be fully effective, these should be accompanied by measures enhancing film education, audience development and promotion of Europe's film heritage as these are crucial instruments for stimulating the appetite of potential audiences for European productions. Moreover, the protection of authors' rights, the fight against copyright theft, and intellectual property rights (IPR) enforcement are critical if the European audiovisual sector is to achieve its full commercial potential.

European movies on the move makes specific recommendations in ten areas, all of which have at their core the importance of **the audience**. In the OMC Group's discussions, focusing on reaching and attracting new and broader international audiences to enjoy European productions emerged as a clear priority, which underpins all recommendations. This is a priority on which more action is needed at all levels: national, subnational and European.

The Group has proven to be an important arena for sharing and discussing experiences and best practices from different Member States and different parts of the audiovisual value chain. Such discussions – among funds, policy makers, and industry stakeholders – should continue.

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/2014/new-work-plan-culture-adopted_en



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Get out and promote!

Stories presenting a local or national perspective are often well-suited to appeal to international audiences, in particular when they are conceived, shaped and promoted taking the possibilities offered by international markets into account.

If cultural diversity is to be enhanced, a strong focus on promotion with an international mindset is needed from the very beginning of the creation process, first by clearly identifying the target audience of the film. Such a pan-European promotion-oriented focus should be taken into consideration as soon as the script writing and development start, and should encompass all parts of the value chain.

Support for promotion can take many forms. For example, several Member States fund mobility schemes for film professionals – including directors and crews to present their works abroad, as it is now clear that the more screenings are organised at festival events, the greater the chances that a film will attract a large audience.

Organisations such as the European Film Promotion and the European Film Academy are valuable initiatives in promoting European films. National bodies – such as uniFrance – and cross-border initiatives – for instance among Nordic countries – also bring real added value in coordinating promotion activities, such as national cinema weeks in another European country or the presence of casts/crews at festivals.



The European Young Audience Award is an initiative by the European Film Academy to promote European films among young cinema lovers, as well as to educate and create new audiences.

Production and distribution companies of course play the most important role in ensuring appropriate promotion for their audiovisual works. The viral online promotion of the animation *Loving Vincent* is one recent initiative that provides an interesting example of how to exploit the potential of technology and social media.

Every film, irrespective of its budget, has an audience potential. One of the talents of filmmakers is to go beyond what the public is expecting and surprise them. Audiences will not know what to expect and films will not realise their potential without planning for promotion from the outset.

The OMC Group recommends that:

- players at all levels invest more in script writing and development as these are the first and among the most important steps to a film to be successful;
- directors, producers and distributors clearly identify the target audience of their films at an early stage and in so doing develop appropriate distribution, promotion, and marketing strategies for the whole of Europe;
- national and European funds coordinate better their efforts at promotion, especially by supporting the mobility of film professionals (including directors) for promotional purposes;
- the visibility of the European Film Awards be increased as a way of further promoting the circulation of European works.



Marketing and promotion support in Hungary

The Hungarian National Film Fund is particularly active in supporting film marketing and promotion. For instance, when applying for production support, producers must involve a local distributor with whom they can start working on the local marketing and distribution strategy from the very beginning of the project. Furthermore, when applying for marketing and distribution support, distributors must include a detailed promotion, advertising and marketing strategy.

The Fund holds regular marketing meetings with the distributors and the producers, where, with the help of local and international marketing advisors, the positioning of the film and the creation of the key sales tools (posters, teasers and trailers) are discussed. The Fund also organises test screenings with focus groups and carries out exit interviews in cinemas at the release of each film to gain more information about the audience and their opinion about the film.

Since these measures were introduced, the audience for Hungarian films has tripled, and the image and recognition of Hungarian films have grown considerably both locally and on the international festival and market circuit.

2. Unleash the potential of cinemas!

As success on a national territory is often the first step to a success in Europe – and indeed worldwide, cinemas are crucial for reaching large audiences across countries. More is being done by cinemas to embrace digitisation in all aspects of the theatrical experience: from planning to box office, from promotion to the technical aspects of image and sound. These efforts are paying off. The exhibition sector is, overall, going through a positive phase across Europe. In 2017, cinemas consolidated the positive results of the previous years. The situation varies from country to country, but the overall positive position of the industry is largely the result of the sustained investments made by cinema operators in embracing technological innovation, improving the cinema experience, more diversified programming, and reaching out to wider audiences.

© Yorck Kinogruppe / Silke Reents



Yorck Kino, Berlin (Germany)

These efforts have often been supported by national funds, as well as by the European Commission's Creative Europe MEDIA programme. The latter, in particular, supports Europa Cinemas, the leading cinema network focusing on European films. The network brings together about 1 100 cinemas (2 800 screens) in over 600 cities and 43 countries. In recent years, Europa Cinemas has made significant efforts to digitise and innovate – for instance, an overwhelming majority of the cinemas in its network have digitised their screens – which is to be

welcomed and should be further encouraged. The main challenges for the Europa Cinemas network today are, on the one hand to expand the number of cinemas in Europe screening EU films, with a particular focus on medium-sized cities and Central and Eastern Europe (where fewer than 12% of all the cinemas in the network are based), and, on the other, to expand activities addressing young audiences specifically.



National, sub-national and regional networks of cinemas also have an important role to play in promoting the circulation of European films. Furthermore, both the European Structural and Investment Funds and national funds can play an important role in financing the modernisation of cinema infrastructure.

The OMC Group recommends that:

- cinemas accelerate the rate of innovative initiatives, for instance through collaborative projects, training, mentoring and exchanges of best practice, particularly those actively promoting European films, including through networks;
- efforts be stepped up through the different funding programmes available at all levels to accelerate and further harmonise the measures taken by cinemas to modernise and digitise;
- the reach of the Europa Cinemas' network be extended, with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe and medium-sized cities;
- the synergies and complementarities between theatrical and VoD releases be further explored.

Digitisation of Croatia's independent cinemas

From 2009-2016, 56 independent cinemas in 47 Croatian cities participated in a project to digitise independent cinemas with support from the Ministry of Culture and local authorities.

The support was conditional on cinemas screening a culturally diverse programme, including heritage films, short films, and special programmes with a defined percentage of national and non-national European content.

Bucharest airport cinema

Bucharest's Henri Coandă International, Romania's busiest international airport, will have a mini-cinema and several screens at the airport's boarding gates featuring a selection of films that will include several national and non-national European ones.

A five-year plan for cinemas in Italy

Cinema and audiovisual legislation passed in Italy in 2016 (Law 220/2016) provides for a five-year plan to upgrade cinemas and multifunctional cultural centres so that they are more widely and evenly spread across the country. Within the Cinema and Audiovisual Fund set up under the law, there is a budget for cinemas of EUR 30 million for each of the years 2017-2019, EUR 20 million for 2020 and EUR 10 million for 2021.

The money is for non-refundable grants for:

- 1. reopening closed or abandoned cinemas;*
- 2. conversion of existing cinemas or multiplexes in urban areas, with a view to increasing the number of screens;*
- 3. building new cinemas, including through the purchase of premises;*
- 4. restructuring, and structural and technological adaptation of cinemas; the installation or renovation of facilities, equipment, furnishings and complementary services to the theatres.*

The grant award procedures establish a scale of intervention priorities that applies if there is not enough money to cover all applications. Key criteria are the location of the cinemas, with particular attention to 'historic' cinemas and those located in municipalities with fewer than 15 000 inhabitants.



3. Festivals are an audience magnet!

Film festivals create a vital link between films and audiences. They play an important role in film promotion, training for professionals, audience development (particularly young audiences) and film education. Films winning awards at festivals often have a better chance of success and tend to travel more beyond national borders. Therefore, public bodies should encourage their players to clearly identify the audience targeted by their films and to develop a strategy on festivals from the very beginning of the creation process as part of an overall promotion strategy.

Several national schemes support festivals – in particular medium-sized and small festivals – featuring national and non-national European films. As does Creative Europe MEDIA. There is a need to strengthen this support and to make it more efficient, for example, by leveraging possible cooperation initiatives among festivals.



In addition, cooperation between festivals on the one hand, and VoD and cinemas on the other, could be beneficial to the objective of fostering the circulation of European non-national works. For example, a festival could act as curator for a programme of specific European films either in a cinema or on a VoD platform.

Open-air screening during the Thessaloniki Film Festival at the Port of Thessaloniki, Greece

The OMC Group recommends that:

- action to support film festivals be strengthened – both at national and European level, since festivals contribute to the promotion of cultural diversity in Europe and to audience development;
- festivals cooperate, exchange and network more intensively;
- festivals and public authorities reflect on ways of leveraging possible cooperation among festivals, for instance in subtitling films;
- cooperation be fostered between festivals on the one hand, and VoD and cinemas on the other (e.g. on rights acquisition, subtitling), whilst respecting the specificities of each player.

Partnership between festivals and VoD services

Portugal is just one of the countries where some SVoD services, such as Filmin and MUBI, have developed partnerships with European film festivals.⁵

⁵ For instance, Filmin partners include festivals such as Berlinale, the Venice Film Festival, Cannes, Locarno, and Sundance; MUBI's partners include the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen.



This allows them to distribute to their customers a selection of films that were programmed and screened in those festivals, including a large proportion of European non-national films. Platforms can thus become a virtual venue for these events with the aim of the films they propose reaching larger international audiences.

By doing this, festivals can reinforce their visibility and be better known by a larger public. At the same time, by acting as curator on VoD platforms, the festivals' reputation and the quality of their brands can help those films have more success on these platforms.

Online French-language film festival

With more than 12 million film views across more than 200 territories in 2018, MyFrenchFilmFestival is a unique online festival of French-language films originating from Belgium, Canada, France and Switzerland (including coproductions). The 8th edition took place from January 19 to February 19, 2018. Geared towards Internet users worldwide and available for one month, it featured a selection of 10 shorts and 10 feature films in competition. All films were subtitled in 10 different languages. Comedies, thrillers, action movies, romance, drama... French-language cinema in all its diversity!

Shorts were free of charge worldwide, while feature films were available free of charge in Africa, Latin America, India, Poland, Romania, Russia and South Korea and to purchase elsewhere. In addition to the MyFrenchFilmFestival.com platform, more than 50 partner platforms relayed the festival, including iTunes across 90 territories, Amazon, Google Play and MUBI.

4. Make European films a hit online!

According to the European Audiovisual Observatory, EU films represent about one in four of the films available in VoD catalogues across Europe⁶. This figure is relatively positive, yet there is still substantial room for improvement.

Giving European films prominence and visibility on VoD platforms – both TVoD and SVoD – is essential. The revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive⁷ represents an important step in the right direction with the obligation on platforms to include at least 30% European works in their catalogue and to ensure their visibility as effectively as possible. The availability of VoD platforms' data and a strengthened partnership with public authorities will be crucial in making this actually happen.

In this context, initiatives by commercial players to develop a strong catalogue of European films and give them visibility on their platforms – for example, some 70% of the films in Filmin's catalogue are European – are welcome.



VOD Film Catalogue, UnCut, UniversCiné Belgium

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/demand-audiovisual-markets-european-union-2016>

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2018/1808/oj>



The OMC Group recommends that:

- greater efforts be made – both at national and European level – to support the setting up and scalability of European VoD platforms and to enhance the presence and prominence of European works on European and global VoD platforms;
- greater support be given to VoD platforms that commit to promoting non-national European films;
- forms of coordination among independent VoD providers featuring a majority of EU films in their catalogues be discussed, including through support from Creative Europe MEDIA. Such coordination could, for instance, touch on common issues such as dubbing and subtitling;
- VoD platforms increase transparency and share with rights holders and public bodies the data related to the catalogue and performance of the films (number of views, demographics). The more information on audiences is available to creators, the greater the influence on the creation process and the improvements in promotion strategies in the different modes of distribution.

Teaming up with VoD providers and exchanging data to promote EU works

The CSA, the audiovisual regulator for French-speaking Belgium, has developed a structured methodology in collaboration with VoD providers to facilitate enforcement of the requirement for ‘prominence’ of EU works under the EU’s Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

Providers are invited to transmit to the CSA a detailed list of tools that they are using to implement prominence of European works, as well as the information on how many people watch which films in their catalogues. Provider data makes it possible to analyse the viewing figures, and to identify efficient tools and strategies. These include, for instance, prominence under different headings (“new”, “last chance”, “favourites” etc.) and the presence of EU works in promotional campaigns for the VoD service.

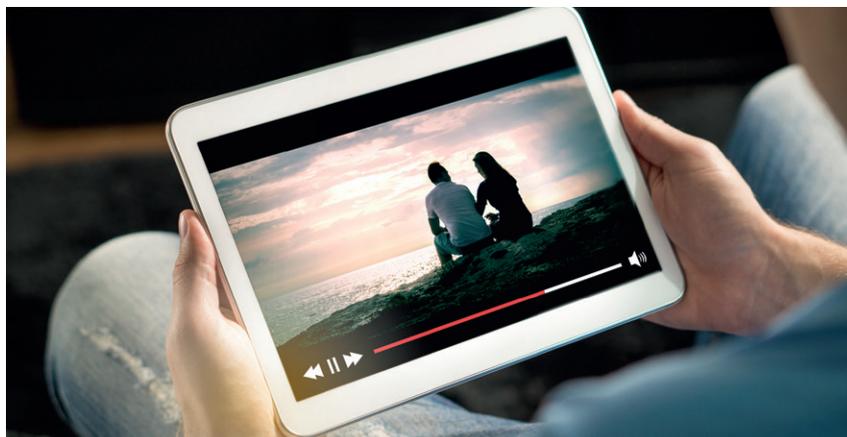
The CSA also asks providers to pass on detailed information on their catalogue (titles of the films on a certain date, position of the film in the catalogue, origins of the films, production dates, beginning and end dates of the rights, and, if possible, the number of views on a certain date).

5. Use data to know your audience!

Data is a goldmine for the audiovisual industry. Box office figures, number and length of views, loyalty cards, newsletters, social media, cookies: both the theatrical business and the VoD sector have access to valuable data about their audiences, their preferences, and their behavioural patterns. Such data can help creators, filmmakers, producers and distributors to bring fresh ideas to their creations and target the audience, organising their operations more efficiently. The data should be put to smart use, and when possible shared with other relevant parties (such as producers), and with respect for users’ rights in terms of data protection. Of course, data also helps audiences in making an informed choice. Film funds that make support dependent on films’ performance could also benefit from having access to this data.



A number of players have developed algorithms and artificial intelligence solutions for screenplay analysis, box office forecasts and planning. While consumer data protection and privacy regulations need to be respected, the use of data by all parts of the European audiovisual industry can nevertheless increase its overall efficiency and competitiveness, and should be encouraged.



© iStock Getty - Tero Vesalainen

The OMC Group recommends that:

- both commercial players and public authorities devote increasing attention to the field of data and investigate the way in which it is legally possible to ensure the transparency and availability of data, with a view to better understanding the needs and preferences of the audience, and hence increase the overall efficiency and competitiveness of the value chain;
- organisations holding large amounts of relevant audience data investigate ways of sharing such data with other relevant players in the value chain and film funds. Consideration could be given to providing support through Creative Europe MEDIA to solutions that improve the use of data by the European audiovisual sector.

Improving a cinema's customer loyalty programme through data

Since May 2018, the Berlin-based Yorck Kinogruppe cinema group has been using Movio, smart data software, to digitise its customer loyalty programme. This tool enables Yorck to aggregate all existing visitor data, such as buying behaviour at the box office, website visits, trailer views and e-mail newsletters. Analysing the data makes it possible for direct marketing to be more relevant, better targeted and of higher quality. At the same time, Yorck, in conjunction with a 360° social media approach, also receives information about the wishes of its regular customers and can thus adapt its programme even better to the interests of the various target groups.

With the personalisation of marketing that this has enabled, the frequency of visits and the identification of the public with the cinema on site have been successfully increased. At the same time, trends can be recognised early. This helps future programme planning.

These data analyses are also used to constantly adapt and improve offers on the website and social media. Through a modified and personalised presentation of films, the number of visits to the website increased by 20.7% in the year to August 2018. The improved targeting also increased the number of Instagram followers by 23.6% over the same period.



6. Support non-national European films!

Support to the release of national films abroad is an important driver of circulation of non-national European films. However, budget and resource limitations can result in national funds tending to prioritise support for the domestic and foreign distribution of national productions rather than supporting non-national films on their own territory. At the moment, national and sub-national bodies' support schemes for non-national European films are more limited and tend to be of a more indirect nature than those targeting foreign sales of national films.



Cinema Katorza, Nantes (France)

© Jean-Gabriel Aubert

Greater efforts by national and sub-national bodies to enhance the circulation of European non-national films within their territories could have a major impact on the overall circulation of European works.

The OMC Group recommends that:

- alongside a strengthening of support to the distribution of national European works abroad, such as several countries already provide, greater priority be given to distributing non-national European films in national territories;
- both national film funds and the European Commission discuss possible forms of cooperation in this area.

A scheme supporting non-national films

In order to promote a diverse offering of films in French cinemas, the French national film fund (CNC) supports the theatrical release in France of non-French films. In 2017, the scheme helped distribute more than 250 films, all nationalities combined. More than 70 European films (59 non-national and 16 French minority coproductions) were supported. They included:

- *A Ciambra (Jonas Carpignano – Italy)*
- *A Fábrica de Nada (Pedro Pinho – Portugal)*
- *Borg vs McEnroe (Janus Metz Pederson – Sweden)*
- *Estiu 1993 (Carla Simon – Spain)*
- *Grüße aus Fukushima (Doris Dörrie – Germany)*
- *Hjartasteinn (Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson – Iceland + Denmark)*
- *Home (Fien Troch – Belgium)*
- *The Killing of a Sacred Deer (Jorgos Lanthimos – Ireland)*
- *The Leisure Seeker (Paolo Virzi – Italy)*
- *The Nile Hilton Incident (Tarik Saleh – Sweden + Egypt)*
- *Slava (Kristina Grozeva & Petar Valchanov – Bulgaria + Greece)*



7. Coproduce!

A number of factors influence the likelihood of audiovisual works traveling beyond borders. One of these is certainly coproduction. Data demonstrates a clear tendency for coproductions to have, on average, more success abroad than purely national films. According to a study by the European Audiovisual Observatory, European coproductions generate three times as many admissions as national films.⁸ Coproductions accounted for 24.2% of overall film production volume in Europe over the period 2010-2015. European coproductions generated 1576 million admissions, i.e. 50.3% of overall attendance for European films during the period.

Recently awarded titles such as *The Square* and *Call Me by Your Name* confirm the added value of coproductions in an ever more competitive market.



IDFA Forum, Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

The OMC Group recommends that:

- more investment in coproductions be encouraged by incentivising coproductions in national legal frameworks and audiovisual support schemes, including by supporting bilateral coproduction or co-development funds;
- coproductions among diverse partners from a wide range of Member States be encouraged.

Coproduced drama *Tabu* distributed in about 50 territories worldwide

The Creative Europe MEDIA-supported Tabu is a 2012 Portuguese independent black-and-white drama directed by Miguel Gomes. Tabu was a Brazilian, French, German coproduction, and competed at the 62nd Berlin International Film Festival, where it won the Alfred Bauer Award and the FIPRESCI Award.

This coproduction has been distributed to almost 50 territories worldwide, including several European countries, but also a large number of others, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Russia and the USA.

Coproduced documentary *The Cleaners* looks at the dark side of the web

A coproduction of Brazil, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United States, the documentary The Cleaners focuses on the digital cleaning industry, which removes certain types of content from the Internet. Several European broadcasters came together with other international players to produce this documentary on a very topical issue. It received support from Creative Europe MEDIA, Ancine (Brazil), BRDE (Brazil), FSA (Brazil), Film- and Medienstiftung NRW (Germany) and Blue Ice Docs (Canada). It featured at a number of festivals, including Hot Docs (Canada), Sundance (US) and IDFA (Netherlands).

⁸ https://www.obs.coe.int/en/web/observatoire/home/-/asset_publisher/9iKCxBygi065/content/european-coproductions-generated-three-times-as-many-admissions-as-european-national-films-over-the-last-10-years?inheritRedirect=false



8. Talk to each other!

It is pivotal that the different players in the value chain strengthen their dialogue and cooperation in order to increase the overall competitiveness and diversity of Europe's audiovisual sector. Public authorities – at national, subnational and European level – should encourage such extensive dialogue and cooperation on important matters such as gender equality and ensure a coherent framework for policy support.

The OMC Group recommends that:

- funds, policy makers and industry players in the different parts of the value chain (including filmmakers, producers, distributors, sales agents, exhibitors and online platforms) strengthen their exchange, dialogue and cooperation, and work together for a coherent policy support framework;
- cross-border cooperation be particularly encouraged. For example, an important topic of such dialogue and cooperation could be how to empower women professionals in the creation, production and circulation of European audiovisual works.

Wide consultation ahead of key policy decisions

For the British Film Institute's (BFI) new five-year strategy, BFI2022, the Institute ran a phased communications and consultation strategy so it could listen to valuable feedback from stakeholders and citizens and learn from thousands of people across the UK, focusing on future audiences, learning and skills needs, talent development and overriding priorities for UK-wide, European and international development, and diversity and inclusion.

The BFI2022 strategy included discussions with strategic partners to frame a wide consultation, followed by round-table events, one-to-one meetings and public consultation roadshow events which were held UK-wide and at key European events. An online campaign enabled the BFI to open up the conversation more broadly, including reaching consumer audiences. Nearly 1500 people took part in these events and meetings. BFI engaged with more than 131 000 people through a social media campaign and reached 2.2 million people through all digital channels. The consultation was well received by the press, the industry and the Government.

9. Get the money to invest!

Access to finance is more challenging for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the cultural and creative sectors than for conventional SMEs. Some of the reasons are the intangible nature of their assets and collateral, the limited size of the market and the lack of training (on the part of financial intermediaries) in addressing the sector's specificities.

For this reason, initiatives aiming to support European audiovisual SMEs in accessing finance are to be encouraged. One of these is the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility of the Creative Europe Programme, created to enhance the access to finance of SMEs in the cultural and creative sector (CCS) and operational since 2016. It supports the scaling up of cultural and creative projects and helps the sector in becoming more competitive. In 2018, the Programme received an additional EUR 60 million through the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI).⁹

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/content/eur-60-million-top-cultural-and-creative-sector-guarantee-facility_en



© Creative Europe Programme

Cultural and Creative Sector Guarantee Facility

Private sources of finance, private investors, and crowdfunding activities are also very important instruments of financial support to the audiovisual sector and should be seen as an ideal complement to public subsidies.

The OMC Group recommends that:

- initiatives aiming at facilitating European creative SMEs' access to debt financing – such as the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility (CCS-GF) of the Creative Europe Programme – be strengthened by exploring the development of equity financing for high budget audiovisual projects with high potential to travel across Europe and beyond.

Guarantees and loans for cultural and creative companies

IFCIC is a specialised French credit institution issuing guarantees and granting loans to companies active in the cultural and creative sectors. Initially limited to guaranteeing loans to film producers, IFCIC has gradually opened up to the TV production sector and now covers all sectors of the audiovisual industry and other cultural sectors.

Most recently, IFCIC has also expanded geographically in the film and TV production sectors by offering its guarantee to all producers based in a Creative Europe Programme participating country. Finally, alongside its guarantee tool, IFCIC has recently started offering direct loans to French cultural and creative SMEs. These loans often act as leverage to obtain an additional loan from a traditional bank.

At the end of 2017 IFCIC was bearing close to EUR 1bn of risk (through guarantees and loans), of which EUR 30 million involved European non-French borrowers. These commitments were benefiting more than 400 companies.



10. Assess your impact!

It emerged from the discussions within the OMC Group that only a minority of public funds have developed effective monitoring tools to evaluate the impact of the schemes that they finance. Whilst it has to be acknowledged that such an impact is often intangible and hence hard to assess – for instance when values and cultural diversity are at stake – further efforts need to be made in evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of schemes (in particular ex-post, and specifically in terms of audience results), in order to make the necessary improvements. This implies, of course, that the objectives and targets of any actions should be clearer from the outset in order to produce a baseline on which to base the evaluation.



© Alexander Stankov

Cinema Dom na Kinoto, Sofia (Bulgaria)
after the screening of *The Square*

The OMC Group recommends that:

- public funds consider the development and implementation of efficient monitoring tools to evaluate the impact of the schemes that they finance, so that scheme improvements are informed by their economic and cultural impact;
- national and international organisations active in the field of audiovisual intensify exchanges on setting up appropriate indicators and monitoring tools.

An audience-focused monitoring process

In Norway, all feature films funded by the Norwegian Film Institute (NFI) are evaluated after their national and international release. The producer, director and national distributor participate in a specific meeting along with consultants from the NFI, going through the whole funding process.

There is a special focus on which audiences the project planned to reach and why the film succeeded or did not succeed. The results of these discussions are used to improve the schemes and the process, and also to make the producers more aware of audience strategies.

Annual impact assessments of support measures

Italy's Cinema and Audiovisual Law (220/2016) identifies a number of different types of public intervention in the film and audiovisual sector as well as associated principles and objectives. These provide the foundation for any evaluation of Law 220's impact and the degree to which it has delivered against its objectives.

The Law provides inter alia for the Ministry of Culture to submit an annual report to the Parliament on the implementation status of the interventions provided for by the law. This report must include particular reference to the economic, industrial and employment impacts and the effectiveness of tax benefits, including an evaluation of film and audiovisual sector support through tax incentives.



The way forward

by **Lucia Recalde,**

Head of Unit, Audiovisual Industry and Media Support Programmes, European Commission

The aims of fostering cultural diversity and strengthening the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry are at the core of our daily work and represent the main objectives of Creative Europe MEDIA. There is a clear link between these objectives and the importance of the circulation of European films, and specifically of non-national circulation.

The dialogue within this OMC Group – for which the Commission provided the Secretariat – was extremely lively and fruitful. It contributed to informing the Commission's work in the preparation of the proposal for the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027.¹⁰ Moreover, the Recommendations listed in this document represent an excellent basis on which to build future actions.

I consider, for instance, that a stronger focus on coproductions – which indeed travel better than national productions – must be among our future priorities. Innovation in data collection is another example where I see room for further action at all levels, including the European one. The question of how to make sure that films achieve their audience potential is also crucial, and, in this context, encouraging a promotion-oriented mind-set throughout the whole value chain is pivotal. Last but certainly not least, the issue of gender and empowering the numerous and talented female professionals in Europe's audiovisual sector surely deserves more attention and effort.

This OMC Group has proven to be a form of public policy dialogue able to gather different standpoints and come to concrete conclusions. I would like to thank its Chair, Jeanne Brunfaut, for steering the work of the Group with her energy, expertise, and pragmatism. I would also like to thank every member of the Group for their commitment and contributions.



The audiovisual sector is changing very quickly. This brings new challenges and opportunities, in particular in light of the digital shift. In order to make sure that Europe remains a global leader in this sector, we must further encourage national and transnational synergies. To this end, public policy dialogue at all levels will become ever more crucial. This OMC Group has represented a virtuous example of such dialogue. It is the Commission's intention to make sure that public policy discussions in this field are continued and enhanced.

¹⁰ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3950_en.htm





The experts

Austria	Stefan	Hahn	European Audiovisual Affairs	Federal Chancellery of Austria
Belgium	Jeanne	Brunfaut	Director	Centre du Cinéma & de l'audiovisuel, Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles
Belgium	Nele	Sels	Policy advisor Film	Department Culture, Youth and Media, Flemish Government
Croatia	Tina	Tišljar	Promotion coordinator	Croatian Audiovisual Centre
Cyprus	Despo	Sergiou	Counsellor	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport at the Cyprus Permanent Representation
Estonia	Edith	Sepp	CEO	Estonian Film Institute
Finland	Lasse	Saarinen	CEO	Finnish Film Foundation
France	Julie-Jeanne	Régnauld	Deputy Director European Affairs	Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée
Germany	Els	Hendrix	Film Industry; International Film Affairs	Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media
Greece	Konstantinos	Aivaliotis	Director of Promotion	Hellas Film , Greek Film Centre
Hungary	András	Kálmán	Distribution Expert	Hungarian National Film Fund / Tritonfilm
Hungary	Zsuzsanna	Jung	Director of Distribution and Special Projects	Hungarian National Film Fund
Ireland	Teresa	McGrane		Irish Film Board
Italy	Bruno	Zambardino	Direction General Cinema	Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities
Latvia	Dita	Rietuma	Director of National Film Centre of Latvia	National Film Centre of Latvia
Lithuania	Gerda	Leonavičienė	Senior Advisor	Lithuanian Film Centre
Malta	Susan	Ronald	Manager	Malta Film Commission
Netherlands	Anita	Németh	Attaché Culture and Audiovisual Affairs	Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the European Union
Poland	Krzysztof	Jankowski	Head Expert	Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
Portugal	Vitor	Pinheiro		Portuguese Institute for Cinema and Audiovisual
Romania	Irina Margareta	Nistor	Film specialist	representing the Ministry of Culture and National Identity
Slovakia	Miroslav	Ulman		Slovak Film Institute
Slovenia	Nataša	Bučar	Managing director	Slovenian Film Centre
Spain	Araceli	Gozalo	Counsellor	ICAA
Sweden	Kristin	Engstedt	Head of Distribution & Screening	The Swedish Film Institute
United Kingdom	Carol	Comley	Head of Film Policy	British Film Institute (BFI)
Norway	Dag	Asbjørnsen	Head of Section, International Relations	Norwegian Film Institute

European movies on the move - Ten actions for better circulation across Europe

Luxembourg: The Publications Office of the European Union

2019 – 24 p., 21 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 978-92-79-99999-4

doi:10.2759/97362

