

Brussels, 21 January 2021

A WELCOME BUDGETARY INCREASE FOR CREATIVE EUROPE/MEDIA, AN ESSENTIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE RECOVERY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE EUROPEAN FILM AND AUDIOVISUAL SECTOR IN COVID-19 TIMES

As organisations working across the European film and audiovisual sector, we represent film and TV authors, screenwriters, directors, producers, sales agents, publishers and distributors of films both offline and online, cinema operators, and VOD platforms. We would like to welcome the budgetary increase of the Creative Europe Programme resulting in a total envelope of €2.2 billion, which reflects the importance of Europe's cultural and creative industries. We would like to warmly thank Members of the European Parliament, the European Commission's MEDIA Unit and the Council for their continued support and for securing this important result.

The consequent budgetary increase for the Creative Europe MEDIA sub-programme will provide key support to the European film and audiovisual sector in continuing to bring unique stories to European citizens and in facing the consequences of COVID-19.

Our eco-system has been rightfully recognised as one of the hardest hit by the pandemic and health & safety precautionary measures implemented by national governments. It is therefore crucial that the MEDIA strand of the Creative Europe Programme has the means to support the film and audiovisual sector in getting back on its feet, for the sake of its authors, talents, companies, workers, audiences and European citizens alike.

Since 1991, the MEDIA Programme has been instrumental in supporting the European film and audiovisual sector to become increasingly culturally and creatively diverse. There is no doubt that it has assisted and facilitated the development of the cultural and creative industries, through proactively supporting the creation of markets and audiences for European content across Europe and beyond. It has had a vital role for independent audiovisual creation across Europe, fostering creative freedom, diversity in storytelling, and allowing smaller production countries to find their own unique creative voices. It has also

supported the sector in its digital transition – which started around 20 years ago with the digitization of shootings, post-production, cinemas, publishing films and AV content on digital carriers such as DVD and Blu-ray, and the early days of online content promotion.

MEDIA will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2021. Its significant results – as listed below – must be built upon and used to guide the working programmes of the next generation of the programme:

- Supporting independent producers and small production companies across the EU in the development process, encouraging animation, creative documentaries and fiction projects for theatrical release, television broadcasting and online distribution.
- Respectively through support to training / networking for authors and to development for producers, helping developing concepts and writing unique scripts which have resulted in successful films for theatrical release and/or TV dramas
- Providing national film distributors with funding for the acquisition and promotion (including marketing, printing, advertising, subtitling and dubbing) of European non-national films, therefore enhancing their circulation across Europe;
- Supporting cinemas via the Europa Cinemas network and the European Cinema Nights;
- Providing international sales companies with funding for the acquisition and marketing of non-national European films;
- Supporting the emergence of a great creative and geographical diversity of European productions and co-productions in both the film and TV sector;
- Contributing towards the training of more than 20,000 skilled audiovisual professionals, enabling them to adapt to new challenges and technologies.
- Boosting the circulation of European works in the European Union and beyond, exposing and promoting the best of European film across all distribution platforms (cinemas, DVD, TV and online);
- Promoting European works via film festivals and film markets, both in countries participating in the MEDIA Programme as well as third countries;

- Developing transnational projects on film education, online distribution, festivals, professional training and innovative practices, which respond proactively to the digital environment.

These impressive achievements show that the MEDIA sub-programme, thanks to its effective and tailored spending, has been of great benefit to the European audiences and citizens while also supporting and contributing to the growth of the European film and audiovisual sector which employs more than 1 million Europeans and supports an additional 1 million indirect jobs¹.

More recently, however, the COVID-19 pandemic has dealt the sector a devastating blow and has impacted the whole value-chain. The ever-changing need to respond and adhere to government recommendations - very often given at short notice - has resulted in massive business and employment uncertainty, bringing significant losses in revenues, and risking irreparable damage to its entire infrastructure. Lockdowns have stopped down offline distribution and exhibition activities - resulting in a no-income reality during long periods - while fostering the uptake of online distribution models. However, the increase in consumer spending on online access to films and AV works has not compensated the massive losses experienced by the rest of the ecosystem.

Access to support via MEDIA will therefore be crucial in creating and bringing unique stories to European audiences for years to come. The film and audiovisual value-chain is made up of a variety of industries and sectors, all of whom contribute greatly to the diversity and quality of Europe's cultural offer and will be all the more relevant after the crisis. These stakeholders should therefore remain front-and-centre as we look ahead to the future of Creative Europe MEDIA – more details provided in annex.

It is now clear that the increased funding for the Creative Europe Programme and its MEDIA strand will, more than ever, be key for the survival, sustainability and future economic growth of the European film and audiovisual sector and, consequently, its important contributions to European and national economies, employment, diversity and cultural identity.

¹ EY Study on the economic and employment contribution of the film and audiovisual sector to the EU economy (2020) – www.avdata4europe.eu

Signatories



CEPI – European Audiovisual Production

CICAE – International Confederation of Arthouse cinemas

Eurocinema – Film Producers' Association

Europa Cinemas – Network of Cinema Theaters for the Circulation of European Films

Europa Distribution – European Network of Independent Film Publishers and Distributors

Europa International – European Network of European Sales Agents

Eurovod – Association of European VoD Platforms

FERA – Federation of European Film Directors

FIAD – International Federation of Film Distributors' Associations

FIAPF – International Federation of Film Producers' Associations

FSE – Federation of screenwriters in Europe

IVF – International Video Federation

SAA – Society of Audiovisual Authors

UNIC – International Union of Cinemas