

MESSAGE TO MEPS:

Strasbourg, 7 October 2025

Enforce EU values and principles

The values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and respect for human rights – including those of minorities – are the foundation of European society. They also underpin the EU's unique cultural model, which has long supported creativity and diversity in an evolving audiovisual sector. But in 2025, these values are under pressure from both inside and outside the Union.

If Europe does not act, its cultural model risks being hollowed out. The European Parliament must stand firm as the guardian of EU principles, ensuring that the Commission and Council stay true to their mandate. This means defending authors' rights, cultural diversity, and artistic freedom – particularly in the face of disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence.

A CALL TO ACTION

1. **Save European culture:** European creativity is a legacy to protect, not a commodity to trade or give away
2. **Stop AI theft!** AI without authors' consent and compensation is cultural theft disguised as innovation
1. **Guarantee fair remuneration to audiovisual authors:** No royalties = no future for European storytelling
2. **Protect artistic freedom:** When art is censored, democracy withers; when its free, democracy thrives.

Europe's audiovisual authors are united in calling for your support. The European Parliament has long been the strongest ally of artists. In this moment of unprecedented pressure, it must raise its voice louder than ever – to defend creativity, diversity, and the democratic.

SAVE EUROPEAN CULTURE

European creativity is a legacy to protect,
not a commodity to trade or give away

Culture is not a bargaining chip — it is Europe's creative DNA. Yet it is being eroded by both vague EU policy and aggressive corporate tactics. The Commission's proposed AgoraEU programme (2028–2034) leaves budget allocations for audiovisual support dangerously undefined, handing the Commission unchecked discretion. Meanwhile, Netflix's lawsuit against Belgium over the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) is a clear attempt to intimidate Member States into backing down from cultural investment requirements.

MEPs must:

- Stand firm, defend investment in culture and your own active say as co-legislator on the allocation of the EU budget to the audiovisual sector.
- The AVMS Directive must be strengthened, not weakened, in its upcoming revision.
- Ensure that support to cultural diversity is non-negotiable in all EU trade agreements. European stories are not commodities to be traded away.

STOP AI THEFT!

AI without authors' rights is cultural theft disguised as innovation

Audiovisual authors have always embraced innovation, but they cannot survive if their works are exploited without consent and payment. Today, AI companies scrape creative works to train their models, without consent or compensation. The result? A cycle of cultural impoverishment, collapsing incomes, and a flood of synthetic content that undermines human creativity. The Commission's weak AI Act implementation package fails to impose meaningful obligations on developers. A blanket copyright exception under text and data mining undermines the Berne Convention, strips authors of negotiation power, and legitimises what is essentially cultural theft.

MEPs must:

- Act to reaffirm the binding force of the Berne Convention, to which the EU and its Member States are party. Don't wait until Trump withdraws from Berne entirely and impose million-dollar copyright registration fees on European rightholders.
- Persuade the AI companies that transparency, authorisation and remuneration are the most cost-effective means of ensuring high-quality LLMs that serve people.
- Mandate the involvement of collective management organisations in any AI licensing framework. Their expertise in managing large repertoires and complex rights across borders makes them indispensable for fair, efficient solutions.

GUARANTEE FAIR REMUNERATION TO AUDIOVISUAL AUTHORS

No royalties = no future for European storytelling

Unlike music authors, audiovisual authors rarely receive royalties when their works are broadcast or streamed. This inequity persists despite Directive 2019/790, which enshrines the principle of appropriate and proportionate remuneration (Article 18). Too often, contractual “freedom” is used to bypass this right.

MEPs must:

- Put pressure on Member States to enforce Article 18 in a meaningful way that will provide royalties to audiovisual authors, including via unwaivable right to remuneration and collective rights management.
- Reassert the binding nature of Articles 18–23 and start looking at their improvement in relation to the Directive review in 2026.
- Close the loophole in Recital 73. Lump-sum payments must remain the rare exception, never the rule. They may only apply where an author’s role is minor. They can never apply to screenwriters or directors, whose creative contribution is central and indispensable to audiovisual works.

PROTECT ARTISTIC FREEDOM

When art is censored, democracy withers;
when its free, democracy thrives

Artistic freedom is not a luxury – it is the lifeblood of democracy. Yet across the EU, censorship, political interference, and attacks on cultural works are becoming normalised. Authors, funders, and public broadcasters increasingly self-censor out of fear for their livelihoods.

MEPs must:

- Systematically monitor and condemn attacks on artistic freedom. Actively support authors at risk. Defending the right to create freely means protecting the voices that make you uncomfortable, because comfortable art has never changed the world.
- Create mechanisms for rapid response to threats against audiovisual authors across Member States.

ABOUT

FERA

The Federation of European Screen Directors represents film and TV directors at European level, with 46 directors' associations as members from 31 countries. Founded in 1980, FERA speaks for more than 20,000 European screen directors, representing their cultural, creative and economic interests.

EU Transparency Register ID: 29280842236-21



FSE

The Federation of Screenwriters in Europe is a network of national and regional associations, guilds and unions of writers for the screen in Europe, created in June 2001. It comprises 32 organisations from 26 countries, representing 10,000 screenwriters in Europe.

EU Transparency Register ID: 642670217507-74



SAA

The Society of Audiovisual Authors is the association of European collective management organisations representing audiovisual authors. Its 33 members in 25 countries manage rights for over 174,000 film, television and multimedia European screenwriters and directors.

EU Transparency register ID: 99336382936-11

