



Statement – Federation of Screenwriters in Europe (FSE)

Cannes 2026: Beyond the chilling effect.

Brussels, 21st May 2026

The 2026 Cannes Film Festival will be remembered as the unintended stage of a demonstration of the growing threats to freedom of creation and expression in Europe.

Seven days ago, an open letter signed by six hundred professionals of French cinema warned against the grip of a single shareholder over the leading private financier of French cinema, because the shareholder's statements and decisions reveal an explicit ideological agenda. Four days later, in *Le Monde*, two professional organisations of producers publicly disavowed the open letter, worried about the consequences for their ongoing negotiations with the financier. Finally, two days later, in Cannes, the president of the financier publicly announced that the company would no longer work with the signatories of the open letter — even though, as president, he embodies a legal entity designed to be independent from its shareholders.

The chronology speaks for itself.

Suggestions that the concerns voiced by the six hundred were premature or inappropriate were invalidated in real time in Cannes, by exactly those they were designating.

Four cases in which works were affected by decisions attributed to the same shareholder — in their financing, their content or their distribution — have since been documented. Amongst them is the recent testimony of director Christophe Honoré, published in the magazine *Trois Couleurs*, reporting statements directly attributed to the same shareholder who personally intervened in the film validation committees, leading to the exclusion of two films from Canal+ main funding — one dealing with gay characters, the other with a trade unionist struggle: « *No queers, no trade unionists* ».

Four cases. Five words. The diagnosis no longer requires comment.

The Federation of Screenwriters in Europe emphasizes that this pattern is recognizable throughout Europe. [The Right to Write report](#), published by the FSE in 2026, methodically documents its Hungarian, Polish, Slovak, Slovenian and Bulgarian variants of the same type of economic entity, using the same methods. Acquiring the media and cultural industries to intervene in the creation of their content. Dissenting voices are economically sanctioned while every demand for stronger legal protection of creators is framed, through a rhetoric of disqualification, as a liberty-killing or archaic relic of the past.



Federation of Screenwriters in Europe aisbl – n°0478.454.478

FSE c/o UNI-Europa, rue Joseph II, 40, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

office@federationscreenwriters.eu

federationscreenwriters.eu



Under cover of moral principles, these entities deploy purely discretionary decisions serving a targeted ideological agenda. Principles which they invoke only to contradict — such as editorial diversity.

The FSE expresses its full and unwavering solidarity with the six hundred signatories of the open letter, with all the professionals targeted by the publicly announced retaliation, and with all European authors affected by any form of censorship.

At both national and European level, laws have long been established to protect freedom of creation and freedom of expression, and to prohibit discrimination on grounds of political opinions, trade union activities or sexual orientation. The only remaining question is whether these laws will be applied with the same seriousness with which they were written.

The Federation of Screenwriters in Europe

About the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe (FSE)

FSE is a network of national and regional associations, guilds and unions of screenwriters, established in 2001. It comprises 31 organisations from 27 countries, representing more than 10,000 screenwriters across Europe. FSE defends and promotes the cultural, professional and economic interests of screenwriters before European institutions and within the audiovisual industry.

PRESS CONTACT

office@federationsscreenwriters.eu



Federation of Screenwriters in Europe aisbl – n°0478.454.478

FSE c/o UNI-Europa, rue Joseph II, 40, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

office@federationscreenwriters.eu

federationscreenwriters.eu