

EUROPEAN SURVEY ON THE REMUNERATION OF AUDIOVISUAL AUTHORS

European Film and TV Authors

THEIR EARNINGS AND WORKING LIFE

Research commissioned by BVR Services GmbH from CuDOS at University of Ghent on behalf of FERA – Federation of European Film Directors and FSE – Federation of Screenwriters in Europe, with the financial support of AIPA, ALCS, VG Bild Kunst, LIRA, Norsk Filmforbund, SAA, SACD, SGAE, SSA.

THE SURVEY

1

Until now, no data has been available at EU-level on audiovisual authors' remuneration. This report presents the results from the first ever, comprehensive, Europe-wide research into the economic and social situation of European audiovisual authors.

The survey addresses the members of 57 professional organisations in 26 European countries who are members of the European Federation of Film Directors (FERA) and the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe (FSE) as well as some collective management organisations (CMOs) who are members of the Society of Audiovisual Authors (SAA). Some additional professional organisations for other audiovisual authors were also included¹.

The project was conducted by CuDOS' team from Ghent University's Department of Sociology.

• Categories of authors :

In total, 3,217 respondents which include screenwriters, directors, and other audiovisual authors.

• **26 countries covered** : Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK. The Netherlands were not included in this study because they had a separate remuneration study in 2017, but their data was made available for comparison.

• **Good response rate** : 23%

• **Representative sample** of members of professional organisations in European countries, meaning that established authors are slightly overrepresented, but nevertheless with a good spread of authors in different career stages (22% emerging and 49% established directors; 17% emerging and 53% established screenwriters). The larger share of males in the dataset (68% for directors, 60% for screenwriters) reflects the situation in the field.

Source : European Audiovisual Observatory

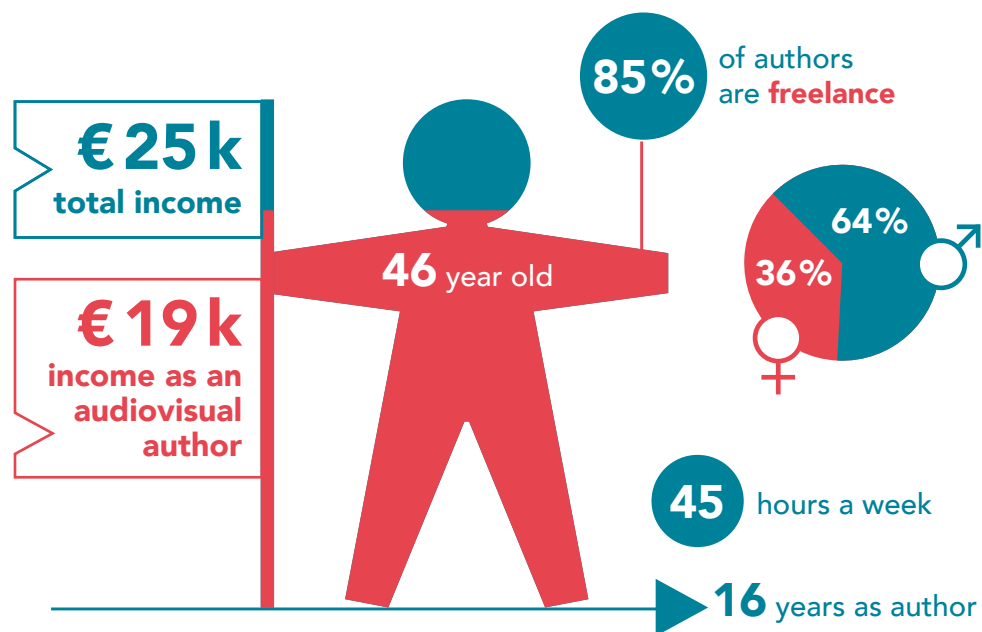
EY study *Creating Growth – Measuring Cultural and Creative Markets in the EU*, December 2014.

THE CONTEXT

A little over 30,000 contracts are signed each year for the writing and directing of 11,600 episodes of television fiction and 1,700 feature length films (including 600 feature length documentaries)². This copyright material is at the base of an industry that employs more than 1.2 million Europeans and turns over € 107.3 billion³. Film and television programmes are, on the one hand, the most diverse and on the other the most popular of contemporary arts.

Yet often writers and directors raise concerns about job insecurity, instability of income and poorly paid or even free work. FERA, FSE and SAA believe that this profoundly undermines their capacity to do their best work, to make their best contribution to European cultures and to facilitate the economic growth which the European audiovisual industries are so capable of. This study was conducted to provide facts and figures for this ongoing debate.

2 WHO IS THE MEDIAN EUROPEAN AUDIOVISUAL AUTHOR ?



- The profile of a median audiovisual author is 46 years old, has a Master's Degree, has been working as an author for 16 years.
- He/she works 45 hours a week and 80% of their income is generated through work as an audiovisual author.
- He/she earns € 19,000 after tax from work as an audiovisual author.
- Including all sources of personal income, he/she earns a total of € 25,000 after tax.
- 85% of audiovisual authors work freelance.
- 36% of the audiovisual authors are female, 64% are male.

3 WHO IS THE MEDIAN EUROPEAN AUDIOVISUAL AUTHOR ?

Profile of male and female directors, screenwriters and other audiovisual authors (median values)

	DIRECTOR		SCREENWRITER		OTHER AV AUTHOR	
	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE
▶ Total personal income after tax	€ 18,234	€ 26,000	€ 27,000	€ 30,000	€ 23,000	€ 25,000
▶ Working hours	45	45	40	40	45	45
▶ % share of income from work as an audiovisual author	55%	60%	95%	90%	66%	90%
▶ Income from work as an audiovisual author after tax	€ 12,500	€ 18,000	€ 23,500	€ 25,000	€ 18,000	€ 24,000
▶ % income from work as an audiovisual author from secondary sources*	5%	10%	10%	11%	-	-
▶ Level of experience: Years as author	13 yrs	17 yrs	12 yrs	14 yrs	15 yrs	19 yrs
▶ Age	44	48	44	46	45	48

▶ Numbers presented here are European medians. Audiovisual authors from low production capacity countries are likely to have considerably lower incomes.

* This percentage is calculated for directors and screenwriters. Other audiovisual authors are excluded because they are almost never paid through secondary payments as they are not widely recognized as audiovisual authors across Europe.

AUDIOVISUAL AUTHORS' INCOME STRUCTURE

Audiovisual authors, by definition, create copyright or droits d'auteur by creating original work.

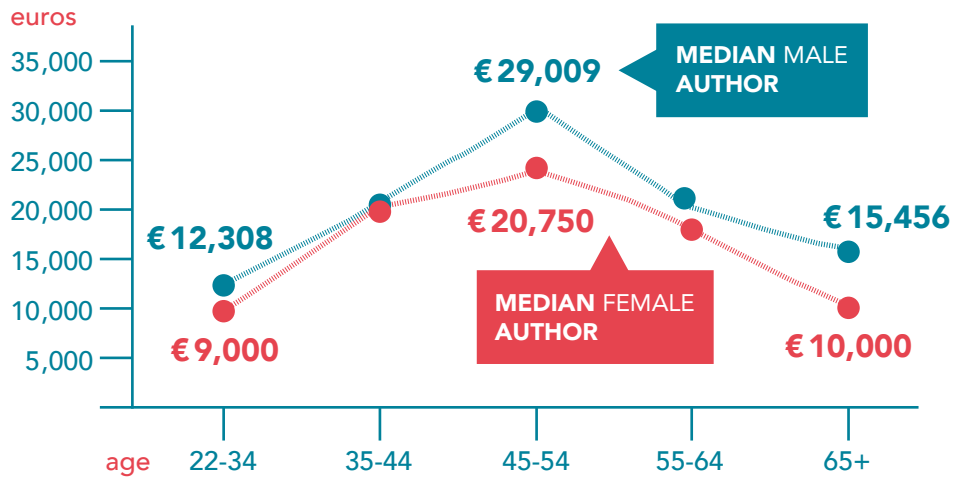
Varying considerably from one Member State to another, authors generally have two main sources of income – **upfront payments** at contract signature or during the life of the contract, that can include their work in creation, payment for the transfer of rights to contractual counterpart, advance payment or buy-out for share of future exploitation revenues; and, secondly, subsequent **secondary payments** for repeat screenings of the work (e.g. share of exploitation revenues), and compensation for copyright exceptions.

This essential second source of income stems from two major rights that are collectively managed and result in secondary payments for audiovisual authors in Europe: cable retransmission (Directive 93/83/EEC) and private copying in the countries where levies exist. On a country by country basis, other secondary rights are administered collectively and result in additional payments which are rather important for TV broadcasting in particular (on-demand uses, video sales, rental and public lending, educational uses, etc.).

Secondary payments provide a continuous stream of income to audiovisual authors over the years, based on the success of their work. They even out their income flow in a very unstable environment, and often produce an income in later stages of their careers.

4 WHAT DOES A CAREER PATH OF A EUROPEAN AUDIOVISUAL AUTHOR LOOK LIKE ?

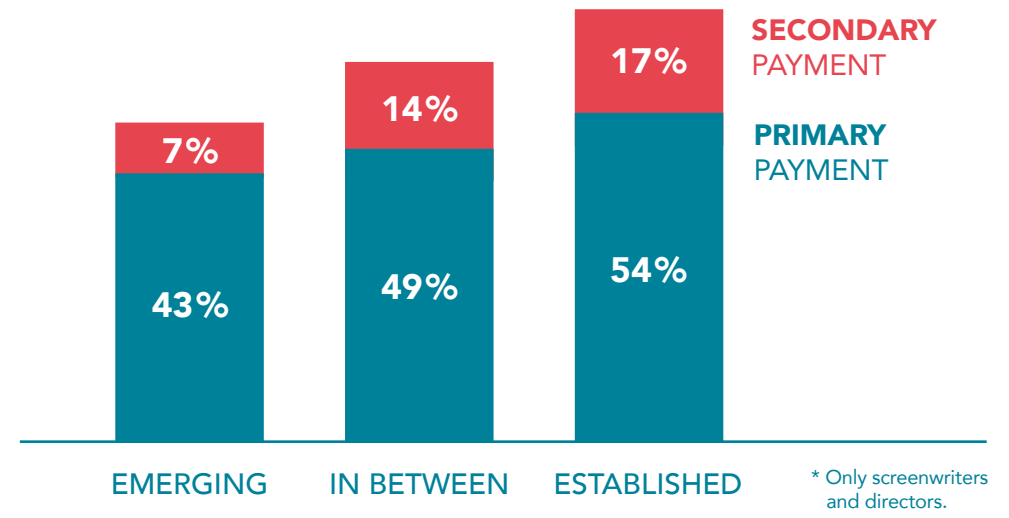
Median annual income from work as an audiovisual author after tax in 2016



- Both male and female audiovisual authors have their financial peak around the age of 50.
- The median income from their work as audiovisual authors after tax is €20,750 for females and €29,009 for males.
- This is the income of older respondents who are still in the business after 20 years. Both younger and older audiovisual authors have to get by with significantly less. In older age categories, this is especially problematic for female audiovisual authors.
- Female authors start at the same income level as their male colleagues, but their peak income as well as their income in later years is significantly lower than the income of their male counterparts.

5 IMPORTANCE OF SECONDARY INCOME AS CAREER DEVELOPS

Proportion of total net income coming from primary and secondary payments according to status position *



- Continuing distribution of audiovisual work and payments originating mainly from CMOs increase during an author's career. An emerging director or screenwriter receives 7% of his total income from secondary payments. This increases to 14% for in between authors and 17% for established authors.
- This emphasises the important role of secondary payments which are not only an essential aspect of a screenwriter's or director's annual income but also help to even out payments to authors in between contracts. Additionally, their importance increases in the later stage of their careers and in retirement.
- Audiovisual authors also raise issues regarding the online exploitation of audiovisual works. 86% of audiovisual authors indicate that income from these sources are too low.

6 UNPAID WORK, LONG HOURS AND INSTABILITY OF INCOME

7 HOW DO THEY MAKE ENDS MEET ?

UNPAID WORK

Significant amounts of unpaid work are usual, **especially during the development and promotion phases**. 38% of directors indicate that they did not receive remuneration for project development they undertook in 2016 and 36% were only sometimes remunerated. This means that only 26% of directors are always remunerated for project development. 65% of directors also did not receive any remunerations for promotional work and 15% were only sometimes remunerated.

LONG HOURS

Respondents noted that long hours of work are the norm: half of the authors work **more than 45 hours a week**.

INSTABILITY OF INCOME

25% of authors indicate that they have difficulties making ends meet with their income. This is especially a problem for emerging authors, 44% of them indicate that they encounter financial difficulties.

Audiovisual authors usually have two or three additional sources of income.

OTHER WORK IN THE AUDIOVISUAL SECTOR

WORK OUTSIDE THE AUDIOVISUAL SECTOR

RELIANCE ON PARTNER'S INCOME

13,5% of audiovisual authors are satisfied with their job security (65% are explicitly dissatisfied).

Only 30% are confident about their future. **74%** are financially insecure.

47% indicate that they would not survive as an audiovisual author without income from other sources.

53% of directors and **48%** of screenwriters also teach or give workshops.

34% of directors and **42%** of screenwriters have another job outside of the audiovisual sector.

WHAT DO AUTHORS THEMSELVES SAY?

Asked to comment themselves about their situation, two main strands emerged.

Authors are committed to continuing in their chosen profession – 83% (4 out of 5) of audiovisual authors indicate that “even if the life of an audiovisual author is insecure, I wouldn't want to give it up”, but that it is extremely difficult to negotiate a good contract.

66% (2 out of 3; 62% of directors and 73% of screenwriters) indicate that it is difficult for an audiovisual author to “stand up for your rights”.

81% of audiovisual authors indicate that it is difficult for a young author to bargain a good contract and **56%** find it also difficult for an established author.

22% indicate that they never get space to negotiate a contract or an agreement.

This weak bargaining position and absence of contractual freedom is the cause of poor pay and financial instability in Europe's audiovisual authors.

JOB PERCEPTION AND JOB SATISFACTION

66%

It's difficult for an author to "stand up for your rights"

83%

Even though the life of an autor is insecure, they wouldn't want to give it up

14%

Satisfied with their job security

74%

As an author, financial insecurity is huge

47%

Without income from other sources (jobs, family support...), they would not survive

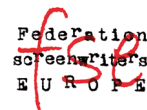
30%

Satisfied with their future as an author

PROJECT PARTNERS



FERA Founded in 1980, the Federation of European Film Directors gathers 43 organisations from 33 countries. It speaks for approximately 20,000 European screen directors, representing their cultural, creative and economic interests at national and EU level. @Film_directors



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 25 members from 20 countries, representing more than 7,000 screenwriters in Europe. @ScreenwritersEU



SPONSORS



BILD-KUNST



**EUROPEAN SURVEY
ON THE REMUNERATION
OF AUDIOVISUAL AUTHORS**

European Film and TV Authors

**THEIR EARNINGS
AND WORKING LIFE**