



FERA

Federation of European Film Directors

EU Filmmakers Call For A Coordinated Response To Existential Threat To European Audiovisual Creation

May 18, 2020

Ahead of the May 19, 2020 video conference, we call on European Ministers of Culture to seek a coordinated response to the COVID-19 crisis affecting the cultural and creative sectors, and to **consider a holistic approach in preserving the European audiovisual ecosystem.**

The EU audiovisual sector faces common challenges with the cultural and creative sectors and the European economy at large. With our partners from the audiovisual and culture and creative sectors' value chain, we have already raised a number of key issues to tackle urgently as this unprecedented crisis unfolds:

- avoid creating inequality between employed and self-employed in emergency measures, which would be [damaging for freelancing authors](#);
- immediate [challenges faced by audiovisual production](#) harboring a vast majority of freelancers and SMEs;
- need for coordinated [support to the entire audiovisual ecosystem](#), as each segment of the value chain is highly interconnected;
- need for [ambitious EU budgetary measures to support the cultural and creative sectors'](#) recovery.

We very much welcome the expressions of support from decision-makers at national and EU level, and urge all involved to take into account **two essential elements at the heart of the existential challenge faced by European audiovisual creation** while considering the short, mid and long-term consequences on the ongoing crisis.

1. Production of new works at risk now and in the long term

In addition to the massive challenges to infrastructure already faced by freelance directors, cast, crew and production companies, resuming production of new works will be a challenge, both practically and financially, as long as social distancing measures in place.

Even if temporary solutions can be found to resume production, social distancing and travelling limitations applied to filming new scripted content – film, TV series – will significantly increase costs and risks, consequently leading to a limited number of productions taking place for an indefinite period.

These new conditions on set will also impact what is visible on screens for a significant period of time, as production cycles extend from months to years: storytelling will have to change significantly

in order to ensure a sufficient level of quality of new works coming to the screens, and a threshold for minimum conditions for creative work to effectively take place must be discussed by all parties involved.

On the long term, the effect of the crisis on infrastructure and investment will determine the possibility for new productions to exist. Audiovisual works require significant investments through a composite of various elements including co-production, broadcasting/ on-demand platform investment, public funding, tax incentives, etc. High production costs entail important financial risks, which in turn can lead to a risk-averse approach to the creative process.

Co-productions and public funding are essential mechanisms to ensure diversity of storytelling by a wide range of European creative voices: they must both be preserved and strengthened in order for the production of new European audiovisual works to still be possible in the near future.

2. Promotion of European works at risk

Without promotion and visibility, European films and TV series are lost in the sea of contents available through various media, including online.

Distributors, sales agents and festivals are essential players for European audiovisual works to meet their audiences locally, in European countries as well as internationally: these operators are facing equally massive challenges to their infrastructure as other more visible segments of the value chain and require the same level of support.

To exist and get a chance to meet their audience, our works require both of these segments of the value chain to overcome the ongoing crisis. We believe that this will be possible through sustained cooperation between EU and national level actions to **strengthen the cornerstones of European audiovisual creation: authorship, co-production, promotion of European audiovisual works and media regulation** providing a level playing field for the entire ecosystem.

ABOUT US

Founded in 1980, FERA represents the independent voice of European film and TV directors in Brussels. With 46 organizations as members from 34 countries, it speaks for more than 20,000 European film and TV directors, representing their cultural, creative and economic interests at national and EU level.

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EU Transparency Register Id No. 29280842236-21

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