



Press release:

EFAD expresses deep concern over proposed 30% cut to Agora EU, threatening Europe's cultural sovereignty and audiovisual future.

The proposed reduction of 30% of an already insufficient Agora EU budget will be deeply detrimental to Europe's cultural, civil society and audiovisual sectors at a time when they are already facing unprecedented economic, technological and geopolitical challenges. EFAD urges the Member States to safeguard the EU's investment in European culture and to reject the proposed budget reduction.

The MEDIA sub-programme is a success-story, a hallmark for film, audiovisual and gaming sector. It is much more than extra funding: sometimes, it's only avenue for films to travel. As heads of national film agencies, we see first-hand the impact of MEDIA on our audiovisual sectors and their interaction with the wider European ecosystems. EU funding plays a unique and irreplaceable role in complementing national support, enabling European cooperation, enhancing visibility of works, their connection to audiences, and generating opportunities that individual Member States cannot deliver alone. Weakening this European infrastructure that makes our film visible will diminish the effectiveness of our national policies and investments.

Any reduction will create a funding gap that national agencies simply cannot absorb, with particularly severe consequences for smaller markets and countries with limited production capacity. The result would be a profound and lasting impact on the visibility, accessibility and circulation of European films across borders, undermining decades of collective efforts to bring European works to European and international audiences.

At a time when global competition for audiences is intensifying and European independent producers are under increasing pressure, reducing the EU's investment will

drastically weaken Europe's capacity to sustain its own creative ecosystem, diminish the competitiveness of our audiovisual companies, and further increase our dependence on non-European market players. These challenges call for more European investment, not less.

European creation, its diverse audiovisual ecosystem, is a core element of Europe's strategic autonomy, narrative sovereignty and democratic resilience: it ensures that European stories are created and circulated from European perspectives, fostering social cohesion, promoting linguistic and cultural diversity, and supporting a structurally pluralistic market.

There is a fundamental contradiction between the Union's stated ambition to strengthen its sovereignty and resilience and the proposed budgetary approach: How can we talk about European sovereignty if we are not prepared to invest in our own stories, the people who tell them and their ability to travel and connect with audiences worldwide? Can we ask European films to exist globally while making it harder for them to exist even within Europe?

We fully recognise the difficult budgetary choices facing Member States in the negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework. However, culture and audiovisual creation cannot be treated as expendable priorities. Access, visibility and circulation that Agora EU will support are essential if European audiovisual works are to fulfil their cultural, democratic and economic potential. A stronger Agora EU is a stronger Europe.

We therefore call on the Member States to urgently oppose the proposed reductions, to defend a strong, ambitious and adequately funded Agora EU programme, and to ensure that the next EU budget reflects the strategic importance of Europe's cultural and audiovisual sectors.

This is not merely a question of cultural funding. It is a question of the kind of Europe we want to build, and whether Europe is prepared to invest in its own cultural future.

About EFAD:

EFAD brings together 38 national film and audiovisual agencies from European countries. EFAD membership covers the European Union countries, with two members from Belgium, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. EFAD members are government or government associated public bodies, in charge of national funding for the audiovisual sector and with the responsibility to advise or regulate on all aspects of audiovisual policies.

EFAD members work to ensure that local cultures and diverse language communities see their lives reflected in films. They aim for impactful, culturally rich movies to touch hearts and minds, benefiting society across Europe. EFAD members support film, film education and storytelling to protect freedom of expression and promote film culture, ensuring that filmmaking, film heritage, and cinema as an art form are accessible and relevant to everyone.

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