

Joint Film and Audiovisual Sector COVID-19 Statement – 16 April 2020



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The film and audiovisual sector in Europe calls for **urgent action by EU and Member State decision-makers** to safeguard the future of the sector in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, following in the footsteps of initial emergency measures announced at national level, including by film funds and other bodies.

Why does it matter? We are facing a profound crisis for creativity and culture in Europe – for businesses and for individuals. Our sector is at the heart of Europe’s cultural, creative and social identity and a key contributor to the European economy and employment; immediate intervention is therefore crucial and indeed strategic for European and national unity going forward. Without a firm commitment from European and national leaders, the film and audiovisual sector in Europe will not recover from the unprecedented impact of the health crisis.

Our sector could play a major role in the healing and recovery process that our societies are going to face in the months and years ahead – but only if its basic infrastructure can be saved.

Why is film/AV specific? The sector is characterized by its project-based nature and irregular business cycles - a vast interconnected eco-system from project development through creation, financing, production, exhibition, distribution (online and offline), and all forms of broadcasting. The sector’s activities are driven by numerous individual creators, entrepreneurs, companies of all sizes, including many SMEs and freelancers that have all been thrown into a social and economic crisis as a result of the pandemic. Each segment of the sector from project development, financing, production through exhibition, distribution and broadcasting will have its own specific challenges going forward. Different impacts are experienced in different Member States, including in different parts of each individual Member State.

The negative impact will not stop when normal activities resume in our societies; rather it will continue through the medium- to long-term due to the long development/lead time nature of the sector.

Although gathering around screens at home has contributed to a sense of unity during the crisis, this has not stopped the current wave of mass job and income losses in the film and audiovisual sector, nor will it translate into recovery of investments, simple resumption of interrupted production, exhibition or distribution activities, or indeed funding for development of future projects.

What is needed? Urgent financial support now and in the months to come to safeguard the existing film and audiovisual eco-system and the future of the sector in Europe which is suffering grievously because of valid social distancing measures and related societal consequences. The crisis in our sector will be felt way beyond the confinement period.

The film and audiovisual sector in Europe can be a conduit and a catalyst for the debates and discussions which will be essential in Europe’s democracies as its citizens come to terms with the consequences of this unprecedented crisis and lay the groundwork for new optimism and confidence in our shared European future.

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