AgoraEU and the future of the MEDIA Programme: Europe's ambitions cannot survive a 30% budget cut

We, the undersigned organisations representing Europe's cinema and audiovisual sectors, call on EU Member States and the Irish Presidency to reject the proposed cuts to AgoraEU and secure a budget consistent with its objectives under the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework.

We recognise the pressure on public finances and the difficult choices facing governments. But these constraints cannot justify disproportionately cutting investment in Europe's cultural diversity, audiovisual competitiveness and democratic resilience.

The trajectory of negotiations is deeply alarming. According to the press *(1)*, the 4% reduction for AgoraEU budget proposed under the Cypriot Presidency has become a 30% cut under the Irish Presidency: €6.0 billion against the Commission's proposed €8.58 billion *(2)*. While the overall EU budget faces a reduction of around 8%, AgoraEU would bear a grossly disproportionate sacrifice which will negatively impact the reinforcement of the MEDIA programme.

The transition from Creative Europe (Culture, MEDIA and cross sectorial strands) and CERV to AgoraEU must come with resources that reflect both inflation and the new programme's broader responsibilities and financing for the new proposed political vision. Yet the Council's proposed envelope would provide only around €1 billion more than the combined 2021–2027 budgets of those existing programmes.

Against this baseline, we estimate that approximately €600 million would be needed merely to offset accumulated inflation during the current programming period and projected inflation over 2028–2034 for the existing MEDIA strand alone. This would absorb most of the apparent increase simply to preserve MEDIA's purchasing power before addressing inflation affecting culture and CERV, let alone financing expanded support for news media.

A 30% cut to the Commission's proposal would be devastating for the operators of the sectors falling under the future AgoraEU: in particular, in a context of higher costs, it would jeopardize European cinema and audiovisual operators' capacity to create, reach audiences across EU borders and project European stories across the world in a competitive marketplace, while they are responding to the dual environmental and digital transitions.

1 Source : Contexte – AgoraEU perd 30 % de son budget au Conseil de l'UE - 12th October 2026
2 Source : Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034 - Negotiating Box. Figures are quoted in current prices

The European film and audiovisual sector assessed that a minimum €3.5 billion allocation for a distinct film and audiovisual MEDIA strand – as a well-documented European success story - within the new AgoraEU for 2028–2034 would provide the scale and predictability necessary to protect what has been built over the past 35 years, strengthen Europe's competitiveness and ensure that the programme remains capable of responding to the challenges and opportunities of the next decade.

A 30% cut to the Commission's proposal would finally conflict with the direction established by the Council itself. Its conclusions of 28 November 2025 *(3)* – less than one year ago - recognised the strategic role of culture, cultural heritage and audiovisual works in upholding European values and democratic resilience. Decreasing funding for the film and audiovisual sector and other creative businesses would compromise the ability to deliver on the Council's own objectives.

Ahead of the forthcoming European Council discussions, we do urge Member States and the Irish Presidency to reverse this trajectory, restore at least the Commission's proposed allocation and ensure that AgoraEU's expanded ambitions are backed by genuinely additional resources. Europe cannot proclaim culture, media and democracy as strategic priorities while denying them the means to deliver.

ATC – Audiovisual Training Coalition
CEE Animation – Central and Eastern Europe Animation
CEPI – European Audiovisual Production Association
CICAE – International Confederation of Arthouse Cinemas
Collective of Film Festivals
EPC – The European Producers Club
Eurocinema
Europa Distribution – International Association of Independent Film Publishers and Distributors
Europa International – Association of European Film Sales Agents
F.A.M.E. – Film and Audiovisual Markets in Europe
FERA – Federation of European Screen Directors
FIAD – International Federation of Film Distributors' and Publishers' Associations
FIAPF – International Federation of Film Producers Associations
FSE – Federation of Screenwriters in Europe
IVF – International Video Federation
SAA – Society of Audiovisual Authors
UNIC – International Union of Cinemas

3 Source : Council conclusion on the strategic role of culture, cultural heritage and audiovisual works upholding European values and democratic resilience (published on 2nd of December 2026)