

CREATIVE EUROPE 2021-2027 – POSITION PAPER

European Documentary Network
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- EDN is fully in support of the Creative Europe programme in general.
- Creative Europe has been an essential driver for the development of the European audiovisual sector, both on the cultural and on the business level and Creative Europe is an instrumental first mover tool in the enlargement of the EU.
- Given the challenging character of the current media landscape we feel that an extra financial effort is needed to allow the Creative Europe programme to continue and strengthen its role as a forerunner of building a strong and diverse European audiovisual community.
- However, we regret the strict separation between the Media- and the Culture sub-programme. The fact that structural support for audiovisual organisations can no longer be requested from the Culture sub-programme has been detrimental on many levels.

In EDN's opinion, the following issues should be taken into account when deciding on the final version of the Creative Europe programme and more specifically, the Media sub-programme:

1. GENERAL REMARKS.

- 1.1. Reinstall access to the Culture sub-programme for audio-visual initiatives and organisations.
- 1.2. Being an essential factor that is contributing to the creation of an open, diverse, democratic and tolerant European society, care should be taken that independent documentary keeps its rightful place within the Creative Europe programme. With cut backs in print media and public service broadcasting being under threat in many countries, independent documentary media remains an increasingly important source to critical reflections.
- 1.3. Do not make **box office figures or market share** the Holy Grail by which success should be measured and rewarded.

2. CONCRETE AIMS AND PRIORITIES CONCERNING THE MEDIA SUB-PROGRAMME

- 2.1. We support the priority to nurture talents and skills and to stimulate collaboration and innovation in the creation and production of European audiovisual landscape but we want to underline that access to the Creative Europe programme – and certainly to the Media sub-programme funds – **should be strictly reserved for independent entities.** We are strongly opposed to allow (public) broadcasters, telecom operators, O.T.T. companies, cable operators and future powerhouses direct access to the application process. Although we are very much in favour of a close collaboration with these potential partners, for any joint initiative that aims to include Creative Europe support, the project owner and beneficiary should be sufficiently independent from players who own access to any distribution platform.
- 2.2. Initiatives to enhance online distribution enjoy our full support but these initiatives (**like support for the subtitling and distribution across the borders**) should be carried out with respect for the rights of the copyright holders and care should be taken that none of these initiatives can harm the interests of the independent partners who have been involved in these projects. (producers/sales agents/distributors...). We are in favour of new business models but only if all partners are treated in a fair way.
- 2.3. VOD and OTT operators getting Creative Europe support should be obliged to share their data with the producers and to carry a certain amount of EU content.



- 2.4. EDN recognizes the value of a European Video on Demand operators network that would screen a significant proportion of non-national European works **but once again underlines that in the construction of such a network the protection of the position of the rightsholders should be paramount.**

3. POLICY FOCUS POINTS

- 3.1. We are of the opinion that in defining the focus of the new programme – as far as nurturing talents and skills is concerned – fair attention should be given to the development of **business skills**. Dealing with innovative business models and the use of new technologies cannot be done successfully without a strong **business-based** backbone. The European creative community has the artistic potential not only to defend but to conquer inter-continental competition, on the condition that its production is carried forward by a well-functioning production structure with a healthy capital structure, capable of investing in research and development.
- 3.2. To get the best results, Creative Europa needs a constant close relation with - and feedback from - the field. This feedback cannot be provided on an individual basis, for this would be unfair to small production entities or those from countries and territories with a lower production capacity. Professional associations – representing the different levels of the value chain – are essential elements in gathering data and providing feedback to the policy makers and the executive agency. **We therefore advocate that structural support can be granted to professional associations.** They can contribute to support policy dialogue, innovative policy actions and exchange of best practices. Funds should be made available to set up analytical activities that can provide reliable data.
- 3.3. In the current political climate, EDN strongly supports any promotion and training action that leads to transnational exchange of experiences and know-how, peer learning activities and networking **among the audiovisual sector and policy makers.**
- 3.4. Training and access-to-markets initiatives, aiming for **inter-continental collaboration, co-production and distribution** should be allowed Creative Europe support, by both sub-programmes. Asia is larger than China alone.

4. EXECUTIVE LEVEL

- 4.1. On a more practical level (of the executive agency) we would prefer to see **multi-year agreements** for projects that have been awarded support.
- 4.2. Care should be taken when assessing the financial capacity of successful applicants to take into account **their track record and reputation** and not base the decision to allow pre-financing solely on accountancy figures and ratios. Some of the most successful partners of Creative Europe are non-profit organisations who will always be balancing on the thin line between profit and loss, but who nevertheless offer a very valuable contribution to the development of a cultural rich and economically sustainable European audiovisual industry.

For the European Documentary Network

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