

European Creative Documentaries, the leftovers of the new MEDIA programme

We, European authors, producers and distributors, welcome the adoption of the legal basis of the Europe Creative programme by the European Parliament, and the support provided to European creation. We are looking forward to the start of the calls for the Media Programme as soon as possible. However, the Work Programme for 2021 prepared by the European Commission includes concerns for the documentary sector which must be changed urgently.

Creative documentary has never been a more essential genre than during the economic, social and health crisis that Europe is currently going through. Documentaries inform people, helping us make sense of the complex world we live in, building critical and diverse points of view from and for European citizens, while fighting against the threats fake news bring on our democracies.

European Creative Documentary as a genre is under threat due to structural underfinancing. To produce their content, European documentary creators are forced to take very high risks, which explains their expectations regarding European public funding policies.

It is with great concern that we note the sharp decline in support for Creative Documentaries by the European Commission following the adoption by the Parliament of the multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027 for the new MEDIA programme and the presentation of the work programmes which define the rules and budgets for each 2021 support scheme.

While the MEDIA budget is increasing, in its Europe Creative 2021 work programme, **the European Commission is quietly digging the grave of the creative documentary. Three technical modifications meant to simplify and standardise the programme rules will have major consequences for creative documentaries in Europe.**

With the objective of launching the calls for projects as soon as possible, these texts have been rushed, depriving Member States and all stakeholders from the necessary in-depth assessment of the impact the new rules would have on the sector.

These **three** technical changes will have the following immediate and negative effects:

Development funds will henceforth only be awarded to projects that begin filming at the earliest **ten months after the deadline for submission of the application for support (as opposed to eight months from the date of submission previously)**. **This new deadline is incompatible with the production schedules of single creative documentaries**, which are inherently shorter than those of fiction and animation, due to the need to react fast to the rapidly changing reality of world events. Although the industry has asked for a reduction of this delay, the European Commission chose to increase the hold backs, thus excluding de facto a growing number of creative documentaries from MEDIA support.

Due to the transformation of the “single **project**” to a new “co-development” tool, every production company must now co apply with another production company from another country. **The leading company should have distributed a project to at least 3 countries, other than its own, since 2014 (it used to be only one)**. **This change unfairly affects the ability for “low capacity countries” companies to lead a project**. This would lead to dramatic consequences in the “low-capacity countries”, the small European countries (as far

as film production is concerned), and in the countries whose language is not spoken in any other European country or do not belong to a geographical area in which collaborations are historically customary. Consequently, the scheduled changes will cause a serious damage to the basic principles of Creative Europe itself: *Creativity, Parity and Pluralism*.

Until now, funds for audiovisual production ("TV programming" support) logically distinguished between the fiction and animation genre, benefiting from a maximum co-financing rate of 12,5 % of total eligible costs from MEDIA fund, and the documentary genre, with a maximum rate of 20%. **From now on, this support will be subject to a single across the board maximum rate of 15% applicable to all genres which is a very welcomed increase for fiction and animation. But already underfunded, creative documentaries are thus seeing their potential support from MEDIA further reduced.**

We, the European authors, producers and distributors, signatories of this statement, wish to express our deep concern at the European Commission seemingly lack of consideration for the documentary industry in Europe. Were the specificities of the genre continued to be ignored, a whole sector of independent European creation would become de facto ineligible for European support, leading to further precarious overall funding.

While the whole sector is already penalized by a very late call for proposals this year, we urge the European Commission to remove these three modifications from the work programme and to maintain measures adapted to the documentary genre in order to guarantee access to the funding system for these works which are and will remain essential for European audiences.

Signatories:



**Documentary Association of Europe,
Berlin**



**European Audiovisual Production
Association**



**Federation of European
Screen Directors**
Fédération Européenne des
Réalisateurs de l'Audiovisuel

**Federation of European Screen
Directors**



**Society of
Audiovisual
Authors**

Society of Audiovisual Authors



EPC - European Producers Club



International Federation of Film Distributors' Associations



Austrian Documentary Film Alliance
www.dok.at
office@dok.at

Austrian Documentary Film Alliance - Austria



Film and Music Austria



Union des Producteurs Francophones de Films - Belgium



AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION
www.czechproducers.cz

Audiovisual Producers' Association - Czech Republic



Danish Producers' Association

Danish Producers' Association - Denmark

EESTI DOKUMENTALISTIDE GILD



The Estonian Documentary Guild - Estonia



Union Syndicale de la Production Audiovisuelle



Le Syndicat des Producteurs Indépendants

French Guild of audiovisual producers - Union Syndicale de la Production Audiovisuelle - France



GUILDE DES AUTEURS-RÉALISATEURS
DE REPORTAGES & DE DOCUMENTAIRES

Guilde des auteurs-réalisateurs de reportages & de documentaires - France

French guild of independent producers - Le Syndicat des Producteurs Indépendants - France



French civil society of Authors - Société Civile des Auteurs - France

EURO CINEMA

*Association de producteurs
de cinéma et de télévision*

Eurocinema



DOKUMENTTIKILTA

The Finnish Documentary Guild - Finland



Arbeitsgemeinschaft
Dokumentarfilm
German Documentary
Association

Arbeitsgemeinschaft
Dokumentarfilm/German
Documentary Association - Germany



Hellas Doc - Greek Documentary Association - Greece

MA▶●KE

Madoke, Hungarian Documentary Association – Hungary



Audiovisual Producers Association - Italy

ASSOCIAZIONE DOCUMENTARISTI ITALIANI

Associazione Documentaristi Italiani
- Italy



The Lithuanian Filmmakers Union –
Lithuania



Macedonian Film Professional
Association - Macedonia

NAPA Netherlands
Audiovisual
Producers
Alliance

NAPA - Netherlands Audiovisual
Producers Alliance - The Netherlands

VIRKE

NORWEGIAN PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

Norwegian Producers' Association -
Norway



The Wladyslaw Slesicki Film
Foundation - Poland



KRAJOWA IZBA PRODUCENTÓW
AUDIOWIZUALNYCH

Polish Producers Alliance - Krajowa
Izba Producentów Audiowizualnych
(KIPA) - Poland



INDEPENDENT TV
PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

Independent TV Producers
Association - Portugal

apordoc

ASSOCIAÇÃO PELO DOCUMENTÁRIO

APORDOC - Associação pelo
documentário – Portugal

Scottish
Documentary
Institute

Scottish Documentary Institute -
Scotland



DOKSRBIJA
DOKUMENTARISTI
SRBIJE

**DokSerbia - Documentary
Filmmakers of Serbia - Serbia**

**ASSOCIATION OF
INDEPENDENT
PRODUCERS**

sk. asociácia nezávislých producentov

**Asociácia nezávislých producentov /
Association of Independent
Producers – Slovakia**



**Association of Slovenian Producers –
Slovenia**



**Association of Audiovisual
Producers - Slovenia**



**DOCMA, Spanish Documentary Film
Association - Spain**

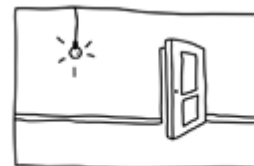
OFF

Oberoende Filmares Förbund

**Independent Filmmaker's
Association (OFF) - Sweden**



**Blackbox Film & Medienproduktion
GmbH.**



Thank You & Good Night productions

Thank You & Good Night productions