



Talk to us
if you want
to know about
independent producers



At CEPI, we support our members in producing **diverse and innovative content** — from feature films and documentaries to animation and drama series — while promoting sustainable cultural and economic growth in the European audiovisual sector.



As **the voice for Europe’s independent production sector**, CEPI engages with European and national policymakers, and participates in sectorial social dialogue. We are dedicated to developing a competitive market where independent producers can thrive within and beyond Europe.

CEPI is actively involved in several key networks and organisations, including the **EU IPO**, and the **European Audiovisual Observatory**, working collaboratively to strengthen the European audiovisual sector.

“Europe’s audiovisual sector empowers independent producers to grow and compete globally, driving innovation, creating jobs, and showcasing our creative talent to the world. By embracing digitalization and globalization, we secure Europe’s leadership in cultural diversity and creative excellence.”

Susana Gato, President of CEPI



About us

Since its establishment in 1990, CEPI - the European Audiovisual Production Association - has organised and represented the interests of independent film and audiovisual producers across Europe.

After 34 years, CEPI extends its membership to **19 national trade associations** of independent producers established in 17 countries. With the participation of the pan-European association Animation in Europe, CEPI's reach has extended to **24 European countries**, for a total of more than **2.600 production companies**, (2024 figures), making CEPI the largest network of independent production companies in Europe.



What is an independent producer

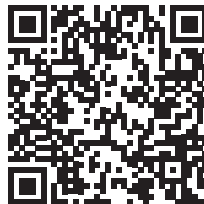
An independent producer in the EU is defined by their autonomy from service media providers such as broadcasters and streaming platforms, ensuring managerial freedom and decision-making without external interference.

While the EU does not explicitly define “independent producer” in legislative texts, **the AVMS Directive** suggests in its recitals to consider ownership structure, content volume supplied to single service media provider, and control over secondary rights as indicators of independence.

Creative Europe’s MEDIA programme offers a more quantifiable definition: no single media service provider should control more than 25% of a company’s share capital, or 50% if multiple providers are involved. These criteria are echoed across various funding mechanisms, such as Eurimages and national funding programs supporting independent production of films and audiovisual content.

Intellectual property (IP) is crucial for these producers, who invest significant resources and take on substantial financial and creative risks alone during the development of their works. **Retaining control of IP** ensures they can recoup their investments and generate sustainable revenue streams through licensing across platforms and countries. This ownership compensates the risks they bear and **enables the reinvestment needed to create unique content, safeguarding Europe’s cultural diversity**.

► Learn more about
the role of
independent producers
in this short video!



The role of an independent producer

DEVELOPMENT

In this initial phase, the producer conducts extensive research, collaborates with screenwriters to refine the idea into a screenplay, secures rights to existing works, plans filming locations, costumes, and set designs, and begins hiring key personnel including the director, composer, cast and crew, with no guarantee that the work will be made.

FINANCING

Crucial for turning ideas into reality, the producer develops detailed financial plans, negotiates pre-sales of distribution rights across different territories and with different players, and leverages private investment, public support and tax incentives. The production of audiovisual works also depends on the decision of the media service providers to contribute to the financing of the work, as no project can move forward without their financial support.



PRODUCTION

The producer delegates shooting management to the director but oversees daily operations to ensure the project meets agreed quality standards, stays on schedule and within budget. Responsibilities also include ensuring compliance with safety and legal standards and supervising post-production tasks like editing and sound design to finalize the product for distribution.

DISTRIBUTION/EXHIBITION

Once the work is complete, the producer works with distributors and sales agents to craft marketing strategies, negotiates global distribution deals, and manages the release strategy across various platforms, including film festivals and streaming services.

Throughout these stages, producers manage multiple projects. This means that if one project does well, it can make up for the costs of other project that don't make a profit or that do not make it beyond the development stage. The producers have a legal duty to complete and deliver the project as contracted, ensuring it adheres to budget, timelines, and quality standards.

An overview of the European audiovisual sector

THE EUROPEAN AUDIOVISUAL MARKET IS INTEGRAL TO THE EU'S CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC FABRIC



In 2022, **the EU and UK produced 1,951 feature films**, an 11% increase from the previous year and the second-highest number on record. Between 2015 and 2022, **Europe produced an average of over 1,200 titles, 23,000 episodes, and 14,000 hours of audiovisual fiction annually.**

Despite the prevalence of small and independent firms, economic value is highly concentrated among the top 100 firms, with US companies making a significant impact, representing 30% of these top firms' revenues.

While the vast majority of players in the European audiovisual market are private, a significant impact is made by a smaller group of public enterprises. These entities, including public service broadcasters, operate 8% of all TV channels and 3% of VoD services within the sector.

Upholding Europe's cultural sovereignty

Independent producers are central to the development, production, and post-production of audiovisual works, managing creative decisions, securing funding and overseeing marketing and distribution. Their investments and risk-taking justify **retaining ownership of IP**, which is crucial for recouping costs, generating sustainable revenue, and compensating rightsholders. IP ownership enables producers to license their content across platforms, driving revenue for new projects and strengthening European independent production companies. IP rights are also key to preserve cultural heritage and fosters the growth of European audiovisual content, ensuring that European works remain within European companies.

A **review of the geographical scope of the definition of European works is necessary**, as current quotas disproportionately favor UK content, often co-produced with US studios. UK works make up 8% of European VOD content, distorting the goal of promoting EU works. Adjusting the definition to exclude predominant UK content would create more opportunities for EU independent productions without limiting access to UK works for European audiences.

Territorial licensing is crucial for balancing the digital accessibility of European works with the need to preserve exclusive rights for creators. It supports cultural diversity and economic viability by enabling revenue generation across borders while protecting regional content exclusivity.

Combatting piracy is also critical as it threatens the sector's economic stability by infringing on IP rights, necessitating robust measures to protect creators and maintain market integrity.



Creating a better level playing field between players involved in the value chain



The European audiovisual market is dominated by a few large buyers, often US-based, putting European independent producers at a disadvantage. **This oligopsony limits their negotiating power and investment opportunities**, concentrating financial resources among major players and reducing overall industry competitiveness.

To address this, it is crucial to **diversify the financial landscape by increasing investment partners and funding sources**. Simplifying funding eligibility guidelines and application processes, along with enhancing transparency, will help producers access essential resources more efficiently. **Maintaining a well-financed public service broadcaster** is also essential, as it plays a key role in supporting independent producers and contributing to a diverse production landscape.



Equally important is **providing producers with access to comprehensive audience data**. This transparency is essential for informed decision-making, allowing producers to tailor content effectively and negotiate fair terms with media service providers. It empowers producers, strengthening their position in negotiations and ensuring they receive fair compensation for their contributions.

The **2018 Audiovisual Media Services Directive** has significantly influenced European audiovisual policies by supporting independent productions and increasing the presence of European works on VOD services. Despite these advances, CEPI calls for enhancement of these provisions to better support the production and consumption of European content.

Quota obligations have proven essential for promoting European works, but the focus should not solely be on quantity but also on quality and diversity of content. **Introducing sub-quotas for different languages, genres, and recent productions** can ensure content remains relevant and engaging for audiences. Moreover, **promoting European works more actively** will help increase their visibility and consumption.

CEPI also calls for the generalisation of the **investment obligations** across all Member States and for more stringent obligations to support diverse creation within the audiovisual industry. These obligations **should also be qualitative**, focusing on fostering long-term economic benefits and **ensuring that a substantial share of IP remains with European independent producers**.

The **Creative Europe MEDIA programme** is pivotal in fostering cultural diversity through independent productions. CEPI stresses the importance of **maintaining the programme's cultural objectives and increasing its budget to match any expansions into new creative sectors**. Rather than re-channelling MEDIA funds, the EU citizens would benefit from significant overall budget increases for culture.

Finally, co-production is vital for independent producers, allowing for the pooling of resources and sharing of IP rights across European borders. This collaboration not only **diversifies financial risks but also enhances access to international markets**. By strengthening co-production frameworks, producers can better navigate the complex landscape of global distribution, reinforcing the European audiovisual industry's diversity and economic strength.



Keeping independent producers at the core of social, sustainable and technical evolutions

The **development of AI technologies**, particularly generative AI, has brought significant opportunities for innovation and growth in the audiovisual sector, with the potential to transform storytelling and production. To ensure AI benefits all players, including SMEs and independent producers, the EU should implement policies that **promote accessibility and provide financial support for smaller producers** to effectively leverage these tools.

It's also crucial that AI models respect copyright rules, **using only lawfully accessed data and respecting the opt-out rights of rightsholders**, with effective enforcement rule to ensure compliance.

Mechanisms for effective remuneration should be respected to ensure that copyright holders are fairly compensated for the use of their work in training AI systems.

Transparency is also essential to distinguish AI-generated content from human-created works and protect creative integrity.

The audiovisual industry recognizes the need for **sustainable production practices**, but public support is essential to make a real impact. Governments and institutions can provide financial incentives, resources, and regulatory frameworks that promote eco-friendly production methods. Investing in sustainable technologies and ensuring access for SMEs and VSEs is crucial for wider adoption.

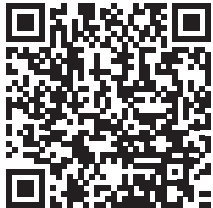


Social dialogue projects

As part of the European social dialogue, CEPI is actively engaged in several initiatives aimed at enhancing the audiovisual sector.

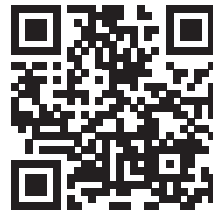
The creation of an **Online Interactive Risk Assessment tool (OiRA)** for the audiovisual sector, designed to assist anyone involved in audiovisual production to assess health and safety risks systematically. It guides users through evaluating risks, identifying hazards, and

determining necessary precautionary measures.



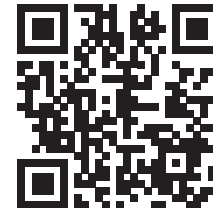
Working on **environmental sustainability in film and TV productions**, CEPI and social partners have published a booklet and launched an online platform that aggregates all sustainable practices identified during the project. This platform also offers guides, training resources, carbon calculators, and certifications. As the industry evolves, so does the platform, continuously updating

to include new practices and provide ongoing guidance.



Discussions and negotiations are taking place in the field of **gender equality, diversity and inclusion**, to improve the capacity of the industry to implement diversity policies. focuses on clarifying related concepts, sharing best practices and experiences, and fostering

initiatives to inspire future actions.





Animation in Europe, Europe



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Audiovisual Producers Association, Italy



ASOCIACE PRODUCENTŮ
Y AUDIOVIZÍ

Audiovisual Producers Association, Czech Republic



INDEPENDENT TV PRODUCERS
ASSOCIATION FROM PORTUGAL

Association of Independent Television Producers, Portugal

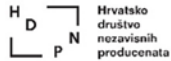


Fachverband der Film- und Musikwirtschaft
Film and Music Austria

Film & Music Austria, Austria



Slovenian Film Producers, Slovenia



Hrvatsko društvo nezavisnih producenata

Croatia Association of Independent Producers, Croatia



Producent Foreningen, Denmark



Union of Independent Producers, France



VLAARRE ONAFHANKELIJKE
FILM & TELEVISIE PRODUCTENTEN

Professional Association of Flemish Independent Film & Television Producers, Belgium (Flanders)



State Association of Cinema, Spain



Association of audiovisual producers of Slovenia, Slovenia



Film Industry Association of Ukraine, Ukraine



Swedish Film and TV Producers Association, Sweden



Macedonian Film Professional Association, North Macedonia



KRAJOWA IZBA PRODUCENTŌW
AUDIOWIZUALNYCH

Polish Producers Alliance, Poland



Union Syndicale de la Production Audiovisuelle

Audiovisual Production Union, France



Screen Producers Ireland, Ireland



SLOVAK AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION

Slovak Audiovisual Producers Association, Slovakia



VIRKE, Norway

Contact:

e-mail: cepi@europe-analytica.com

tel +32 (0) 2 231 12 99

Residence Palace

Rue de la Loi 155 | Building C - 5th floor

1040 Brussels, Belgium



@cepi_producers



CEPI - European Audiovisual Production Association

EU transparency register :

59052572261-62

Learn more about CEPI

<https://cepi-producers.eu>

