The AgoraEU budget: a political choice about the Europe we want to build

As representatives of the European film and audiovisual sector, we wish to express our serious concern at the indicative envelope of €5.324 billion (2025 prices) proposed for AgoraEU in the draft conclusions prepared for the European Council of 26–27 November 2026[1]. This remains 30% below the €7.606 billion proposed by the European Commission (€8.582 billion in current prices)[2]. It is also 44% below the €9.5 billion called for by the European Parliament (€10.72 billion in current prices)[3]. AgoraEU would account for only 0.34% of the €1,582.5 billion in commitments foreseen for 2028–2034, compared with 0.43% in the Commission's proposal[1] [2]. The savings would be marginal for the European Union's budget. The consequences for Europe's cultural and democratic life would not.

At a time of geopolitical tension and growing polarisation, the European Union needs, more than ever, spaces where citizens meet, understand one another and recognise themselves in a common project. Europeans say so clearly: 87% agree that culture and cultural exchange should have a very important place in the EU so that citizens from different Member States can feel more European[4]. European films and audiovisual works are among the most powerful vehicles of that exchange. They carry the diversity of Europe's languages, stories and perspectives across borders, to audiences. Supporting their creation and circulation means supporting a shared European public space.

This investment also delivers tangible returns in every Member State. The cultural sector, in which film and audiovisual play a central role, employs 8.9 million people across the European Union, or 4.3% of total employment[5]. From the authors, creative professionals and producers who bring stories supported by the MEDIA strand to life to the distributors, cinemas, festivals, markets that circulate and bring these works to audiences, as well as the training organisations, the European audiovisual ecosystem spans large and small markets alike, in capitals as well as in regions where EU action is otherwise rarely visible. Few EU programmes are as present in citizens' everyday lives.

The proposed envelope is difficult to reconcile with the ambition that led to AgoraEU's creation. Bringing Creative Europe and CERV together was meant to give culture, media and democratic values a stronger and more coherent framework. The Commission itself proposed to increase the allocated budget by almost 75% (+ €B3,25, 2025 prices). The envelope now under discussion, by contrast, would exceed the €4.35 billion of the programmes it replaces by less than €1 billion[2]. According to the sector's estimate, around €600 million of that margin would be needed simply to offset inflation in the MEDIA strand[6]. A broader mandate with barely greater means would set the programme's priorities against one another rather than allowing them to reinforce each other.

We therefore urge the Members of the European Council to reconsider this allocation. The Commission's proposal should be the bare minimum floor for negotiations, and the Parliament's position should guide their ambition. Within AgoraEU, support for film and audiovisual should take the form of a clearly identifiable, adequately funded and predictable strand, which the sector assesses at a minimum of €3.5 billion[6]. Continuity

and predictability are essential: they allow creatives and companies alike to plan, invest and build lasting partnerships across Europe.

The next Multiannual Financial Framework will say much about the kind of Europe its leaders choose to build. Culture and European creativity are not costs to be contained, but an investment in our continent's democracy, resilience, and diversity. They are one of the most direct ways in which citizens experience the European Union, and they deserve a place in its budget that reflects this.

Brussels, 25th November 2026

Signatories

ATC – Audiovisual Training Coalition
CEE Animation - Central and Eastern Europe Animation
CICAE – International Confederation of Arthouse Cinemas
CEPI - European Audiovisual Production Association
DAE – Documentary Association of Europe
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

Sources

1. Draft European Council conclusions on the 2028–2034 MFF, 21 November 2026, paragraphs 5 and 112 (constant 2025 prices)
2. European Commission, COM(2025) 550, and EPRS briefing "AgoraEU 2028–2034", Table 1 (2025 prices).
3. European Parliament press release, 19 November 2026
4. Special Eurobarometer 562, Europeans' attitudes towards culture, 2025
5. Eurostat, "EU cultural sector in 2025: 8.9 million people employed", July 2026
6. Joint statement of the European film and audiovisual sector, 14 October 2026.