

Press Release

Cannes, France — May 15, 2025

European Independent Producers Call for Ambitious Regulation to Safeguard Culture, Democracy, and Creative Freedom

In response to current geopolitical, economic, and technological challenges, **European organizations representing the independent production sector have today released a Common Charter, reaffirming their commitment to a regulated European cultural space** that protects cultural diversity, creative freedom, and the fundamental rights of both citizens and right-holders.

"Independent production is one of the driving forces behind the European cultural exception in film and audiovisual media. It plays a crucial role in preserving the diversity of stories and imaginations. By supporting the artistic freedom of creation, it allows unique works to find their place, far from a purely commercial logic dictated by the preferences of a distorted consumer model."

— **Emma Rafowicz, Member of the European Parliament**

This initiative comes ahead of the upcoming 2026 review of the Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS) Directive. On this occasion, the signatories emphasize that **robust regulation is essential to ensure a pluralistic, high-quality, and independent cultural offering across Europe.**

In recent years, the European Union has introduced major reforms, including the AVMS Directive, GDPR, Copyright Directive, DSA, DMA, EMFA, and the AI Act. These texts represent essential progress, still open to improvement, but fundamentally important for shaping an environment that respects the rights of citizens and right-holders.

Today, this hard-won balance is under growing pressure. **The trade war reignited by the Trump administration** — notably through recent declarations threatening punitive measures on companies producing outside the United States — **adds to the mounting pressure from global broadcasters, streamers and Hollywood studios on European regulatory framework.** These actions not only **risk dismantling key regulatory achievements but also constitute a direct attack on the spirit and letter of international cultural and trade agreements**, including the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the core principles of the WTO. Such moves undermine multilateralism and are fundamentally incompatible with the values of fair cultural exchange and Europe's cultural and democratic interests.

At the same time, the European Commission appears to be moving toward regulatory simplification, which could also pave the way for a troubling erosion of these safeguards and turn into deregulation.

The signatories want to reaffirm that regulation:

- is **essential to the cultural diversity** we champion;
- forms the **foundation of effective national public cultural policies**;
- **guarantees freedom of creation and expression within a pluralistic ecosystem.**

Its absence — as evidenced in certain markets — leads to democratic and cultural impoverishment, where content is dominated solely by American productions.

By signing this Charter, the European independent production community reaffirms its unwavering commitment to bold and ambitious regulations, aligned with the democratic, cultural, and technological stakes of our time.

Signatories call on national governments, European institutions, and all political leaders to stand by the European independent production sector. We urge them to defend our regulatory framework, to resist external pressure, and to commit to policies that guarantee the future of our cultural sovereignty.



About us

The signatories of the Independent Production Charter represent a broad spectrum of audiovisual professionals from across Europe, working to ensure that the voice of creators is heard in European policy debates.

Contact

Thomas Gomes

+33 6 72 15 07 62

thomas.gomes@eurocinema.eu