

EFADs-MEDIA Roundtable

Exporting outside Europe: how to better promote and distribute European films in the world?

Sunday 21 May 2017, 10:00 - 11:30 am

Moderator: Frédéric Berezziat, Director at UniFrance

The roundtable, organised by the European Film Agency Directors (EFADs) and the European Commission, brought together public and private actors to explore best practices and concrete solutions to better export, and for this purpose, better promote and distribute European films in the world. As **EFADs Vice-Chair, Guy Daleiden (Luxembourg)** pointed out in his introduction during the roundtable, this is a topic we have debated for the last 25 years and it is crucial to introduce solutions to get European movies out and into the world. The national film agencies' public interest mission is to promote cultural diversity not just in Europe but worldwide.

The roundtable included participants from the European Commission, film promotion agencies, national film agencies and representatives of all segments of the European audiovisual industry. Below is an overview of the discussion which took place. The following solutions were identified:

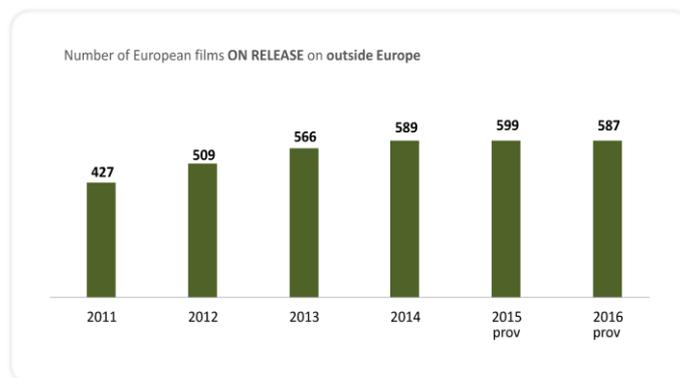
- 1. At European level, the European Commission was encouraged to relaunch a dedicated scheme** to support operators in third countries to release, distribute, and promote European works more actively.
- 2. Support initiatives which pool knowledge and best practices on promoting European works in specific markets worldwide.** More information sharing is necessary to enhance our understanding of the audiences in specific markets and to develop effective region-specific export strategies.
- 3. Test the feasibility of a European cinema label/brand.** Create a "European Cinema" brand, so that audiences worldwide recognise that films have a European origin. This will enhance visibility and ensure niche markets are exploited worldwide.
- 4. Support initiatives to improve collaboration and develop networks between experts, distributors and festivals around the world.** Boost cooperation between film promotion agencies and collaborate with key non-EU markets to work together to tailor promotion. Creative Europe MEDIA should facilitate dialogue and cooperation across the value chain.
- 5. National and European funding tailored to each region and which identifies and supports European films which have the most potential for success.** This would include building on European gems selected in film festivals, in Europe and beyond.
- 6. Use existing and establish new film festivals around the world to promote European works.** This could include putting together a collection of European arthouse movies to showcase at existing festivals.
- 7. Support and cooperate with VoD platforms in non-EU countries interested in buying European films.**
- 8. Support initiatives which target young audiences, such as events, promotion via social media and film education activities involving universities and schools.**
- 9. Support the involvement and movement of talents to promote European films in non-EU countries.**
- 10. A European resource dedicated to facilitating access to promotional material.** Pictures and trailers of films could be made available on an online platform for export purposes.

State of Play

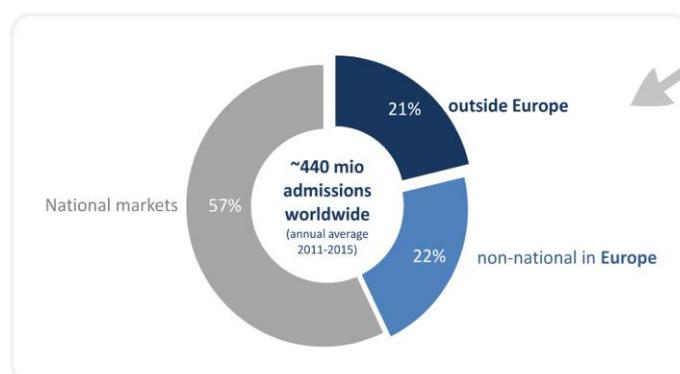
Europe is a production giant but has not reached its full export potential

Achievements

- According to **Martin Kanzler (European Audiovisual Observatory)**, on average, **Europe produced and released 1,650 films per year** between 2011 and 2015.
- **18% of all European films produced between 2011-2015 were exported and this number is growing.** Europe is ahead of other markets such as Asia, Latin America and Oceania in terms of exports.
- **Admissions for European films in non-European markets are on average between 60 and 70 million.** This represents 21% of total worldwide admissions for European works.
- These films tend to be:
 - big budget productions from the UK and France
 - in the English language
 - award winning films
 - dramas, family animations or selected thrillers
 - international co-productions
 - based on familiar cultural content
 - handled by a sales agent
 - distributed by a US studio



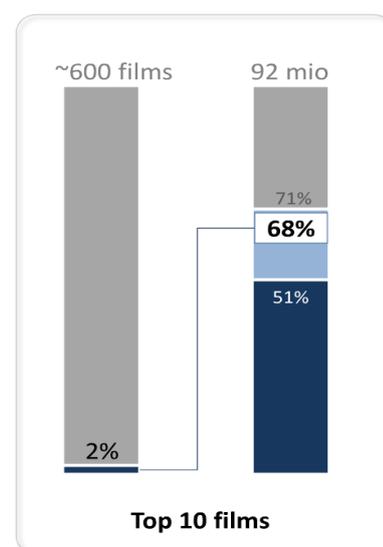
Source: European Audiovisual Observatory, comScore



Source: European Audiovisual Observatory, comScore

Challenges

- **The US is in a league of its own.** Whilst Europe is performing better than other regions in terms of exports, they do not come close to US figures. US films produced in 2014 achieved a huge 1,135 million non-national admissions.
- **Only a comparatively small number of European films are successfully exported.** The top 10 European works make up almost 70% of admissions outside of Europe. 80% of European films sell less than 100,000 cinema tickets, including critically acclaimed festival films such as *The Broken Circle Breakdown* (2012) and *Tabu* (2012).
- **There is a clear distinction between commercial and “arthouse” films.** The niche films tend to find it much more difficult to crack foreign markets.
- **There is a lack of data on how European films perform worldwide on DVD, TV and VoD.** This makes it difficult to judge the market and potential for European films on these platforms.
- **Big on-demand platforms acquire few European movies.** **Richard Lorber (Kino Lorber - United States)** explained that in the US, big platforms such as Netflix do not acquire European movies because they are seen as too niche. For smaller platforms, the risk is high to acquire these films.



	1 or 2 release markets	3 to 5 release markets	6 or more release markets	Total films
> 1 mio admissions	→ 11%	13%	77%	14 films
100' - 1 mio admissions	→ 13%	32%	55%	45 films
< 100' admissions	→ 75%	22%	4%	232 films
Total films	180 films	66 films	44 films	290 films

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory, comScore

- Several attendees pointed out that promotion is challenging and so is building young audiences. **Lorber (Kino Lorber – US)** highlighted that the challenge is to drive awareness amongst young audiences. The European film audience abroad tends to be the over 50s. **Martin Schweighofer (European Film Promotion - Germany)** added that there is a press film review culture but few young people read these. We need to engage with them on other platforms.
- There are political obstacles in some regions. **Marianna Ibragimova (P&I Film - Russia)** said the Russian government requires companies to purchase a distribution certificate for 60 Euros for Russian films and 80,000 Euros for non-Russian films.

Best Practices and Solutions

A clear and more streamlined European strategy to improve exports

- A clear European strategy for exporting European works, streamlining the different programmes (MEDIA, ACP Culture+, Eurimages, national film funding). **Giuseppe Abbamonte and Lucia Recalde (European Commission)** suggested that Europe needs a clear strategy which brings together all the actions at national, European and international level to ensure they work efficiently together.
- At European level, a replacement for the MEDIA Mundus programme. **Daniel Melamed (New Cinema Ltd – Israel)** explained that in Israel, Spanish and Italian movies used to have a market because of Europa Cinemas Mundus, but this is no longer the case. During its lifespan, the programme offered support for theatrical programming to foster the circulation and exchange of films between non-EU countries and EU Member States. **Loïc Wong (Institut Français - France)** proposed we renew support to foreign distributors who purchase European films as MEDIA Mundus was doing before, whilst **Roberto Olla (Eurimages)** added that we could imagine creating something similar to MEDIA Mundus to allow a chunk of our films to be exposed and circulated. **Abbamonte and Recalde (European Commission)** explained that the end of MEDIA Mundus was based on a clear logic to make the most of their limited resources. However, if there is something which really adds value then they will explore how it could be integrated into Creative Europe’s successor programme in 2020.
- Support initiatives which pool knowledge and best practices on promoting European works in specific markets worldwide. **Schweighofer (European Film Promotion - Germany)** suggested pooling our knowledge on audiences worldwide whilst **Peter Dinges (FFA and EFADs President – Germany)** envisaged analysing each market in order to adapt the promotion strategy accordingly. He stated that in some markets, such as Vietnam, there is no awareness of the different European cinematic cultures. A common European promotion strategy might be more effective than each country promoting its own cinema separately.
- Test the feasibility of a European cinema label/brand to enhance visibility of European works and better exploit niche markets worldwide. **Loïc Wong (Institut Français - France)** explained that in Asia there is nearly no European cinema market, only US, local and world cinema. European films are not

“This is not just about production and making money, but about showing our culture worldwide”

Evelyne Gebhardt, Vice-President of the European Parliament

available on legal or even illegal platforms due to a lack of interest from the audience. **Trautmann (Eurimages)** agreed we need to focus on creating a European cinema label/brand.

- **Support initiatives to improve collaboration and develop networks between experts, distributors and festivals around the world.** **Loïc Wong (Institut Français - France)** proposed finding special agents in key non-EU markets; partners and experts who will work together to tailor promotion for European arthouse movies. He suggested developing an international network of European audiovisual attachés. **Evelyne Gebhardt (European Parliament – Germany)** said the Parliament will look at how to encourage more collaboration between the different actors and countries.
- **National and European funding tailored to each region and which identifies and supports European films which have the most potential for success.** **Roberto Olla (Eurimages)** said that not all 1,650 films worldwide can be exported, and we need to understand which films will be successful. **Christian Brauer (AG Kino & Europa Cinemas – Germany)** added that we need to also gauge where the successful markets are whilst **Jaime Tarrazon (Federación de Cines de España)** said we cannot have a single support strategy for all regions. **Catherine Trautmann (Eurimages)** added that we need new funds and new instruments for promotion.
- **Use existing and establish new film festivals around the world to promote European works.** **Benjamin Zeccola (Palace Films – Australia)** proposed we use national film festivals, such as the Spanish film festival in Australia, as platforms to promote European works. We could establish similar festivals. **Loïc Wong (Institut Français - France)** agreed that a strong European policy to promote film festivals worldwide is needed and regular screenings outside of festivals. **Daniela Elstner (Doc & Film International – France)** added that we could put together a collection of smaller arthouse movies to showcase at festivals.
- **Support and cooperate with VoD platforms interested in buying European films to show in non-EU countries after their theatrical release.** **Lorber (Kino Lorber – US)** suggested we look at smaller platforms with an interest in niche films and help them acquire European films. **Schweighofer (European Film Promotion - Germany)** added that we need to “create order in the VoD chaos,” to truly take advantage of this mode of distribution.

Which tools are best to reach the younger audiences outside Europe for European works? #EFADsCannes17

63% Social media

13% Film literacy

0% Increased accessibility

24% Festivals and events

“We discuss the same issues but we are asking the right questions because more exports are good for the industry and cultural diversity”

Giuseppe Abbamonte, Director Media and Data, European Commission

- **Support initiatives which target young audiences, such as events, promotion via social media and film education initiatives involving universities and schools.** **Ibragimova (P&I Film – Russia)** explained that they are working with universities and schools to build film literacy and develop young audiences for European films. **Trautmann (Eurimages)** added that we should engage with social media and organise events to connect with young audiences.

- **Support the involvement and movement of talents to promote European films in non-EU countries.** **Zeccola (Palace Films – Australia)** suggested that European films could be successfully promoted in Australia, if a representative of the film could travel to Australia to, for example, take part in question and answer sessions and other promotion activities.
- **A European resource dedicated to facilitating access to promotional material.** **Loïc Wong (Institut Français - France)** explained that in order to improve distribution, non-commercial exploitation should be fostered through cultural institutes. Promotional material such as pictures and trailers could also be made available on an online platform for export purposes.