



Reviving, Boosting, Optimising
and Transforming European Film
Competitiveness

Newsletter November 24



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Table of Contents

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|
| 01 | REBOOTing the European film industry | 02 | Spotlight on REBOOT: REBOOT website draws international attention |
| 03 | REBOOT at the Cannes Film Festival's Marché du Film | 04 | Charting the future of European film |
| 05 | Diversity, film and on-demand audiovisual services | 06 | Trade, development and the cultural sector: An impossible nexus? |
| 07 | How to reboot European cinema | 08 | “Lights, Camera, Action!”: Inspiring future filmmakers at the Children’s University |
| 09 | European film and youth: REBOOT Vienna’s research team at ECREA Conference | 10 | Preliminary REBOOT findings presented at EEAs conference |
| 11 | Collaborate to compete: Insights from REBOOT Advisory Board members | 12 | Small nation cinema at NECS |
| 13 | Culture in EU foreign trade policy | | |

01

REBOOTing the European film industry

In this edition, we update you on REBOOT's progress and achievements during the summer and autumn period, while offering a preview of upcoming milestones.

Since its launch in February 2023, **the REBOOT project** has been making significant strides in advancing the European film industry's competitiveness and cultural value. The project's initial year emphasized intensive data collection and analysis, laying a robust foundation for its ongoing work to understand and improve competitiveness in the European audiovisual sector.



REBOOT consortium in Cannes, May 2024

Building on this foundation, REBOOT has been conducting in-depth empirical data collections to further enrich the insights into the European film industry's dynamics. A focal point of these investigations has been the European Union's approach to defining and promoting 'competitiveness' in the audiovisual and film sectors.

Some of the analyses and reports focus on how EU institutions, including the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of the

EU, conceptualize and legislate competitiveness.

By reviewing key documents issued by these bodies, REBOOT seeks to understand the nuances of their regulatory, funding, and policy frameworks.

The project utilizes a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. For instance: A diachronic textual analysis of EU legislative acts and policy instruments, using NVivo for lexicometric analysis. In-depth qualitative analysis of critical legislative, funding, and policy documents to extract insights derived from the quantitative phase.

Through the analysis, REBOOT aims to highlight how evolving concepts such as 'cultural diversity,' the impacts of COVID-19, digitalization, and the rise of platformization influence the competitiveness of the sector.

Further research targets youth engagement and public value governance in six key countries: Austria, Poland, Belgium, Spain, France, and Greece.

To achieve its objective, REBOOT is conducting qualitative interviews, analyzing European policy documents strategically, and gathering insights from workshops designed to engage stakeholders. These comprehensive studies and reports aim to provide a deeper understanding of the sector's challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing landscape.

Coordinating data collection and analysis among 11 partners in (9 EU and 1 non-EU countries) has been a complex but rewarding effort. To foster collaboration, the REBOOT consortium convenes quarterly online and annually in person. A major highlight this year was the in-person gathering during the Cannes Film Festival, from May 14-16, 2024, at the Château de La Napoule, marking the second such meeting after the initial kickoff in Vienna in March 2023. The four days were dedicated to giving an overview of the current activities, data collections, presenting progress and looking forward to important future milestones, by mapping out next steps.

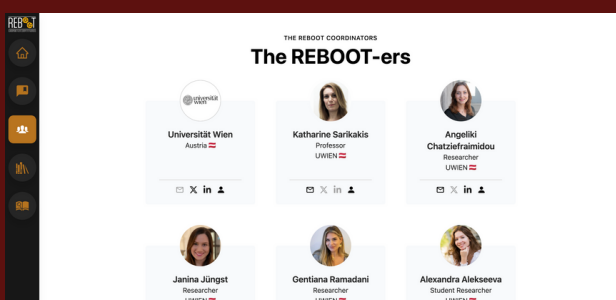
02 Spotlight on REBOOT

REBOOT Website draws international attention

Since its launch, [The REBOOT Project website](#) has emerged as a critical platform for industry professionals, researchers, and cultural policymakers in the European film sector. Only between July 1, 2024, and mid-October, the website garnered significant attention, recording 844 unique users and amassing 7,249 page views. These metrics underscore a growing interest in REBOOT's mission to drive innovation, competitiveness, and inclusivity in European cinema.

Visitors from 54 countries have accessed the site, reflecting a broad spectrum of international engagement and highlighting REBOOT's appeal beyond Europe's borders. While the United States led with 140 visitors, strong interest from Austria (104 users) and Finland (75 users) demonstrates a regional as well as a transatlantic connection to the project's initiatives.

The website serves as a knowledge center for interested groups, including filmmakers, academics, policymakers, and cultural organizations offering data, reports, news on industry workshops, and policy discussions. By providing resources such as insights from advisory board members, industry metrics, and collaboration opportunities, it positions itself as a bridge between research and real-world impact. These data-driven resources, combined with up-to-date project developments, cater directly to professionals seeking to stay ahead in the evolving landscape of film and media, fostering collaboration across borders and disciplines.



REBOOT website and Coordination Team, University of Vienna

Policy Briefs published:

- [Sganga, C., & Turan, P. \(2024\). *Pathway to the Operationalisation of the Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage: Unravelling the Copyright-Related Aspects of Populating the Data Space with Cinematographic Works*](#)
- [Sarikakis, K., Chatziefrimidou, A., Ramadani, G., & Jüngst, J. \(2024\). *Engagement and Inclusion of Young People in the European Film Industry*](#)
- [Hiltunen, K., & Lähdesmäki, T. \(2024\). *Developing young people's Engagement with European Cinema via the Youth Audience Award*](#)
- [Psychogiopoulou, E., Samaras, A., Comerma, L., Vlassis, A., & Riga, D. \(2024\). *Fostering 'competitiveness' and 'cultural diversity' in the European film and audiovisual sector*](#)

Blog posts published

- [Ramadani, G. \(2023\). *Cinematography and Society. In Conversation With Kujtim Çashku.*](#)
- [Albornoz, L. \(2023\). *Bridging Latin America and Europe: The SIMRA Seminar on Audiovisual Services and Regulation.*](#)
- [Sganga, C., & Turan, P. \(2023\). *.... And, action! Stakeholders' workshop towards a more accessible, competitive, diverse, and inclusive European film industry.*](#)
- [Upola, A. \(2023\). *Queer utopias in coming-of-age films: Finding a place to breathe in contemporary European LGBTQ+ cinema.*](#)
- [Aakkonen, K. \(2023\). *The sinister aspects of reindeer as representatives of the mythical northern wilderness.*](#)
- [Zawisza, A. \(2023\). *Breaking Down the Walls? Interview with film director, Andrzej Krakowski.*](#)
- [Juengst, J. \(2023\). *Women in the Film Industry: Leaky Pipeline Phenomenon.*](#)
- [Ramos, F., & Caballero, L. \(2023\). *Looking back on 30 years of European Film Industry. A conversation with Paul Pauwels.*](#)
- [González, L. \(2023\). *Ventana Sur: una oportunidad para potenciar la producción audiovisual latinoamericana.*](#)
- [Samaras, A. \(2023\). *The flow of audiovisual content in the EU: Unravelling the legislative changes.*](#)
- [Erdede, R.D. \(2024\). *Philosophy vs. Realpolitik: Discussing European Cinema Competitiveness Crisis Through "Alice and the Mayor"*](#)
- [Vargas Miranda, I. M. \(2024\). *Mapping the circulation of European cinema in Argentina.*](#)
- [Comerma, L. \(2024\). *The challenges to audiovisual and media cooperation between EU and Western Balkan candidate countries.*](#)
- [Biltreyest, D., & Willems, E. \(2024\). *Senior professionals on the resilience of the European film industry: a media industry perspective, the REBOOT project.*](#)
- [Fernandes, M.R. \(2024\). *Boosting competitiveness through marketing: An Interview with Joanna Solecka.*](#)
- [Corredoira, L. \(2024\). *The competitiveness of European cinema: "non-theatrical" cinema wins through S-VoD.*](#)

03 REBOOT at the Cannes Film Festival's Marché du Film

Advancing competitiveness, gender, and youth in the European film industry



Venue of panel discussion during the Marché du film at Cannes Film Festival 2024.

In the heart of the Cannes Film Festival, industry leaders, public institutions, university representatives, and stakeholders gathered from May 14th to 16th, 2024, under the REBOOT project. The consortium, coordinated by the University of Vienna, created a dynamic forum for engaging in strategic dialogue on reshaping the European film industry, with a focus on increasing competitiveness and integrating gender and youth perspectives.

What are the possibilities to enhance the European Film Industry's competitiveness? What visions are necessary for a truly European film industry? REBOOT has addressed these questions by presenting its work and first findings at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival's Marché du Film. Jean-François Trubert (University Côte d'Azur, France), Katharine Sarikakis (University of Vienna, Austria, and coordinator of REBOOT), Evangelia Psychogiopoulou (ELIAMEP, Greece), and Antonios Vlassis (University of Liege, Belgium) presented collective insights on May 15 at The Viewpoint in Lérins.

The REBOOT project, supported by the European Commission through the Horizon Europe program, brings together 12 experts in the field as part of an advisory board from 11 institutions like the European Broadcasting Union, EuroCinema, the Austrian Film Institute, and the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity. This esteemed network united diverse expertise and experiences, providing a unique platform for discussions on the dynamics of the film sector during a three-day panel discussion.

Defining competitiveness in a shifting landscape

During the Cannes meeting, panels composed of advisory board representatives centered the conversations on refining the notion of "competitiveness" within the European film industry. Panel discussions explored key factors shaping competitiveness, identifying strategies to strengthen industry positioning amidst evolving market dynamics. The dialogue emphasized not only creativity and market trends but also delved into the roles of gender and youth within policy and strategic frameworks.



Panel discussion of the REBOOT Advisory Board, Cannes, May 2024.



Juliette Prissard, General Delegate of EuroCinema,

provided insights on the nature of competitiveness, stressing its duality as both a challenge and a coordinated opportunity. According to Prissard, strong regulatory frameworks are key to supporting competitiveness in a balanced and thriving sector.



Guillaume Prieur, Director of Institutional and European Affairs at SACD and Secretary General of the French Coalition for Cultural Diversity,

underscored the important role of public intervention and cultural policy, citing France's strong model of economic support through cinema centers and public broadcaster investments as exemplary pillars of success.



Allison Beale, Professor Emerita, Simon Fraser University, Canada,

addressed the urgent need for gender and diversity accountability within the film sector, engaging discussions on accountability, gender, and youth inclusion. Beale called for enhanced data accuracy to support women and gender-diverse creators, recognizing that meaningful change hinges on robust data collection and transparency.

04 Charting the future of European film

Insights youth audiences, and policy dynamics

The REBOOT project continues its mission to understand, analyze, and shape the competitiveness of the European Film Industry (EFI) against a backdrop of shifting economic, technological, and cultural forces. Through interviews, surveys with students and children and focus groups across EU member and non-member states and in-depth engagement with youth audiences, REBOOT is building a multifaceted understanding of how the sector can better serve Europe's diverse and evolving needs. This holistic approach seeks to unite market forces with cultural, social, and political imperatives.

Youth Engagement: The Next Generation of Audiences and Creators

One of REBOOT's focal points is youth, those who will become tomorrow's film professionals, leaders, and discerning audiences. A survey of approximately 4,500 young people (aged 12-24) from Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Turkey, combined with focus groups of 60 participants in each country, has provided a wealth of insights into how young Europeans perceive, access, and engage with film. For several months now, teams across the consortium have been working on conducting.

and analyzing data regarding the tastes and preferences of young people concerning transnational and European film content. While data collection is ongoing, an initial look at the findings from these focus groups reveals that:

- Many young people are honing impressive film-related skills independently, applying these abilities to create content and engage with media in their everyday lives,
- European youth exhibit strong global sensibilities and approach media consumption with critical awareness, balancing entertainment with a desire for meaningful content,
- Socio-economic disparities continue to shape young people's access to cinemas, platforms, and diverse film offerings. Polarization along resource lines limits the ability to experience and appreciate the full breadth of European cinema,
- Emerging filmmakers among Europe's youth challenge conventional hierarchies, opting for collaborative approaches steeped in social responsibility and community engagement. However, many feel constrained by the "tyranny of networking" and the industry's commercialization pressures.



During focus group sessions in Vienna.

Beyond the Market: Redefining Competitiveness for a Sustainable Future

As REBOOT's preliminary findings suggest, competitiveness in the European film industry must go beyond pure market metrics. Its research underscores that competitiveness, while rooted in economic vitality, must also reflect Europe's social, cultural, and political context. This broader lens captures the evolving regulatory and policy environment, the impact of digital transformation, and the imperative to preserve cultural diversity amidst globalized media influences.

Looking ahead: Building a resilient, inclusive film sector

REBOOT's upcoming work will continue to explore and redefine competitiveness within the industry through workshops, expert interviews, conversations with stakeholders, reports, and strategic dialogues. Through this work, REBOOT is charting a path forward where film thrives as both an industry and a public good, uniting creativity, diversity, and social responsibility.

05 Diversity, film and on-demand audiovisual services

On October 23, 24, and 25, the *International Seminar Diversity and On-Demand Audiovisual Services* was held at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. This event was organized by the Audiovisual Diversity research group with the support of the Faculty of Humanities, Communication and Documentation (FHCD-UC3M), the University Institute of Spanish Cinema

(IUCE-UC3M), the Latin American Observatory of Media Regulation and Convergence (Observacom), the Laboratoire d'Excellence 'Cultural industries and artistic creation' (LabEx ICCA, France), the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities at the State Research Agency and the REBOOT Project.

During the seminar, Fernando Ramos (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), Antonios Vlassis (Université de Liège) and Isabela Vargas Miranda (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid) presented preliminary findings from their research that examined the relationship between European cinema and streaming audiovisual services.

Their presentations were entitled, respectively,

- 'For me, the competence of a streamer is still unproven'. Or how the European film industry values the recent VOD story,
- Exploring the cross-national politics of the audiovisual media governance in the light of VOD services,
- European film and the Latin American VOD landscape.

The event brought together academics, industry professionals, and regulators from both sides of the Atlantic to discuss the promotion and protection of diversity in the audiovisual sector. Key topics included the impact of video-on-demand service providers in Europe and Latin America, with a particular focus on U.S.-based transnational companies, along with the production and distribution of audiovisual works. This gathering aimed to foster a critical dialogue on the influence of these industry players from both political-regulatory and socioeconomic perspectives.



Fernando Ramos (UCM), Antonios Vlassis (ULiège) and Isabela Vargas Miranda (UC3M) during the presentation of the preliminary findings on REBOOT.

06 Trade, development and the cultural sector

An impossible nexus?

Evangelia Psychogiopoulou as co-author with Anna Kandyla presented "Trade, Development and the Cultural Sector: An Impossible Nexus?" at the 12th Biennial Conference of the ECPR Standing Group on the European Union (SGEU), held at Universidade NOVA, Lisbon, from 19-21 June 2024. The session, attended by 20-25 academics specializing in EU trade and development policies, was part of the "Promoting EU Norms through Trade" panel.

The presentation focused on the audiovisual exception in multilateral and bilateral trade agreements entered into by the EU with third countries that has been customary. The story of the EU cultural battle fought in the WTO is well told,

and it was meant to restrain the impact of trade liberalization on cultural diversity. Following the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, the EU has developed novel approaches to culture in its external economic relations, covering the audiovisual sector. The integration of a cultural cooperation protocol in the EU-Cariforum EPA in 2008 was a first attempt to implement preferential treatment for the cultural sector of developing countries. However, this was not systematic. In other cases, cultural cooperation with developing countries was addressed through agreements other than EPAs, like association and cultural cooperation agreements. This confirmed the unease of addressing culture and the audiovisual

sector within a trade-related framework, despite the EU-Cariforum EPA having a genuine development perspective, shown, amongst others, in preferential access to the EU market granted to EU-Cariforum audiovisual co-productions.

Since then, the practice of cultural cooperation protocols has withered, but EU cultural cooperation with developing countries is ongoing through other instruments. Global Europe, as its precursor, the Development Cooperation Instrument, funds a range of activities with a cultural cooperation component. Evangelia Psychogiopoulou explored the evolution of the Union's development cooperation policy in the field of culture. She examined the efforts made by the EU and the challenges faced in the ways of embedding culture in trade-related agreements, and traced policy orientation towards supporting cultural cooperation

with developing countries through funding. Such orientation might be better suited for boosting the effectiveness of EU cultural cooperation with developing countries.



Evangelia Psychogiopoulou during the presentation, Lisbon, June 2024

07 How to reboot European cinema

Interview with Professor Katharine Sarikakis

This is a republication of the interview University of Vienna's Research Magazine *Rudolphina* published on October 31, 2024. Click [here](#) to access the original interview led by Hanna Möller.

Vienna just hosted the Viennale, Austria's biggest film festival. Best moment to check with Katharine Sarikakis, Professor of Communication Science at the University of Vienna, who is heading an international project on the future of European film.

In REBOOT (short for: Reviving, Boosting, Optimising and Transforming European Film Competitiveness) Katharine Sarikakis is coordinating eleven universities and institutions and a budget of just under four million Euro all over Europe. Together they aim to connect the existing strengths of European film, identify and suggest future competitiveness in the fields of policy, practice and experience. We catch Katharine Sarikakis between research, teaching and sessions in front of the big screen.

Rudolphina: What is the state of the European film industry?

Katharine Sarikakis: What we experience is that the European film industry always feels like a "second" runner-up: it comes after Hollywood in terms of revenue, budgets and admission numbers. This is a story that has been going on since the early twentieth century and has not changed until today.

But what makes the European film industry outstanding is the fact that it tends to be more diverse and possibly less scared to tackle difficult issues and aspects. Films are about the human

condition – not about cars or coffee-makers or other symbols of consumerism. One reason for this is that in Europe, education is predominantly free, this includes film schools, but also generally schooling and higher education. The other reason is that in Europe public institutions, such as public service broadcasters have been investing heavily in the production of independent films for decades. This policy is considered part of the public service to support the production of films that do not come from established or major studios and generally dominant market players.

Rudolphina: Why is an independent film industry of public and political interest?

Katharine Sarikakis: Market outreach is a desired outcome but not the priority for an independent creator which therefore means that there is another motivation. And that is often the willingness to deal with difficult, unpleasant subjects and to take a critical stand to whatever cultural or sociopolitical situations society is called to deal with. Film is bigger than just its admission ticket office or number of downloads. It is also a storytelling hub of meaning for democracy and for communal life.



Katharine Sarikakis presented the research project REBOOT, its work and first findings at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival's Marche du Film in May 2024.

Rudolphina: You are in lead of the REBOOT project, which takes a closer look at European cinema. What is the idea of the project?

Katharine Sarikakis: The core aim of the project has been to reboot both our thinking about what it means to have a competitive European film industry and reboot dominant approaches into strengthening this kind (or kinds) of competitiveness. We try to understand what the different stakeholders consider competitive, to identify the gaps in these

understandings which form policy and strategy and detect the problematic areas in determining competitiveness. For example, it would be problematic for European societies if Europe's film industry only followed the market and European and national film policy considered the role of film as cultural and political expression insignificant or an afterthought.

In Vienna we lead the research part which focuses on young audiences, especially on children and young adults. There already exists a lot of research on the reasons why audiences go to movie theatres, also some research about young people's preferences. We want to explore these aspects with a view to the future: What are the habits and preferences of young audiences? What does European cinema mean to young people? While we are speaking we are running a survey with 4000 young people and focus groups with about 500 children and teenagers across nine countries.

Rudolphina: What is special about young audiences and their way of watching movies?

Katharine Sarikakis: Young audiences are digital natives. And given the fact that they are also creators of visual content – from TikTok and other channels to makers of short movies – they have fundamentally, we hypothesise, different expectations and want to see different styles in movies. They can participate and understand what the process is behind cameras. They are creators and consumers at the same time. Young people today are also the policymakers of the future and the leaders of the industry.

Rudolphina: This year's Viennale celebrated, among others, Helene Thimig, an outstanding creative artist who was long described only as the "daughter or wife of". How diverse is European cinema today?

Katharine Sarikakis: Helene Thimig is a typical case of how women are being hidden from history, whether it is politics, technology, science or culture. That the Viennale has focussed on her work shows how important conscious leadership of such institutions is. They can contribute to social justice and create role models for the youth. Still only one fourth of the leading producing creators in the

European film industry is female. Women tend to work in teams rather than present themselves as sole story creators. The gender gap is also an aspect we investigate in our project built in all our research design and activities seamlessly. We understand that the stories cannot be diverse if there is no diversity of experiences in making those stories.



Helene Thimig (1889-1974) was an Austrian stage and film actress most noted for her successful theatre career, especially in the 1920s. This still shows her in "Strangers in the Night" (1944). Her film career has only recently begun to receive recognition. © Viennale



Katharine Sarikakis

is professor of Communication Science and heads the Media Governance and Industries Research Lab. She held the Santander Chair of Excellence and was the Director of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence Communication, Facts and regulation for Europe (FREuDe); Katharine Sarikakis has served on major Communication journals. Her research interests focus on transformation, process of decision-making and power relations in media governance. Katharine's transdisciplinary work in policies can be seen in her collaborations with international organisations, such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe, as well as European organisations for freedom of expression.

08 “Lights, Camera, Action!”

Inspiring Future Filmmakers at the Children’s University

On July 12, 2024, the Reboot team hosted an engaging workshop titled “3, 2, 1... and Action!” for children aged 10 to 12 at the Children’s University in Vienna. Since 2020, the Children’s University has been offering exciting opportunities for young minds to engage with various research experiences, with contributions from scientists across multiple disciplines. This year, Reboot team joined the roster of over 400 programs, bringing the magic of filmmaking to life for curious young learners.

The “3, 2, 1... and Action!” workshop was designed to immerse young participants in the captivating world of filmmaking, seamlessly weaving creativity, education, and hands-on experience into a single engaging session.



Take-home booklet from the workshop.

The goal was to ignite a lasting interest in the film industry among young minds by offering them a rare opportunity to explore its inner workings firsthand. Central to the workshop was the creation

of stop-motion videos, a medium that allowed children to unleash their creativity while learning the fundamentals of filmmaking. Through this activity, they not only discovered the art of storytelling but also gained practical knowledge about the tools and techniques involved in bringing their ideas to life.



Impressions from the "3, 2, 1... and Action" workshop.

The workshop also aimed to demystify the complexity of filmmaking by introducing participants to the various roles and professions that contribute to a film's production. Children were encouraged to step into these roles themselves, experiencing firsthand the teamwork, decision-making, and problem-solving required in real-world filmmaking.

The workshop began with an icebreaker game where children shared their names and favorite films, fostering a warm and friendly environment. The first activity invited participants to match professional tasks to their corresponding roles and categorise them into pre-production, production, and post-production stages.

The children were fascinated by the diversity of roles in the filmmaking process and enjoyed this interactive activity.

One participant remarked, "I didn't know so many people worked to make a film!" while another discovered that the producer's job, which they assumed was part of production, actually begins in pre-production.

4 researchers, 2 assistants from the industry, and 3 young volunteers joined the session to introduce the eight steps of filmmaking, complemented by short training on camera angles and lighting techniques. The children eagerly asked questions and shared experiences from their own video projects, demonstrating both curiosity and enthusiasm.

Divided into three groups, the children took on the challenge of creating their own stop-motion films. With the guidance of researchers and professionals, along with detailed booklets, the young filmmakers selected characters, developed storylines, and crafted storyboards. They utilized a materials corner stocked with Playmobil figures, Lego pieces, and creative props to bring their visions to life.

The collaborative nature of the workshop encouraged participants to assume different responsibilities, such as selecting characters, designing prompts, and directing scenes. The workshop culminated in a mini film screening, where participants proudly watched their creations on the big screen. Each child received a certificate and small gifts related to their projects, leaving with newfound knowledge and a sense of accomplishment.



Takeaways from the workshop

"I learned about the three-lights effect." (Boy)

"I now know that production starts before the actual filming begins." (Girl)

"Working with so many opinions made it difficult but also fun."

09 European film and youth

REBOOT Vienna's research team at ECREA Conference

From October 24 to 27, a team of researchers, led by Prof. Katharine Sarikakis, represented the University of Vienna's Media Governance and Industries Research Lab and the REBOOT project at the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) Conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The tenth edition of the biennial conference, themed "Communication and Social (Dis)Order," drew more than a thousand attendees, offering a vibrant forum for media and communication scholars to exchange insights.

Researchers Gentiana Ramadani and Janina Jüngst presented the soon-to-be-published chapter "Young People and the European Film Industry: The Governance of 'Near Misses'."

Additionally, researcher Angeliki Chatziefrimidou delivered a compelling presentation entitled "Guardians of Digital Privacy: Unravelling Children's Perceptions Beyond Parental Control." Angeliki's research offered valuable insights into children's views on online privacy, highlighting perspectives often overlooked in digital privacy debates. The presentations underscored Reboot Vienna's commitment to advancing media research and encouraging meaningful discourse at the intersection of culture, technology, and social engagement.



Gentiana Ramadani during presentation at ECREA conference, Ljubljana, September 2024.

The co-authored chapter by Katharine Sarikakis, Angeliki Chatziefrimidou, Janina Jüngst, and Gentiana Ramadani, titled **"Young People and the European Film Industry: The Governance of 'Near Misses'"** searches into the overlooked role of youth in shaping the European film industry.

The European Union regards the film sector as a cornerstone of its creative industries, recognizing its power to influence markets and shape European identities. Film is celebrated not only for its contribution to cultural diversity and economic growth, but also for fostering sociopolitical cohesion. However, despite these acknowledgments, youth's participation in the development and governance of film has historically been sidelined.

Efforts within the industry have often focused on addressing challenges such as competition and distribution. Yet, these initiatives frequently neglect to engage young people, an omission that stifles the potential for innovation and undermines the industry's long-term competitiveness. The chapter highlights the persistent framing of youth as passive audiences rather than as active contributors with the ability to influence the future of European film.

By examining instances where young people were recognized as creators and policy influencers, the authors shed light on the 'near misses'-moments of potential that fell short of empowering youth as key stakeholders. This analysis not only underscores the need for meaningful inclusion of young voices but also advocates for their active participation as future leaders in the film industry.

The chapter offers valuable insights into how the European film sector can better integrate youth, ensuring its sustainability and relevance in an increasingly dynamic cultural landscape.

10 Preliminary REBOOT findings presented at EEAs conference

Mafalda Dâmaso, Researcher and Principal Investigator at Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) in the Netherlands, one of the partners of REBOOT, presented emerging findings from the project and discussed their relevance for the EU's external action, underscoring the geopolitical dimension of the European film industry.

In June 2024, she spoke at the conference Unity in Cultural Diversity: A Workshop on Artistic Freedom, Human Rights, and the Role of International Cultural Relations in Europe and Beyond, which was co-organised by the Cultural Relations Platform and the European External Action Service.



Mafalda Dâmaso (right) presenting the research findings at the Unity in Cultural Diversity conference, June 2024.

Dâmaso intervened in the panel discussion *Impact of Political Dynamics on International Cultural Relations*.

Her paper reflected on the continued relevance of the Joint Communication Towards an EU strategy for International Cultural Relations (ICR), which structures the EU's approach to culture around the world and is based on the idea of co-creation.

Mafalda identified several challenges faced by ICR – such as the need to scale in the face of growing disinformation campaigns by illiberal actors – and

suggested corresponding potential pathways to address them, such as supporting the mainstreaming of ICR by strengthening the links between EU cultural, media, industrial, and foreign policies and programs.

In making this case, she mentioned preliminary findings emerging from a REBOOT task focused on European Film Festivals, which is led by the University of Jyväskylä and in which EUR participates.

This followed a presentation in the European Parliament's CULT Committee in the context of an exchange of views on recent developments in the EU's Cultural Diplomacy, which had taken place in February 2024. In it, Mafalda argued that the EU must respond to global claims of justice as part of the design of the new global order that is yet to emerge. This reinforces the strategic importance of ICR for the EU: listening, learning, and co-creating with others should be central to the EU's external action. Several findings emerging from REBOOT's research illustrated this argument. Namely, the presentation reflected on how EU festivals can either become two-way opportunities for local and European film professionals to interact or be fully transformed into joint festivals. These presentations confirm the relevance of the project – which identifies untapped policy pathways in EU policies for film competitiveness – and its findings for European policymakers.



The intervention can be watched by simply clicking on the QR code or scanning the code and jumping to the 09:59:32

11 Collaborate to compete

Insights from REBOOT Advisory Board members about the European film industry

European film competitiveness, as explained by **Ufuoma Akpojivi, Policy-Research and Learning Lead A4ID**, lies in the diversity and cultural richness brought by different EU member states producing films that reach global audiences through platforms like Netflix.

"We have different members of the EU all producing films, and we get to see these different cultures being shown on Netflix," he noted, emphasizing the healthy competitiveness stemming from cultural variety.

However, true success in promoting European films requires collaboration among member states to unify their efforts and expand market reach. Despite the dominance of Hollywood, a united European approach can leverage its diverse cultures and audiences for greater impact. Distribution remains a key challenge, as fragmentation limits access.

"The reach of EU films, I would say, is limited. So we need to think about ways of distributing the films, and this takes me to working together to leverage on existing infrastructures, to leverage on the advantage, and see how they can use that to enhance the distribution. So I think the distribution is the biggest challenge."



According to **Rodrigo Gómez, Professor at UAM**, Competitiveness in the European film industry thrives on quality, sustainability, and creative expression, showcasing the rich cultural diversity of Europe. However, circulation remains a major challenge.

Building young audiences and incorporating diverse gender perspectives are also vital to enhancing the industry's competitiveness, fostering new narratives, and expanding global influence.

"The main and biggest challenge for the European film industry is circulation," Professor Gomez noted, emphasizing the need for strategic alliances, especially with the public sector, to engage new audiences worldwide and deepen cross-cultural understanding.



The European Network for Cinema and Media Studies (NECS) conference was held in Izmir, Turkey from 26 to 29 June 2024. This year's conference theme, 'Emergencies -Media in an Unpredictable World', was particularly pertinent given the focus of the REBOOT project on the challenges facing European cinema in the context of intensifying competition for audiences.

Kaisa Hiltunen, a senior researcher from the University of Jyväskylä, participated in the panel discussion entitled "Functional emergencies? Looking back at thirty years of European Film Industry (1990–2020)". This panel was based on the REBOOT project's ongoing research, which focuses on the diachronic understanding of competitiveness in the European film industry from the perspective of European film institutions. The third researcher from the REBOOT team to present in the panel was Engelart Willems from Ghent University.



The Izmir University of Economics, venue of the conference.

The panel addressed the challenges and successes of the Flemish, Finnish, and Spanish film industries and broader perspectives on the state of European cinema. In her presentation, Hiltunen used Finland as an example of a small film industry operating relatively successfully with limited resources.

12 Small nations cinema at NECS

Expert interviews with representatives of the Finnish Film Foundation were conducted to gain insight into the Finnish film industry, forming the foundation for the presentation. While a general sense of stagnation pervades the European cinema industry today, the interviews revealed a more optimistic outlook on Finnish cinema. It was considered to be much more competitive now than 20-30 years ago and is attracting increasing international interest.

The foundations for the current success of Finnish cinema were laid in the late 1990s with a shift towards a more business-oriented film policy. European cinema, on the other hand, was noted to be lacking interesting phenomena at the moment. The presentations generated a lot of interest and were followed by a lively discussion about the persistent challenges of the European film industry on the one hand and the different national cinemas on the other.

Relevant issues for the REBOOT project were also discussed in some of the other panels of the conference. For example, in the panel "Film industry and emergencies", André Rui Graça from the CRESCINE project presented findings on audience preferences concerning the SVOD market in Portugal. Petar Mitric and Lydia Papadimitriou discussed the relationship between film academics and the film industry from a methodological perspective in the panel "Film Industry and Cinemagoing".

13 Culture in EU Foreign Trade Policy

A Lecture at the University of the Peloponnese

Laia Comerma Calatayud from the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) recently delivered an insightful lecture on the role of culture within the European Union's foreign trade policy at the Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of the Peloponnese. The session included a lecture followed by a question-and-answer period, focusing on the EU's nuanced engagement in the cultural sector, which, while modestly funded, adheres to the principle of subsidiarity and spans multiple areas of intervention and funding systems. The session, featuring a dynamic lecture followed by an interactive Q&A, illuminated a complex aspect of EU governance that is often overlooked but holds significant global and local impact.

Calatayud began by acknowledging a central reality that the EU does not possess a unified cultural policy in a traditional sense. Its work within the cultural sector is shaped by modest funding, strict adherence to the principle of subsidiarity, and a fragmented approach spread across different areas and funding systems. This inherent fragmentation, she explained, stems from the interplay of three key dimensions.

First, the global industrial and trade dimension highlighted the expanding importance of cultural goods in international trade, particularly since the end of 1980s. Culture has become more than just an expression of identity; it is a commercial force in a global market. This shift necessitates careful navigation by the EU to protect its unique cultural products while engaging in broader economic exchanges.

Calatayud, explored the socio-economic dimension of EU cultural policy. The influence wielded by cultural industries and professional organizations was evident, with their considerable economic, media, and symbolic influence and professional cultural organizations put political pressure on government authorities and EU institutional bodies;

And third, the political and cultural dimensions were also at the forefront.

As cultural expressions serve as vehicles for European identity, but they also clash and coexist with national, regional, and local identities. This multi-layered complexity often leads to competition and tension among various identity-promoting groups within the EU's diverse cultural landscape.

Calatayud's lecture, rooted in thorough document examination, traced the historical trajectory of EU trade and cultural policies. It highlighted key milestones such as the 2005 UN Convention on cultural diversity and the EU's Protocol on Cultural Cooperation, illustrating both successes and ongoing challenges.

The analysis pointed to a clear shift;

- Unresolved dilemma between the desire for flexibility and policy space on cultural policies to protect the EU's industry and its cultural diversity at home; and the goal to promote the economic competitiveness of the EU's cultural and audiovisual industry, as well as its cultural diversity and heritage.
- Especially in the age of 'platformisation', VOD, e-commerce and globalization.
- Stand-alone Protocols, tagged to an economic agreement, seem no longer to be the policy of the EU, but the audiovisual industry keeps on being excluded from the commitments in trade agreements with a 'positive list' of reservations.
- How can this dilemma be reconciled?



Event announcement poster.

Calatayud's exploration left participants with a deeper understanding of how culture weaves through EU trade and development policies, influencing everything from market negotiations to the preservation of European heritage.

In an age where cultural identity and economic interests often collide, her insights underscored the EU's ongoing struggle to find harmony between protecting its rich cultural diversity and engaging in global trade.

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