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Reviving, Boosting, Optimising
and Transforming European Film
Competitiveness

Newsletter #3



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon research and innovation programme under grant agreement 101094796



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01 The REBOOT Podcast

This new initiative offers new spaces for exploration of the key challenges and innovations shaping contemporary European cinema. The Reboot podcast, through thoughtful conversations with leading voices from across the industry, examines how the European Film Industry (EFI) is adapting to a rapidly changing global context addressing questions of identity, distribution, policy, creativity, and the future of filmmaking in a digital age.

The REBOOT podcast is designed to dive deep into the complexities of European film, examining everything from cultural identity and distribution to technological innovation and the changing dynamics of global competition. It delves into the multifaceted landscape of European cinema, exploring a wide range of topics critical to the future of the European Film Industry (EFI). Episodes tackle the evolving concept of European identity in film, examining how globalisation and co-productions challenge traditional boundaries. The podcast will also explore key industry issues like distribution, competition with Hollywood, and the changing dynamics of film festivals and streaming platforms. Discussions cover the economics of European film production, the role of EU policies in promoting cultural diversity and sustainability, and the impact of emerging technologies such as VR, AI, and blockchain on filmmaking.

From legal constraints to audience preferences, the podcast addresses the challenges faced by non-mainstream filmmakers, the shifting tastes of younger audiences, and the need for innovation to stay competitive in a globalised market. Each episode features insights from industry experts, filmmakers, and policymakers, providing listeners with a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and opportunities shaping the future of European cinema.

The first episode will be broadcast in May 2025. Stay tuned!



02 Creativity meets circularity

The EIT Culture & Creativity Innovation Forum in Nice Illuminates Europe's Circular Future

By Jean-Francois Trubert

At a time when Europe is reimagining its future through the lenses of sustainability, social cohesion, and cultural innovation, the EIT Culture & Creativity Innovation Forum offered a timely and powerful platform for dialogue, inspiration, and

action. Held on April 22–23, 2025, in Nice, France, the second edition of this flagship event brought together over 130 participants from across the continent – academics, entrepreneurs, policymakers, artists, and institutional leaders – united by a shared conviction: that culture and

creativity are not peripheral to Europe's green and digital transition, but central to its success.

Organized under the compelling theme “Creativity Meets Circularity”, the forum underscored the pivotal role of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in shaping a circular economy. In partnership with the MIN4CI Foundation (Mediterranean Institute for Innovation in Culture and Creative Industries), the event combined high-level vision with grassroots energy, offering both strategic insights and on-the-ground examples of innovation.

A Forum Rooted in Europe's Transformation Agenda

The European Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan, and the New European Bauhaus initiative set the stage for this year's forum. These policy frameworks do more than define environmental goals—they call for a rethinking of our economic and social models. In this context, the Innovation Forum positioned CCIs as not only beneficiaries of these policies, but active agents of change.

The city of Nice, with its rich cultural heritage and commitment to sustainable urban development, served as the ideal host for this gathering as well as University Côte d'Azur. Over two days, participants engaged in a dynamic programme of conferences, roundtables, workshops, and networking sessions that explored the intersections of creativity, ecology, and economy.

Ecosystems, Values, and a Call to Action

The forum opened at the beautifully restored Théâtre des Franciscains in Nice's Old Town, where participants were welcomed by institutional leaders and treated to an inspiring keynote by Winy Maas, the visionary architect and co-founder of MVRDV. His talk set the tone for the day: bold, imaginative, and deeply grounded in questions of urban life and sustainability.

Three thematic roundtables followed, each offering a different lens on the forum's central theme:

- Local cultural and environmental ecosystems were explored through the experiences of the Friche la Belle de Mai in Marseille, the Opéra Grand Avignon, and Aix-Marseille University.

- The South Region of France was presented as a living lab for creative and circular innovation, with voices from Relais Culture Europe, the Région Sud, CNRS, and the regional Campus for Cultural and Creative Industries hosted by Université Côte d'Azur.
- A powerful dialogue on European values and the New European Bauhaus brought together Ambra Trotto (EIT Culture & Creativity) and Annemie Wijkmans (CRAFT Lighthouse Project), emphasizing beauty, inclusivity, and sustainability as guiding principles for innovation.

The day concluded with a creative networking session, where participants had the opportunity to forge new alliances and cross-sector partnerships in an atmosphere of openness and possibility.

Sectoral innovation and political vision

On the second day, the forum moved to the Troabas Campus of Université Côte d'Azur, where five parallel sessions focused on the EIT Culture & Creativity's priority sectors: Fashion, Architecture, Cultural Heritage, Audiovisual & Media, and Video Games. These sectoral tracks showcased groundbreaking projects, emerging technologies, and circular business models that demonstrate the vibrancy and relevance of creative industries across Europe.

We were also deeply honored to welcome Professor Katharine Sarikakis, Project Lead of the Horizon Europe Project REBOOT, whose presence brought critical insight into the ethical and societal dimensions of technological innovation in the cultural and creative sectors.

In the afternoon, attention turned to policy and investment. High-level speakers offered perspectives on how Europe can support innovation in CCIs through coherent and forward-looking frameworks. Among them were:

- Barbara Stacher from the European Commission,
- Anna Linden representing the EIT Governing Board,
- Luigi Amati, President of Business Angels Europe,
- Christian Ehler, Member of the European Parliament and longstanding advocate for research and innovation.

Their interventions reinforced a clear message: Europe's cultural and creative sectors are not simply artistic or economic assets – they are vital infrastructure for a sustainable and inclusive future.



The panel including Katharine Sarikakis and moderated by Jean-Francois Trubert discussed new creative models can drive transformation in an era increasingly defined by sustainable priorities.

Resilience, Creativity, and the Road Ahead

The forum also served as the launchpad for the new EIT Culture & Creativity Resilience Initiative, designed to equip the sector with tools to adapt to future shocks—economic, environmental, and technological. This initiative reflects a growing awareness that resilience is not only about survival but about transformation and regeneration.

By the end of the two days, one thing was clear: the Innovation Forum had achieved more than dialogue. It had catalyzed momentum, inspired vision, and laid the groundwork for lasting collaborations across disciplines, sectors, and borders.

In a time marked by uncertainty and urgent transitions, the Innovation Forum 2025 stood as a beacon of what is possible when creativity meets circularity—and when Europe believes in the transformative power of culture.

03 “Meetings on the Bridge”

Rethinking European cooperation, copyright, and competitiveness at Istanbul Film Festival

The current EU legal regime, though comprehensive, continues to suffer from a lack of harmonisation, particularly around the definition of authorship and the complex web of terms and systems governing the use of content in `secondary windows` such as Video-on-Demand and other online platforms. Added to this are systemic challenges including unstable exchange rates, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and politicized domestic support structures, all of which were highlighted as major obstacles for filmmakers. Moreover, cultural and communication barriers often complicate co-production partnerships. Professionals voice a clear call for more flexible and adaptive policy frameworks, particularly in light of recent reforms introduced by Eurimages, and urged for revisions to minimum spending requirements, which currently hinder many from participating in international co-productions. These were among the most discussed issues at the 20th edition of “Meetings on the Bridge,” the industry platform of the Istanbul Film Festival.



Part of the panel at Istanbul Film Festival was the presentation of preliminary findings of ongoing REBOOT research.

On 15 April 2025, the REBOOT Project was presented by researchers Melis Behlil (KHAS University), Pelin Turan (SSSA), Marina Rossato Fernandes, and Antonios Vlassis (ULiège). The event took place at Hope Alkazar, a former cinema turned cultural venue in central Istanbul, drawing filmmakers, producers, and researchers into a timely and critical discussion about the challenges shaping today's European film industry.

Moderated by Yamaç Okur, a well-known Turkish producer with extensive experience in European co-productions, the session presented key findings from REBOOT's ongoing research, which includes international surveys and interviews with film professionals from across and beyond Europe. The conversation navigated structural challenges, policy inconsistencies, copyright issues, and cross-border collaborations, framed through the perspectives of both EU and non-EU professionals.

Antonios Vlassis and Marina Rossato Fernandes shared insights from a pan-European survey and 37 expert interviews on how film professionals across the EU perceive the rise of AI and the growing influence of Video-on-Demand (VOD) platforms. The presentation explored both the opportunities and challenges professionals identify in engaging with these technologies—from enhanced creative tools and broader distribution channels to concerns about intellectual property, market concentration, and artistic autonomy. The findings highlight a critical need for policy frameworks that better reflect on-the-ground realities and support a sustainable, diverse European film ecosystem in the digital age.

Moderator Okur Okur talked about how competitiveness in the European film industry is not just about market presence but about access to networks, understanding legal frameworks, and finding spaces for collaboration across borders. Pelin Turan, researcher at Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, delved into the copyright-related obstacles faced by independent and non-mainstream European producers, especially in distributing films internationally. Turan argues that technological advancements and the platformisation of content have opened new doors but these same developments raise complex questions about authorisation and rights clearance across multiple territories.

She emphasized that navigating this fragmented regulatory environment is particularly difficult for smaller players, noting: For many producers, it's not only time-consuming and expensive, it also threatens their ability to bring films to global audiences.

To respond to these gaps, the REBOOT team is currently developing a set of best practices and coping strategies based on successful approaches adopted by film professionals who have managed to overcome such challenges.

Following this, Melis Behlil of Kadir Has University presented insights on co-productions and the role of European Film Institutions (EFIs) from the perspective of Turkish filmmakers. She emphasized that many professionals see co-productions as crucial avenues for creative and financial support.

She explained that co-productions are seen as lifelines by many. They provide access to funding, feedback, networks, and international distribution, especially valuable for young filmmakers trying to break into the European scene.



The REBOOT project was represented by Melis Behlil, Pelin Turan, Marina Rossato Fernandes, and Antonios Vlassis.

However, Behlil also acknowledged the serious domestic and cross-cultural barriers that still persist. These include economic instability, limited institutional continuity, and difficulties working with international partners due to differing expectations and working styles. Nonetheless, she highlighted recent Eurimages practices that have helped address some of these issues, and echoed calls for more flexible policy mechanisms to respond to crises like the pandemic or other unpredictable events.

Okur concluded that the panel attendees is not just studying problems but working with those in the field to co-create solutions that reflect the realities and aspirations of a diverse film community."The REBOOT Project was part of the panel titled "REBOOT: Rethinking Competitiveness, Copyright and Film Cooperation," as part of the festival's "Cinema Talks" series.

04 Creative Hub Greece and ELIAMEP Roundtable on Film Industry Policies

On April 10, 2025, the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) hosted a timely and insightful discussion on the future of European cinema, as part of the Horizon Europe-funded REBOOT project (Reviving, Boosting, Optimising and Transforming European Film Competitiveness). Organised in partnership with EKKOMED - Creative Greece, the event brought together researchers, policy experts, and cultural practitioners to reflect on evolving film industry policies and the role of Greece as an emerging reference point in shaping European audiovisual strategies.

Under the title “Film Industry Policies in Europe: Greece as an Institutional Reference Point for Film Promotion and Education”, the dialogue addressed the pressing challenges facing the European film sector, from digital transformation and the influence of social media to policy fragmentation and shifting audience behaviours, particularly among younger generations. Central to the discussion was the call for a more unified European policy approach that strengthens competitiveness while remaining inclusive and culturally diverse.



the roundtable brought together researchers, policy experts, and industry professionals to discuss evolving film industry policies

Professor Katherine Sarikakis, coordinator of the REBOOT project and director of the Media Governance and Industries Research Lab at the University of Vienna emphasized the importance

of rethinking European film competitiveness beyond market-based indicators, calling for a more values-driven, inclusive framework that supports creative diversity and democratic participation in film governance.



Professor Sarikakis joined the roundtable online, presenting the REBOOT's objectives and preliminary findings on youth and film.

Eirini Andriopoulou, head of the Creative Hub GR at EKKOMED – Creative Greece and REBOOT researcher, highlighted Greece's evolving institutional strategies, which connect audiovisual production with public engagement and cultural education. She pointed to several national initiatives as examples of how Greece is becoming an influential player in shaping European policy dialogues.

Associate Professor Eirini Sifaki, director of the Interart Studies Lab at the University of Thessaly and also a REBOOT researcher, stressed the crucial role of audiovisual education. She argued that educating young people in media literacy and cinematic expression is not only key to cultivating informed audiences but also essential for empowering a new generation of creators with critical and cultural insight. The discussion highlighted the need for productive collaboration between culture, education, and institutional strategy to boost the competitiveness and promotion of European cinema.

05 Competitiveness and Public Policy in Film

REBOOT at Script Fiesta

In March 2025, the REBOOT Polish team participated in the Script Fiesta festival at the Warsaw Film School, where a workshop titled “Competitiveness in the European Film Market: 20th Anniversary of the Polish Film Institute” brought together producers, researchers, and students for a dynamic exchange of ideas.

Chaired by Prof. Alicja Waszkiewicz-Raviv, the session welcomed acclaimed film producers Agnieszka Dziedzic (Koi Studio, Polish Producers Guild) and Agata Terpiał (One3 Studio), alongside REBOOT researchers Anita Zawisza and Jacek Mikucki. Together, they explored the evolving role of public institutions in shaping film policy, with a focus on competitiveness, funding frameworks, and the future of European cinema.

The event also highlighted the contributions of emerging talents from the Warsaw Film School, with a photo report prepared by students Joanna Godun and Marianna Watras from WDIB.

During the workshop, the parties discussed the organizational and cultural conditions of institutions financing the film industry in Poland. Invited guests, that is, the independent executive producer and chair of the producer’s association in Poland, indicated regional and European state experiences and the strongest barriers. The case studies of the best Polish export films were discussed.



Questions from the public were about the possible avenues for development for young producers and short film producers, as the public mainly consisted of young audience members and scriptwriters.

06 The competitiveness of European cinema on digital platforms

The Reboot Project at Málaga Film Festival 2025 (MAFIZ)

The Spanish VOD market is undergoing a profound transformation, shaped by global streaming giants and strengthened by national legislation promoting European content. These are among the central findings of the VOD Europe Report – Case Study of Spain, presented at the Málaga Film Festival

as part of the Horizon Europe-funded REBOOT Project. The report presented in this event, led by Fernando Ramos and Loreto Corredoira of the Complutense University of Madrid, explores the regulatory impact and market trends surrounding Video on Demand (VOD) services in Spain.

It examines the impact of major global platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and MAX, as well as the response of national operators such as Filmin and Atresplayer. Among its key findings, it highlights the positive effects of the implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (in Spanish legislation through the General Law on Audiovisual Communication, which establishes requirements for the promotion and funding of European content.

Alongside the presentation, a panel discussion was held, moderated by Fernando Ramos, with Fabia Buenaventura, General Director of Independent Producers (FAPE), who called for continued support for Spanish and European cinema, considering that the sector is fragmented by SMEs and medium-sized businesses. Miguel Langle, Director of Regulatory Affairs and Institutional Relations of Atresmedia, suggested that, in the future, the Directive should apply the same legal framework to all audiovisual players and not only television and VOD (video-sharing platforms such as YouTube and Instagram). Finally, journalist and film critic Ana Sánchez de la Nieta (Aceprensa, Row 7) talked about the creative period Spanish cinema is coming through and pointed out that the financial support has been effective and has led to films such as *Sorda*, a film by Eva Libertad that is tipped to be a favorite in Málaga Film Festival, with a fresh approach to disability and motherhood, a kind of movie that make us better as a society.



The panel included representatives from research, policy experts and the film industry.

A VOD Landscape in Transition: Spain Between Global Giants and Local Innovators

The study reveals how the arrival of major international platforms starting in 2015 with Netflix has transformed the Spanish audiovisual ecosystem, generating significant changes in the production, distribution, and consumption of European films. The year 2020 was especially important due to the "shutdown" resulting from COVID-19, which increased the consumption of streaming content. Disney+ took advantage of the opportunity to launch its service globally.

The report focuses on three VOD cases in Spain, from the arrival or launch of MAX (in 2016 under the HBO brand), Filmin (in 2008), and Atresplayer in 2019 with the Premium option, to the maturity or consolidation of these applications in the market. These are three distinct models for offering films, series, documentaries, and animation.

The level of compliance with the obligations to promote European audiovisual works has been analyzed. Filmin, for example, leads the offer of European content, with 61% of its catalog including European works, which is his hallmark. MAX also meets this requirement thanks to its parent company's catalog, as HBO was acquired by WarnerMedia in 2021 and merged with Discovery+ in 2023. Atresplayer, for its part, being part of the Atresmedia audiovisual group, which invests in its own and third-party productions, also exceeds the production quota requirements (50-60% of its catalog of European works are audiovisual works, mainly series).

Furthermore, the report highlights the importance of regulatory policies that require platforms to invest a percentage of their revenue in financing European productions, purchasing rights, or contributing to Film Funds. As a result, in 2024, Netflix allocated €68 million to this purpose, while Atresmedia and Filmin invested €94.9 million and €1.5 million respectively (all according to data from the National Commission on Markets and Competition (CNMC)). The research also notes a turning point in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic boosted streaming consumption globally, offering platforms like

Disney+ a strategic launch window in Spain. At the end the recommendations and perspectives emphasizes the need to strength the role of the CNMC in supervising VOD platforms, improving transparency in the reporting of data on the production of European content as well as regarding audience measurement (a current lack of transparency due to the variety of services), and strengthening investment obligations in the European film industry. It also advocates for greater diversification of the content offer in order to ensure the sector's cultural diversity and competitiveness.



The Málaga Film Festival served as beautiful backdrop for insightful discussions on the film industry.

07 Advancing Sustainability and Collaboration in European Animation

Spotlight on CEE Animation Conference GO! 2025

In March 2025, the twin cities of Nova Gorica in Slovenia and Gorizia in Italy became a vibrant meeting point for animation professionals, institutions, and creatives during the CEE Animation Conference GO! 2025. Held from March 11 to 14 as part of the GO! 2025 European Capital of Culture programme, the event served as a critical space for reflecting on the challenges and opportunities facing the animation industry in Central and Eastern Europe.

The conference was organized by the CEE Animation association and aimed to strengthen international collaboration in the animation sector, with a particular focus on sustainability and the transnational development of animated projects. Attendees included representatives from film funds, national animation associations, journalists, experts, and daily visitors, altogether contributing to a dynamic exchange of knowledge and strategies. Antonios Vlassis from the University of Liège, presented research findings from the REBOOT project, funded by the EU's Horizon Europe

programme. His presentation focused on insights from a recent survey (WP4) conducted among EU-based film professionals, examining how they perceive the competitiveness of the European Film Industry (EFI) in both European and global markets. The results shed light on professionals' concerns and aspirations within a rapidly changing technological landscape and explored how policy can play a supportive role in strengthening Europe's audiovisual sector.



Antonios Vlassis presented results from research with industry professionals.

The conference welcomed 16 representatives from film funds, 17 national animated film association delegates, 15 guest speakers and experts, 3 journalists, and 10 daily guests.

It also featured joint sessions with 37 talents and experts from the CEE Animation Workshop and 11 participants from the REACT Animation Lab, fostering rich cross-programme interactions.

08 Cinema as a Cultural Bridge

Students exploring identity and interculturalism at CulCo Lab Workshop in Greece

On February 26, 2025, the Cultural Relations and Comparative Arts Lab (CulCo Lab) at the University of Thessaly, in collaboration with the REBOOT project, hosted an inspiring educational workshop titled “Cinema and Interculturality: Languages, Identities, Stories”. Held in Volos, Greece, the event welcomed 70 secondary school students aged 12 to 18 into an immersive cinematic experience focused on how film can illuminate issues of migration, cultural identity, and intercultural dialogue.

The workshop was led by a team of researchers from the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP): Associate Professor Eirini Sifaki (University of Thessaly), Dimitra Thliverou (PhD Candidate), and Stella-Maria Davia (PhD Candidate).

Through a curated selection of film excerpts from European, Arab, Asian, and Latin American cinema, students embarked on a journey across cultural landscapes. The discussions centered around themes such as migration, multiculturalism, cultural conflict, and the complexities of identity formation. A major point of engagement was the role of language, specifically subtitling and dubbing, in shaping a viewer’s emotional and intellectual connection to a story. Students explored how translation choices can subtly alter meaning, tone, and cultural nuance, offering a deeper appreciation of language as a vehicle for empathy and understanding.



The participating students had the possibility to reflect themes of language and intercultural discourse through film.

The participants responded with enthusiasm and curiosity, actively contributing to discussions and expressing a desire to further engage with global cinema. Their reflections underscored the importance of fostering media literacy in young audiences and the power of cinema to promote empathy and intercultural awareness.

This workshop is part of REBOOT’s broader mission to connect new generations with European film, support educational outreach, and inspire intercultural dialogue.

09 Rethinking the Global Film Landscape

REBOOT at IFFR
Pro Dialogue
2025

How competitive is European cinema really and at what cost? In an era where EU policymakers are doubling down on the word competitiveness, the REBOOT Project brought this question to the fore at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in a panel titled “Global Film Europe: Rethinking Competitiveness, Identity, and Power.” The event wove together research insights, fieldwork, and a deeply human reflection on the position of European cinema within the shifting dynamics of the global film industry.

Moderated by Pedro Tinen, German Chancellor Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the session invited a compelling lineup of speakers: Mafalda Dâmaso (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Prof. Antonios Vlassis and Marina Rossato Fernandes (both from the University of Liège), and Isabela Morena Vargas Miranda (University Carlos III of Madrid). Together, they presented new data, fresh analysis, and urgent calls for reimagining the rules of cinematic engagement between Europe and the world. The panel opened with a crisp overview of the REBOOT Project by Prof. Vlassis and Dr. Dâmaso, setting the stage for three key presentations, each probing a different dimension of the European film industry’s global footprint.

At the heart of the conversation was a shared critique: that the dominant market-driven understanding of “competitiveness” in European film policy is not only narrow but increasingly disconnected from the realities on the ground.

Rossato Fernandes and Prof. Vlassis shared findings from a pan-European survey and 37 in-depth interviews with EU-based professionals. The results revealed a complex picture, while European film is often praised for its artistic credibility and diverse storytelling, there is growing frustration with fragmented promotional strategies, limited access to global markets, and structural underinvestment. Next, Dâmaso turned the spotlight northward to examine the co-production ecosystems in Denmark

and Sweden, drawing on interviews with 15 professionals. She highlighted how strategic policy frameworks, such as streaming levies and support across the entire value chain, contribute to a fertile environment for making globally competitive films. “What stands out is the emphasis on cultural pluralism, long-term investment, and policy mechanisms that redistribute value back into the local industries,” she explained.



Mafalda Dâmaso, Antonios Vlassis, Marina Rossato Fernandes, and Isabela Morena Vargas Miranda presented research findings from the REBOOT project.

The final presentation widened the lens even further, investigating how European cinema is perceived by professionals in South Korea, South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Turkey. Co-authored by Dâmaso, Vargas Miranda, Rossato Fernandes, and Vlassis, the research blended survey and qualitative fieldwork. The findings pointed to a duality: on the one hand, admiration for Europe’s cinematic heritage; on the other, skepticism about the inclusiveness and reciprocity of current cooperation frameworks.

Throughout the session, the audience was drawn into a conversation that transcended statistics and strategies. It became clear that the future of European film is not simply a matter of competing harder, it’s about reimagining the terms of competition altogether. This means embracing complexity, rebalancing power, and building new narratives of cooperation, equity, and creative freedom.

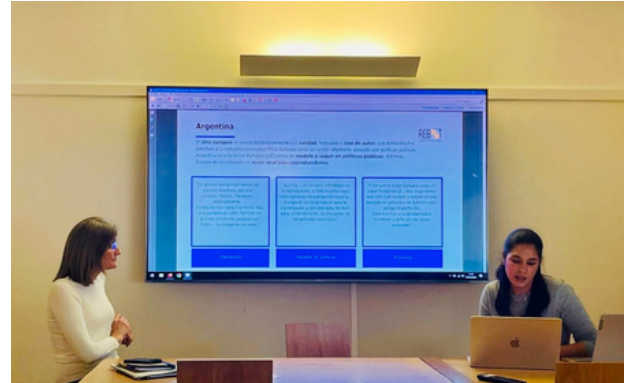
10 Notes on the Circulation of European Films in Latin America

REBOOT at ULEPICC-Spain 2025

On February 6-7, 2025, the REBOOT project was represented at the 9th International Congress of the Spanish Section of the Latin Union of Political Economy of Information, Communication, and Culture (Unión Latina de Economía Política de la Información, la Comunicación y la Cultura - ULEPICC-España), hosted at the Faculty of Communication Sciences, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.

Framed around the theme “Communication and Public Service,” the congress gathered leading scholars and practitioners to explore the intersections of media, democracy, and cultural policy.

As part of the session on Diversity and Communication Policies, Prof. M^a Trinidad García Leiva and Isabela Vargas Miranda (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid), members of the REBOOT research team, presented their ongoing work on “La circulación de películas europeas en América Latina: situación actual en los principales mercados” (the circulation of European films in Latin America: current situation in the main markets.).



M^a Trinidad García Leiva and Isabela Vargas Miranda represented the REBOOT project at the ULEPICC-Spain.

Their contribution shed light on the current dynamics and challenges of distributing European films across major Latin American markets, offering insights from a critical political economy perspective.

The congress served as an important platform for advancing dialogue on communication rights, diversity, and public service media within a global and comparative framework.

To view more information about the conference and the program, read more [here](#).

11 Cultural Audiovisual Heritage for Public Good and European Competitiveness

By Jacek Mikucki

On January 22, 2025, a workshop titled “Cultural Audiovisual Heritage for the Public Good and European Competitiveness” was held at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw to

discuss the film and media industry. The workshop aimed to explore how various European film markets operate, focusing on film policy-making and the role of public institutions in supporting the film industry.

The REBOOT project consortium organised the event in collaboration with researchers from the PSM-AP project and Zachęta - National Gallery of Art, alongside Creative Europe Desk Poland and FINA - National Film Archive - Audiovisual Institute. This workshop is part of the REBOOT (Reviving, Boosting, Optimising, and Transforming European Film Competitiveness) project funded by the European Commission under Horizon Europe. The project is led by Katharine Sarikakis from the University of Vienna. For more information about the project, please visit <https://thereboot-project.eu/>.



REBOOT researchers discussed with film industry representatives the how various European film markets operate, film policy-making and the role of public institutions in supporting the film industry

The event of the REBOOT EU Horizon Europe project was joined for the three-day event in Warsaw under the umbrella of the Knowledge Exchange, setting the scene for public service media to thrive in the Age of Platforms. The goal of Poland's REBOOT national workshop was to support the audiovisual and film industries by bringing together scholars, filmmakers, producers, and key state institutions. Participants discussed the concepts of Public Good and European Competitiveness in the context of global media platforms. The REBOOT initiative focused on research, societal impact, and policy-making contributions aimed at exploring Poland's and Europe's audiovisual heritage. Additionally, it sought to enhance access to archives from the pre-internet era, addressing the integration of production and distribution.

The event took place at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art's Cinema Hall and began promptly at 3:00 p.m. Approximately 60 people attended the

workshop, actively engaging in the debate for nearly two hours. The workshop, structured as a debate, was led by Michał Głowacki from the University of Warsaw, who heads the Polish research team for the REBOOT project. Several experts participated in the discussion, including Tadeusz Kowalski from the National Broadcasting Council, Jacek Mikucki from the University of Warsaw, Gentiana Ramadani from the University of Vienna, Fernando Ramos Arenas from Complutense University of Madrid and Anita Zawisza from the University of Warsaw.

The lenses of today's competitiveness

The event started with a welcome address by Michał Glowacki, who provided a brief overview of the workshop and the objectives of the Reboot research project. The guests were then welcomed by the Dean of the Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies, Dariusz Kuźmina, as well as Agnieszka Pindera, the Director of the Zachęta National Gallery of Art, and Małgorzata Kielczewska, the Director of Creative Europe Desk Poland. These institutions, along with the National Film Archive - Audiovisual Institute (FINA), were co-organizers of the event. The debate began with a critical question aimed at offering a modern understanding of competitiveness in the film market where Michał Glowacki asked: „Let's try to speak about the lenses of today's competitiveness. What does the competitive mean to you in terms of film, audio, visual and in terms of history?“ Gentiana Ramadani emphasised that defining the concept of competitiveness in today's rapidly changing world, influenced by technology, is challenging. This is why the Reboot project was initiated, aiming to redefine this concept and understand the dynamics of the contemporary film industry. Focusing on the European film market, Ramadani pointed out that competitiveness relies on finding a balance between regulation and creativity. She also highlighted the importance of a shared understanding of competitiveness and public good among both filmmakers and audiences. Fernando Ramos Arenas noted that contemporary film competitiveness should be viewed from a historical perspective to identify both commonalities and differences. It's important to remember that the film industry is constantly evolving, affecting film

production, distribution, and exposure. Consequently, the concept of competitiveness in the film market has also changed, taking into account the cultural and social differences among various film markets worldwide. He also referenced research findings to support his points: “We started the conversation with our stakeholders with this idea of asking them about competitiveness, and we ended then usually talking about sustainability.” Thus, it is crucial to maintain a balanced presentation of content in the era of global streaming platforms such as Netflix. Jacek Mikucki pointed out the multiplicity and diversity of film markets, which also makes it difficult to have one holistic definition of competitiveness in the audiovisual sector: “Plenty of people from South America coming to Europe to study to, for example, film direction, camera operation and so on but in the end, they don't follow exactly the same path which Europe promotes.” Thus, the concept of competitiveness should be considered through the lens of regions around the world.



Gentiana Ramadani highlighted the important role of public service media in film distribution.

Audiences as agents of competitiveness

Tadeusz Kowalski, an audiovisual policymaker for more than 40 years, stressed that due to his experience and knowledge, it is extremely difficult to define contemporary competitiveness in the film industry. As he stressed: “I think that we had to think about very wide concept of the competitiveness.” He noted that at the end of the day, all film entities are competing to keep the attention of audiences, which in turn affects economic competition in the film market. This emphasis on the audience's role in shaping

competitiveness not only underscores their importance but also makes them feel valued and influential in the industry. Anita Zawisza spoke about the important role of diversity in the film industry: “When it comes to the stakeholders, when it comes to the subject of the movie, of the TV series, it is very important to remember about diversity.” She pointed out that the largest markets in the world are the US and China. Especially the film market in China has a completely different approach to competitiveness, because they don't consider the European or American market, due to China's internal values and policies, which differ from those of, for example, Europe. Besides, the target group is the Chinese citizens themselves, and it is for them that film policy is created.

Distribution and public support

Later in the conversation, Fernando Ramos Arenas referred to the enormous role of new communications solutions: “You have like this useful suspects over production, huge impact of the VOD platforms, it conglomerates, automation.” He added that Hollywood productions heavily influence the European film market. So competitiveness is often considered only by these two film markets. In turn, Tadeusz Kowalski cited data showing the European market's significant role: “In 2023, it was produced 3300 films in Europe.” He also pointed out that an average of 30 feature-length films are produced annually in Poland. Ramos Arenas acknowledged the problem in film distribution by independent filmmakers: “if you talk to the, to the producers, they may independent producers, they may say that's a problem of distribution or people are not reaching the audiences because somebody's not making the job rightly.” Gentiana Ramadani, on the other hand, pointed out the key role of film policies, especially European ones: “European countries provide a lot of support, of course, to their film industries, but they are both motivated from an economic perspective as well. Cultural objectives and this is related.” Ramadani stressed that film policies depend on cultural factors and the government's understanding of them. In doing so, she cited the example of Austria, which is in the top five European countries that subsidise the film industry with public funds. She attributed the reasons for this result to the film industry's

sustainable support programs: “22 public funding institutions in Austria with six operating at the national level and 16 at the regional level.”

Although the second part of the debate was scheduled for experts to debate with the audience, people from the audience had already started asking questions during the first part. One question was asked by a Polish film producer who was curious about the Netflix data: “It’s a question about the methodology you used for your financial data, and I was actually really intrigued by what Professor Kowalski said?”. The producer added that Netflix invests large sums of money to produce films and series in Poland, perhaps even more than in other European countries. One reason may be the large audience market (38 million citizens) in Poland. Tadeusz Kowalski noted that Netflix is reluctant to share its statistics. Still, based on conversations with policymakers and Netflix employees, it can be concluded that the streaming platform’s annual budget is larger than the public budget dedicated to the development of the film industry in Poland. A media researcher from Romania, Ioana Avadani from The Center for Independent Journalism, spoke next, outlining the experience of the film industry in Romania. The researcher also referred to the creative process itself, which has changed, citing the example of a Romanian film shot with a smartphone. She noted that technological changes affect not only the film industry but also the media industry: “The photojournalism went down, and Chicago Tribune sacked all the photo departments because reporters can take pictures with the phone. And secondly, we were so happy to support citizen journalism, and now it blows in our faces.” With this, she started discussing the role of information and communication technologies, which radically affect the labour market.

New audiences

Anita Zawisza raised the issue of following new generations and their ways of using media tools: “TikTok, social media in general, video platforms, that’s all changing. We are living in platform, really driven landscapes, and that’s true.” In turn, Jacek Mikucki added that the Reboot project is also studying the preferences of young people.

The study is at the stage of developing results, but it can be seen that one of the results is the use of smartphones to watch all kinds of audiovisual content, including VOD platforms. So, one can see a shift from using large screens to the mobile and compact screens that smartphones offer. Mikucki also stressed the significant role of special effects in films, which are often expected by young filmgoers.



Fernando Ramos discussed the role of new means of communication in regard to the European film industry.

European film and cultural heritage

Then, Michal Glowacki steered the conversation towards the role of European cultural heritage in the field of European film. He also referred to the process of archiving audiovisual productions in the era of digitisation, which may also affect the dissemination of national films in the online sphere. Tadeusz Kowalski mentioned the difficulties of digitising films due to the copyrights of filmmakers as well as co-creators, for example, in the area of film music. He said: “If you want to do anything with the old film, is the silent film,” highlighting the legal problem associated with digital archiving. Fernando Ramos Arenas referred to the key role of cultural institutions that are responsible for the dissemination and digitisation of film heritage. Given the development of streaming platforms, digitising older audiovisual productions is advisable. He added that access to digital cultural heritages for the public is important. In turn, Gentiana Ramadani stressed the important role of public service media in film exposure: “Public service medium should distribute films that reflect the societal challenges and identities and values, and of course, serving the public interest. It’s very

important.”

In the conversation with audience the panellists attempted to answer the questions. One of the questions was asked by Milica Pesic, director of the Media Diversity Institute from the UK, who pointed out that film diversity in Europe is very culturally diverse. In doing so, she gave the example of the UK, which culturally differs significantly from so-called continental Europe. Jacek Mikucki also added that budgets for film productions vary considerably due to the economic situation in each country. He cited the results of the survey, which indicate that Polish producers have to save on many elements when making a film, citing the term “Ikea Glass productions,” which was used by a person surveyed during the study. He said: “We want to make better quality movies, but the reality is different.” He added that one solution is international co-productions, which increase the quality and value of films and foster European ties.

Another audience member, Alicja Waszkiewicz-Raviv of Warsaw University, referred to the young audience in her statement: “Maybe about creating a link between this tension of technology that we see as accessible for youngsters and, on the other hand, their approach to movies as something that.” She also emphasised the role of film education among young people. Later in the debate, Bissera Zankova of the Media 21 Foundation from Bulgaria spoke, stressing the need for audiovisual education for young people. She also referred to the key role of public service media in distributing and exposing films. She noted that the display of Hollywood productions often dominates many European public service media. In contrast, public service media should follow their principles and values more closely, promoting indigenous and European productions. One of the last to speak was Tadeusz Kowalski, who summed up the debate with the following sentence: “I think that maybe we should also have in mind that it's not only about the competitiveness. It's also about the protection of diversity, protection of language, protection of history, of culture, of generation.”

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