

Audience Views on European Film Competitiveness: Results from the SCREENING THE SCENE Conference Survey

By Sarah Baumgartner

“How can European cinema remain competitive in a rapidly changing global landscape?” The REBOOT research is helping to answer this question - and audiences are taking notice. Feedback gathered from our recent international conference *SCREENING THE SCENE: Rethinking European Film Competitiveness*, which took place in Vienna on 9–10 October, shows overwhelming support for the relevance of the research, with participants highlighting its fresh perspectives on youth audiences, technology, policy, and global markets. Most respondents not only learned something new, but also felt inspired to continue the conversation and take action. Here’s what they had to say - and why the REBOOT findings matter for the future of European film.

The survey aimed to assess participants’ perceptions of the relevance, impact, and usefulness of the research, as well as to identify which thematic areas and findings were considered most important for the future of the European film industry.

Participants included students, policymakers, academics and professionals from diverse European and international backgrounds. The evaluation reflected broad international and European representation, with respondents from Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Belgium, Cameroon, Finland, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and the United States. This diversity strengthens the evaluation results by showing that the research resonates with a wide, internationally engaged audience concerned with the competitiveness of European film.

The survey employed a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated no agreement at all with a given statement and 5 indicated very strong agreement. The evaluation shows that respondents strongly believe in *the necessity of research into European film competitiveness*, which received an average score of 4.76 out of 5. This suggests near-universal agreement that such research is essential in the current media and cultural landscape. Similarly, participants agreed that *European films can benefit directly from the REBOOT research*, with an average score of 4.58. Such results suggest that the research is perceived not merely as theoretically significant but also as possessing tangible industry applicability.

In terms of intellectual impact, respondents felt that the research *opened up new and innovative ways of thinking* about European film competitiveness, scoring 4.61. Many

participants also reported that they *learned something new* from the findings (4.58), indicating that the research successfully contributed new knowledge rather than reiterating familiar ideas. Importantly, the research also showed a capacity to inspire action: respondents expressed a strong willingness to *take action together with colleagues* based on the findings (4.50), and a clear interest *in learning more about the REBOOT project* in the future (4.58).

One question addressed whether the research changed how respondents think about supporting competitiveness in the European film industry. While the average score remained positive (3.74), it was slightly lower than other items. The interpretation of this result is not entirely straightforward, as it may indicate that the research primarily confirmed existing views rather than fundamentally changing perspectives, or that deeper shifts in thinking require more sustained engagement over time. At the same time, this suggests that the research resonates with respondents and encourages reflection on the topic, even if it does not necessarily lead to immediate or fundamental changes in perspective.

Participants were also asked to evaluate the importance of specific research themes. The highest-rated topic was *the views of young people and children as audiences in Europe* (4.71), highlighting the central role of future audiences in discussions of competitiveness. Closely following were *technological advancements in the film industry* (4.55) and *the views of professionals working in the European film sector* (4.50). Strong importance was also attributed to *global markets and industries*, as well as *young people's experiences as filmmakers* (both 4.47), underlining a forward-looking and internationally aware perspective among respondents. Research into *film and cultural policies* also scored highly (4.39), reflecting recognition of the policy environment's influence on competitiveness.

Lower scores were given to *the history of the European film industry* (3.79) and *musical soundtracks in the film industry* (3.61). Although these topics remain relevant, their lower scores indicate a peripheral status compared with respondents' priorities - youth engagement, innovation, and the strategic positioning of European cinema globally. This suggests participants focus on factors seen as directly affecting competitiveness, while historical and niche artistic aspects are considered less central, reflecting broader trends toward forward-looking, market-oriented cultural policy.

In conclusion, the evaluation clearly demonstrates that the REBOOT research is perceived as highly relevant, timely, and impactful. Respondents strongly value its contribution to understanding European film competitiveness and appreciate its emphasis on future audiences, technological change, professional perspectives, and global dynamics. While

some impacts - such as shifts in long-term thinking - may develop gradually, the research has already succeeded in informing, inspiring, and engaging its audience. These results confirm the importance of continuing to disseminate the REBOOT findings and fostering dialogue between researchers, policymakers, and industry professionals to strengthen the future competitiveness of European cinema.

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