Gender balance, Diversity and Inclusiveness in the media and audiovisual sectors

Gender balance and diversity are core EU values. During the last years, concerns about the gender and diversity gaps in various sectors have increased. The news media and audiovisual sectors are considered drivers in shaping our beliefs, values and perceptions, and are thus a window to new ways of thinking, changing attitudes and challenging stereotypes.

Even though much has changed and improved in the audiovisual sector in the face of the #MeToo movement, a gender gap in representation of women remains. This is especially relevant in women’s lack of representation in leadership and management positions, access to employment, funding and equal pay. The situation gets even more alarming when we look at women belonging to less privileged segments of the population, as some communities suffer all types of discrimination beyond and on top of gender related issues.

The European Commission has set gender and inclusiveness at the top of its policy agenda through its Creative Europe MEDIA programme, paying attention to areas where diversity and gender imbalances are often overlooked, such as jobs behind the public stage. An intersectional lens should be taken as a departing point, as the overlap of various personal identities (age, race, sexual orientation, disability etc.) actively contribute to systemic discrimination on grounds of gender. Being inclusive with all talents and improving equal access to finance, visibility and equal participation will help European societies transform and it will benefit creativity with a richer content and diverse narratives.

Within the framework of the Creative Europe MEDIA programme, the Commission has started to work to improve gender balance and diversity in the media and in the audiovisual sector by engaging with stakeholders and raising awareness, collecting data, and establishing networks.

Creative Europe MEDIA programme (2021-2027)

The strategy for 2021-2027 foresees further policy development by including gender activities in all European actions towards the audiovisual sector. The focus of the strategy has moved from gender alone to the broader concept of diversity and inclusiveness.

In the next seven years, MEDIA intends to:

- pursue structured dialogue with the stakeholders,
- introduce dedicated schemes in Creative Europe (especially in the training scheme, such as capacity building and mentoring),
- request Creative Europe applicants to commit to gender equality in their company strategies.

In addition, in 2021, within the framework of the Creative Europe programme and the Media and Audiovisual Action Plan, the Commission - in partnership with Collectif 50/50 - launched the CharactHer awareness campaign on Gender & Diversity, focused on the audiovisual and news media.
CharactHer aims to dismantle persistent imbalances, including the fact that some professions are still perceived as “masculine” and considered inaccessible by certain segments of the population. This perception provokes widespread self-censorship among young women or people from less privileged backgrounds, who do not dare to project themselves into the media and AV industry.

The campaign places the spotlight onto twelve female European professionals working in diverse positions in the AV and news media sectors. The 3-minute videos dedicated to each portrait allow the audience to discover their professional and her career path.

**Previous milestones of Creative Europe MEDIA**

**2020**

- In February 2020, during the Berlinale, MEDIA organised a roundtable with the European Parliament, public authorities and industry representatives to open the discussion around concrete initiatives to be introduced in the next MEDIA programme to further implement gender and inclusiveness policies.
- In March 2020, on the occasion of International Women’s Day, the account @Creative.EU on Instagram launched the awareness campaign #WomenInTheSpotlight to give visibility to talented creative women working in the fields of culture or audiovisual.
- In June 2020, during the online Cannes Marché du Film, MEDIA organised a showcase in partnership with EWA focusing on « Access to finance - challenges faced by female professionals post global pandemic”.
- According to the Creative Europe 2020 Monitoring Report, women represented 33.3% of the applicants and 34.2% of the beneficiaries in 2020. Since 2014, we can see a slight upward trend of the share of applying organisations to Creative Europe MEDIA calls, with women holding key positions.

**2019**

- In February 2019, at the Berlinale, MEDIA met with stakeholders to discuss gender balance on the audiovisual and film industries, to stress the Commission’s commitment to promote the role of women in culture, art and film, and to present a brochure featuring exclusive MEDIA data on the shares of women in key positions among the applications and grants awarded. This data show that, overall, the Programme over performs the industry average.
- In May 2019, at the Cannes Film Festival, MEDIA launched the first edition of ‘Women on the move’. It consisted of a full day dedicated to gender, including debates with female professionals, the launch of a video and the publication of an overview of good practices. During a dedicated event, Collectif 50/50 - the organisation advocating gender parity in the audiovisual sector in France, presented exclusive figures on the representation of women in the film sector, as well as their first assessment of the Gender Parity Pledge signed already by 47 festivals.

**2018**

- This year, Creative Europe MEDIA started rigorous and systematic data analysis on women participation in the different schemes of the programme.
- In May 2018, Commissioner Mariya Gabriel launched the “Women in digital“ strategy and task force, to promote women in every European initiatives, venues, events in the context of the Digital single market. This strategy was built on three pillars: fighting gender stereotypes,
promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics for girls, and encourage digital entrepreneurship for girls.

- In November 2018, MEDIA supported the production of a short film made by European Women's Audiovisual network (EWA): "Women pioneers in European cinema". This short film featured very first female filmmakers such as Alice Guy, Elvira Notari and Lotte Reiniger, with a symbolical message: women are part of cultural heritage and history.

More information

- EC Global Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025
- Focus on justice and fundamental rights
- Studies by the European Audiovisual Observatory

Related topics

Media MEDIA programme