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Cine-Regio welcomes the long standing policy to exclude the audiovisual sector from EU Trade Agreement

Cine-Regio, the European network of regional film funds welcomes the decision of the EU27 Trade Ministers to exclude audiovisual (AV) services from negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement (TTIP).

The EC, EU and Member States have exempted audiovisual services from previous bilateral free trade agreements, and the EU ringfenced the AV sector in the GATS negotiations.

Cine-Regio welcomes the decision to continue that policy, which it believes has made a significant contribution to European cultural diversity.

It believes that European countries must retain the right to support and regulate their audiovisual industries, not least as they adapt to emerging technologies.

The still evolving digital era represents the biggest challenge in the history of cinema, changing the way films and audiovisual projects are financed, produced, distributed and watched.

Cine-Regio has long argued that these evolving digital trends can be harnessed to enhance Europe's wide variety of languages, cultures and regional identities but those opportunities will not be realised if the future of the AV sector is left to a globalised market, dominated by U.S.-based multinationals.

That is why the association strongly backed the exclusion of the sector from TTIP.

We should remind ourselves of the fact that the EU ratified the UNESCO convention for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions for the same reasons.

With the AV sector excluded from the TTIP talks, the regional film funds in Europe can now continue our commitment to film and to the wider development of a dynamic, forward-thinking and audience-centred audiovisual sector.

Cine-Regio is an independent non-profit association. Cine-Regio acts as a lobby and network organisation encouraging cross-border and interregional co-operation and co-productions. The network is continuously expanding and today counts 39 regional film funds from 16 countries in Europe, which together represent a total funding capital of €165M per year to support film culture.

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