

EURIMAGES' GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY (2021-2023): Equal voices for equal talent

Foreword

According to Council of Europe policy,¹ achieving gender equality is central to the fulfilment of the Organisation's mission: safeguarding human rights, upholding democracy and preserving the rule of law.

Gender equality means equal rights, visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation for both women and men in all spheres of public and private life. It also means equal access to and equal distribution of resources between women and men.

Gender equality is one of the priorities of the Council of Europe and the Organisation has a dual approach, including:

- specific policies and actions, including positive action when appropriate, in critical areas for the advancement of women and for the realisation of *de facto* gender equality, and
- the promotion, monitoring, co-ordination and evaluation of the process of gender mainstreaming² in all policies and programmes.

Recent statistics collected from the Eurimages Fund (see <https://www.coe.int/en/web/eurimages/gender-equality-documents>) indicate that projects with female directors accounted for a 38% share of Eurimages-supported films in 2020 as compared to a 17% share in 2012 and a 21% share in 2016. However, even if this indicates an increase, this figure is still far from the second strategy's gender parity goal. Furthermore, recent studies as referred to in the Council of Europe's *Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality in the audiovisual sector* (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 September 2017 at the 1295th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)³ indicate relative parity at film school level which still does not transpose into the

¹ See the Council of Europe's *Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017* (<https://rm.coe.int/1680590174>) and the *Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023*.

² Gender mainstreaming refers to the: "(re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making." (Council of Europe *Group of Specialists in Gender Mainstreaming*, 1998).

³ https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016807509e6.

reality of the situation for many women working in the industry. While the percentages vary depending on the roles performed (on and off-screen), this under-representation of women is overwhelmingly the case in most film-related occupations.

Over the past eight years, there has been substantially greater awareness throughout the audiovisual industry and in the wider press about the prevalence of gender inequality. Unfortunately, sensitisation to this issue is not enough to bring about substantial change alone and systemic inequality remains widespread. It is therefore essential that even more proactive solutions be proposed in this third strategy to redress this gender imbalance, to ensure the situation improves across the board and in a long-lasting manner.

As indicated in the *Recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector*, one crucial issue is the added value that greater gender equality in film-making can bring to cultural diversity; the audiovisual sector is one which is well placed to shape and influence perceptions, ideas, attitudes and behaviour prevalent in society and so has an important role to play. Eurimages, in particular, as a top financier which has already adopted two *Gender Equality Strategies: 2016-2017⁴* and 2018-2020 and remains in a strong position to help bring about change. Greater gender equality can also allow new and more diverse audiences to enjoy a wider range of stories and contribute to creative renewal in the film industry.

In addition to gender equality, Eurimages acknowledges the necessity of promoting wider diversity in the industry. This is in line with the values of equality and cultural diversity, and the need to broaden the content on offer to better represent society and as a means to have an impact on it. The Gender Equality Working Group will work with diversity experts to prepare proposals for a new diversity strategy to be overseen by the GEWG.

⁴ <https://rm.coe.int/eurimages-strategy-for-gender-euquality-in-the-european-film-industry/168073286d>

Introduction

The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 sets out and underpins the Organisation's prioritisation of advancing the gender equality agenda as part of efforts to uphold the principles of democracy and human rights.

The overall goal is to ensure the advancement and stronger participation of women and bring about real gender equality in Council of Europe member states through activities based on the following strategic objectives:

1. Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism.
2. Prevent and combat violence against women.
3. Ensure the equal access of women to justice.
4. Achieve a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making.
5. Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.
6. Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures.

The action being taken by Eurimages will take into account all of these objectives to varying degrees.

I – Strategy

With this strategy, Eurimages undertakes to reinforce the gender equality perspective as far as possible in its policies and measures.

The 2021-2023 Eurimages strategy draws on:

- the experience gained and the data collection system hitherto implemented by Eurimages (2014-2017 and 2018-2020);⁵
- ongoing co-operation with the Council of Europe and its Gender Equality Commission and other relevant sectors of the Council of Europe;
- co-operation with professional and institutional bodies and NGOs working in this area;
- the 2016-2017 and 2018-2020 gender equality strategies for Eurimages; and
- the *Council of Europe Recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector* and its annexes.

The strategy is also inspired by:

- the UN goal of Planet 50/50 by 2030;⁶

⁵ <https://rm.coe.int/strategy-gender-equality-in-the-film-industry-english/16809805b5>

⁶ <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/initiatives/stepitup/stepitup-brochure-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4739>

- the Swedish Film Institute's action plan: *50/50 by 2020: Gender equality in film production, both in front of and behind the camera 50/50 by 2020*⁷ with respect to distribution of public funding to creative positions;
- the Austrian Film Institute's gender incentive aiming for gender equality throughout all of the different departments;
- in 2016, Telefilm Canada committed to build, by 2020, a representative and diversified feature film portfolio that better reflects Canada's population in terms of gender, Indigenous communities and cultural diversity. For gender parity the aim is to achieve a balanced production portfolio (at all budget levels) that reflects parity in each of the key roles: director, writer and producer.
- the Italian Film and Audiovisual law n. 220/2016 set out new measures to support the sector. Two of the schemes set up by the law: for selective contributions and automatic contributions, provide extra-points and bonuses for works directed by women or with a majority of female authors (director, scriptwriter and composer). In addition, the law establishes an annual report on the impact of its measures which also includes an assessment of the status of gender equality in the industry; and
- Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland first announced its Six Point Plan on gender equality in 2015, implementing a range of measures to increase female representation across key creative roles in filmmaking. The agency provides enhanced funding incentives of up to €100,000 in additional funding for projects with female writers and directors attached, established a female-focused co-development fund with Luxembourg, and is currently supporting a line-up of emerging female talent in writing and directing their first features with the innovative low-budget production scheme, POV.

The 2021-2023 strategy sets out Eurimages' aims and priorities for the promotion of gender equality in cinema in Eurimages' member states and outlines the working methods and principal partners, as well as the measures needed to ensure visibility in terms of results. In particular, this strategy will focus on greater equality across both technical and creative roles in the audiovisual sector.

The strategy has a dual purpose: taking action within Eurimages and encouraging the relevant supranational, national and regional bodies to do likewise. It also aims to involve and mobilise civil society organisations active in the film sector, building on their experience and knowledge. Finally, it seeks to lay the foundations for fruitful co-operation with relevant stakeholders, film festivals, film schools, institutions, data monitoring bodies, NGOs and other associations working to bring about gender equality.

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http://www.filminstitutet.se/globalassets/_dokument/handlingsplaner/actionplan_genderequality_eng_final.pdf

It proposes specific action in critical areas and key measures aimed at promoting change and making progress. A supplementary three-year action plan will be drafted to indicate the concrete measures to be taken in detail (this will be annexed to this strategy).

II – Strategic goal and objectives

General goal

This third gender equality strategy takes as its focus the presence of women in both creative and technical roles, thus moving away from a primary focus on female directors, as set out in the second Eurimages gender equality strategy, and focusing on female-driven projects. In order to define what constitutes a female-driven film project a two-tier system will be adopted as outlined in Annex I, considering having two out of three key roles as essential in defining a female-driven project: director, scriptwriter and producer and then including other heads of department and the first two roles for fiction projects.

To try to achieve this goal, Eurimages will:

- 1. Contribute to increasing the presence of women in the industry:**
 - a.* by attracting more female-driven projects;
 - b.* by showcasing their achievements.
- 2. Raise awareness about the prevalence of gender inequality and increase the visibility of the best-practice work being carried out within the Eurimages Fund and as set forth in the *Recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector*.**
- 3. Carry out and promote data monitoring and the systematic sharing of findings.**
- 4. Sponsor and offer patronage to gender-based initiatives and support research.**
- 5. Ensure gender-mainstreaming across the Fund and across decision making.**

The methods for achieving these aims, and the partners and information pertaining to them will be outlined in an accompanying action plan.

Correlation with Council of Europe gender equality strategy

1. Combat gender stereotypes and sexism

The Council of Europe's gender equality strategy refers to preventing and combating gender stereotypes and sexism (objective 1). This is a delicate area for the film industry in the sense

that filmmakers have always fought to defend freedom of artistic expression and Eurimages supports freedom of expression, another Council of Europe value.

What we may note, however, is that stereotypes are preconceived ideas that arbitrarily assign women and men specific roles determined and limited by their gender. Stereotypes can impede the development of the natural talents and abilities of girls and boys. Some studies, especially those carried out by the Geena Davis Institute and Vivendi⁸ into more commercial films predominantly, as well as information to be gleaned from the British Film Industry Filmography⁹, reveal the existence of numerous stereotypes in the way women are portrayed in films: *“in artistic content, women are too often presented as objects of male desire above everything else. Therefore, the image of women is degraded and even sometimes degrading [...]. (A)s artists, women seem stuck in specific roles; muses or performers. They are not the ones who create but always exist thanks to a male creator ...”*.

2. Prevent and combat violence against women

This strategic objective refers to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the “Istanbul Convention¹⁰”).

This Convention provides, in its Article 17, for the “Participation of the private sector and the **media**”, in these terms: “Parties shall encourage the private sector, the information and communication technology sector and the media, **with due respect for freedom of expression and their independence**, to participate in the elaboration and implementation of policies and to set guidelines and self-regulatory standards to prevent violence against women and to enhance respect for their dignity”.

Unfortunately, violence against women is still widespread in the Fund’s member states. Showing a degrading image of women in films, all too often submissive women or women turned into sexual objects, without critical context, may be seen by some to encourage this violence, whereas showing positive images of men and women may be seen to help counter it. Eurimages will bear this point in mind as appropriate.

⁸ ***Study by the Geena Davis Institute on female characters in 120 popular international films across 11 countries.***

This study reveals deep-seated discrimination, omnipresent clichés and stereotypes with regard to women and girls in the 120 films studied. The female characters seldom have a job and even more rarely hold positions of responsibility. By contrast, hypersexualisation concerns women more than men, with girls and women twice as likely as boys and men to be shown in sexually revealing clothing or partially or fully naked.

In November 2013 Vivendi and the Equality Lab published the initial results of a study on “Women in music and cinema in Europe”. See:

<https://www.vivendi.com/en/social-responsibility/specific-issues/promoting-cultural-diversity-2/>

⁹ <https://filmography.bfi.org.uk/>

¹⁰ <https://rm.coe.int/168046031c>

3. Achieve balanced participation of women and men* (*4 in the CoE objectives)

All of the above-mentioned strategies can **help** to contribute towards a more balanced participation in the film industries in diverse professional capacities in Eurimages' member states. Whilst the Council of Europe's *Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023* refers specifically to balanced participation in political and public decision-making (objective 4), the Eurimages strategy transposes this to aim to work towards balanced participation throughout the industry and throughout all cast and crew positions in the audiovisual sector.

As stated in the *Recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector*: "audiovisual content can either hinder or hasten structural change towards gender equality. Gender inequalities are reproduced in audiovisual content but also within the audiovisual sector, notably women's under-representation in the different professions and in decision making. Furthermore, women are more likely to encounter pay inequalities, the 'glass ceiling' and precarious employment positions."

Through the measures outlined in this document, Eurimages wishes to contribute to the balanced participation of women and men throughout the industry.

4. Mainstream a gender-equal approach in all policies and measures* (objective 6 of the Council of Europe strategy)

This mainstreaming approach involves taking account of the "gender" dimension in all processes, including financial processes. Eurimages will continue to carry out ongoing assessments of its processes with the aim of incorporating the gender equality perspective in all areas and at all levels.

Eurimages will endeavour to improve gender equality in the allocation of support where it can and will continue to monitor and assess the amounts granted to co-production projects as well as to all other forms of support given.

Eurimages will also help to promote this gender mainstreaming approach among the Fund's member states by ensuring the visibility of its actions and strategy, gathering and distributing information on developments in the situation in Europe and communicating and disseminating good practices where possible.

III - Implementation – Communication

This strategy will be implemented under the responsibility of the Eurimages Board of Management by the "**Gender Equality Working Group**", which is at the heart of this initiative.

This working group will ensure that the rules and principles laid down in the strategy are applied and that the Board of Management's decisions in matters of gender equality are acted upon and give the Board of Management as well as all other bodies of Eurimages, especially the external experts, the necessary tools to do so, i.e. ongoing professional training, etc.

It will continue to report on its activities to the Board of Management and requesting approval for new initiatives, along with any related budget estimate.

It will ensure the visibility of its work as outlined earlier, drawing on social media and increased presence on panels and at networking events to heighten awareness about the Fund's work and to further promote the talented women supported by the Fund. The aim of greater communication is to ensure that a wider audience, including young people, are aware of this work.

IV – Partnerships

Several national funds and supranational bodies (including the European Audiovisual Observatory and the European Film Agency Directors (EFADs)) are aiming to adopt gender equality strategies and action plans and a number of professional associations have been set up to defend and promote the role of women in the film industry.

This provides a sound basis for the establishment of partnerships or institutionalised co-operation enabling the identification of opportunities for joint action, complementarity and synergy.

Eurimages will endeavour to work where possible with other national or regional organisations and will also strive to involve and mobilise civil society organisations, building on their experience and specialist knowledge.

Annex I – Definition of female-driven projects

Calculation of gender percentages for fiction projects

Cast and crew	Number of Males	Number of Females	Total	% of Males	% of Females
Lead producer					
Director					
Scriptwriter					
1st role					
2nd role					
DoP/Image					
Editor					
Composer					
Total					

Calculation of gender percentages for animation projects

Cast and crew	Number of Males	Number of Females	Total	% of Males	% of Females
Lead producer					
Director					
Scriptwriter					
Conception					
Character design					
Total					

Calculation of gender percentages for documentary projects

Cast and crew	Number of Males	Number of Females	Total	% of Males	% of Females
Lead producer					
Director					
Scriptwriter					
DoP/Image					
Editor					
Total					

Definition of female-driven, male-driven or balanced projects

- ✓ If the project obtains 60% or more female roles, it could be considered as a female-driven project (see additional condition below).
- ✓ If the project obtains 60% or more male roles, it will be considered as male-driven project.
- ✓ If the project obtains between 40 and 60% of male roles or female roles, it will be considered as balanced project.

Additional condition on the creative trio to receive the female-driven project "label"

A project can only receive the "female-driven project" label if at least 2 out of 3-of the creative trio (lead producer, director and scriptwriter) roles are held by women, bearing in mind that several people may hold one of these roles simultaneously.

This condition is valid for any type of project (fiction, animation or documentary).

Annex II – Action Plan (2021-2023)

Action area	Initiatives	Explanation
<p>1. Increasing the presence of women (creative and technical)</p>	<p><i>a.</i> In order to attract more female-driven applications,¹¹ the Fund will continue to offer a range of incentives to reflect its commitment to these projects. These will include existing incentives, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>no fourchettes</i>: ensuring that the amounts requested for female-driven applications are not lowered; - <i>ex aequo rule</i>: always choosing a female-driven project if there is a situation of equal points. <p>New initiatives from 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inviting producers explicitly to supply information on their previous work, highlighting their work with female directors, prizes and festival participation of films with female directors, as well as cast and crew members, and asking producers to complete the Bechdel-Wallace test for their application. <p>New initiatives from 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - raising the possible support for female-driven projects to 25% of the total production costs (instead of 17%) whilst maintaining the ceiling of € 500,000 maximum support; 	<p><i>Starting from 2021:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - non-mandatory but offering the opportunity to underline the female-driven aspects of companies applying and to raise awareness of gender aspects in the script. <p><i>Starting with the new system in 2022:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following the example of documentaries where this measure led to a significant raise of applications - when drafting the pre-ranking of the projects based on the off-

¹¹ The switch from projects with female directors to female-driven projects might need some transition time. Until all the information needed is available, all measures will focus on female-directed projects; as soon as all the information is available, the focus will be on female-driven projects (except where mentioned differently).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - offering extra points for female-driven projects during the pre-ranking system <p>Regarding the new Eurimages distribution programme, female-directed films would be prioritised in order to contribute to their increased distribution.</p>	<p>site assessment sent in by the experts, the Secretariat adds extra points to female-driven projects so that they get a higher ranking and this will be discussed at the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When opening the distribution programme to all member countries focusing on Eurimages-supported films, female-directed films should be prioritised.
	<p><i>b.</i> In order to showcase female talent, a new communication strategy will be adopted which would draw heavily on social media to promote the success of women supported by the Fund in different sectors. Social media channels would be used to ensure that information was shared widely. The interviews could then be shared more widely.</p> <p>Webinars could be used as well as a system of mentoring to ensure that female filmmakers can interact with staff and representatives more easily. Networking opportunities should continue and the outreach meetings could be transformed to include regular one-to-one meetings at festivals between Eurimages staff and representatives and female creatives and cast.</p> <p>The Audentia Award will continue in its current format for the best female director at a different festival annually; in addition, further Audentia Awards could be</p>	<p>Social media will be used as teasers for younger target groups to raise their awareness of the Eurimages website and the Fund's focus on gender equality to encourage more female-driven applications.</p> <p>It is considered too early to change the nature of the award or to extend it to other departments; but the juries will</p>

	<p>envisaged for women in other departments than directing. Furthermore, smaller festivals possibly focusing on documentary or animation genres could become strong partners for the work of Eurimages in the field of gender equality.</p>	<p>be asked to look for “outstanding contributions” from other female heads of departments; in the future we could consider further Audentia Awards for other departments</p>
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<p>2. Raising awareness</p>	<p><i>a.</i> by developing and implementing a more wide-reaching communication strategy as mentioned above, drawing on greater use of the Eurimages website and social media to reach new audiences and, where appropriate, ensuring that patronage from Eurimages is offered to increase visibility of festivals and other initiatives that share and promote the values of gender equality;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – List of female-driven projects, prizes and awards received; – Publication of awards of sponsorship or patronage; – Statement with Eurimages’ gender values. 	<p>Wider availability of gender-related information on the front page of the website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To be added on the website
	<p><i>b.</i> at member state level and among national, supranational and regional funds and festivals, ensuring a regular presence on panels and at relevant conferences;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – close cooperation with networks is envisaged (e.g. EFADs) <p>Eurimages representatives should be the ambassadors for gender equality in their countries.</p>	<p>Especially during the transition period in 2021, communication on the new incentives is needed.</p>
	<p><i>c.</i> among industry professionals and students, including by encouraging more applications from female graduates;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – close co-operation with networks is envisaged (CILECT). 	

3. Data monitoring	<i>a.</i> this would include gender budgeting and assessing the gendered composition of projects (female-driven, male-driven, balanced – see Annex I of the Gender Strategy 2021-23).	
	<i>b.</i> in 2023, specific monitoring relating to the Council of Europe Recommendation on Gender Equality in the Audiovisual Sector must be carried out.	
4. Sponsorship and research support	<i>a.</i> wider range of sponsorship and patronage for gender-based initiatives to be invited in response to one annual call; corresponding budgetary allocation has to be set aside;	Support for 2 years to guarantee a certain amount of continuity but allowing new activities to be supported.
	<i>b.</i> support research by sharing findings on a dedicated section of the Eurimages website and communicating the latest facts and figures .	Gender mainstreaming throughout all levels of the website; gender-related information should be more visible on the website.
5. Gender mainstreaming	In addition to widespread gender mainstreaming across all of the Fund’s activities, this would also mean: <i>a.</i> ensuring gender-sensitive language is used in all Eurimages documents and tools;	All Eurimages documents (including letters, contracts, internal tools such as databases, etc) will be gender-sensitive, including a non-binary system and a clear colour-system .
	<i>b.</i> training for staff on institutional sexism and unconscious bias to be mandatory, and, training on unconscious bias for BoM members and experts (pertaining to both equality and diversity);	In accordance with the proposal of the Evaluation WG.

	<p>c. more collaboration with other working groups to encourage gender mainstreaming, gendered statistics, gender parity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- within awards given by the Promotion WG and the directors selected for the Gold Album;- Bonus for programming female-directed films within the cinema support programme and screening of the Eurimages gender trailer;- Prioritising of female-directed films within the distribution support programme.	
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