

**EURIMAGES
GENDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
STRATEGY (2025-2027)**

1. Introduction	2
1.1 Gender Equality.....	2
1.2 Diversity and Inclusion	4
2. Strategy	6
3. Strategic Goals and Objectives.....	10
3.1 General Goals.....	10
3.2 Correlation with the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy	11
4. Implementation and Communication	15
5. Partnerships	15

1. Introduction

Promoting an equal and diverse society is key to the fulfilment of the Council of Europe's mission: safeguarding human rights, upholding democracy and preserving the rule of law.

In line with the Council of Europe's policies, Eurimages is committed to promoting equality - including gender equality - diversity, and inclusion in its activities and in the film industry in general.

In previous years, Eurimages has already adopted three *Gender Equality Strategies*: 2016-2017¹, 2018-2020² and 2021-2023³ (prolonged for the year 2024). The *First Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*⁴ ran from 2022 to 2024.

In this first integrated strategy for gender equality, diversity and inclusion, Eurimages reaffirms its commitment to fostering an inclusive, representative, and equitable film landscape. This combined approach seeks to optimise resources, acknowledging the profound synergies and common goals between gender equality, diversity and inclusion. Building on the belief that these values are interconnected and central to creativity and innovation, this strategy aims to ensure that both the film sector and the works on offer reflect society as a whole.

1.1 Gender Equality

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.

*The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029*⁵ sets out and emphasises 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 and girls and domestic violence.
3. Ensure equal access to justice for women and girls.
4. Achieve balanced participation of women and men in political, public, social and economic life.
5. Ensure women's empowerment and gender equality in relation to global and geopolitical challenges.

¹ See <https://rm.coe.int/eurimages-strategy-for-gender-eugality-in-the-european-film-industry/168073286d>

² See <https://rm.coe.int/eurimages-gender-equality-strategy-2018-2020-aiming-for-50-50-by-2020/1680760bff>

³ See <https://rm.coe.int/3rd-gender-equality-strategy-2021-2023-web-2781-1615-4114-2/1680a13a04>

⁴ See <https://rm.coe.int/diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-en/1680a87cd4>

⁵ See <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-equality-strategy>

6. Achieve gender mainstreaming and include an intersectional approach in all policies and measures.

In pursuing these objectives, the Organisation follows a dual track-approach:

- specific policies and action, including positive action where appropriate, in areas critical for the advancement of women in order to realise *de facto* gender equality, and
- the promotion, monitoring, co-ordination and evaluation of the process of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes, whereby 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.

In reaffirming its commitment to gender equality, Eurimages pledges to take into account the objectives laid out in the *Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029*, to varying degrees, across its activities.

A recent study by the European Audiovisual Observatory⁶ highlights persisting gender imbalances in European film production, despite some progress. Between 2019 and 2023, women made up 26% of active professionals working in key roles, with representation higher among editors (30%) and producers (33%), but much lower among cinematographers (14%) and composers (12%). Female professionals are more frequently represented in collaborative roles, such as producers and writers, where multiple professionals often work together. In contrast, they are notably underrepresented in roles typically held by a single individual, like directors, composers, and cinematographers. The study also points out that collaboration with female professionals in leadership roles, such as directors, tend to drive the presence of women in other technical and creative roles. Despite an increase in awareness, particularly from festivals and the media, the slow rate of change indicates that proactive measures remain essential for achieving greater gender parity across all film-related professions.

As indicated in the *Recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector*⁷, one crucial issue is the added value that greater gender equality in filmmaking can bring to cultural diversity. The audiovisual sector is well placed to shape and influence perceptions, ideas, attitudes and behaviour prevalent in society and consequently has an important role to play. Greater gender equality also results in a wider range of stories which contributes to new and more diverse audiences.

Eurimages, as a top financier with a strong focus on promoting gender equality, is especially well-positioned to make a meaningful impact.

⁶ European Audiovisual Observatory, Female professionals in European film Production, 2024:

<https://rm.coe.int/female-professionals-in-european-film-production-2024-edition-october-/1680b18400>

⁷ Council of Europe, *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): https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016807509e6

As a result of the previously established strategies for gender equality since 2016, Eurimages has successfully implemented, among others, the following measures:

- the maximum support possible for projects directed or co-directed by a woman has been raised to 25% of the total production cost (instead of 17%), while maintaining the ceiling of €500,000 maximum support;
- the Audentia Award was launched in 2016 to spotlight the achievements of outstanding female directors, with the award presented each year at a different festival;
- the *Gold Album - Female Directors*⁸, celebrating 50 films made by female directors, was published in 2020;
- in order to raise awareness of producers submitting and experts assessing projects, the Fund invited producers to highlight, in their application, prior collaboration with female directors and women in key Head of Department roles, as well as any prizes or festival participation for films led by female directors, noting the involvement of female cast and crew members and indicating if the project has completed the Bechdel-Wallace test where applicable;
- since 2017, Eurimages has been offering sponsorship and patronage to selected film-related activities in the area of gender equality;
- data has been collected to monitor the Fund's progress towards its goals.

Recent data collected by the Fund indicate significant improvement in the progression towards the gender parity goal, which has been set in the Fund's second gender equality strategy (2018-2020) and further pursued with the strategy running from 2021-2024. Driven by the efforts to attract projects helmed by female directors, the share of Eurimages-supported films directed by women has steadily increased, rising from 21% in 2014 to 45% in 2023. The gender gap in co-production support has also narrowed, with projects directed by women receiving 47% of the total co-production funding awarded in 2023. While these figures show substantial progress towards gender equality for directors, disparities persist across several other professional categories. Ongoing efforts are crucial to sustain and further advance these achievements in gender parity.

1.2 Diversity and Inclusion

As regards the film and audiovisual sectors, diversity and inclusion can be defined as follows:

- **equal representation** of diversity in society, both on-screen and off-screen;
- **equal treatment** in access to resources and peer recognition in the film industry;
- and **works accessibility** to audiences from diverse backgrounds, fostering inclusivity across all demographics.

The European and national legal frameworks on equal treatment and non-discrimination are central for reaching and upholding diversity and inclusion in the film industry. The European

⁸ <https://rm.coe.int/thegoldbookfemaledirectors-web/1680a0a1cc>

Convention on Human Rights⁹ (Article 14 and Protocol No. 12) prohibits discrimination on multiple grounds: “sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status”. The case law of the European Court of Human Rights has clarified that under “other status”, age, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity are also prohibited grounds of discrimination¹⁰. These protected grounds denote different individual identities and reflect the diversity of society and its population. The film industry should be inclusive of such identities and their individual intersectional combinations.

Despite increasing awareness about diversity and inclusion in the film and audiovisual industries, research continue to reveal persistent inequalities both on-screen and off-screen affecting minorities and disadvantaged groups¹¹. For instance, data suggest that minorities are still often portrayed in a stereotypical manner¹². Several studies also shed light on the experiences of individuals facing multiple forms of discrimination on various grounds simultaneously. The conditions within the film industry mirror broader societal issues, including inequalities, discrimination, and racism. This picture emphasises the need for comprehensive action to address discrimination, such as implementing national equal treatment legislation in employment and other sectors¹³.

With the adoption of the *Eurimages First Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*¹⁴ (2022-2024), the Fund has been developing measures and actions to promote a more inclusive and diverse society, in line with the overall objectives and policies of the Council of Europe.

In this framework, the Fund has launched two key initiatives aimed at raising awareness on diversity and inclusion in the industry:

- in partnership with EFAD, the European Film Agency Directors Association, Eurimages has collected information about the diversity and inclusion measures already developed in the respective member countries. This data, which includes measures adopted by film funds, festivals and associations as well as online resources, resulted in a “Diversity & Inclusion Mapping tool”¹⁵ which has been

⁹ See <https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-convention/reference-texts>

¹⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and Council of Europe, *Handbook on European non-discrimination law*, 2018.

¹¹ See Luminare, *Entertainment Diversity Progress Report*, 2024; UCLA Social Sciences, *Hollywood Diversity Report*, 2024; Arcom, *Rapport sur la représentation de la société française dans les médias*, July 2023; Université Catholique de Louvain / Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel, *La diversité dans les films belges en 2018-2020*, 2022; European Audiovisual Observatory, *Diversity and inclusion in the European audiovisual sector*, 2021; CAMEo Research Institute for Cultural and Media Economies, *Workforce Diversity in the UK Screen Sector Evidence Review*, University of Leicester, 2018; Danish Film Institute, *Study of Ethnic Diversity in Danish Film*, 2018; Nwonka C. J., *Race and Ethnicity in the UK Film Industry: an analysis of the BFI Diversity Standards*, LSE, 2020; Swedish Film Institute, *Which Women? Gender Equality Report 2019-2020*.

¹² See, for example, Pink Triangle Press, *Pink Paper: 2SLGBTQIA+ Representation in Canada's Screen Industries*, 2024, and Black Screen Office, *Being Counted: Canadian Race-based Audience Survey*, 2024.

¹³ See, for example, the surveys on discrimination carried out by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/promising-practices/discrimination-survey>; and the reports and recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance>.

¹⁴ See <https://rm.coe.int/diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-en/1680a87cd4>

¹⁵ Mapping tool: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/eurimages/diversity>

made available on the websites of both Eurimages and EFAD. The aim of the mapping tool is to emphasise the necessity of setting up more diversity and inclusion measures in the audiovisual and cinema sectors;

- since 2024, applicants to the Fund's co-production support scheme are encouraged to include information on diversity and inclusion in their application, on a voluntary basis and if appropriate. Producers may choose to describe in their producer's note the working process and the commitment of the team towards diversity and inclusion in all possible areas of impact of the project. This may include research practices, handling sensitive content that could be harmful or reinforce systemic barriers (during the writing process or during filming), engaging with local communities, or using specialised expertise.

Addressing diversity and inclusion in the film and audiovisual industries remains a highly challenging endeavor. While discussions have intensified and awareness has grown, further action is essential to ensure that these conversations lead to real, lasting progress in creating an industry that truly reflects and supports all members of society.

2. Strategy

With the present strategy, Eurimages commits to strengthening the gender equality perspective, alongside diversity and inclusion, within its policies and measures.

The 2025-2027 Eurimages strategy draws on:

- the general principles of non-discrimination as outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights;
- the experience gained and the data collection system hitherto implemented by Eurimages since 2014;
- 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 Eurimages' 2016-2017, 2018-2020, 2021-2024 gender equality strategies and the strategy for diversity and inclusion 2022-2024;
- and the Council of Europe *Recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector* and its annexes¹⁶.

The strategy sets out Eurimages' aims and priorities for the promotion of gender equality, diversity and inclusion in cinema in Eurimages' member States. It outlines the working methods and principal partners, proposing specific action in critical areas and measures aimed at promoting change and making progress.

The strategy follows a dual approach: taking action within Eurimages and encouraging the relevant supranational, national and regional bodies to do likewise. It also aims to involve and

¹⁶ Council of Europe, *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): https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016807509e6

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, diversity and inclusion.

A supplementary three-year action plan, annexed to this strategy, details the specific measures to be implemented.

Current Measures in the Film Industry

Driven by the growing awareness of inequalities in the film industry, many organisations have stepped up to address these challenges. The Eurimages strategy draws inspiration from measures already implemented by various film institutes, festivals, and other industry bodies to promote gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. Such initiatives can be grouped into five main categories:

- 1) **Gender and diversity standards or requirements** stipulating conditions for film projects' on-screen and off-screen representation, professional outreach, or audience accessibility usually in the context of funding applications. Such requirements aim to institutionalise gender equality and diversity as a selection criterion among others.
- 2) **Incentives** encouraging professionals and institutions to promote gender equality, diversity and inclusion. They include special funding allocations or awards to promote on-screen and off-screen representation of women and/or underrepresented groups, and audience accessibility to works. Institutional inclusion targets, codes of conduct, industry pledges and diversity recruitment tools are further incentive measures.
- 3) **Initiatives to raise awareness**, including campaigns, programmes, conferences, and training.
- 4) **Data collection and research** on gender and diversity, providing the basis for measuring inequalities and progress achieved.
- 5) **Inclusive outreach** focused on developing talent for women and disadvantaged professionals, promoting equal access to education, and enhancing audience inclusion through compensatory measures.

While not representing an exhaustive list of measures implemented by Eurimages' member States, initiatives launched by film organisations to promote **gender equality** include:

- **the Austrian Film Institute's** comprehensive gender mainstreaming policy, including the gender incentive and the gender budgeting programme¹⁷;

¹⁷ The gender incentive (<https://filminstitut.at/foerderung/gender-incentive>) aims at reaching gender equality across the different film departments, while the gender budgeting (<https://filminstitut.at/institut/gender/gender-budgeting>) aims at distributing funding amounts equally between women and men. Since 2018 the Austrian Film Institute has also published three Film Gender Reports providing comprehensive on- and off-screen data on gender imbalances within the Austrian film industry, covering the years 2012-2021 (see <https://filminstitut.at/institut/gender/gender-report>).

- **Telefilm Canada's** action plan on gender equality (part of its broader Equity and Representation Action Plan)¹⁸ aims to build a balanced production portfolio across all budget levels and ensuring equal representation in key creative roles (director, screenwriter and producer). The action plan also emphasises promoting female talent and supporting industry partnerships to increase the visibility of women in film;
- the **French CNC's** parity bonus¹⁹, launched in 2019 as part of its automatic support scheme and developed in collaboration with **Collectif 50/50**. This measure aims at incentivizing the presence of women in key film production roles by providing a 15% bonus to eligible films²⁰;
- **Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland's** Six Point Plan²¹ on gender equality, including enhanced funding incentives for projects with female writers and directors, as well as dedicated funding and training programs for female talent. As part of the "Safe to Create" initiative, the agency also launched a series of free online courses targeting industry professionals and focused on combating harassment and unconscious bias²²;
- the **Italian Film and Audiovisual law** n. 220/2016²³, setting out measures to support the sector. Two of the schemes set up by the law (for selective support and automatic support) provide extra-points and bonuses for works directed by women or with a majority of female authors (director, scriptwriter and composer) as well as for works with a majority of female crew members in key Head of Department roles. 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.

An increasing number of initiatives have also been adopted, both within member States and internationally, to advance **diversity and inclusion** in the film sector. These include:

- diversity and inclusion standards adopted by film funds (such as the **British Film Institute**²⁴ and the **Norwegian Film Institute**²⁵) as well as representation and inclusion standard frameworks applied by the **European Film Academy**²⁶ and the **US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences**²⁷;

¹⁸ See <https://telefilm.ca/en/who-we-are/our-engagement/gender-parity-action-plan>

¹⁹ https://www.cnc.fr/professionnels/actualites/le-cnc-presente-le-premier-bilan-de-son-bonus-pour-la-parite-des-equipes-de-tournage_992733

²⁰ See <https://www.cnc.fr/documents/36995/2097582/Observatoire+Egalite+Femmes-Hommes+2024.pdf/82de7751-7374-aaa0-d6b8-f0d150c5f95b?t=1731583711864> and https://www.cnc.fr/professionnels/etudes-et-rapports/etudes-prospectives/observatoire-de-legalite-femmes-hommes-edition-2024_2294641

²¹ <https://www.screenireland.ie/about/gender>

²² <https://www.screenireland.ie/news/bord-scannan-na-heireann-the-irish-film-board-ifb-statement-on-sexual-haras>

²³ <https://cinema.cultura.gov.it/per-gli-utenti/approfondimenti-tematici/focus-parita-di-genere/>

²⁴ See <https://www.bfi.org.uk/inclusion-film-industry/bfi-diversity-standards>

²⁵ <https://www.nfi.no/tilskudd/egenmelding-mangfold-og-inkluderings>

²⁶ See <https://www.europeanfilmacademy.org/diversity-and-inclusion/>

²⁷ See <https://www.oscars.org/awards/representation-and-inclusion-standards>

- dedicated support **schemes** such as **World Cinema Fund at the Berlinale**²⁸, the **French Diversity Image Fund**²⁹ aimed at promoting a more diverse film landscape;
- international initiatives such as **New Dawn**³⁰, a film production fund bringing together film bodies from nine different countries³¹;
- festival awards aimed at promoting diversity, such as the **Dennis Davidson Spotlight Award** at the Tallinn Black Nights Festival³²;
- measures aimed at supporting creators with disabilities, such as the **Spanish funding incentives targeting film directors with disabilities** (Royal Decree 1090/2020)³³;
- measures to enhance content accessibility, such as mandatory requirements in **Italy**³⁴ and **Spain**³⁵ for subtitling and audio-description, along with grants provided by the **Swedish Film Institute**³⁶ for the same purpose;
- the experience of Telefilm Canada, which, through its **EDI Action Plan**³⁷, sets targets for staff and clients to create a more inclusive and representative entertainment landscape. The organisation undertakes a variety of initiatives to support Indigenous creators, including dedicated funding streams for Indigenous projects and ongoing support to the **Indigenous Screen Office (ISO)**³⁸;
- guidelines to help create more authentic and inclusive content, such as the report *Being Seen: Directives for Creating Authentic and Inclusive Content*³⁹ by the **Canadian Black Film Office**;
- platforms and tools providing resources and best practices in inclusive recruiting, such as the **bible 50/50**⁴⁰ in France, **People of Film**⁴¹ in Sweden, the **Equality Tool** developed by **WIFT Finland**⁴², the **Dutch Diversity & Inclusion Code for the cultural and creative sector**⁴³;

²⁸ See <https://www.berlinale.de/en/wcf/home/welcome.html>

²⁹ See https://www.cnc.fr/professionnels/aides-et-financements/multi-sectoriel/ecriture-et-developpement/fonds-images-de-la-diversite_191484

³⁰ <https://newdawn.film>

³¹ Belgium (Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles and Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds), Canada (Telefilm Canada), Finland (Finnish Film Foundation), Ireland (Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland), Luxembourg (Film Fund Luxembourg), Norway (Norwegian Film Institute), the Netherlands (Netherlands Film Fund), Portugal (Portuguese Film and Audiovisual Institute) and Sweden (Swedish Film Institute).

³² See <https://poff.ee/en/about/awards/>

³³ See BOE-A-2020-15877 Real Decreto 1090/2020, link: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2020-15877>

³⁴ <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2016;220>

³⁵ See <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2020-6921>

³⁶ See https://accessible-eu-centre.ec.europa.eu/content-corner/digital-library/act-20181937-accessibility-digital-public-services-lag-20181937-om-tillganglighet-till-digital_en

³⁷ See <https://telefilm.ca/en/who-we-are/our-engagement/equity-diversity-and-inclusion>

³⁸ See <https://iso-bea.ca/about-iso>

³⁹ See <https://telefilm.ca/en/etudes/being-seen-directives-for-creating-authentic-and-inclusive-content>

⁴⁰ See <https://www.bible5050.fr/>

⁴¹ See <https://peopleoffilm.se/>

⁴² See <https://www.wift.fi/english>

⁴³ See <https://codedi.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Code-Diversity-and-Inclusion-EN.pdf>.

- research projects, such as the **OMNI Inclusion Data**⁴⁴ pilot initiative by the German **MOIN Film Fund**, in collaboration with the **Austrian Film Institute**⁴⁵, which aims at collecting diversity data on cast and crew, and the **#VielfaltImFilm** survey on diversity and discrimination within the German-speaking film and television industry⁴⁶;
- the diversity talent mentoring programme by the **Norwegian Film Institute**⁴⁷, as well as the equal opportunities programme of the French Film School **La Fémis**⁴⁸;
- audience development initiatives, such as the **Danish Film Institute’s Children and Youth Unit**, focusing on creating inclusive and participative programmes for young audiences⁴⁹, and the **Italian** scheme for audience development initiatives, **National Cinema and Pictures Plan for Schools** (“Piano Nazionale Cinema e Immagini per la Scuola”), aiming to raise awareness on diversity and promote inclusion for young people living in the peripheral and/or disadvantaged areas through cinema and audiovisual images⁵⁰.

3. Strategic Goals and Objectives

3.1 General Goals

The overarching goal of the present strategy is to reduce inequalities in the film industry, with a particular focus on gender inequality. It aims to promote the role of women both in front of and behind the camera, as well as to advance diversity and inclusion throughout the industry.

To achieve this goal, Eurimages will implement targeted initiatives, drawing on the following operational goals:

1. Contribute to increasing the presence of women in the industry by:
 - a. attracting more female-driven projects;
 - b. showcasing their achievements.
2. Promote diversity and inclusion in the industry by showcasing more inclusive film projects.
3. Continue raising awareness of various types of inequality across the film industry, with a focus on gender and minority representation. Efforts should address both on-screen and off-screen inclusion, equitable access to resources, and fair peer recognition.

⁴⁴ See <https://moin-filmfoerderung.de/en/aktuelles/2024/02/19/omni-sets-the-course-for-a-more-inclusive-film-and-media-industry> and <https://www.filmuniversitaet.de/en/research-transfer/research/projects/project-page/detail/omni-inclusion-data-pilot-studie>

⁴⁵ The Austrian Film Institute plans on implementing the OMNI tool in their funding programmes.

⁴⁶ See <https://citizensforeurope.org/vielfalt-im-film/> and <https://omni-inclusion.de/>

⁴⁷ See <https://www.nfi.no/talent-og-mangfold/up>

⁴⁸ See <https://www.femis.fr/-programme-egalite-des-chances-254->

⁴⁹ See <https://www.dfi.dk/en/english/children-and-youth>

⁵⁰ <https://cinema.cultura.gov.it/cosa-facciamo/sostegni-economici/linee-di-sostegno/promozione/cinema-per-la-scuola/>

4. Continue to increase the visibility of the best-practice work and measures carried out by national and international bodies and by Eurimages to promote diversity, inclusion and audience accessibility.
5. Carry out, where possible, and promote data monitoring, if available, on gender equality, diversity and inclusion, and foster the systematic sharing of findings.
6. Sponsor and offer patronage to initiatives promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion and support research on these subjects.
7. Mainstream gender, diversity and inclusion across the Fund and across decision-making.

The methods for achieving these aims are outlined in the three-year action plan annexed to this strategy.

3.2 Correlation with the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy

The goals for targeting diversity will be presented in the general context of the gender equality objectives of the Council of Europe as laid out in the *Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029*. This approach aligns with an intersectional perspective⁵¹, addressing the needs of women and girls, but also men and boys in all of their diversity⁵². Recognizing that individuals often face discrimination on multiple grounds, as detailed in Article 14 of the *European Convention on Human Rights*, and following the principles laid out in the Reykjavik Declaration⁵³, the *Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy* emphasises the importance of addressing all forms of discrimination to foster a truly equal society. This implies integrating the needs and circumstances of both women and men in gender equality policies.

In line with the Council of Europe strategy, Eurimages sets out to adopt a holistic approach in upholding equality and combating discrimination. In implementing its strategy on gender

⁵¹ “An intersectional approach can allow for insight into the more complex forms of discrimination, exclusion and violence to which individuals may be exposed. Various grounds on which such discrimination is based may intersect, leading to unique lived experiences and vulnerabilities. In the context of gender equality policies, an intersectional approach can be used to understand, take into account and address the interactions between gender and sex and other personal characteristics/statuses (...) and the resulting compounded forms of discrimination. Anyone can be vulnerable to these forms of discrimination, but certain groups of women and girls are particularly exposed to them and thus stand to benefit in particular from an intersectional approach to gender equality policies.” See *The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029*.

⁵² According to *The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029*: “The expression ‘all women and men, girls and boys’ includes persons in all their diversity, with their different characteristics/statuses as listed above. This affirms the commitment to leave no one behind and to achieve a gender-equal Europe for everyone”.

⁵³ See <https://rm.coe.int/4th-summit-of-heads-of-state-and-government-of-the-council-of-europe/1680ab40c1>.

equality, diversity, and inclusion, the Fund may focus on specific areas depending on the operational goal considered.

The power for change and critical observations that are made possible through a non-stereotypical presentation of women, girls, men and boys in all their diversity in films, can allow the shaping of a more diverse society and a critical perspective on discrimination and anti-gender and gender-critical narratives. Therefore, Eurimages continues to raise awareness among its member States of these challenges and contributes to a more diverse film offering, by supporting projects that tell stories that can help to overcome these challenges.

1. Preventing and combatting gender stereotypes and sexism (objective 1 in the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy)

The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 maintains its focus on preventing and combating gender stereotypes and sexism. This goal aims to dismantle discrimination, sexism and gender stereotypes affecting one or more particular group(s) of women⁵⁴. The strategy highlights that gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms not only negatively affect women and girls, but also men and boys, who are pressured by harmful forms of hegemonic masculinity. This often results in discrimination, violence and other adverse reactions against those who deviate from traditional gender roles.

Media portrayal and societal perceptions can contribute to gender stereotypes, influencing expectations around appearance, behaviour, career choices, and unpaid care or domestic responsibilities⁵⁵. Stereotypical gender representations remain prevalent on screen, significantly limiting opportunities for both women and men by confining them to predefined roles. Relevant studies, such as those conducted by the USC Annenberg School of Communication⁵⁶ and Journalism and the Geena Davis Institute⁵⁷, reveal that on-screen women are considerably underrepresented in leadership or authoritative roles, and more frequently objectified than their male counterparts⁵⁸. Also, they represent less than one third of speaking characters in films released in 2023⁵⁹.

Addressing these stereotypes is crucial to advancing gender equality in the film industry. Despite some progress, efforts are still required to ensure that women are portrayed in diverse, nuanced, and empowered roles, breaking away from restrictive stereotypes that have

⁵⁴ Including lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LBTI) women; Roma and Traveller women; women from national, ethnic or religious minorities; women with disabilities; migrant and refugee women; older women. See Art. 47 of the *The Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029*.

⁵⁵ See Art. 41 of the *The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029*.

⁵⁶ <https://annenberg.usc.edu/research/annenberg-inclusion-initiative/gender>

⁵⁷ <https://geenadavisinstitute.org/>

⁵⁸ "Gender Bias with Borders: An Investigation of Female Characters in Popular Films Across 11 Countries" (2014). <https://geenadavisinstitute.org/research/gender-bias-with-borders-an-investigation-of-female-characters-in-popular-films-across-11-countriesgender-bias-with-borders/>

⁵⁹ "Inequality in 1 700 Popular Films" (2024). <https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/a11-popular-films-2024-08-02.pdf>

persisted for decades, and that men and boys are shown in diverse life situations, roles and with a complex characterisation allowing to show a variety of identities.

2. Preventing and combatting violence against women and girls and domestic violence (objective 2 in the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy)

This strategic objective refers to the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and girls and domestic violence* (the “Istanbul Convention”⁶⁰).

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”.

As violence against women is still widespread in the Fund’s member States, depictions of women in degrading, submissive, or sexualised roles, especially without a critical context, can perpetuate harmful stereotypes that may contribute to this violence. Conversely, portraying positive and empowering images of both men and women can play a role in countering it. These considerations apply not only to women but also to other marginalised communities and groups. As an international co-production Fund, Eurimages will take these factors into account as appropriate.

3. Achieving balanced participation of women and men in political, public, social and economic life (objective 4 in the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy)

Objective 4 of the *Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029* refers to balanced participation in political and public decision-making, highlighting the broad benefits of gender equality for individuals and societies, including economic growth and well-being. The Eurimages strategy on gender equality, diversity and inclusion builds on this goal to promote balanced representation across all roles in the film and audiovisual industry. Women and minorities in this sector face widespread challenges typical of the broader labour market, such as unequal pay, limited pension benefits, unpaid care responsibilities, and restricted access to leadership positions. These barriers are often more pronounced for women from marginalised groups, including migrant women, women with disabilities, and those belonging to ethnic or religious minorities.

As stated in the Council of Europe *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

⁶⁰ See <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treaty-num=210>

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 the present strategy, Eurimages reaffirms its commitment to working towards to a balanced participation of women and men across the film and audiovisual industry.

4. Achieve gender mainstreaming and include an intersectional approach in all policies and measures (objective 6 in the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy)

The gender mainstreaming approach involves taking account of the "gender" dimension into all processes, including financial processes. Inspired by an intersectional approach, Eurimages will seek to implement measures that take into account diverse situations, as well as multiple forms of discrimination⁶¹.

Eurimages remains committed to continuously assessing its processes to embed gender equality across all areas and levels. To further promote gender mainstreaming among its member States, Eurimages will enhance the visibility of its actions and strategies, gather and share information on new developments, and disseminate best practices.

Eurimages is committed to improve gender equality in the allocation of support whenever possible and will continue to monitor and assess the amounts granted to co-production projects as well as to all other forms of support awarded. 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 of the situation in Europe and communicating and disseminating good practices where possible.

Eurimages is looking into ways to address diversity and inclusion in the activities of the Fund. It should be noted however, that while expanding its scope to the promotion of diversity and inclusion, Eurimages continues to apply specific measures for the advancement of women in the audiovisual industry.

Many member States actively promote gender mainstreaming in their national policies and measures through action plans and institutional frameworks, adopting gender budgeting policies and offering dedicated training opportunities.

⁶¹ See Art. 83 of the *Council of Europe Strategy on Gender Equality*: "Gender mainstreaming efforts, by focusing on the different needs of groups and individuals, have helped to shed light on intersecting forms of exclusion, discrimination and violence that certain groups of women and men face, due to their different characteristics/statuses. Integrating an intersectional perspective, by taking into account this diversity and compounded forms of oppression, is essential if the Organisation is to adopt and implement inclusive policies and projects".

4. Implementation and Communication

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

This working group will ensure that the rules and principles laid down in the present strategy are applied and that the Board of Management's decisions in matters of gender equality, diversity and inclusion are acted upon by giving the Board of Management as well as all other bodies of Eurimages, the necessary tools to do so.

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

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

5. Partnerships

Several national funds and supranational bodies, including the European Audiovisual Observatory, the European Film Academy, the European Film Agency Directors (EFAD) and the European Film Agency Research Network (EFARN), are working on issues and standards related to equity, including gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

This provides a sound basis for partnerships, co-operation and exchange of knowledge enabling the identification of opportunities for joint action and complementarity.

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

Annex I – Eurimages’ Action Plan (2025-2027) for Gender Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Action area	Initiatives
<p>1. Increasing the presence of women (creative and technical)</p>	<p>a. In order to attract more female-driven applications⁶², the Fund will continue to offer a range of incentives to reflect its commitment to these projects.</p> <p>These include existing incentives, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - encouraging the experts evaluating the projects to take into account the gender of the director in their final recommendation of the projects for co-production support; - increased support: projects directed or co-directed by a woman are eligible for support up to 25% of the total production cost (instead of 17%), with a maximum support ceiling of €500,000. <p>b. To increase the presence of female crew members in key Head of Department roles, where women are currently underrepresented, the Fund commits to exploring measures that raise awareness of female talent in these roles and incentivise the hiring of female crew members in underrepresented positions. Potential measures may include introducing an additional award or similar initiatives.</p> <p>c. The Audentia Award will continue to be presented in its current format to the best female director, at a different festival annually.</p> <p>d. Encouraging the experts evaluating the projects to take into account the gender of the director in their final recommendations for support under the new Film Marketing and Audience Development Support programme.</p>

⁶² Female-driven films are defined as projects in which women comprise 60% or more of all professionals involved.

2. Raise awareness about inequalities in on-screen and off-screen representations of women and minorities	<p>a. In order to raise awareness among the producers and the experts assessing projects, the Fund will continue to invite producers to provide the following information in their applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- highlighting prior collaboration with female directors and women in key Head of Department roles, as well as any prizes or festival participation for films led by female directors, and noting the involvement of female cast and crew members;- detailing prior and current work on diversity and inclusion, particularly in relation to minority representation. This may include information on the team’s commitment to diversity throughout the project’s development, such as research practices, engagement with local communities, handling of sensitive content, and consultation with specialised experts to avoid reinforcing systemic barriers;- indicating, where applicable, if the project has completed the Bechdel-Wallace test. <p>b. Maximising visibility for initiatives and best-practices work carried out by national and international bodies, as well as Eurimages, in promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion. To achieve this objective, the Fund will develop and implement a wider-reaching communication strategy, including, but not limited to, the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- publishing on the Eurimages website a list of female directors supported by the Fund, a list of the Audentia Award winners, as well as a list of initiatives supported within the sponsorship and patronage programme;- adhering to an annual or bi-annual communication schedule to maintain consistent visibility and engage audiences effectively;- expanding communication efforts to include relevant awards and initiatives developed within other Eurimages Working Groups, such as those related to Promotion, Film Marketing and Audience Development as well as Cinema Support Programmes;- continuing updating the “Diversity & Inclusion Mapping tool”, developed in collaboration with EFAD, to monitor measures and initiatives on these topics adopted by individual countries;- supporting research by sharing findings on gender equality, diversity and inclusion in a dedicated section of the Eurimages website and communicating the latest facts and figures available.
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	c. At member State level and among regional, national and supranational funds, and at festivals, ensuring a regular presence on panels and at relevant conferences; Eurimages representatives should be the ambassadors for gender equality, diversity and inclusion in their respective countries.
3. Sponsorship and research support	Expanding the scope of sponsorship and patronage to support initiatives that advance gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. The Fund will issue a call for proposals for an annually renewable agreement, covering a maximum period of three years; a corresponding budgetary allocation has to be set aside.
4. Data monitoring	<p>a. Carrying out specific data monitoring related to the Council of Europe <i>Recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector</i> and also related to Eurimages' specific initiatives (i.e. evolution of the share of female-directed and female-driven films supported by the Fund, monitoring of the impact of the 25% incentive for projects helmed by women).</p> <p>b. Exploring and promoting data collection methodologies on gender, diversity and inclusion, that comply with relevant data protection legal frameworks.</p>
5. Gender, diversity and inclusion mainstreaming	<p>Identifying barriers to inclusion within Eurimages and exploring opportunities for improving accessibility of Eurimages procedures, communication and language use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ensuring that gender-sensitive language is used in all Eurimages documents and tools; – fostering a more inclusive organisational culture, by providing appropriate resources (research, training, e-learning tools) on institutional sexism, unconscious bias and content sensitivity (pertaining to both equality and diversity) for Eurimages' staff, Board of Management members, and experts.