

EURIMAGES' GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY (2018-2020): Aiming for 50/50 by 2020

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 an equal access to and 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: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/eurimages/Source/GenderBrochure2017.pdf> p. 4), indicate that projects with female directors accounted for a 21% share of Eurimages-supported films in 2016 as compared to a 17% share in 2012. However, even if this indicates a slight increase, this figure is still relatively low given that recent studies as referred to in the Council of Europe's

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

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. 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.

In the past five years, however, there has been substantially increased awareness in the industry and the wider press about this prevalence of gender inequality. Unfortunately, sensitisation to this issue will not suffice to bring about substantial change alone. It is therefore essential that proactive solutions be proposed to redress this gender imbalance so as to achieve a widespread and lasting improvement in the situation.

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. Furthermore, 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 a *Gender Equality Strategy (2016-2017)*⁴ is in a strong position to help bring about change.

Introduction

The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, and forthcoming *2018-2023* edition set out and will underpin the Organisation's prioritisation of advancing the gender equality agenda as part of the 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:⁵

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.

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

⁴ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/eurimages/Source/Stratégie%20pour%20l'égalité_en.pdf

⁵ Please note that Point 5 – “protecting the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum-seeking women and girls” is pending adoption.

6. Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures.

The action being taken by Eurimages is a variation on the fourth objective, namely working towards achieving balanced participation of women and men, not only in decision-making positions but in terms of industry access as far as possible.

The Eurimages strategy is also in line with the last objective of “achieving gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures”, and touches on on-screen representation and combating violence against women (objectives 1 and 2).

I – Strategy

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

The 2018-2020 Eurimages strategy draws on:

- the experience gained and the data collection system hitherto implemented by Eurimages (2014-2017);⁶
- the conclusions of the conference held in Sarajevo on 14 August 2015;⁷
- 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 gender equality strategy 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;⁸ and
- 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*⁹ with respect to distribution of public funding to creative positions.

⁶ <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/eurimages/Source/GenderBrochure2017.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.sff.ba/upload/documents/Conference-Declaration-on-Gender-Equality.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/initiatives/stepitup/stepitup-brochure-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4739>

⁹ http://www.filminstitutet.se/globalassets/_dokument/handlingsplaner/actionplan_genderequality_eng_final.pdf

The 2018-2020 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.

It 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. Lastly, it seeks to lay the foundations for fruitful co-operation with relevant stakeholders, institutions, data monitoring bodies, NGOs and other associations working to bring about gender equality.

It proposes specific action in critical areas and key measures aimed at promoting change and making progress. These are set out in a three-year **action plan** (for the period 2018-2020, see **Appendix 1**).

II – Strategic goal and objectives

General goal

The strategy's overall goal is to **aim for** the target of 50/50 by 2020, i.e. equal support for projects with female directors attached, and to **work to help** increase gender equality both on and off-screen in the film industry. To try to achieve this goal, Eurimages **will endeavour** to:

- 1. 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*:**
 - a. at member state level and among national, supranational and regional funds and festivals;
 - b. among industry professionals and students;
 - c. by developing and implementing a holistic communication strategy.

- 2. Increase the visibility of creative and technical work being carried out by women in the industry:**
 - a. by continuing to showcase their achievements.

- 3. Carrying out and promoting data monitoring and the systematic sharing of findings.**

4. Supporting research initiatives.

5. Advocating for greater opportunities for women professionals.

6. Devising strategies to:

- a. redress the imbalance in the share of public film funding women receive;
- b. tackle the difficulties female creatives face in obtaining equitable financing;
- c. aim for the goal of 50/50 by 2020 for female directors' share of public funding from Eurimages.

The methods for trying to achieve these aims, and the partners and information pertaining to them, are outlined in detail in Appendix 1.

1) Achieve balanced participation of women and men

All of the above-mentioned strategies **aim to 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.

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 Appendix 1 to this document, Eurimages wishes to contribute to the balanced participation of women and men throughout the industry.

2) Mainstream a gender equality approach in all policies and measures

This mainstreaming approach (objective 6 of the Council of Europe strategy) 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 where possible.

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.

3) *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 Vivendi¹⁰ into more commercial films predominantly, as well as information to be gleaned from the British Film Industry Filmography¹¹, 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 ..."*.

¹⁰ ***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/>

¹¹ <https://filmography.bfi.org.uk/>

4) 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 Convention¹²”).

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, 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.

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 endeavour to 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.

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 best as possible as set out in point 2 of Appendix 1, thereby promoting best practice.

¹² <https://rm.coe.int/168046031c>

IV – Partnerships

Several national funds and supranational bodies (most recently the European Film Agency Directors (EFADs)), have adopted 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.

APPENDIX 1: EURIMAGES STRATEGY FOR EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IN EUROPEAN CINEMA - AIMING FOR 50/50 by 2020

THREE-YEAR ACTION PLAN: 50/50 by 2020 (2018 - 2020)

Actions	Aims, expected results	Incentives	Means, tools, methods	Partners	Timeline	Resources
<p>1. Awareness-raising</p>	<p>Increase awareness about gender inequality at member state level and amongst national, supranational and regional funds and festivals</p>	<p>1. Share know-how and information from the recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector and from Eurimages' best practice; 2. Encourage representatives from the Board of Management to become ambassadors for gender equality in their countries, by sharing examples of their country's own best practice and by helping to disseminate information about the gender equality recommendation and its possible implementation; 3. Heighten awareness of gender equality and how to analyse scripts using e.g. the Bechdel test for Eurimages' scriptreaders where possible.</p>	<p>1. Organise outreach initiatives to disseminate good practice; 2. Bring gender equality experts to BoM meetings to provide extra information for Board members ensuring they can become ambassadors for best practice in this area and invite Board members to share best practice initiatives in their countries; 3. If possible organize a training day for Eurimages' scriptreaders and include an unconscious bias training component.</p>	<p>Festivals; Political institutions and bodies; Trade Unions (e.g. representing EBU, FIA etc.) Supranational bodies (e.g. EFADs, CineRegio, etc.); National and regional funds/ Board of Management members; Consultants.</p>	<p>2018/2020</p>	
	<p>Increase awareness about gender inequality and how to address this amongst professionals and students</p>	<p>1. Continue to organize quarterly outreach meetings during BoM meetings; 2. Organize limited number of collaborative training sessions with film schools</p>	<p>1. Outreach meetings; 2. Training sessions in limited number of film schools if possible</p>	<p>Quarterly outreach meetings; 2 training sessions in film schools per year if possible</p>	<p>2018/2020</p>	
	<p>Increase visibility of work carried out by Eurimages in the field of gender equality</p>	<p>Ensure that Eurimages' gender equality work is highly visible</p>	<p>Ongoing development of communication strategies (website, social media , press releases, brochures, visual identity, if possible a clip to introduce Eurimages' gender work, short-form brochure on recommendation, timer with countdown for 50/50 by 2020; etc.)</p>	<p>Work with consultants, providers and in-house to create, develop and strengthen these tools</p>	<p>2018/2020</p>	

Actions	Aims, expected results	Incentives	Means, tools, methods	Partners	Timeline	Resources
2. Visibility initiatives	Put the spotlight increasingly on the work of female creatives and crew	Make sure that the work of women in the industry is given good visibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aim to interview female directors who receive Eurimages' support; 2. Invite female experts to speak at masterclasses e.g. during outreach meetings; 3. Commission an expert to carry out a feasibility study into "gender equality approved" festivals in collaboration with a pan-European partner with expertise in the domain. 	Aim to work with a journalist ideally associated with the industry press to ensure that maximum exposure is given to the creative and technical work of women in the film industry; Look for a university expert to carry out a feasibility study.	2018/2020	
3. Data monitoring	Carry out on- and off-screen data monitoring / promote monitoring by others pertaining to gender equality in the audiovisual sector	Within possible means ensure that monitoring of data continues in Eurimages	e.g. some of the Eurimages' Performance Indicators	In-house work	2018/2020 regular presentation of some data at BoM meetings)	
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage the systematic collection of pan-European and where possible Eurimages' member state data; 2. Encourage national and regional funds to collect data; 3. Endeavour to encourage the creation of a pan-European database. 	Encourage other bodies to draw on performance indicators as set out in the Recommendation on gender equality in the audiovisual sector (see annex II)	EFADs, Cine regio (EFARN group), European Audiovisual Observatory, other monitoring bodies - laboratories for equality etc.; national and regional funds	2018/2020	
4. Research	Continue to encourage and support research initiatives which can help advance gender equality in the film sector	Share information about new research projects and studies	Include information from new research studies on the Eurimages' gender equality website		2018/2020	
		Support research initiatives which have a pan-European angle		Research bodies;	2018/2020	
5. Advocacy	Advocate for more opportunities for women; Create greater visibility and recognition for female filmmakers	Support existing initiatives to help women in the industry, for example, residencies, etc.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to offer financial support (scholarships) to help participants at residencies such as: Nipkow/Medienboard (Berlin); Cinefondation; Biennale de Venezia; and patronage to other relevant initiatives; 2. Continue to identify a festival at which the Audentia Award can be given on an annual basis and give financial support to a female director 	Residencies; Training initiatives; Festivals	2018/2020	
		Continue to give an award to a female director (Audentia Award)				

Actions	Aims, expected results	Incentives	Means, tools, methods	Partners	Timeline	Resources
6. Strategize	Address the problem of under-representation of women in funding decisions	Identify and adopt in-house Eurimages' measures which could assist the goal of fairer distribution of funds between women and men	1. Adopt an <i>ex aequo</i> approach whereby if in one group of the CPWG there are two projects with equal points the project support goes to the director from the under-represented sex;	In-house	2018/2020	
	50/50 by 2020	Drawing on all of the above-mentioned methods and approaches endeavour to encourage the supporting of the goal of 50/50 for funding of female directors by 2020	1. Monitor the quarterly Eurimages' funding results and post these on the Eurimages' website after each BoM meeting and include the information in the quarterly funding result press releases; 2. Participate in the Stockholm 50/50 by 2020 meeting and share Eurimages' experience and results at this event	In-house; SFI	quarterly 2018-2020 and conf. 2020	