



# Diversity and inclusion in the audiovisual industries

Summary of the workshop

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# **Diversity and inclusion in the audiovisual industries**

Summary of the workshop

**Strasbourg, 10 December 2020**

Online event

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## Introduction

Given the privileged role of the audiovisual sector in society due to the capacity of the media and cinema to represent people in their diversity and to influence and ultimately shape public opinion, particular attention has been paid to the objective of achieving greater diversity and inclusion in this sector. Anglo-Saxon countries have traditionally been well ahead in this field, even before international organisations such as the Council of Europe or UNESCO took a step forward on the issue in the 2000s.<sup>1</sup> At EU policy level, the objective of ensuring greater diversity and inclusion has been increasingly emphasised in recent years.<sup>2</sup> In addition, many initiatives have been taken in recent years at European and national level by industry stakeholders, media regulators and film funds to promote the presence of underrepresented groups on screen and on air, as well as in the workforce.<sup>3</sup>

Despite these developments, there is still a long way to go in order to achieve diversity and inclusion in the audiovisual sector. Statistics on gender available for the European audiovisual sector show important imbalances both in terms of representation in leadership roles and career perspectives. On the other hand, statistics on diversity are not as easy to produce as gender statistics and are available for a limited number of EU countries only. When available though, they do reveal strong imbalances, for example in the representation of people with disabilities, sexual orientations, or ethnic backgrounds.

After specifically addressing the issue of gender imbalances in the 2018 edition of its annual workshops, the European Audiovisual Observatory (EAO) decided to broaden the scope to cover issues of diversity and inclusion (D&I) in the audiovisual sector in a wider perspective. These questions respond to a growing societal demand for more inclusive content and representation in the media and echo recent social movements such as “Black Lives Matter”. They are high on the political agenda in many countries and it is in this context that the Observatory will devote a new legal report to these issues, to be published by Spring 2021. The format of the traditional EAO December “closed” workshops has been exceptionally revisited in 2020 due to the sanitary context and took the form of an online webinar open to the public, and structured as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001); The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2006); The revised European Social Charter (ETS No. 163) (1996).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Directive 2000/43/EU on equality of treatment between persons without distinction of race or ethnic origin and Directive 2000/78/EU on equality of treatment in relation to employment and work.

<sup>3</sup> See the EPRA comparative report, “Achieving greater diversity in broadcasting – special focus on gender; Benefits and best practices approaches, Jones, J. (Ofcom), 4 September 2018, [https://www.epra.org/news\\_items/achieving-greater-diversity-in-broadcasting-publication-of-the-final-comparative-background](https://www.epra.org/news_items/achieving-greater-diversity-in-broadcasting-publication-of-the-final-comparative-background); See also EPRA Working Group II on Diversity (2018), Bratislava, <https://www.epra.org/attachments/bratislava-wg-ii-achieving-greater-diversity-in-broadcasting-the-whole-picture-summary>.



- The first session of the workshop aimed at debating the question of under-representation in the audiovisual creative value chain from a labour market perspective, including equal employment conditions and training opportunities for minority and underrepresented groups;
- The second session addressed the issue of diversity and inclusion on screen, and the ways to promote inclusion and non-discrimination on screen.





# Session 1 – Off-screen diversity and inclusion

The first session of the workshop was chaired by Maja Cappello, and introduced by Francisco Cabrera, Senior Analyst of the Department for Legal Information (EAO).

The introductory presentation started by citing several historical figures in the artistic sector who were censored, ignored, locked up and forced to convert and comply due to society's discriminatory views on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and disabilities.

The creative and technical teams in today's audiovisual industry live in a different society and legal framework from those historical figures. At European level, an important body of legislation and case law, such as the European Convention on Human Rights,<sup>4</sup> the European Social Charter<sup>5</sup> or the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union<sup>6</sup>, prohibits discrimination on many grounds. In particular, two EU directives combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, religion, belief, age, disability, race or ethnicity in the areas of employment and access to the welfare system and social security, as well as to goods and services: the Employment Equality Directive<sup>7</sup> and the Racial Equality Directive.<sup>8</sup> Despite this, there are still gaps in EU anti-discrimination law, as some of those protected grounds are only safeguarded in the context of employment. A 2008 proposal for a Directive by the European Commission<sup>9</sup> suggested extending protection against discrimination through a horizontal approach, but so far, the draft proposal has remained blocked.

At national level, legislators and regulators have provided tools and mechanisms to promote equality and fight discrimination, for example, by imposing obligations on broadcasters. Various film funds make public funding conditional upon the fulfilment of equality and diversity criteria. The European audiovisual industry has also stepped in, introducing new policies aiming at increasing diversity and promoting inclusion in the sector. But all those legislative tools and other initiatives are not sufficient, hence the need for further discussion on D&I off screen.

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<sup>4</sup> European Convention on Human Rights, [https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention\\_eng.pdf](https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention_eng.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> The European Social Charter, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/035>.

<sup>6</sup> The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32000L0078>.

<sup>8</sup> Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32000L0043>.

<sup>9</sup> The 2008 Proposal of Anti-Discrimination Directive, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-area-of-justice-and-fundamental-rights/file-anti-discrimination-directive>.



## 1.1. UK Diversity data: methods and results

Amy Turton, Project Manager of Diamond (Creative Diversity Network), addressed the issue of data collection on diversity in the UK television industry. This section summarises her presentation.

The Diamond project, led by the Creative Diversity Network,<sup>10</sup> was created as a result of an initiative by the UK’s main broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky) to jointly tackle the issue of the lack of data on diversity. They extended the use of an already shared software platform to create Diamond in order to collect data on six diversity characteristics concerning the cast and crew making programmes for the five main broadcasters.

The data collection process consists of a diversity form that is completed by the relevant stakeholders; the data is then entered into the database and reviewed by Diamond according to specific criteria, producing an overall analysis of the industry. Amy Turton then shared some of the main findings of their latest monitoring report on diversity in the UK television industry:<sup>11</sup>

- Disabled people are among the most underrepresented in the television industry: 7.8% on screen and 5.2% off screen, while constituting 17% of the working population;
- Diversity is much better on screen, which masks the fact that there is not enough diversity off screen;
- In key creative roles, such as director or screenwriter, women and BAME people<sup>12</sup> are not as well represented as they are in other roles: for example, while women make up 53.7% of the off-screen workforce, they represent only 26.2% of directors.

There are many positive aspects to the diversity data collection process, including encouraging organisations to be more transparent and accountable, and to set diversity targets. However, monitoring diversity presents some major challenges, such as obtaining this type of data on a voluntary and continuous basis, or taking diversity into account in a broad sense, without establishing hierarchy between diversity criteria. In addition, there is a need to improve and broaden the evaluation of ongoing diversity initiatives, to assess what works and whether it can be exported and used by other organisations.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://creativediversitynetwork.com/diamond/>.

<sup>11</sup> Diamond – The Third Cut Report, 2020, <https://creativediversitynetwork.com/diamond/diamond-reports/diamond-the-third-cut-report/>.

<sup>12</sup> The abbreviation BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) has evolved as an umbrella term to refer to people of all ethnicities except white.



## 1.2. The gender pay gap: good practices against inequality

Pauline Durand-Vialle, CEO of FERA - Federation of European Screen Directors,<sup>13</sup> focused on the issue of the gender pay gap by sharing the results of their recent study on the remuneration of audiovisual authors in Europe.<sup>14</sup> This section summarises her presentation.

The study first pointed out that there are about 36% of female audiovisual authors in Europe (which includes scriptwriters, directors, composers, directors of photography and other audiovisual authors). It then revealed the existing pay gap in terms of median annual income differences:<sup>15</sup>

- For directors: EUR 12 500 for women against EUR 18 000 for men
- For screenwriters: EUR 23 500 for women against EUR 25 000 for men
- For other audiovisual authors: EUR 18 000 for women against EUR 24 000 for men

The study also provides an illustration of the glass ceiling effect: although the data show that female authors start their careers almost on an equal footing with their male counterparts, a clear gap begins to appear when they reach the age of 50, where the median female author earns EUR 20 750 compared to EUR 29 009 for a median male author.

In terms of good practice, although there are several gender equality measures and policies in place with regard to access to finance, these have no impact on reducing the gender pay gap. This could be explained by the fact that issues related to working conditions and income are difficult to address in the audiovisual industry, for the following reasons:

- The proportion of audiovisual authors working as freelancers;
- The issue of improving professional representation and collective bargaining capacity is essential to closing the gender gap, but also to addressing a wider range of social issues;
- The appropriate leverage depends largely on the national labour law framework.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://screendirectors.eu/>.

<sup>14</sup> Behind the screens: European survey on the remuneration of audiovisual authors, FERA, 2019  
<https://screendirectors.eu/new-report-first-ever-eu-wide-study-finds-audiovisual-authors-struggling-to-make-ends-meet-and-to-maintain-sustainable-careers/>

<sup>15</sup> The median income is calculated on the total personal income after tax in 2016 in Europe.



### 1.3. Highlights from the “Good Practice Handbook”

Daphne Tepper, Director at UNI Europa,<sup>16</sup> presented the Good Practice Handbook<sup>17</sup>, which was prepared by the social partners of the EU Social Dialogue Committee in the Audiovisual sector.<sup>18</sup> This section summarises her presentation.

The project was a follow-up action of the adoption in 2011 by the organisations of the European Framework on Actions on Gender Equality in the Audiovisual Sector,<sup>19</sup> which put forward considerations and recommendations in five key areas: gender portrayal, equality of pay, equality in decision making, gender roles in the workplace, and the reconciliation of work and private life.

The objective of the project was to assess the progress made since the adoption of the Framework for Action in 2011, and to try to identify and promote good practices. The focus was on gender equality, but diversity in its broadest sense was also addressed. The research aimed to learn more about what is at stake in terms of women's presence both on and behind European screens; whether the sector is fair for women in terms of pay and opportunities; what has been put in place to combat this discrimination; and what works and what is missing. The Handbook presents the results of this research, highlighting some of the available data on the presence of women in the European audiovisual sector, as well as a series of good practices and lessons learned, such as:

- The importance of data, targets, monitoring and reporting: gender equality strategies without targets, or gender equality goals without monitoring have proven to be ineffective;
- The importance of public funding and the role of public broadcasters and audiovisual regulators, who can encourage the sector to transform some of the traditional models which lead to imbalances;
- The need to continue to raise awareness and organise training, committing individuals and the organisation to change, and making visible and understandable the structural discrimination that persists between men and women;
- Changing the way the audiovisual sector operates on a day-to-day basis, for example with workplace policies and actions in the form of databases of various profiles, childcare facilities, flexible working solutions, etc;
- Making safe spaces a priority and putting procedures in place should be a central element of any gender equality strategy;
- Establishing relevant synergies between actions in favour of gender equality and diversity.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.uni-europa.org/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.equalitydiversityinavsector.eu/>

<sup>18</sup> Which include: The Association of Commercial Television in Europe (ACT), the Association of European Radios (AER), the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the European Audiovisual Production Association (CEPI), the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), the International Federation of Actors (FIA), the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF), the International Federation of Musicians (FIM) and UNI Europa – Media, Entertainment & Arts (EURO-MEI).

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/framework-actions-gender-equality-audiovisual-sector>.



## 1.4. Discussion

The ensuing discussion addressed the issues of data collection on D&I, providing examples of initiatives and good practices that encourage more diversity behind the camera, the challenges and barriers faced by women and underrepresented groups, and the need for more intersectional approaches to D&I off screen.

### 1.4.1. Diversity data collection: methodology and barriers

The participants first discussed the data collection process itself and the related barriers it may face. Data collection was often depicted as a crucial first step to revealing imbalances before any concrete initiatives or actions are put in place. It can be used for all types of grounds for discrimination, but some grounds may be more difficult to measure than others. In addition to imbalances, data collection can also be useful in trying to identify existing or perceived barriers to D&I in the audiovisual sector and beyond.

With regard to the data collection process itself, the discussants identified some common obstacles, such as security and privacy rules. The representative of the Diamond project, for example, shared that, when producing their report, they had to balance the demand for detailed information on specific programmes with the need to respect the security and privacy rules enjoyed by broadcasters.

Another common obstacle encountered concerns the issue of ethnic data collection. In some countries, such as France, the collection of this type of data is allowed only in narrowly-defined cases.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, in other countries, such as the United Kingdom, the collection of ethnic data is in fact quite widespread, even in other areas of life, and considered normal. Some participants also pointed out that in addition to the difficulty of being able to collect such data, diversity can also vary from one country to another, making it more difficult to compare such data at European level. However, some participants emphasised that even where the collection of such data is illegal, certain initiatives can nevertheless be taken that can help to diversify the recruitment process.

Some participants also questioned how inclusion could be measured alongside the diversity component in the composition of the workforce, suggesting that measuring the degree of inclusion could make it possible to address some of the existing problems relating to the measurement of the level of diversity.

### 1.4.2. Sharing off-screen initiatives and best practices

Workshop participants and members of the audience who intervened through the online event’s chat box then shared some examples of initiatives and good practices enhancing

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<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Article 6 of the French Loi n° 78-17 du 6 janvier 1978 relative à l’informatique, aux fichiers et aux libertés, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000886460>.



D&I off screen. Many of them highlighted the fact that a strong commitment was indispensable for making any significant change. Moreover, a tool frequently discussed and appreciated for its effectiveness was the establishment of gender or diversity targets, often as a result of a study or research that highlighted imbalances.

A representative of UNIC, an international trade association representing cinema operators and their national associations in Europe, shared some of their initiatives. For instance, UNIC launched a mentoring scheme in 2017, the “UNIC Women’s Cinema Leadership programme”, which aims at supporting more women coming into the industry by creating a strong network of professionals.<sup>21</sup>

Regarding VOD platforms, a representative of Netflix presented their mentoring programme launched in Spain, where young female directors shadow an experienced director during a full season of a series and are given the opportunity to direct an episode. In addition, Netflix also contributed to the OFCOM Diversity Report and created the Best Practices Guidelines to ensure diversity both in front and behind the camera.<sup>22</sup> Netflix also created a Diversity and Inclusion department<sup>23</sup> in 2018, which aims to ensure inclusiveness and diversity in all aspects of their operations.

On the regulators’ side, the CSA (Belgium) explained that, in addition to its diversity barometer which measures diversity on screen, it has recently conducted extensive research on gender equality off screen<sup>24</sup> by studying the barriers and mechanisms in place in the audiovisual industry and their impact on women’s careers.

Regarding film funds, and with respect to diversity in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, one member of the audience mentioned the initiative “Foot in the Door” by Ffilm Cymru Wales,<sup>25</sup> which aims at finding and creating local opportunities to learn about and transfer valuable skills, as well as useful resources, for people interested in working in the Welsh film industry, regardless of their background, financial means or experience. Another member of the audience gave the example of the Diversity Standards of the British Film Institute,<sup>26</sup> which are a contractual requirement for all BFI funding and an eligibility requirement for certain BAFTA Film Awards categories.

### 1.4.3. Off-screen D&I: Key challenges and recommendations

Some participants shared that despite the initiatives and actions put in place, their research findings showed that progress on the gender equality front has been too slow in recent

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.unic-cinemas.org/industry/mentoring-scheme/?L=0>

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0022/207229/2019-20-report-diversity-equal-opportunities-tv-and-radio.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/207229/2019-20-report-diversity-equal-opportunities-tv-and-radio.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> <https://jobs.netflix.com/inclusion>.

<sup>24</sup> Analysis of gender equality in audiovisual professions and human resources of audiovisual media service providers, CSA (Belgium), 2020, [https://www.csa.be/egalitediversite/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/Egalite-dans-les-metiers-de-laudiovisuel\\_Rapport-FINAL.pdf](https://www.csa.be/egalitediversite/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/Egalite-dans-les-metiers-de-laudiovisuel_Rapport-FINAL.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> <http://ffilmcymruwales.com/funding-and-training/foot-door>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.bfi.org.uk/inclusion-film-industry/bfi-diversity-standards>



years. Some figures from the latest CSA report (Belgium)<sup>27</sup> illustrated the remaining imbalances, showing that in the audiovisual industry of the French-speaking community of Belgium, about 35% of employees are women and 65% are men, with men representing about 90% of the profiles in senior and middle management.

With regard to the issue of racial discrimination, the representatives of the Council of Europe stressed that they had observed a growing trend towards xenophobic rhetoric and hate speech. They highlighted the situation of the Roma population, which is one of the most discriminated against minorities in Europe. If the audiovisual sector is to be part of the solution, the profiles of its workforce need to be diversified to reflect society more accurately. Some members of the audience also wondered whether it might not be better to use the term “underrepresented ethnic groups” when discussing racial discrimination, instead of referring to them as “minorities” or “BAME”, which could give the impression that they are of lesser importance than the “ruling majority”.

Another challenge concerns the issue of media accessibility. This type of inclusion means that more investment is needed in services such as subtitling for the hearing impaired or descriptions for the visually impaired. Indeed, some participants pointed out that the level of media accessibility is not sufficiently balanced in Europe and varies from country to country. This imbalance is even accentuated when it comes to accessibility for minority languages, which in fact represent the majority of languages in Europe.

Some participants and members of the audience suggested that discrimination that may be experienced behind the camera or in terms of media accessibility could also be the result of a lack of horizontal measures supporting D&I, and the lack of a general and collective responsibility that could be provided by law. In general, any change towards D&I off screen would require more radical commitments at different levels of organisation, and across the whole industry, as the status quo is no longer acceptable. In addition, the representative from the International Labour Organization (ILO) pointed out that, in preparation of a future survey, they had conducted some research and found that there was a lot of discussion and commitment in the corporate sector about D&I; however, these discussions and commitments did not necessarily lead to comprehensive action.

#### 1.4.4. A call for intersectional approaches behind the camera

Some participants expressed their willingness to extend their current actions and initiatives to other groups of people, thus addressing diversity in its broadest sense, and called for urgent action to address these issues, denouncing an audiovisual sector that is too uniform and too widely represented by certain groups, in particular white men over 50 years old.

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<sup>27</sup> Analysis of gender equality in the audiovisual professions and human resources of audiovisual media service publishers, CSA (BE), 2020, [https://www.csa.be/egalitediversite/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/Egalite-dans-les-metiers-de-laudiovisuel\\_Rapport-FINAL.pdf](https://www.csa.be/egalitediversite/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/Egalite-dans-les-metiers-de-laudiovisuel_Rapport-FINAL.pdf)



In this line, they mentioned the need to adopt an intersectional approach<sup>28</sup> when dealing with the issues of D&I, thus avoiding any form of hierarchy between the various grounds for discrimination.

Several participants expressed their intention to replicate or extend what they have done for gender equality to include further underrepresented groups. Others, such as a representative of cinemas, called for the creation of synergies between gender equality and diversity, but without losing the work done on the gender equality side, especially the gender equality targets.

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<sup>28</sup> Intersectional approaches derive from the concept of intersectionality, a qualitative analytical framework developed at the end of the 20th century that measures the way in which several forms of discrimination and oppression can combine and cumulate with each other. Intersectional approaches therefore require that all these different factors and grounds of discrimination and the relationships between them be taken into account when promoting social and political equity.





## Session 2 – On-screen diversity and inclusion

The second session of the workshop was chaired by Julio Talavera, Film and Audiovisual Analyst, and introduced by Sophie Valais, Senior Analyst, both from the Department for Legal Information (EAO).

The issue of on-screen representation has been in the spotlight in recent years. The 2015 social media campaign #OscarsSoWhite was the starting point for a constellation of social movement, from #WhiteWashedOUT for Asian representation to Time’s Up for gender parity, intensifying media attention on the film industry’s treatment of historically under- and misrepresented groups. Studios have begun to focus on greater diversity behind and in front of the camera, as for example with Disney’s Marvel Studios’ 2018 film *Black Panther*; even if black characters are slightly overrepresented in both theatrical production<sup>29</sup> and broadcast scripted shows,<sup>30</sup> Asian characters are slightly underrepresented in theatrical but not in broadcast scripted shows, while Native Americans and Hispanics remain clearly underrepresented. Moreover, the figures suggest similar trends for gender and minority representation, such as LGBTQ.<sup>31</sup>

Achieving greater D&I on screen is important because it offers audiences a more accurate portrayal of society itself. In addition, images and narratives have an impact on self-representation and on how we see others. In this line, things have started to change in Europe, with a series of new initiatives to measure and foster on-screen D&I. These may include “professional equality” or “diversity” labels, industry standards, observatories to assess representation, film funds’ action plans, etc.

### 2.1. From gender equality to broader on-screen diversity: the approach of film funds

Anna Serner, CEO of the Swedish Film Fund (SFI),<sup>32</sup> presented the way the Swedish Film Institute is transitioning from having a purely gender equality agenda to a much broader D&I agenda in this field. This section summarises her presentation.

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<sup>29</sup> Hunt, D. and Ramón A.C., 2020. Hollywood Diversity Report 2020. Part 1: Film, UCLA College Social Sciences. <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2020-Film-2-6-2020.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Hunt, D. and Ramón A.C., 2020. Hollywood Diversity Report 2020. Part 2: Television, UCLA College Social Sciences. <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2020-Television-10-22-2020.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> GLAAD, 2020. Studio Responsibility Index, 2020, Glaad Media Institute. <https://www.glaad.org/sites/default/files/GLAAD%202020%20Studio%20Responsibility%20Index.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.filminstitutet.se/en/>.



In 2013, the Swedish Film Institute launched the 50/50 initiative in Sweden, which aimed to allocate production funds equally between men and women within four years.<sup>33</sup> The initiative did not receive much media coverage and attention until 2015, thanks to the interventions of several celebrities who helped raise global awareness of the problem of lack of diversity on the screen.

Until recently, the focus was placed on gender equality only. It is thanks to the #OscarSoWhite event and the work of other organisations that this awareness has also spread to the problem of the structurally racist system that exists within the film industry and around the world. From that moment on, the SFI embarked on a process of self-reflection and began to move towards greater diversity, starting with ethnic diversity.

The SFI is subject to an obligation imposed on it by the government to make gender equality and diversity the flagship of the Swedish film industry. Within the framework of diversity, the SFI has shifted to a more intersectional approach by focusing on different groups. The new mission given to it by the authorities is to ensure a better representation of minority languages in Sweden. Another example of an intersectional approach is the report published in 2020 entitled *Which Women?*,<sup>34</sup> which deals with women of colour and women of a certain age.

Anna Serner then mentioned the EFAD (European Film Agency Directors association) group she is currently chairing,<sup>35</sup> whose work focuses on gender and a broader inclusion group by exchanging experiences between different countries and pushing the MEDIA programme to create a specific programme to help member states understand how they can have a more inclusive industry.

## 2.2. Promoting D&I on air: a comprehensive and long-term strategy

Miranda Wayland, Head of Creative Diversity at the BBC, presented what has been done at the BBC in terms of on-screen diversity. This section summarises her presentation.

The exceptional events of the year 2020, with the pandemic and the killing of George Floyd, have highlighted the need to see a better reflection of the audience in the content broadcast on television, with richer and more authentic stories that are no longer based on stereotypes. In the light of these events, the BBC has undertaken to ensure that its content reflects the diversity of its audience, both on and off the air, using not only visual representation on screen, but also subject matter, storytelling, presenters, and contributors to prove that its output reflects everyone.

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<sup>33</sup> This initiative results from the 2013 Film Agreement. More information available here : <https://www.filminstitutet.se/en/about-us/swedish-film-institute/gender-equality/>.

<sup>34</sup> Which Women? Gender equality report 2019/2020, Swedish Film Institute, 2020, [https://www.filminstitutet.se/globalassets/4.-om-oss/svenska-filminstitutet/bilder-jamstalldhetssidan/jamstalldhetsrapport\\_hemsida\\_pdf\\_s1\\_201119.pdf](https://www.filminstitutet.se/globalassets/4.-om-oss/svenska-filminstitutet/bilder-jamstalldhetssidan/jamstalldhetsrapport_hemsida_pdf_s1_201119.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Gender and Inclusion working group of the European Film Agency Directors association (EFAD): <https://europeanfilmagencies.eu/members-partners/working-groups/gender-inclusion>.



In this line, the BBC has set up the “50:50 The Equality Project”,<sup>36</sup> which looks at gender equality by relying on collecting data to effect change, measure those who are contributing to the BBC’s stories and ensure that those stories are authentic, while never compromising on quality. Within the BBC, more than 600 outlets are now involved in the 50:50 project, ensuring that their content reflects the women’s perspective. As a result, 39% of those who are engaging with the BBC have noticed a shift towards more female representation. The BBC has now expanded the 50:50 project to work with 75 partners in 22 countries.

Overall, the focus on creative diversity at the BBC is to create change through concrete actions and different initiatives aimed at bringing about better representation and inclusion. These initiatives include, *inter alia*:

- Equality in Audio pact: an industry-wide initiative to ensure better representation in the audio sector signed up by BBC Radio & Music;<sup>37</sup>
- BBC Sounds Lab: a new initiative of BBC Radio & Music giving budding audio creators the support they need to turn a great idea of theirs into a podcast outside of the existing commissioning structure;
- The creative Ally Track:<sup>38</sup> a tool designed by the BBC Academy and the USC Institution to help people to be better advocates and allies. The tool takes the principle of the privilege game in an online test, giving people the opportunity to look at some of the advantages and disadvantages that people may face within their organisations, and giving advice on what steps to take to balance things out to create greater inclusion;
- Pan-BBC language guidance for all content sharers: a living document that will serve to support the consistent use and style of language across the organisation.

## 2.3. Assessing the perception of diversity on TV: the CSA Barometer

Géraldine Van Hille, Head of Department for Social Cohesion Missions at CSA (France), presented the CSA Diversity Barometer<sup>39</sup> and the ways in which this tool can help the media to improve their diversity level on screen. This section summarises her presentation, which started by introducing the methodology of the tool, created in 2009, which consists of:

- An analysis of all programmes (excluding commercials) on 18 TV channels, broadcast over a two-week period from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. The study represents more than 1 200 broadcasting hours and 40 000 speaking characters;
- A classification of the speaking characters according to:

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/5050>.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/aboutthebbc/entries/9b801ac9-2289-433c-9fcd-258bfca91927>.

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/creativitydiversity/allyshipapp/#/>.

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.csa.fr/Informer/Collections-du-CSA/Observatoire-de-la-diversite/>.



- quantitative criteria: ethnic origin, gender, profession, disability, age, place of residence, poverty situation;
  - qualitative criteria: status (hero, main character, secondary character), with the possibility of crossing criteria; weighting is applied according to the role, the duration of the programme, and the attitude (positive, negative, neutral);
- A comparison of the results with the French population.

When developing those studies, the CSA faced some issues. One of the biggest issues was the fact that ethnical statistics are forbidden in France - except when the objective is to combat discrimination in a specific sector - which makes it impossible to know the ethnicity level of the French population.

Géraldine Van Hille then shared the main findings of the 2019 Diversity Barometer:<sup>40</sup>

- The ethnicity level on screen<sup>41</sup> remains below 17% and non-white speaking characters are mostly represented as secondary characters;
- People of colour are more likely to have a positive role and are mainly in fiction;
- Women are still underrepresented on TV, especially when cumulating two discrimination criteria, and are more likely to be even more underrepresented when cumulating several discrimination criteria;
- Certain groups barely exist on French TV compared to the general population: 0.7% of disabled people are represented, even though 20% of the French population have some form of disability; 0.8% of people are in a situation of poverty on TV compared to 20% in the French population.

Next on the CSA (France) agenda is a strong collaboration with the media in order to improve these results. Only global results are published (no “naming and shaming”); individual results are also available and are shared with the media outlets concerned. According to their individual results, the TV channels can make concrete commitments and develop specific strategies in order to improve their results for the coming years. These commitments and strategies are discussed and agreed with the CSA.

## 2.4. Discussion

Several participants expressed their commitment to taking a step forward with regard to D&I on screen by sharing their approaches and initiatives taken to this end. They also discussed the benefits of greater on-screen D&I and the remaining key challenges.

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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.csa.fr/Informer/Collections-du-CSA/Observatoire-de-la-diversite/Barometre-de-la-diversite-de-la-societe-francaise-resultats-de-la-vague-2019>.

<sup>41</sup> The level of ethnicity mentioned here has been collected according to the perceived origins of the people appearing on the screen: perceived as 'white', perceived as 'black', perceived as 'Arab', perceived as 'Asian', 'other'. Collecting data on perceived origin is not prohibited under French law, unlike ethnic data.



## 2.4.1. Commitments and initiatives to increase D&I on screen

A representative of a broadcaster explained how they have begun to reject casting lists that are not diverse, to ensure that their sets are open to actors with disabilities, and to set diversity targets that they then make public. RTVE, for instance, has also launched a specific guide on how to use language in a non-sexist way and how to incorporate a gender perspective in the production of TV content.

On the regulators' side, a representative of BAI (Ireland) outlined some of the initiatives it has put in place, such as "Women stories",<sup>42</sup> where the idea is to broaden the perspectives of programmes to include more women; and "New Generation",<sup>43</sup> an ongoing cross-border multi-stakeholder partnership with Northern Ireland aimed at training young professionals, on and off-screen, in writing, directing, and acting in the Irish language.

In the advertising sector, in addition to the codes that prohibit discriminatory advertising, some stakeholders are actively defending a progressive and diversified representation of society in advertising and commercial communication. Several brands such as Gillette, Microsoft and L'Oréal have run more inclusive advertising campaigns on transgender, disability, and age issues – for example, Gillette's "First Shave" advert in which transgender teen and trans rights advocate Samson Brown shaves for the first time with his father and reflects on his transition.<sup>44</sup>

Some participants mentioned interesting technology-driven initiatives, specifically using AI technology. In the United States, the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media teamed up with Google's machine learning engineers to develop a software that accurately measures women's visual representation and speaking time on screen.<sup>45</sup> In France, the INA also used similar technology in 2018 on French content covering a period of 20 years, and showed that women are still largely underrepresented (women's speaking time on radio and television accounts for around 30% of the total speaking time), with imbalances having remained stable over the last 20 years.<sup>46</sup>

On the institutional side, the European Commission is committed to improving gender balance in representation and inclusion both behind and in front of the camera by discussing how to introduce a horizontal criterion in the next MEDIA programme that would require a minimum effort from applicants regarding gender balance and diversity. Being more inclusive with all talents and improving equal access to finance, visibility and equal participation will help European societies transform as well as benefit creation with a richer diversity of content and forms of narratives.

Concerning public funding at national level, some members of the audience shared a recent Canadian report on gender parity and the representation of diversity in publicly

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.bai.ie/en/bai-focuses-on-womens-stories-under-sound-vision-scheme/>.

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.bai.ie/en/gluin-nua-supports-emerging-directors-and-writers-to-create-short-form-content-in-the-irish-language/>.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/28/gillette-ad-shaving-transgender-son-samson-bonkeabanut-brown>.

<sup>45</sup> [https://about.google/intl/en\\_us/main/gender-equality-films/](https://about.google/intl/en_us/main/gender-equality-films/).

<sup>46</sup> <https://larevedesmedias.ina.fr/la-radio-et-la-tele-les-femmes-parlent-deux-fois-moins-que-les-hommes>.



funded audiovisual projects.<sup>47</sup> Others also stressed the need for the government to advocate for such issues and mandate film funds to prioritise social justice issues.

## 2.4.2. Benefits of more on-screen D&I

Several participants stressed the benefits of having greater D&I on screen, particularly in terms of contributing to better creativity and content quality. A representative of a film fund, for example, pointed out that not considering the whole range of talent by being discriminatory hinders the achievement of the best quality and creativity, as creativity is the result of bringing together different voices and perspectives.

In the same line, a representative from the advertising industry stressed that D&I are good for business, not only in terms of consumer loyalty and brand image, but also in terms of advertising effectiveness, as they have found that progressive and non-stereotyped ads tend to be 25% more effective and attain a 18% higher purchase intent.<sup>48</sup>

## 2.4.3. On-screen D&I: key challenges and recommendations

After sharing best practices, participants discussed the remaining challenges and made some recommendations. A representative of the advertising industry observed that there is still work to be done in their sector, giving the example of some advertisements that have received complaints from consumers due to negative portrayals of immigration and ethnicity. On the other hand, complaints were also received against more positive ads featuring, for instance, a homosexual couple, but they were rejected as those ads are not in contradiction with the values that are enshrined in self-regulatory codes.

A representative of a broadcaster underlined the link between the on- and off-screen angles by giving the example of the fact that there are not many people with disabilities in the acting world, which is a throwback to the fact that there are not enough roles for people with disabilities on television. Moreover, some mentioned the lack of comparative data on D&I, and the lack of a common approach at European level at present.

Some media experts noted the urgency of putting in place effective and harmonised technological measurement tools – praising the use of AI tools – to address the current barriers to data collection, stressing that the objectivity of comprehensive data can put pressure on leaders and organisations and make them more accountable.

As in session 1, some participants recommended that the adoption of intersectional approaches<sup>49</sup> be the preferred strategy to address the causes of both gender equality and

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<sup>47</sup> Women in View On Screen report 2019, <http://womeninview.ca/wp-content/uploads/WIVOS19-Full-Report.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> UNILEVER, <https://www.unilever.com/sustainable-living/enhancing-livelihoods/opportunities-for-women/advancing-diversity-and-inclusion/>.

<sup>49</sup> See the definition of intersectional approaches in Session, under 1.4.4 “A call for intersectional approaches behind the camera”.



diversity. A regulator’s representative shared their experience on how to adopt an intersectional approach during the data collection process by crossing characteristics which can help to show not only whether different groups are represented on TV, but also how they are represented. Others also noted that successful programmes or initiatives already in place to support gender equality could be replicated and serve as a template for other D&I objectives in a broader sense. In addition, key industry players have been encouraged to focus more on multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration on these issues. However, some participants expressed their concern that the cause of gender equality in the media might be replaced by diversity measures, and recalled that in terms of on-screen representation, women should be the priority as they constitute about half of the population. In this regard, some participants mentioned the latest Nordicom study which predicted that it would take 70 years to achieve gender parity in the news if things kept evolving at the current pace.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> <https://www.nordicom.gu.se/en/latest/news/news-media-wont-reach-gender-equality-another-70-years>



## Closing of the workshop

Maja Cappello, Head of the Department for Legal Information (EAO), thanked the participants and the audience for their detailed presentations and stimulating discussions. She concluded the workshop by highlighting the three key points that were discussed during the two sessions:

### The link between on screen and off screen

The two-fold approach of the workshop, covering both the on-screen and off-screen aspects related to diversity and inclusion in the audiovisual sector, showed very clearly how the speed of ongoing developments is influenced by driving forces, be it legislation or industry initiatives.

The relatively large amount of regulation developed in the field of the working environment over several decades has certainly contributed to pushing the process forward when it comes to off-screen issues such as access to the labour market or working conditions. Nevertheless, differences in wages and access to top positions are still quite common, especially when considering gaps between men and women: the “white man over fifty” still tends to be the winner taking it all.

On-screen representation is an area where a lot of good work has been done in more recent years, with initiatives being drawn from the media sector itself. What is more complex is how to measure the progress made in this area, as representation often depends on perception, and stereotyped portrayals can be harder to fight than quantitative pay-gaps.

What has emerged is the very strong link between the progress made on the off-screen side and its reflection on-screen representation.

### The complexity that can arise in collecting data on diversity

A common point raised during the discussion was the lack of harmonisation of data categories and collection methodology. This directly reflects the difficulty in gathering meaningful datasets for comparison across different countries, making the whole assessment process very complex.

Countries with a leading experience in data collection act as forerunners for the definition of methodologies, which at the same time are not always fit for the environment they are exported to. The combination of the different compositions of societies (as also resulting from different historical backgrounds and immigration policies) and often diverging legislation with regard to datasets that may be legitimately collected, makes every country tell its own story.





It was possible to conclude that there is plenty of room for improvement when it comes to harmonising the ways data are collected, assembled and analysed, with the goal of achieving a unified methodology across Europe.

## The need for intersectional approaches

Historically, discussions on diversity and inclusion have always started with the equality gap between men and women. Over time, the picture has become more nuanced, and it has been enriched with further categories, raising the new question of how to deal with the so-called intersections, the areas where minorities or underrepresented groups meet each other.

This more refined type of action is still in its early days. What seems to be a challenge in this context is how to avoid the progress made in certain sectors, such as gender equality, being overshadowed by the work to include in the conversation the categories which so far have been less explored, such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, and disabilities.

In short, it could be said that diversity and inclusion go hand in glove, with the former being the goal, while the latter is the action to achieve it.

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