



**DYNAMIC STUDY ON  
EUROPEAN FEMALE  
FILMMAKERS**  
Summary & key figures - 2018

With the support of



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**Within the French context, with the organization of the convention about Women-Men equality in the cinema industry**, organizes by the Collective 5050, Le Deuxième Regard, the Ministry of Culture and the CNC, the Lab Femmes de Cinéma publishes the update of its yearly study on the position of female filmmakers in the European cinema industry.

The Lab Femmes de Cinéma has updated and enriched the yearly study initiated by Les Arcs Film Festival in 2016 on the position of female filmmakers in the European cinema industry, and the policies implemented in their favor in the different countries.

Based on data from 1462 films produced and directed in 30 countries, from Portugal to Russia and from Norway to Italy, this study tackles the position of female directors. The average current share of female directors in Europe is 21,7%, which means that a little more than one filmmaker out of five is a woman.

We're interested in the progression of this proportion over the last six years, comparing generations (first, second, third...films directed within a career), to focus on what's happened recently, without the numbers being biased by a current state of affairs.

We're also looking to understand when the share of women in that profession "drops": by comparing the share of women directing short films (with less financing difficulties) and the share of women directing feature films (relying more on third parties financiers). Then, we compare the number of women who "made a career" in that field to men who did.

The conclusion we can draw from these figures, noting that, in proportion, there are more women beginning their career than established female directors, is that the cinema production line gives fewer opportunities to women than men.

Finally, we're interested in the trust given to female directors, by comparing the film budgets granted to men and the budgets granted to women<sup>1</sup>.

To dissect the results, we take an interest in the share of women documentary directors (smaller budgets), feature (bigger budgets) and animation<sup>2</sup>.

The study compares the data from each country, to observe the existence of cultural and/or political differences.

The last part of the study is qualitative and looks at what's been implemented in the different countries to offer an overall view of the initiatives and to analyze which policies are the most effective.

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<sup>1</sup> Let's note that the budget data has been collected from the film production industry of 5 countries, which are all "good students" in terms of their proportion of female directors: Wallonia-Belgium, Finland, Netherlands, Denmark and Austria.

<sup>2</sup> We decide to tell the difference between documentary, fiction, and animation (which also includes documentaries and fictions)

## KEY FIGURES OF THE STUDY

### PROPORTION OF FEMALE DIRECTORS

In 2017, the proportion of female directors among the total number of directors was **21,7%**. In comparison, in 2016, it was **21,4%**. **It's a true progression and it's been the best proportion since 2012.** Yet, this progression isn't the indicator of a clear trend.

**In 2017, Finland** is the best-ranked country with **43,4% of its films directed by women**, followed by Slovakia (41,7%), the Netherlands (38,7%), Austria, Denmark and Sweden. Since the beginning of our study, it's been the first time we notice a country, here Finland, reaching what could be called an "almost equality". However, as it isn't a country producing many films (38 in 2017), these proportions can change from one year to another. This observation is even more relevant for Slovakia (12 films in 2017).

**Sweden** remains, in the long-term (from 2012 to 2017), **the first country (30,9%)**, followed by the Netherlands (30,4%) and Austria (29,2%). Then come Norway, Germany, Finland and Denmark. These figures are more representative of what we call the "good students", countries where there are strong policies and a more established culture towards equality.

In 2017, countries where the share of films directed by women are the weakest are **Slovenia** (0% of the 12 films produced), **Turkey** (8,1% of the 118 films produced), **Romania** (8,7% / 23 films), **Spain** (10% / 75 films), **Italy** (10,4% / 103 films) and **the UK** (13,7% / 106 films).

In the long-term (2012-2017), **Latvia (9,3%), Turkey (10%), Italy (10,1%) and the UK (12,1%)** are the countries with the weakest proportion of films directed by women. Data about Latvia should be analyzed carefully as it's a country with a very small film production (27 films over the period in Latvia, compared to 600 in Turkey, the United-Kingdom and Italy).

**Furthermore, it appears that over the last six years, women have never represented more than a third of film directors.**

**Regarding the main trends, we can notice a strong difference between the Northern and Southern European countries, which can be appointed to the proactive policies implemented in most Northern countries, contrary to the Southern countries, as well as to generalized cultural phenomenon, and to draw conclusion on the importance of the latter.**

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS

In 2017, the share of women having directed **a first or a second feature film is of 25.4%**, whereas this number drops down to 17,8% for female filmmakers having directed their third film or more.

**We can conclude that female filmmakers from young generations are proportionally more than their elders, that it forms a real trend, though we're still far from a real parity.**

## DOCUMENTARY / FICTION

**30,8%** of documentary directors are women, **18,7%** of fiction directors and **15,4%** of animation directors.

**Women are proportionally more present in documentaries:** indeed, in 5 countries (Denmark, Ireland, Portugal, Czech Republic and the Netherlands), more than half of the documentaries released in 2017 were directed by women.

## BUDGET

The average budget of the films studied is 3,06 M€, **3,75 M€ for a male director** and **1,8 M€ for a female director**<sup>3</sup>. The budgets granted to male directors represent twice the budgets granted to female directors.

## GOING FROM SHORT TO FEATURE

In 2017, **33,8% of the short films listed were directed by women** (weighted average): more than one out of three. Which is way superior to the percentage of feature films directed by women that same year (21,6% for the 17 countries concerned - weighted average). In 8 countries, women represent more than 40% of short film directors. In the Netherlands and Czech Republic, they even represent more than half of them.

**We can imagine that there are as many women as men who would like to direct films, but it can't be proved statistically. Nevertheless, in concrete terms, in**

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that the average budget has been calculated from the film production of 5 countries, which are all good students in terms of female directors : Wallonia-Belgium, Finland, Netherlands, Denmark and Austria.

average, women direct a third of European short films. If there weren't any problem, this proportion should logically persist in feature film. The fact that this average drops down to 21,6% for a first feature shows an inequality of opportunities from the beginning of a career, and all the more when the financial stakes are higher.

## CAREER LENGTH

Among all the directors having directed a first feature, **68,5% of men and 61,7% of women have directed a second one**. From second to third, 73,6% of men go on with their career, where 63,6% of women do. Finally, among them, 79,2% of men direct a fourth feature whereas 67,7% of women do.

Moreover, women wait more between two films. Globally, in 2017, for active **male directors** having directed at least four films in their careers, **10 years and a half** went by between their first and fourth film.

For active **female directors** having directed at least 4 films, **11 years and 11 months** went by between their first and their fourth film. **Which translates into a 1 year and 5 months gap between men and women** between their first and their fourth film.

## A RECOGNIZED INEQUALITY OF TREATMENT

These last statistics clearly show that the higher the financial and commercial stakes, the less space women have, which demonstrate a clear inequality of treatment, knowing that it rarely is a career choice to only make short films, not many features or small budget films, but opportunities given, or not, to a male/female director by the film financing and production system.

## WHAT ABOUT FRANCE?

Between 2012 and 2017, France, the biggest film producer in Europe, is in the first third of the European average with **24,2% of films directed by women**. After two years of decrease (with about 20% in 2015 and 2016), let's note that the proportion increased again in 2017 (25,4%), which is closer to the 2013-2014 period (about 26%). The country seems to be in transition, with 30,4% female directors among the directors of first and second features in 2017.

Regarding **budgets**, men's productions are **90% higher** than women's (5,36 M€ for male directors, 2,84 M€ for female directors).

## A FEW POLICIES TO BEAR IN MIND (qualitative study)

**Sweden** is the **leading country**, by implementing one of **the most proactive and diversified policies**. With the proportion of films directed by women increasing from 16,7% in 2012 to 36,1% in 2017, Sweden is a model for other European countries and proves that regulating policies (parities, quotas) are the most effective. Sweden is closely followed by Norway.

Around them, the good students are divided between countries with good results but a **late awareness** (French-speaking and German-speaking Europe); **countries with slow and sustainable changes** where female filmmakers are increasing and, in parallel, very represented among the former generations (Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria, Ireland); **and the countries in stagnation** (Finland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary).

Let's notice that if diverse policies are implemented in the West, **several countries of the East have yet to implement measures, on an institutional level, in favor of women directors**. Thus, even if the proportions of female directors tend to increase due to the arrival of a bigger number of women in the profession, their progression remains limited.

**On the contrary, we notice that some Southern countries (Spain, Portugal, Italy) or the United Kingdom**, which tend to have low proportions of female filmmakers, **have recently implemented diverse and intense policies**, displaying a real will to change.

The **policies of information and sensitization are the most numerous, compared to encouragement policies** (financial support) **or restrictive policies** (with numbered goals defined in advance). Collectively lead by film institutes and nonprofit initiatives, they are present in the great majority of countries and are witnessed through the yearly publication of gendered assessments.

Some countries want to go further by also implementing progressive policies, such as **encouragement policies**, including mentoring programs, networking, and **hierarchization policies**, which invite to favor the funding applications from female filmmakers, if there is no difference in quality (Belgian "soft quotas" – implementation of motivational scales in Spain, Portugal, and Italy).

**The parity requirement in committees**, in charge of examining the applications and dividing the financial helps, among other things, **is a measure that involves almost a third of the studied countries** (Spain, Poland, France, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal).

## ABOUT THE FEMMES DE CINEMA LAB

**The Lab Femmes de Cinéma, a unique place of reflection and creation on the position of women in the European cinema Industry.**

Created in 2017, The **Lab Femmes de Cinéma** is a place of meetings and discussions where women and men representing the whole cinema industry, rallying around the challenge that is the position of women in the European cinema industry.

Its ambition is to make ideas emerged, to suggest actions and stimulate experimentations, in order to instigate change.

The Lab Femmes de Cinéma updates every year its study, initiated by *Les Arcs Film festival* on the position of the new generation of female filmmakers in the European cinema landscape, and organizes every year six workshops and two master classes.

*The Sisley Foundation* is the founding sponsor of the **Lab Femmes de Cinéma**, *ELLE magazine* and *Le Deuxième Regard* are its sponsors.

[www.femmesdecinema.org](http://www.femmesdecinema.org)