LE LAB
FEMMES DE CINEMA

10 YEARS OF POLICIES FOR GENDER PARITY IN EUROPEAN CINEMA: FUNDING, SAFEGUARDING, TRANSFORMING

2026 REPORT

IN COLLABORATION WITH

Observatoire européen de l'audiovisuel

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

EFAD European Film Agencies

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LES ARCS FILM FESTIVAL

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The complete study is available on https://femmesdecinema.org/en

ABOUT LE LAB FEMMES DE CINÉMA

Le Lab Femmes de Cinéma is a think tank working on parity and diversity in the film and audiovisual industries.

Every year, Le Lab Femmes de Cinéma updates its study on measures to promote parity in the film industry in Europe, organises workshops, masterclasses and podcasts.

Our partners are the Fondation Sisley d'Ornano, STUDIOCANAL, the French Ministry of Culture, the CNC and Eurimages.

The 2026 study was carried out by **Joyce Dardanne,** with the collaboration of **Anaïs Manka**, on behalf of the association **Révélations Culturelles**, under the direction of **Fabienne Silvestre** and **Guillaume Calop**.

This study is intended to be disseminated as widely as possible, so please feel free to pass it on, use it and reproduce its data. Please quote your source (Lab Femmes de Cinéma study) and let us know by writing to contact@femmesdecinema.org

THE LAB'S EDITORIAL

"In ten years, Europe has learnt to count the women in cinema.

It must now learn to share power.

We won't wait until 2062."

Ten years ago, virtually no country had figures to objectively demonstrate the glaring under-representation of women and the imbalances at work in European cinema. Ten years ago, the #MeToo movement was set to bring about lasting change in the fight against sexist and sexual violence and harassment in the film industry. Ten years ago, few institutions regarded gender equality as a major cultural issue. **Ten years on, the anniversary study by le Lab Femmes de Cinéma takes stock.**

Since 2016, most European countries have been tracking the number of women working in film, and an increasing number have adopted measures to promote their involvement. However, **progress has plateaued at around one in four films directed by a woman**, and the gains remain fragile: some countries are backtracking, and measures are being slowed down or even halted depending on the political climate. The figures force us to be uncompromisingly realistic: at the average rate of the past decade, **we would have to wait until 2062 to achieve gender parity in European cinema**. That is more than thirty-five years. For the Lab and for all the professionals fighting on the ground, this timeframe is quite simply unacceptable.

Ten years of European experience tell us one simple thing: **the figures will only change if we change the rules.** The coming decade must be one of structural transformation: one that takes action on budgets, careers, decision-making bodies and power dynamics. At the conclusion of this anniversary study, the Lab Femmes de Cinéma affirms **five convictions**:

1. **Counting is no longer enough**. Data collection was the essential first step towards moving beyond denial. But measuring a problem has never been enough to solve it. We must move beyond declarations of intent and take action.

2. **Money is the lifeblood of the industry, and without financial leverage, nothing changes**. Quotas, bonuses and/or penalties, and various financial incentives are the most powerful drivers of gender parity. Two-thirds of organisations recognise this as crucial, yet barely more than a third actually use it. Why? Public money is not neutral: it must stop funding the automatic perpetuation of the status quo.
3. **A virtuous circle is within our grasp; let's seize this opportunity**: when women hold key positions, teams become more gender-balanced at all levels. Teams with greater gender parity are teams where violence is on the decline. And where violence is on the decline, women stay, progress and, in turn, rise to key positions.
4. **Women represent a largely untapped reservoir of creativity.** On what grounds are we depriving ourselves of all these untold stories? Why are we allowing the young female directors we have trained to give up the profession? Even more alarming: in a complete reversal, measures promoting equality – which are a source of renewed creativity – are now sometimes presented as obstacles to creative freedom, as a way of justifying their non-adoption. Why are our industries turning their backs on diversity? Our conviction is stronger than ever: equality has never restricted art; it broadens and enlivens it.
5. **In the face of political headwinds, it is essential that we stay the course and redouble our efforts, together.** For decades, we have been raising our voices. They have carried more weight in recent years but are still too often tolerated rather than listened to. **To be truly heard, we must build lasting coalitions between organisations, the research community and public authorities, at both national and European level.**

These convictions underpin our recommendations: public funding as a lever, the law as a bulwark, the fight against violence as a prerequisite, Europe as a guarantor, and the entire sector as a conduit, from film sets to the screen.

For the past ten years, the Lab Femmes de Cinéma has been working to document public policies in order to raise awareness and equip decision-makers. We are delighted to see that this study has become a benchmark praised by European film

institutes and a point of reference in academic circles, which have directly informed this tenth edition. True to its role as a *think tank*, the Lab reaffirms its commitment: to continue analysing public policies, to facilitate this essential dialogue between public authorities, researchers and industry professionals, and to champion the diversity of narratives on screen. Equality in cinema is not a concession: it is the sine qua non for the vitality and renewal of European creativity. We will stay the course, and we will not wait until 2062.

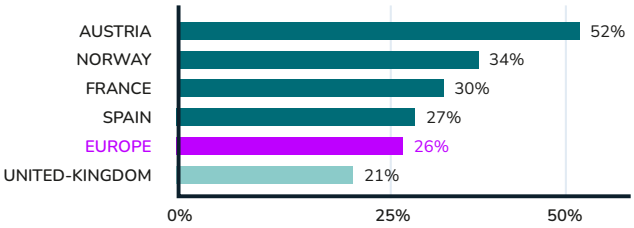
KEY FINDINGS

THE PLACE OF WOMEN DIRECTOR IN EUROPEAN CINEMA

DATA PROVIDED BY THE EUROPEAN AUDIOVISUAL

2025 : THE FIRST COUNTRY TO REACH PARITY

PROPORTION OF FILMS DIRECTED BY WOMEN BY COUNTRY IN 2025



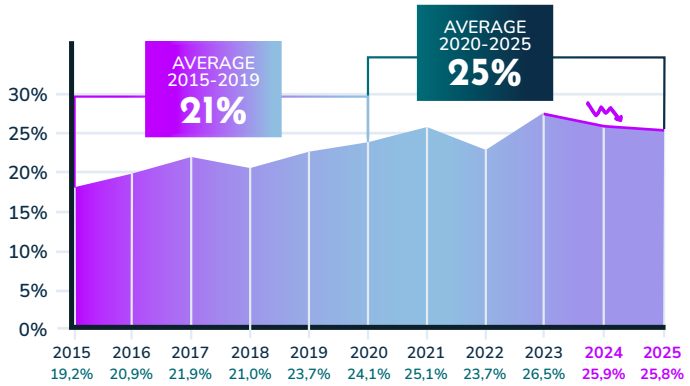
Selection of countries corresponding to those featured in a dedicated focus on their gender parity policies.

In 2025, the share of films directed by women stands at **26% on average across Europe. For the very first time, one country exceeds the 50% threshold**: Austria. Overall, strong year-to-year fluctuations can be observed. An analysis based on a multi-year average is therefore preferred here.

SLOW AND FRAGILE PROGRESS

TRENDS IN THE PROPORTION OF FILMS DIRECTED BY WOMEN* IN EUROPE 2015-2025

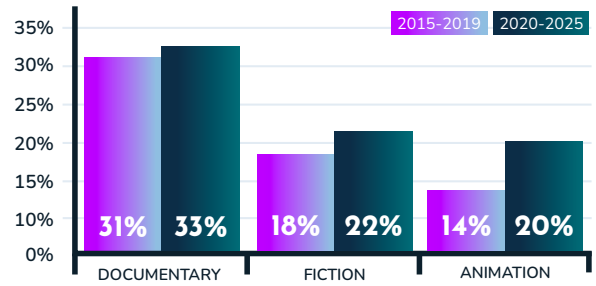
*including co-productions with at least one female director



There has been real progress in the share of films directed by women in Europe on average: **it rose from 19.2% in 2015 to 25.8% in 2025** (+6.6 pts). However, this progress is **not linear**: although a peak of 26.5% was reached in 2023, some years saw declines (2018, 2022, 2024 and 2025). Thus, 2025 shows a drop for the second consecutive year, a first since 2015, a sign that **a glass ceiling seems to be setting in. At the pace observed since 2015, parity would be reached in... 2062!**

WOMEN DIRECTORS BETTER REPRESENTED IN DOCUMENTARY

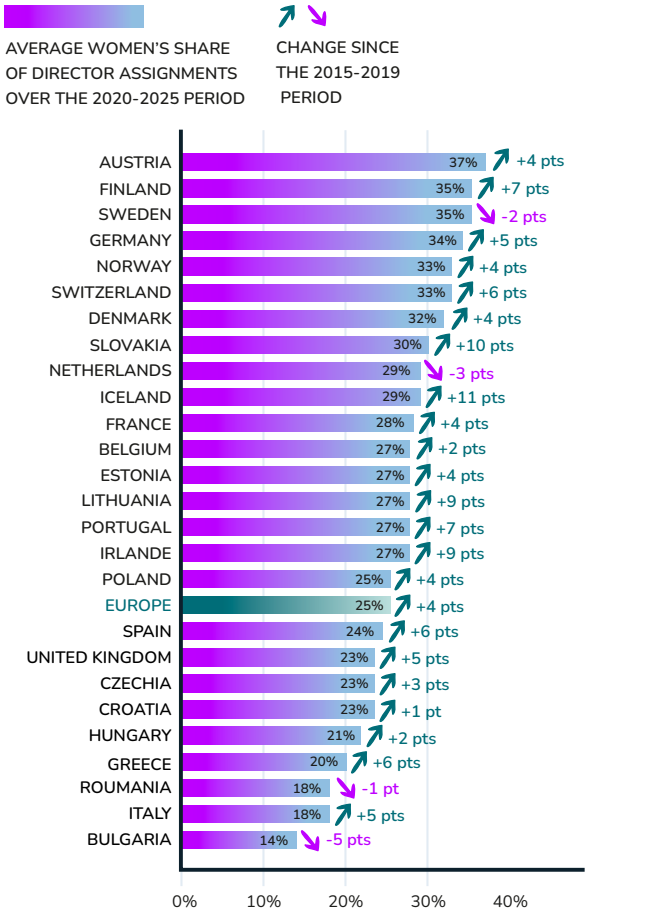
TRENDS IN THE PROPORTION OF WOMEN DIRECTORS IN EUROPE BY FILM GENRE



Between 2015 and 2025, **the share of active women directors increased across all types of films in Europe**. Women directors remain proportionally **more present in documentary**, where the average budget per film is lower than in fiction and animation. For the first time, however, we note that animation, where the percentage of women directors has long been particularly low, now has a share of women directors close to that of fiction.

2020 - 2025 : A MULTI-SPEED EUROPE

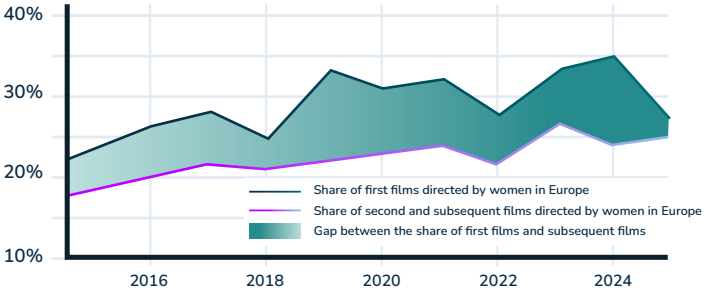
TRENDS IN THE AVERAGE PROPORTION OF FILMS DIRECTED BY WOMEN BY COUNTRY



Comparing the average share of films directed by women over 2015-2019 with 2020-2025, the vast **majority of European countries saw an increase** (shown here in green), while some countries saw a decline (Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden). The top 5 countries over the 2020-2025 period are: Austria, Finland, Sweden, Germany and Norway.

A GRADUAL DECLINE IN THE PRESENCE OF WOMEN DIRECTORS AS CAREERS PROGRESS

TRENDS IN THE PROPORTION OF FILMS BY WOMEN IN EUROPE FROM FIRST FILMS TO SUBSEQUENT FILMS



Women, who make up on average 50% of film school students (Le Lab, 2019), appear to be gradually driven out of the industry. **The share of first films directed by women in Europe averages 29% over the 2015-2025 period, dropping to 23% for second and subsequent films.** Alarming signal: the share of first films directed by women has never exceeded 35% and is declining again in 2025, to the point of approaching the share of second and subsequent films directed by women, which has historically been lower.

PUBLIC POLICIES FOR GENDER PARITY IN EUROPEAN CINEMA

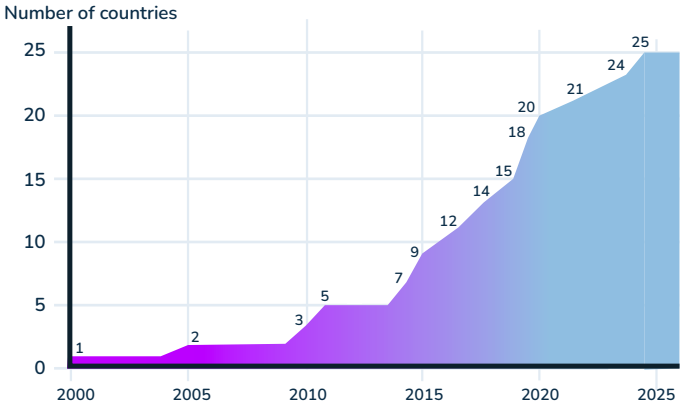
SOURCE: LE LAB FEMMES DE CINÉMA 2026 DATA

METHODOLOGY:

- QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO NATIONAL FILM INSTITUTES: 33 COUNTRIES RESPONDED IN 2026.
- INTERVIEWS WITH 7 EUROPEAN RESEARCHERS.
- INTERVIEWS WITH 5 NATIONAL FILM INSTITUTES.

A GROWING NUMBER OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IMPLEMENTING MEASURES

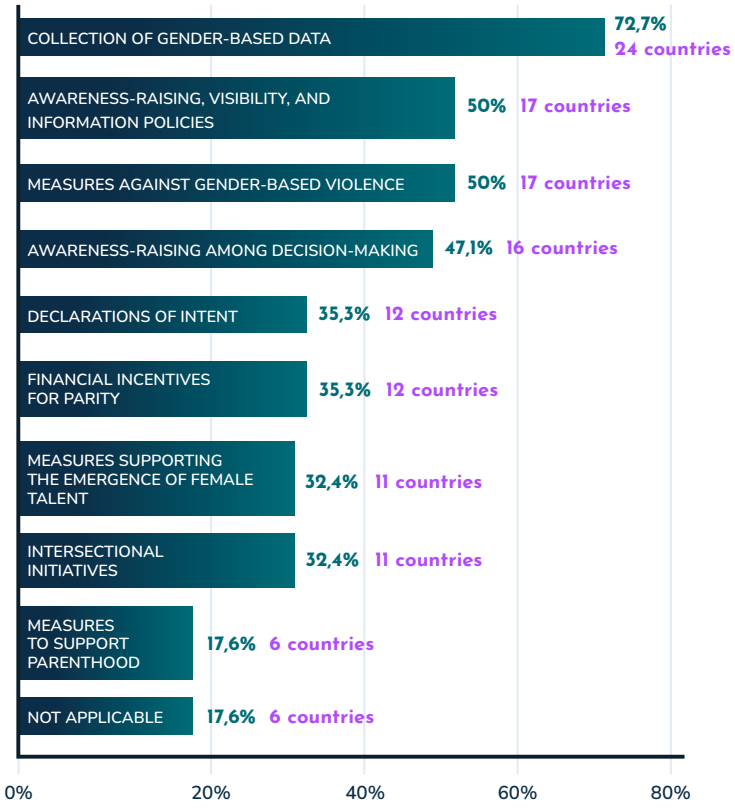
YEAR IN WHICH EUROPEAN COUNTRIES LAUNCHED A GENDER PARITY POLICY



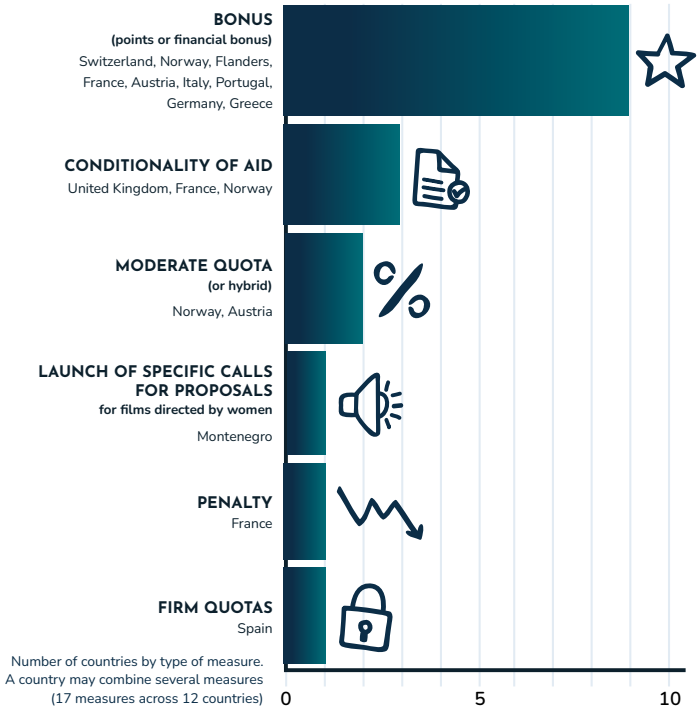
In 2026, the majority of responding European countries are committed, to varying degrees, to gender parity in cinema. This ranges from statements of intent to the adoption of concrete measures. When asked to define the stage their parity policy has reached in 2026, nearly 60% of the 33 responding countries (19) describe themselves as being on a positive trajectory (implementation, strengthening or diversification of measures, mature policy). However, nearly 40% of the countries (13) that responded to our survey have yet to put any concrete measure in place («No policy planned or in place to date» or «Intention stated, but no measures adopted yet»).

THE RANGE OF MEASURES ADOPTED TO PROMOTE GENDER PARITY

X% Share of countries that have implemented this type of measure
X countries Number of countries that have implemented this type of measure



SPOTLIGHT ON FINANCIAL LEVERS



Countries that have implemented a financial lever overwhelmingly favor incentive-based measures: bonuses, in the form of points or financial bonuses, are by far the most widespread (9 countries). One country (Montenegro) stands out with a more targeted mechanism: the launch of specific calls for proposals for women directors. More restrictive measures remain rare: conditionality of aid applies to 3 countries, moderate or hybrid quotas to 2, and the penalty (France) and firm quotas (Spain) are each applied by only one country.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES AS SEEN BY EUROPEAN FILM INSTITUTES

22 countries

MANY BELIEVE IN IT

22 out of 33 countries (67%) cite financial incentives as an essential lever for achieving parity.

12 countries

TOO FEW DO IT

Only 12 countries (one third) have put them in place.

7 countries

THOSE WHO DO ARE WON OVER

Nearly 60% of the countries that have implemented them (7 out of 12) consider them the most effective

While two thirds of responding countries identify financial incentives as key levers, it is worth noting that **only slightly more than a third report having implemented them**. All the researchers we met also identified the financial lever as the essential ingredient for generating concrete results. The responding national film institutes confirmed this: nearly 60% of the countries that have implemented it cite it as the most effective measure.

10 YEARS, 10 KEY FINDINGS

For its anniversary edition, the Lab's study brings together the perspectives of various institutes and researchers to take stock of ten years of public policies promoting gender parity in European cinema. It highlights the dynamics at play, the conditions for success and the obstacles that still need to be overcome.

1. Progress is being made, but it remains slow and uneven: at this rate, gender parity will be achieved in… 2062!

Over the past ten years, the proportion of films directed by women in Europe has risen, from 19.2% in 2015 to 25.8% in 2025 (+6.6 percentage points), but this trend is far from linear and varies considerably from country to country. After peaking at 26.5% in 2023, the proportion of films directed by women fell slightly in 2024 and 2025, before stabilising at around 26%. This stagnation at European level and the slow progress in certain countries call for a review of the development and implementation of policies to accelerate change.

2. Europe is moving at different speeds in terms of public policy

The commitment to gender parity has become widespread across Europe, but countries are at very different stages of maturity. In 2026, 19 countries (out of 33 respondents, or 58%) reported being engaged in a positive trajectory (launching, strengthening or maturing measures), whilst 13 countries (nearly 40% of respondents) have not yet adopted any measures or are still only at the intention stage. Some even report a phase of stagnation or regression, which should be alarming. In any case, the decisive role played by European film institutes in driving change within the industry is confirmed.

3. To bring about change, figures are necessary but not sufficient

Statistical studies are the primary catalyst for public policy cited by the institutes and the most commonly adopted measure (24 countries). Collecting data makes inequalities visible, documents trends and enables the development of evidence-based policies. But data collection is only a starting point: it must be accompanied by concrete measures capable of bringing about change. It should be noted that nearly 30% of countries still lack statistical studies on gender

inequalities, and certain essential data – notably on budget and pay gaps, the proportion of women in teams, and qualitative data on women's experiences – remain largely insufficient.

4. Money: the lifeblood of the fight for gender parity

Quotas, bonuses and/or maluses, earmarked funds, conditionality of aid: financial mechanisms play a central role in the policies that have proved most effective. Experience in Europe shows that they can bring about tangible changes in behaviour when they are sufficiently well-structured and maintained over time. Two-thirds of countries regard them as a key lever, but only one-third have put them in place.

5. Strong and sustained political will is the condition for success

Public policies cannot produce lasting effects without strong and consistent political will. Research organisations identify the commitment of public authorities as one of the main levers for change; conversely, a lack of political commitment is among the primary obstacles encountered. European experiences also show that progress and measures can quickly be reversed when political priorities change.

6. There is no silver bullet: it is the combination of several key principles that brings about change

An analysis of the last ten years shows that the most successful initiatives combine several levers: data, funding, career support, combating violence and discrimination, raising awareness, diversifying decision-making bodies, etc. The issue is therefore not to find 'the right measure', but to build a coherent system of measures that reinforce one another, that hold the sector to account, and that are evaluated so they can be adjusted.

7. Beyond the figures: the necessary transformation of the distribution of power

Gender parity cannot be reduced to a mere question of representation. The increase in the number of women in key positions is a key indicator, but it does not in itself guarantee structural change. Ten countries consider that their measures improve statistical representation without sufficiently altering the balance of power, whilst twelve note that progress remains concentrated in certain professions or levels of

responsibility. The next step, therefore, is to examine who makes the decisions, who controls the resources, who puts together the teams and who gains access to the best-funded productions.

8. Equality must be considered for the entire length of the individual's careers and in all their diversity

The challenge is not merely to bring more women into the film industry, but to enable them to remain there, to progress and to reach positions of responsibility. Policies must take greater account of career paths, emerging talent, parenthood, working conditions and the various forms of discrimination that can occur simultaneously. A truly inclusive policy cannot, therefore, treat 'women' as a homogeneous group.

9. Diversifying teams promotes equity and contributes to greater creativity

The diversity of those who make films contributes to the diversity of the stories told. Encouraging women to take up key roles also means encouraging their participation in a wide range of film professions. A film is a collective endeavour, and the transformation of the sector depends on diversifying all the teams involved in its creation. The challenge is therefore twofold: to open more roles and areas of responsibility to women, and to use this diversity as a catalyst for renewal in filmmaking.

10. The coming decade must be one of cooperation and perseverance

Ten years of public policy have shown that results take time, that they can be fragile, and that they must be regularly assessed and adjusted. One of the main limitations identified by the funding bodies is that their policies only apply to the films they fund, and the engagement of professionals is seen as the primary driver for an effective policy: sustainable change therefore relies on cooperation between public authorities, funding bodies, professionals, researchers, associations, schools, broadcasters and festivals. Gender parity is built collectively and must be defended over the long term.

All these lessons are interlinked and serve to support the success of public policies promoting gender equality.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Ten years of public policy show that gender parity progresses when it is championed at all levels: by the funding bodies, by the governments that set the framework, by the European Union that encourages and harmonises, and by all the professionals who produce, distribute and teach cinema.

In light of the findings of this study, le Lab Femmes de Cinéma makes the following recommendations:

1. To national film institutes

- **Use public funding as a lever for gender parity.** Two-thirds of film councils consider financial incentives to be crucial, but only one-third have actually implemented them. Every institute that awards grants should adopt at least one mechanism linked to gender parity (bonuses, earmarked funding, allocation targets, conditionality), without ruling out the imposition of requirements where incentives reach their limit.
- **Assess compliance with and the effectiveness of measures and adapt those that are not working.** Each measure should be accompanied by public indicators and monitoring of the commitments made.
- **Share decision-making power.** Ensure gender parity on allocation committees, in management teams and on juries; train these bodies to recognise biases; and monitor women's representation beyond directing: in production, technical roles and budget disparities.
- **Support careers over the long term.** The proportion of female directors drops from 29% for debut films to 23% for subsequent films: support schemes must target the transition to the second film and beyond, develop mentoring and 'shadowing', and take parenthood into account.
- **Combat violence,** for example by raising awareness amongst film crews or making funding conditional on preventive measures.

2. To national governments and parliaments

- **Embed gender parity in law and in the statutes of film institutes**, so that policies remain resilient to changes in government: 13 institutes consider their progress to be fragile without a lasting political commitment.
- **Provide film institutes with the means to take action.** A lack of human resources and expertise is the main obstacle cited (17 countries), closely followed by a lack of financial resources (13 countries).

3. To European institutions

- **Strengthen data collection at European level**, for example by expanding the data analysed by the European Audiovisual Observatory to include, for instance, budget and pay gaps between male and female directors, which are currently tracked by only a minority of countries.
- **Strengthen equality criteria in European funding schemes**, notably AgoraEU (by introducing clear and concrete gender parity criteria in the programme's implementation and the allocation of its funding) and Eurimages, so that European institutions lead by example.
- **Assess whether and how the 2017 Council of Europe recommendation** has been implemented, and support those countries that have not yet adopted measures.

4. To the sector as a whole

- **To producers and social partners**: aim for gender parity in production teams and the representation of women in key roles, not just in directing. Regulate working practices to prevent all forms of discrimination and enable a diverse range of talent to work in the sector.
- **To broadcasters, streaming platforms, distributors and festivals**: adopt policies promoting diversity in creative work, both in front of and behind the camera, and publish monitoring data. As the policies of national film councils only apply to the films they fund, the commitment of broadcasters is essential to take this further.

- **To film schools**: develop a gender parity policy at student level and then support the professional integration of female graduates; raise awareness of these issues throughout the course of study.

5. To researchers and organisations

- **Strengthen dialogue between researchers, organisations and public authorities**, to design and evaluate measures together and present joint proposals with one voice.

PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY : METHODOLOGY AND FORMAT OF THIS ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The Lab Femmes de Cinéma was established in 2017 as a follow-up to the annual study on European gender equality policies, launched in 2016 by Les Arcs Film Festival during its 8th edition, which was dedicated to female directors. As an offshoot and partner of the festival, the Lab has been carrying out this study every year since then.

To mark the 10th edition of this study, the Lab wished to take the opportunity to take stock of the last ten years. This year's perspective and methodology are therefore unprecedented. Our aim is to highlight the diversity of approaches developed across Europe to promote gender parity, **to draw lessons from these ten years of action and analysis, in order to contribute to a collective reflection** that will shape future policies.

This new edition of the study differs from previous years:

- it provides a **review of the last ten years** rather than a snapshot of public policies at a single point in time;
- it offers a **summary of the lessons shared** by all countries, rather than an exhaustive account of measures and data on a country-by-country basis;
- for the first time, it includes **contributions from researchers**, as we believe it is important to strengthen the links between the academic world, public authorities and professional organisations working towards greater gender parity in the sector;
- for the first time, it includes **qualitative interviews with several film institutes**, thereby complementing the responses provided via a questionnaire.

The study continues to draw on its two **key partners:**

- **the European Audiovisual Observatory** (EAO)[1]: we have been using their statistics since 2020;
- **the EFAD** (European Film Agency Directors Association[2]), which brings together the national film and audiovisual agencies of various European countries. Since 2021, EFAD has been putting us in touch with its members[3], reviewing the study and disseminating it to its network. It also organises an annual presentation of the study's main findings as part of an online event.

To carry out this study, we drew on the following resources :

- **a questionnaire sent to all European national centres (33 responding countries)**;
- **7 interviews with European researchers** to provide a more analytical perspective on our findings and to foster dialogue with the academic community;
- **5 semi-structured qualitative interviews with several European national centres** (France, Austria, the United Kingdom, Norway and Spain, which contributed in writing);
- **statistical data on the proportion of women in film projects, provided by the European Audiovisual Observatory (EAO).**

[1] To read the latest EAO report on women's participation in European film production : https://rm.coe.int/gender-report-film-and-tv

[2] https://www.europeanfilmagencies.eu/

[3] The EFAD association brings together 38 film and audiovisual centres from the countries of the European Union, as well as from Iceland, Norway, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania.