



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### WHERE ARE THE WOMEN DIRECTORS?

#### *Report on gender equality in the European film industry*

This report is the culmination of a two-year process and brings together comparative research from seven European countries: Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom. It is a response by the European Women's Audiovisual Network (EWA) to growing concern worldwide about the marginalisation of female directors in our film culture and aims to provide the evidence to inform policy change at national and European level.

In United Nations Charters, European treaties and national policy statements there is a commitment to gender equality. Yet EWA's findings show that the structure of Europe's film industries do not support this. Instead inequality is being perpetuated by a combination of factors including the competitive habits of the marketplace, contemporary industry structures, the impact of new technologies and false assumptions about women's abilities and business risk.

This report calls for affirmative action to transform this status quo. It makes fifteen recommendations, many based on best practice, which will address the challenges female directors face in sustaining their careers. EWA believes strongly in the powerful impact of the audiovisual media on our societies. By realising female directors' full potential our industries will be strengthened and diversity of form and perspective will be more successfully represented on our screens.

#### Research partners:



## KEY FINDINGS

The report shows that there is a significant under-representation of female directors in all levels of the industry. This is in spite of evidence that there is an almost equal share of women graduating from film schools, women's films perform well in festivals and awards and, in some instances, enjoy a higher average share of admissions per film than those directed by men.

- Only one in five films in the seven European countries studied is directed by a woman (21%). This means four out five films are NOT directed by a woman.
- The vast majority of the funding resources (namely 84%) go into films that are NOT directed by women.
- Low funding perpetuates the scarcity of female-directed films in circulation, in turn affecting the markets' willingness to invest and thus creating a vicious circle.
- There is a significant difference between the proportion of female directors graduating from film schools (44%) and the overall proportion of female directors working in the industry (24%). The talent exists but the potential is not exploited.

### Barriers preventing women from working in the industry

- *Gender bias in the industry.* Over three quarters of respondents to EWA's questionnaire, released in all seven of the countries, feel that gender inequality exists, with the highest results in Germany and the UK. Of the male respondents only half are convinced.
- *The struggle for funding* is identified as women's most significant challenge, both economically, given their unequal status in the marketplace, and creatively, in terms of the range of stories they want to tell.
- *Risk aversion on the part of investors.* A significant number of respondents believe a female director negatively impacts on funding decisions: 56% negative for private funders and 31% for public funders across the board.
- *Lower share of broadcasting funds for female directors:* especially significant as directors move between cinema and television to sustain their careers.
- *Inequality in average national funding awards.* Female directors of fiction films receive less funding per project than their male counterparts. For documentaries, funding has been more equally shared.
- *Distrust of female directors in delivering films with higher budgets.* Female directors fare better where budgets are smaller. The stronger presence of women directors IN documentaries is indicative.
- *Low representation of women on commissioning and funding panels,* and low awareness by these panels of inequality.

- *Absence of statistics.* Few national institutions collect data and even fewer carry out data monitoring. WITH the exception of the Swedish Film Institute, there is ALSO a lack of a coherent, evidence-based strategy within leading institutions to address inequality.
- *Pay differentials between men and women.* With the exception of France, none of the countries in the report appear to monitor data on comparative earnings for female directors. However, if French findings are typical, they reveal that between 2009 and 2012 their average earnings were 32% lower than male directors' earnings on a euro per hour basis.
- *Failure to support directors who are parents.* It is not parenting in itself which is a problem but the industry's lack of adjustment to the way in which this affects career progression, for instance re-entry into the market after starting a family, or the demands of childcare during production.
- *Low support for distribution.* Almost all respondents recognised the need for greater support to boost visibility for female-directed films and develop distribution strategies.

### **Quality of female-directed films: awards and nominations**

- Results for 2013, EWA's sample year, show that for the seven countries overall a higher proportion of female-directed films participate both in national and international festivals, and that female-directed films win more awards than films directed by men.
- Female-directed films are nonetheless significantly under-represented at A-list festivals. Evidence of their critical success undermines claims about quality used to justify their marginalisation.

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

There is almost universal recognition that more female-directed films in circulation would impact on the representation of women, promote equality and encourage tolerance in our society. Furthermore, the most important way to encourage women to direct is by showing more of their films on television and cinema screens.

There is broad support for policy change including measures to:

- Address the under-representation of female directors in educational programmes;
- Equalise the distribution of public funds;
- Achieve equal representation and greater awareness on commissioning boards;
- Incentivise producers to support female directors;

- Provide much greater support and a targeted strategy for publicity, advertising and distribution.

Almost 70% of respondents supported using quotas to achieve equality targets. Support for this measure in the participating countries ranged from 58% in France to 83% in the UK.

### **EWA recommends that**

1. The European Commission and the European Parliament urgently address equality agendas in the audiovisual industry.
2. All European supranational film and audiovisual funds, in particular Creative Europe's MEDIA Sub-programme, noting and emulating where appropriate the Council of Europe's initiatives, should actively address gender equality issues in all their policies, measures and support programmes: these should include training, distribution, exhibition, festivals and audience support, as well as media literacy initiatives.
3. In any future revision of the European Union's E-Commerce Directive or the AVMS Directive attention should be given to improving measures for gender equality and the visibility of female-directed films and audiovisual works.
4. Member funds of pan-European associations, such as the EFAD (European Film Agency Directors), and CineRegio (Association of European Regional Film Funds), drawing on the expertise of EFARN (European Film Agency Research Network) and/or the European Audiovisual Observatory (EAO), should do their best to adopt a common approach to data gathering and analysis on gender equality by their members through agreed common indicators and standardised sets of data, as well as committing to the publication of this data on a regular basis and the exchange of best practice.
5. These organisations should be strongly encouraged to dedicate a section of their websites to the issue of gender equality where the results of the research and studies undertaken at European or national level can be published.
6. The European Broadcasting Union should encourage its members to agree common indicators to analyse gender equality in programme output, commissions and acquisitions, with regard to female directors, and this data should be monitored and published on a regular basis in order to track trends and progress.
7. The International Association of Film and Television Schools (CILECT) should encourage all members to maintain and monitor statistics on gender equality regarding applicants as well as graduates; to ensure gender equality amongst teaching staff; and to ensure greater visibility for female directors in all curricula and source materials.
8. National film institutes should review gender equality and adopt action plans to include:
  - o Adequate systems for data gathering and analysis on gender equality for film directors, with results being monitored and published on an annual basis. Statistics

should include data on applications as well as awards;

- Initiatives to raise awareness and promote debate on the issue of women's marginalisation and image misrepresentation in the media, in particular aimed at investors, producers and distributors;
  - 5-year targets for all funding schemes (excepting those for first-time directors) to achieve an equal share of funding for female directors, to be averaged over 3-year periods in order to take into account annual variations in applications;
  - Programmes for first-time directors allocating an equal share of funding to female directors with immediate effect;
  - An equal share of funding for all schemes targeting first-time directors;
  - Consideration, where applicable, of female directors' particular trajectory through the industry with regard to targeted funds for development and support for new directors;
  - Recommendations on adding childcare as a line in production budgets;
  - Increased support for publicity, advertising and distribution strategies for female-directed films with particular attention to the distinctive needs of first, second and subsequent productions;
  - Lobbying to encourage investors and cinema owners/programmers to work for gender equality in film investment and exhibition.
9. Audiovisual funds covering more than one European country, such as the Nordisk Film & TV Fond in the Nordic countries, and regional funds within countries, should also review gender equality and adopt action plans in the same manner as national film institutes.
10. National regulatory bodies with responsibility for media and broadcasting, both private and public, terrestrial and online, should adopt measures to encourage gender equality and visibility for works by female directors, including developments in video-on-demand (VOD) and subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) platforms.
11. Public service broadcasters should review policies for gender equality and adopt action plans to include:
- Targets to achieve a minimum 40% share for female directors of feature-length dramas and documentaries of over 60 minutes;
  - Equal gender representation in commissioning and funding committees.
12. Measures should be taken to monitor and increase the visibility of female-directed films in school curricula, school film clubs, cinemathèques and video-on-demand services.
13. All commissioning bodies, policy-making boards, selection panels and juries should be composed on the basis of gender parity.

14. Further research should be funded, whether through national or regional organisations, to include:

- o Case-study research with female directors of different generations to further our understanding of women's trajectory in the profession;
- o Analysis of the way gender impacts on investor and commissioning decision-making;
- o Analysis of the route to the market for female-directed films, including a focus on the effectiveness of support for publicity, advertising and the validity of distribution strategy.

15. On the basis of EWA's findings, we recommend that symposia should be held in each country, with key stakeholders being invited, to raise awareness, to identify and systematise data-gathering needs and to agree targeted action plans.

Overall, this report finds that policy on gender equality is piecemeal and poorly monitored in most public institutions in the film and audiovisual industry, and many private stakeholders keep no statistics at all. This is indicative of the continuing failure of the European film industry to take gender inequality seriously. Even though it may be argued that a competitive marketplace and job instability impact on male directors as well, their critical mass, propped up by the inherent bias of the industry, means they are far less affected. In contrast, for female directors, the combination of factors revealed in this report conspire to make their careers less sustainable, depriving audiences of their vision and talent, and leading to a critical imbalance in film culture in Europe.

EWA is ready to co-operate on an advisory basis with industry and institutional actors in the implementation of this report's recommendations.

### **Further information**

For press copies of the report (to be made available in the coming weeks) please contact: [contact@ewawomen.com](mailto:contact@ewawomen.com) or [ewawomen26@gmail.com](mailto:ewawomen26@gmail.com)

If you are an industry professional and wish to receive a copy please note that they are available to all EWA members (membership is open to women and men in the industry.)

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