



Film Festivals at EU Delegations

Feasibility study exploring different possible modus operandi for making available a package of European films

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Executive summary

Towards the establishment of the programme 'FILM FEST' – *Connecting and engaging through films*

In today's globalised world, the European Union should be equally concerned about deploying its cultural and creative assets as it is about asserting its political and economic influence. In this context it should endeavour to fully embrace culture in the its diplomacy in order to reach out more widely in the world, show the value of Europe's artistic expressions, organise collaborative events with local populations in order to enhance the values and priorities of the EU abroad.

Cinema is eminently a vehicle for the expression of identities and singularities capable of reflecting the state of a society or a community. In this regard Europe has successfully transferred its genetic make-up to its film industry: cultural, but also linguistic and ethnic diversity, its values such as equality, freedom of expression, the rule of law and democracy, as well as its social model.

The potential of cinema to communicate about Europe and the creativity that lies at the heart of European film production have been recognised by a number of EU Delegations (EUDs) in third countries that regularly organise film festivals as part of their outreach activities.

Indeed, more than half of the 139 EUDs (i.e. 76 EUDs) around the world are involved in the organisation of film festivals and other film events with a view to promote the European Union, showcase European culture and use film as a cultural diplomacy tool.



76
EUFFs
worldwide



Fully/partially organised
and/or funded by an EUD
★ 1 per year ★
Showing films from EU MS
sometimes with local films
or films from non EU MS

Film festivals are one of the most effective instruments to reach a wide audience in a given territory. This is in particular that case when in a third country there is no infrastructure for film distribution or when European films do not have a 'blockbuster' status. The majority of these film festivals can be considered as successful diplomatic events. However, a number of obstacles prevent the diversity and excellence of European films from being shown in the best conditions in many third countries: lack of professionalism, limited budgets and shortage of human resources.

To efficiently build on existing initiatives and ensure that European cinema contributes to the EU's external relations as well as the EU's influence and attractiveness in the world, EU Delegations need adequate support, in particular, assistance to strengthen their actions and ensure that film festivals become effective diplomatic, cultural and trade tools.

After having scrutinised the current state of affairs among the EUDs as well as completed a SWOT analysis of the EUFFs, the study, proposes a set of strategic and operational recommendations for the organisation of such festivals in a streamlined and cost-effective way. The recommendations include improvements for:

- The selection of films - to propose the best of European cinema to international audiences (European package of films).
- The rights clearance process to screen films in cinemas and other venues or digital platforms.
- The marketing and promotion strategies at central and decentralised levels.
- The engagement and support of film professionals including talents.
- Organisation of side events to increase the collaborative dimension of the films festivals with local population.

These recommendations are tailored to fulfil the three identified dimensions of the European film festivals namely Diplomacy – Culture and Audiovisual – Trade (so-called triple D-CA-T dimension) that can add value to the activities the EUDs in third countries:

EUFFs and external relations – diplomacy	EUFFs and culture and audiovisual policies	EUFFs and trade – market access for European films
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A tool for diplomacy to help EUDs to build relations, trust and mutual understanding with governments and the local populations in hosting countries •Films, including their entertainment value, are influential means of expression and a mirror of human relations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •EUFFs contribute to the EU’s cultural and media agenda in supporting culture and creative industries outside the EU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The low market share of European films outside the EU is an indication that European cinema is not reaching mass audiences and young people around the world. This is affecting Europe’s image and influence abroad. •EUFFs should also be considered as a potential vehicle to promote trade in audiovisual products.

This triple D-CA-T dimension of EUFFs needs to be taken into consideration if one wishes to develop a more coordinated approach for the organisation of attractive EUFFs.

Impact assessment of EUFFs

Film festivals are one of the main public relations activities of EUDs on the five continents and are popular events among local audiences: while traditional on-site film festivals are estimated to reach out to 409,000 people globally each year, the online experience in China recorded 17 million viewers in 2012, showing that EUDs are also capable of embracing digital tools to increase the dissemination of European films.

Although each of the film festivals and events organised have similar objectives, there is no fixed model for setting up an EUFF. Their management varies depending on the resources available, the local context, partnerships with the Embassies and cultural institutes of the EU Member States as well as industry stakeholders in the country. Some are entirely handled by the EUD while others are organised by third parties. EUFFs last

from three days to several months and can be held in various cities as well as venues ranging from commercial cinemas to cultural centres and universities.



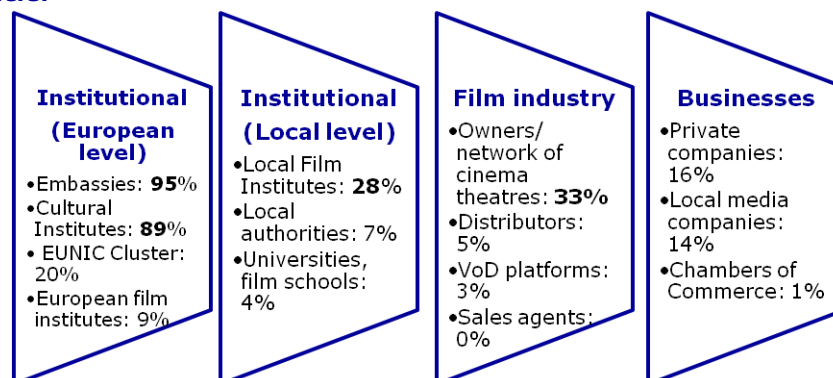
Despite their great potential to reach out widely and mobilise a large amount of European and local stakeholders, the study identifies bottlenecks that prevent EUFFs from achieving full impact in relation to the above mentioned triple D-CA-T dimension:

- 71% of EUFFs are organised on a budget under €20,000 mainly coming from the Press and Information Section of the EUD. With such a limited budget EUDs seldom have the appropriate means to organise an effective and successful EUFF. They often rely on the personal commitment of the staff of the EUDs, working extra hours to ensure the film festival takes place.
- The attractive programming of film festivals is a complex issue and professional support is needed. The success of EUFFs relies to a great extent on the ability of the programme of films to meet the tastes of the local audience.



- The survey shows that EUDs invest very little in terms of promotion and marketing. Therefore EUFFs sometimes suffer from an exclusive and elusive status, whereby only a narrow circle of people ever hears about them.
- The lack of engagement of the European cultural and audiovisual sector in the organisation of EUFFs and the low visibility of the EUFFs among film professionals need to be addressed.

EUFF partners:



The sector's support is essential to have access to good films and to be able to organise activities that also benefit the diplomatic, cultural and trade stakeholders in the EU and third countries.

These weaknesses need to be addressed as they are detrimental to EU's image abroad and capacity to connect and engage with the local population.

Main needs and requirements

To face these issues and create successful EUFFs, the needs of the EUDs can be split into four main areas:



To match their needs and address their difficulties, **89%** of EU Delegations (whether currently organising EUFFs or not) favour the idea of a **European package of films with negotiated rights** to gain access to recent quality films and become less reliant on the embassies and cultural institutes of the EU Member States. Access to good quality films was for 60% of the EUDs the greatest difficulty when organising a EUFF. 84% of the EUDs also consider that such a package should come with a range of additional support activities. Particularly to facilitate subtitling (70% of EUFF organisers), participation of European talents (68%) and adequate professional promotional and marketing support (55%).

Best practices

The study also highlights examples of good practices in the organisation of film festivals notably:

- European film festival in South Africa: a 'new generation' of EUFF i.e. professionally organised and run like a commercial festival with a festival organiser and a curator, an excellent selection of recent awarded films.
- European Film Weeks in Morocco: one of the highest budgets for a EUFF, the organisation is subcontracted to a local agency working in partnership with Europa Cinemas in order to be able to offer a selection of the best recent award winning European films.
- German film festival in China : strong budget, industry involvement and high sponsorship level.
- My French Film Festival – good use of digital technology to promote first feature films on-line in 90 countries.

Recommendations

The study makes recommendations to support EUDs in organising more attractive and professional EUFFs that are capable of getting a high level of (political) attendance from the host countries; reaching out to a wide local audience (including young people); going beyond capital cities whilst at the same time enabling the organisation of side events for networking opportunities and matchmaking between local and European audiovisual professionals as well as for collaborative activities with the local population.

The **guiding principles** for the organisation of EUFFs are set with a view to ensure minimum quality standards. EUFFs organisers would endeavour to implement these guiding principles for film festivals and related events to achieve their diplomatic, cultural and trade objectives. Therefore the study recommends that EUFFs should be organised on the basis of the following principles:

- Contribute to **portray a diverse and creative Europe**
- **Professionally organised**
- Respect the **industry's commercial imperatives**
- Mobilise **EU's and Member States' highest diplomats** in the host country
- Count on **sufficient financial resources**

Following these guiding principles, as **minimum quality standards**, EUFFs should involve:



The study shows that in large countries around the world it is difficult to organise an EUFF aiming to meet these essential quality requirements on a budget below €60,000 to 100,000. Only this level of funding is likely to trigger sponsorship from private donors.

To assist EUDs to implement good quality EUFFs the study proposes a series of support measures to be implemented on the one hand at central level (EU Headquarters) and on the other hand at the local level (EUDs).

In addition, recommendations are also made in the study for EUFFs to be held online, in combination with onsite EUFFs (not included in the budget mentioned below).

1. Centralised support measures

These measures would be provided centrally by an External Service Provider (ESP) hired by the European Commission/EEAS and consist of:

- **Managing a stakeholders' board** to foster strategic development and engagement (Leadership Board) with representatives of European public stakeholders such as the EEAS, relevant European Commission services as well as national film or cultural institutes and other bodies organising film events at European level (for example the LUX Film Prize of the European Parliament); as well as representatives of private stakeholders (e.g. sales agents and promotion agencies for European cinema).

- **Preparing a European package of 15 to 30 European films** (selection of films, negotiation and acquisition of rights) based on a number of criteria (recent, quality, award-winning films as well as box office hits); **subtitling** the selected films in at least ten major world languages; setting up a **database with information** on the selected films to facilitate EUDs' access to good quality films.
- **Setting up a selective support scheme** (maximum €40,000 per EUD) to reward EUDs proposing the best marketing and promotional plan for the EUFF to comply with the quality standards described above. The different types of measures qualifying for additional funding support would be promotional and marketing activities, engaging a curator, additional screening fees and subtitles (not covered in the European package of films) and side events.
- **Supporting the professionalization of EUFFs:** in the field of marketing and promotion, support in organising side events, coordinating the exchange of information among EUDs, setting up a help desk, preparing a DIY guide for the organisation of EUFFs.

2. Decentralised support measures

EUDs will retain the freedom and flexibility to organise EUFFs that fit best their local context. However, the quality standards set above and the support of the ESP will contribute to assist the EUDs in making their EUFFs more attractive and capable of reaching wider audiences. A second set of measures should then be implemented by EUDs at the local level.

- **Minimum and diversified funding to support local promotion** to comply with quality standards;
- **Curator and festival organiser** to select films matching the audiences' taste and to deal with the logistics and organisation of the EUFF;
- **Subtitling** (when not available in the European package) and share the subtitles with other EUDs to create synergies and reduce costs;
- **Screening films in local cinemas** to reach a wider audience, to build partnerships and promote the event and to show exhibitors the potential of European cinema;
- **Seek local partnerships to pool resources** to widen the impact, access additional funding and engage with local sponsors;
- **Organise side events** (market, political, educational, with young people) to discuss EU values and relevant priority policies with the local population, to foster intercultural dialogue and to promote the distribution of European films or co-production activities;
- **Evaluate the impact** to better assess the results of the festival as regards the triple D-CA-T dimension and improve future editions and to better communicate and engage with relevant stakeholders.

Budget for centralised support services

The organisation of an EUFF is a complex undertaking that requires specific professional skills if one aims to have an effective event that serves the EU's diplomacy, cultural as well as trade interests. The cost to establish a European Film Festival Programme 'FILM FEST' – *Connecting and engaging through films* is estimated at €2.5 million over two years for the centralised support services. The Partnership Instrument of the Foreign Policy Instrument would be the most suitable funding instrument.

European Commission

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