

**Joint Statement  
on the importance for territorial licensing for cultural diversity and pluralism  
in the European audiovisual sector**

Territorial and exclusive licensing of rights are essential for the audiovisual sector in order to guarantee its creativity, financing and sustainability, but also to ensure that European consumers have access to culturally diverse content and a pluralistic media.

We are concerned as proponents of a monolithic European culture attempt to undermine the principle of territoriality, often via amendments in unrelated reports, thereby ignoring the allocation of competences amongst committees in the process, with the aim of undermining the foundations of a driver of our cultural and creative sectors and with it European cultural diversity and media pluralism. Proposals that concern the core of the audiovisual sector yet fall beyond the scope of the said reports and/or committee competences.

**We call on Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs, as well as Coordinators to adopt a clear line on this issue to avoid resulting abstentions in Plenary votes. This unfairly penalizes the work of fellow MEPs and is an incredible waste of Parliamentary time. Parliament needs a strong stance against attempts to confiscate the political process to satisfy a partial agenda.**

It bears noting that threatening a core principle for reinvestment in this sector in a period of recovery is questionable. To do so on false pretenses of consumer demand and denial of the economics of the sector, is entirely regrettable.

It does not do justice to the workers and industries in this sector that represent millions of direct and indirect jobs. This threatens their ability to thrive and deliver European, national and

local works that make and reflect diversity and pluralism in Europe. The news, films, series, documentaries and other works we have all relied on during this period of distress.

Looking now and forward, it also fails to address the known consumer welfare loss that undermining territoriality would lead to. And this argument is clear and unchallenged. 20 MEPs, across party lines, made this case already in 2017 starting from what Europeans want first: ***European consumers are a myriad of individuals who want different things, have different purchasing power, different cultures and different tastes or priorities.*** [...] *European consumers want content services in their first language, packaged and delivered according to local preference, with a reasonable price that is calculated based on local demand and purchasing power.* (“Consumer interest in the Digital Market”, published on netopia.eu on 7th December 2017, <https://www.netopia.eu/consumer-interest-in-the-digital-single-market/>)

This case remains valid today. The data sources from the Eurobarometer in question continues to support the arguments made in favor of territoriality<sup>1</sup>. What has changed is that these debates were settled under the previous legislature. The Commission's evaluation of the Regulation concluded that the available evidence does not justify a change in its scope. Licensing and legitimate geoblocking practices that underpin the Digital Single Market in Europe continue to be fully justified. **We therefore call on fellow MEPs to act decisively on this issue in their treatment of current and present reports. We thank colleagues across party lines for their expressions of support and actions to bolster our creative and cultural sectors.**

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<sup>1</sup> According to the European Commission's own [research](#), 83% of users never even tried to access content not intended for them, only 9% of consumers tried to access audiovisual content (excluding sports) and only about only half of those were blocked (ie. only 4.5 % of users affected). The main reason for not trying to cross-border access were lack of interest or the belief that the choice of content is sufficient in their own country.

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