

## **European Independence Arena Declaration**

It is necessary and urgent to:

1. Give a specific status to independent cultural SMEs, endorsed at the European level. It is important to create an environment that fosters the creation and development of cultural SMEs. These SMEs should be granted specific support and benefit from positive discrimination measures. Existing measures such as the 'law on one price' on books in France must be preserved in the digital world.
2. Recognise the crucial role of the independents as discoverers of new talent and precursors in the development of new aesthetics. In the music sector the independents produce 80% of all new releases, organise 60% of concerts and create more than 50% of jobs. In the cinema sector, independents distribute 85% of films selected for competition at Cannes.
3. Ensure a high level of protection of authors' and producers' rights.
4. Regulate the digital environment by putting in place mechanisms based on the cooperation of all the actors including notably the rights holders. The implementation of the "Creation and Internet" law which guarantees a balance of everybody's rights and liberties - creators' property rights and privacy protection of internet users, in order to allow a true development of content online in the best interests of creators and consumers.
5. Ensure that, through inter-professional agreements, independent productions receive sufficient and sustainable exposure in the media, shops, cinemas and in the new media.
6. Propose new competition and concentration law rules or practices, such as defining accompanying measures for mergers and situations of vertical and horizontal concentration.
7. Create financial tools, as well as fiscal and social measures at national and European level. In the context of the current economic and financial climate, particular attention must be paid to maintaining the access of cultural SMEs and micro-enterprises to credit through organisations such as IFCIC or Kultuur Invest. There needs to be a facilitation of the dialogue and communication between financial institutions and cultural enterprises
8. To promote the legal availability of creative works on line, notably through reduced VAT rates on cultural products in both physical and online markets.
9. Invest EUR 1.5 billion of the European budget per year (corresponding to the contribution of the sector to the European GDP) into the cultural industries, with priority given to SMEs and micro-enterprises.
10. Establish a positive discrimination system for the independents, in particular in terms of the purchase of advertising space and access to new media.