Economic indicators in the evaluation of public policies for the cinema: the wrong road

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Abstract By comparing the discourse of the European Commission on the Media Programme at field survey of professional film and audiovisual, we wish to report in this communication the inefficiency of using certain economic indicators for the evaluation of this framework Programme. This raises a key question in our opinion: how to establish a fair assessment of a European funding program if the only criteria evaluated are not the ones that matter to the users? Indeed, we note that in the discourses on the Media program, the institution (European Commission) highlights the financial efficiency of data grants. The latter spring through indicators such job creation, revenue earned by companies financed, number of cinema tickets for some movies. Indeed, a public body that funds film industry has to report on the economic efficiency of invested grants. But this is not necessarily a good use of public funds and that is precisely what we wish to highlight in this communication. Following our fieldwork, we have revealed (statistics and testimonials in support) that, contrary to the European Commission, professionals - users of these grants - are very few to identify these same indicators as essential. They seem to prefer more qualitative aspects that will be profitable in the medium and long term economic: the construction of co-production networks, sharing experience, knowledge of markets. Finally, all this analysis aims to show that the economic indicators as a basis for the European Commission analysis are nothing more than tools that serve both their political identity and career, on the other hand, political governance of the sector (i.e. the outcome is less important than how to communicate it).

Keywords: European policy, indicators, governance, cinema policy

European audiovisual and cinematographic policy

In recent decades, the cultural sector became a legitimate area of policy. Not only is the socio-cultural interests of the population, but it’s also valued as an important economic player, contributing in part to the growth and employment and also to the increase of GDP. In this sense, the two policies are complementary to boost the sector: national cultural policies, and in subsidiarity to them, European policy. Studying European politics as a whole would be a too vast
project. We therefore focused our research on a cultural area that is very promising and intriguing in its mode of operation.

We have recently seen that the audiovisual and film industry is booming and the current debates on the arrival of Netflix, or the implementation of the digital single market demonstrates it. This sector has enjoyed since the late 1980s a special attention from the European Union. Thus, in 1985 the European Commission is testing the first pilot phase of the MEDIA program (Measures to encourage the development of the audiovisual industry). Shortly after (1988) the Council of Europe’s Eurimages will be put in function. As we will show, these two funds are complementary. MEDIA (now a part of Creative Europe program) works with the audiovisual sector and film upstream and downstream of production.

Eurimages, meanwhile, is involved in all phases of film production, paying particular attention to the production side.

If in their early stated objectives agreed on the cultural value of these two funds, in their evolution, communication that institutions will make to professionals and the general public will change. If Eurimages will stay true to its cultural values supported through cinematography, MEDIA, meanwhile, will change its paradigms.

In Table 1 we tried to synthesize the reach and influence of two support programs to highlight the one hand the differences between the two funds, and secondly their operating modes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Display</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Average amount</th>
<th>Way of finding</th>
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<tr>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
<td>Eurimages</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Economic &amp; Cultural Dimension</td>
<td>Economic &amp; legal</td>
<td>416000 approx. 25 projects</td>
<td>Advance on Receipts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>MEDIA</td>
<td>Industrial / Economic</td>
<td>Industrielle &amp; economic Dimension</td>
<td>Cultural &amp; economic</td>
<td>120000 approx. 6500 projects</td>
<td>Project Grants conditioned by subsidiarity</td>
</tr>
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Table 1. Comparative table of two devices of EU funding and operation
So we can observe that in terms of communication, MEDIA will lie on an industrial and economic niche, while Eurimages will pull that of culture. However, looking more closely at the criteria for allocating these funds\(^1\) the matrix changes.

The Political Power expresses the commitment of cultural policy of European cinema through advances on receipts issued on the basis of economic and legal criteria. This is, in this case the Eurimages funds involved in the operational phase of the project. It focuses on sixty projects per year, with an average budget allocated 416 000 euros per film.

The Technical Authority affirms the will of an economic policy of the European audiovisual sector through subsidies granted on the basis of cultural values and a similar intervention of Member States or private funds. MEDIA is involved in the design phase and distribution. There is a scattering of means because the fund has the ability to finance about 6,500 projects with an average budget allocated 120 000 / project).

Indeed, the two powers, and the funds they issue does not pursue the same goal. Yet they seem to serve the same cause: the development of the audiovisual and film sector, through a cultural policy. However, although the two do not have the same objective, during periodic assessments, economic indicators will be systematically valued, while others will be ignored.

The evaluation of a program, such as the evaluation of any action, requires first the existence of measurable objectives. Looking closely at these two programs, one can easily realize that they attach to both economic and cultural objectives but which often have distinct temporalities. Likewise the two funds are not part of the same temporality as Eurimages is a sustainable program, which does not undergo significant structural changes, while MEDIA is a multiannual framework program, which is systematically updated in its objectives and purposes.

So, we chose to restrict the fields of this paper in the evaluation of the MEDIA program and the establishment of communication of the latter.

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\(^1\) We are talking here about subsidies or advances on receipts.
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The choice of this documents was made to establish the evolution of the institutional and political discourse of the European Commission on the MEDIA Programme. The press releases, as they were responding to a communicational aspects and mediation (between the Commission and civil society) were chosen. We made this choice because these discourses allow us to recreate the image (Ethos) that the Commission has created through discourse. This enables us on the one hand to illustrate the implementation strategy (as well as the strong elements on which the Commission will focus), the roles played by the various actors in relation to situations outlined and finally this leaves us to understand the source of political difficulties in their discursive positioning as well as (in) understanding of the producers (and other receivers of this information).

To summarize, the corpus consists of 45 press releases of the European Commission between 1985 (when they started thinking about the MEDIA Programme) and 2014 (date of the implementation Creative Europe Programme road). One hypothesis of this work is that we are witnessing a communicational rupture between the beginning of the Media program and the establishment of the Creative Europe program.

Given the objectives pursued in this analysis, we decided to use a semantic analysis software, Tropes, to limit the risks of interpretation. Specifically, when we work an analysis of a corpus of texts in Tropes, « it is to extract text a series of variables that will be the subject of statistical processing to reveal test results targets which would not necessarily be identified after a thorough reading of the text.»

In order to understand the issues of the analyzed information, be aware that « the European Commission is the executive body of the European Union. It is independent and promotes the general interest of the Union. Under the guidelines set by the European Council, it prepares and implements the decisions of the EU Council and the European Parliament. The European Commission has four main functions: legislative function (it submits laws in Council and 2


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Parliament); Executive function; Monitoring the application of Community law in particular (competition); Representation function (for any external representation except foreign policy and common security).».

In terms of discourse competence, the most important would be given by its representative function - the European Commission is positioned as the spokesperson of the European Union, on topics related to audiovisual and culture. In this regard interdiscourse becomes very significant because we find a recurrent references to other press releases, articles, memos, speeches, other European commissioners (specialized in other sectors). They position themselves as the political body that has a program (programs) that should be « regarded as proposals or resources for action ».

A press release is a written document that is proposed for information to journalists. This is a non-advertising corporate communications. The purpose of a press release is to communicate on a current event to the press in order to get quotes and rewarding and positive media coverage, but the discourse is still oriented. It is to question the journalists and encourage them to write an article, to request more information or to attend a press conference for example.

This extensive document analysis allowed us to identify several constants discourse. This has also given us the opportunity to review crossing of diachronic and thematic elements, the communicational link between the objectives announced for each of the programs and assessments that are made.

Thus, in Table 2 we wanted to point out the differences that remain between the objectives that the Commission shall provide premises and programs put in parallel with the communication they do after the feedback.

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<td>MEDIA II</td>
<td>MEDIA Plus</td>
<td>MEDIA 2007</td>
<td>Creative Europe</td>
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### Stated objectives of the program

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### Instruments

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### Achievement strengths/evaluation

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Table 2. Summary of the objectives, instruments and assessments Media programs

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6
To summarize, the Table 2 highlights at first the evolution of program objectives in time. We can easily notice that some objectives continue from one program to another (eg. Out of defragmenting markets). This is the objective that the Commission seems to attach to on long term. However, given the temporality of the framework programs, we feel that these are never treated goals. Besides, if we take just the example of the defragmentation of markets, this objective is at the very creation of this program. It is clear that in 2014, during the adoption of Creative Europe program always figured as the central element of the program. Moreover, we observe in the same table as other objectives in the short and medium term, are discussed and assessments highlight advancements on these issues.

So we can draw a conclusion: the temporality of the objectives set by the Commission require different time scales to implement them and check their effectiveness. However, the temporality of the programs, and the need of these evaluations in order to make them change raises a number of questions. First, that of the relevance of these assessments, so that there is no distance to do it. Then one of the indicators used to determine the reliability of the sector development incentive instruments and measures.

It is clear from this work is that since the establishment of the European Framework program through a financial crisis (generated by the oil crisis of the years 1973 and 1979 again accentuated by that of 2007) of which the Europe has never recovered. Therefore, we believe that the European Commission justify any decision taken for the audiovisual sector, film and cultural by purely economic criteria.

Building an audiovisual policy, cultural or whatever application, beyond the investment of actors, it needs a basic treatment, coupled with an inscription in time, to enable individuals and institutions to adapt, appropriate the new standards.

Watching these programs carefully, we can see that the institutional rhythm of the Commission and Commissioners mandates are relatively short. This implies firstly a basic work to develop a strategy for the Commission and advance the industry concerned. Moreover Commissioners, occupying their positions for a given period, need short term and intermediate outcomes that can serve their political agenda, enabling them to justify their actions and especially ideally propelling them to other functions.

They only have so not many solutions to reconcile the two timeframes, while considering their political careers. The only one that seems to emerge to date is the one related to communication that is made on the programs and their evaluations. Thus, we can see, reading the analysis reports of the various MEDIA programs, a thorough reflection is conducted on the program’s effectiveness against stated objectives.
Divers indicators\(^5\) are chosen for these evaluations, which appear to cover all questions about these programs.

Among these, we can identify monitoring indicators and performance. Indeed, follow the development of support means granted, and the rate you acceptability of country files, seems natural.

Other indicators are put forward, such as those of results and impact, which are supposed to assess competitiveness and cultural and linguistic diversity. While competitiveness seems easy to analyze sound economic criteria, however the question of assessing the cultural and linguistic diversity. At first glance, these qualitative criteria, that would know what part of the Programme Countries, or the benefit they receive. It is not. For evaluators, cultural and linguistic diversity is more related to economic criteria (changes in budgets invested by MEDIA in various countries, reinvestment rates, changes in the rate of training participants / country).

Finally, we find context indicators which focuses on the evolution of distribution and European market share.

Although much of these criteria may be similar, moreover, to qualitative criteria, we notice a very strong economic presence. We release a first observation, the politicians need to justify their passage to the governance of the program. As we were able to show it above, the qualitative criteria attached to more cultural criteria, take a longer temporality as those than the measure of the distribution of a film, for example.

Therefore, in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of their policies, Commissioners will communicate on return in the short and medium term on economic returns.

To illustrate this, we extracted from the lexicographical analysis we conducted, linguistic correlations and lexical occurrences in the economic field. This will allow us to see relationships that are built in the analyzed discourse and highlight the preponderance of economic therein.

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\(^5\) We'll take just one example here of Final evaluation of the MEDIA PLUS and MEDIA Training, directed by EURÉVAL - Technical rappot - November 2007, pp. 51-53
Graph 1. Linguistic correlations the word « instrument »

In this first chart, we can see the relationship and the use that is made between the terms of discourse. Thus, in the center we find the term "instrument", which is here, and generally in the jargon of the European Commission the key element through which political action takes place. The elements that are found on the left (blue) are terms which precede it, those on the left (pink) succeed him.

Table 3. Quotes extracts under the Graph 1

The extracts contained in Table 3 allow us to see the scope of the instruments within the speech. This is the example of the justification of the effectiveness of instruments for the economy. Indeed, as we can easily see from the quotations from texts of press releases analyzed in a systematic way the lexical
field used to illustrate about related instruments and economic. This allows us to draw another conclusion -linked to the current societal need to have everything, right away. Indeed, we can notice, since the advent of the Internet, everything accelerates. We have access to all information with a click, we can make reservations at the other end of the world with the same gesture. Similarly, it seems that politicians, representatives of the European Commission in this case, need to display a result at all costs. Their reputation and career at stake, this result should be at its best. Therefore, in times of crisis, the commissioners will communicate particularly on growth, employment and banking, which are treated as subjects / growth sectors from a communicative point of view.

Another element seems very important to support our previous remarks: the definition given to the sector by the European Commission.

Graph 2. Linguistic correlations the word « industry »

Graph 2 allows us to precisely locate this economic linguistic matrix. The audiovisual and film sector which is supported by this program is systematically identified with industry. Therefore, the most important occurrences are found in « developing the program industry », « media » in connection with « European industry ». This central element that is the industry induces economic vocabulary, and financial justifications.
Table 4. Quotes extracts under the Graph 2

However, looking at some extracts present in the Table 4, we can see the ambiguity of these discourses. Thus, what emerges is a strong presence of strategic within European programs.

By comparing these with the initial need that gave rise to this program, this is very relevant. Indeed, the Commission established this program in 1985 to meet the growing need of audiovisual programs and fictions of European television. From this point of view, put forward the strategic side seems very relevant. However, we can also find economic arguments, adding that this «industry», «present tremendous potential for economic development and employment» or it is «dynamic and competitive» to name only a selection each of these arguments.

We have seen so far that an evaluation of this type of program requires, firstly, verification of the fulfillment of objectives. Secondly we can only wonder about the program's effectiveness against stated objectives. And that is what the Commission appears to ask the providers that perform the studies. As for communication that is made, although a number of indicators are identified, the Commission will focus on economic indicators and efficiency.

We wanted, however, to confront some of the ideas conveyed by the Commission as the benefits and gains of the MEDIA program, the expectations of users to see if they recognize themselves. Once compiled this report, we can begin to explore solutions that are emerging as a result of this review.
Graph 3. Definition of the sector by professionals

On one side, what seems important to clarify is that interviewing professionals, there is a small part that defines the sector as an industry. This is apparent in mind these are the notions of "independent cinema" and "art film essay / art film", closely followed by the notion of "European co-production." We find this very interesting distinction, because it shows, in our view, the ambiguity of the sector and its professionals. In terms of the sector, as we have shown in Table 1, the MEDIA program will communicate on an industrial side, economic. In fact, it will focus the choice of projects on cultural criteria (which are only vaguely valued when communicating). Professionals, on the other, although they are mostly financial (producers, in search of profitability) will recognize the particular cultural capital industry, aesthetics, production independence. A strong element of the construction of a European cinematography and background work that the Commission did (but does not highlight) is this notion of "European co-production." This is an example that this program, like Eurimages, managed the construction of a pan-European business community.

Another element that emerges from the survey that we conducted is linked to the perception of the added value of the MEDIA program.
Graph 4. The added value of the MEDIA funding identified by professionals

Among the items recovered by the European Commission in communications materials, we find the added value of the MEDIA funding. This gain pays special attention to the macro-economic effects of this program.

The interviewed professionals, less sensitive to macro, have put first emphasis on transnational, and then on subsidiarity funds (see Graph 4). Conversely, it appears that for the latter, the long-term effects on the industry are not visible, or at least not valued as important. Thus, the conclusion we draw is that, in general, professionals see first the personal benefits they can derive, and second, only the benefits that this program could have on the entire sector.

Finally, among the professionals interviewed, most of the respondents felt that the main advantage that the MEDIA program is providing growth and employment.
Graph 5. Benefits of the MEDIA program

The Graph 5 shows in a clear way in our view, the impact of the Commission’s communication to professionals. Without denying their free will, we have the impression that they are imbued with the elements on which the Commission communicates to make them their own. To see this inconsistency simply pass these responses with those of Graph 3. Thus, we can easily see that in this graph (3) the area is not akin to an industry. In Graph 4, it participates in the development of the industry. This disparity in results is due, in our opinion, communication effects. Since the European Commission communicates primarily on major economic impact this program has on the industry, overall the professionals make their remarks, without wanting to verify or consolidate this hypothesis.

However, what seems interesting are the development of an almost equivalent SMS communications more qualitative criteria, such as the development of artistic creation and the construction of a European film. This highlights one hand the ambiguity of professionals on this program.

In conclusion, we wish to focus on the elements that unite, rather than those that divide. We have seen that in its construction, the MEDIA program seems balanced between economic and cultural, although in other communication effects are prosecuted.

Concerning professionals, whether those of the European Commission, or those of the audiovisual and film sector, they each pursue their own interests, and we can not charge them. However, what we retain is that the economic effects on which the Commission focuses not seem to meet the public's opinion. If this program proves effective enough on the fund and its operating mechanisms, it seems that the Commission should, perhaps, consider changing the way it communicates. To do this it could do so simply by integrating particularly the most qualitative elements of order, such as aesthetics,
construction of a European cinematography, to be more consistent on one hand with medium and objectives long term they have set and the other, with the perception of users professionals.

A final element seems to bring together all the professionals who responded to our questionnaire with the opinion of the Commission. This gathering element is that of networks.

Indeed, as we can see in Graph 6, the Commission shall communicate on networks, and their effectiveness at the micro and macro level. This is very clearly stated in Table 5, when the Commission talks about the effects that these networks could have on all structures and especially on the sector.
Finally, networks can be perennial collaborations, easy movement of projects and producers from one country to another. This increases cultural diversity, but also economic trade, investment and returns can be multiplied.

Effectivement, pour tous ces éléments, une temporalité devrait être prévue. Au fond, l’évolution de ce programme s’est faite progressivement jusque dans les années 2000, en intégrant des pays ayant globalement la même capacité financière, la même culture économique. Avec l’élargissement de l’Europe, les changements technologiques et les évolutions culturelles, nous avons besoin d’un traitement de fonds pour que les 34 pays associés au programme MEDIA trouvent un modus vivendi optimum, qui permettrait une meilleure efficacité des investissements. Cela demande beaucoup de temps pour le mettre en place et rendre les mesures opérationnelles. Cependant, en prenant de la hauteur sur le programme MEDIA, nous pouvons voir qu’il a parcouru déjà un long chemin depuis sa construction. Maintenant, il faut laisser le temps au temps, et permettre aux responsables politiques d’intégrer l’importance des critères qualitatifs et des retours des professionnels sur ce programme.

Indeed, for all of these, a temporality should be provided. Basically, the development of this program has been gradual until the 2000s, by integrating countries generally have the same financial capacity, the same economic culture. With the enlargement of Europe, technological change, cultural developments, we need treatment fund for the 34 countries involved in the MEDIA program are optimal modus vivendi that would allow greater efficiency of investments. It takes a lot of time to set up and make operational measures. However, taking the height of the MEDIA program, we can see that he has already come a long way since its construction. Now you have to let time take its course and allow policy makers to integrate the importance of qualitative criteria and feedback from professionals on this program.