

Weimar Declaration

Connecting the Dots

Towards a vital European Children's Film Culture

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Erfurt Declaration adopted at the 1st KIDS Regio Forum, 80 representatives from 24 countries attended the 3rd KIDS Regio Forum in Weimar and worked towards the Weimar Declaration to revise their work and ensuing demands from 2009.

The participants of the 3rd KIDS Regio Forum address this Declaration to regional, national and European politicians and policy officers as well as all associations and institutions connected to the film industry to do everything in their power to actively support the development, access, visibility and promotion of European children's film in the spirit of this Weimar Declaration.

In 2018 according to Eurostat the 28 EU member states had 512.7 million inhabitants of which around 15 % were younger than 15 years. The European Audiovisual Observatory lists an average of 1119 feature fiction films produced between 2014 and 2017 in the EU. In the same period there has been an average of annual 78 feature fiction film for children. This means a percentage of only 6.97 %¹.

Following up on the Erfurt Declaration 2009 there is a consensus among the 80 professionals from 24 countries- enforced and enabled with the help of the KIDS Regio Network - that the support of children's films with a special focus on original live action features is necessary **because:**

- These films form an essential part of the concept of **cultural diversity** and represent valuable means in terms of media literacy and cultural as well as personal education, especially in **transferring values**.
- **Original stories** have the power to move towards a new narrative that provides a wide variety of genre, subjects and styles as well as different types of storytelling.

European film has the ability to portray diversity, make it tangible for its (future) inhabitants and thereby foster **European identity**. It is agreed that forward looking cultural change is needed to lead to a state where watching children's films from various cultures becomes normality for young people. Children are the audience of today and tomorrow. They deserve multi-faceted high quality content that takes them, their needs, views and dreams seriously. Children's film functions as a cultural asset with high social relevance to get the young audience acquainted to both diverse cultures and the European Film.

It is therefore necessary to instigate strategic actions to give children's film more visibility and recognition to empower young people.

¹ Data provided by the European Children's Film Association (ECFA) in cooperation with Dr. Steffi Ebert from the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg.

Based on these principals, the participants of the 3rd KIDS Regio Forum agree on an agenda of 5 points, aiming at strengthening live action feature films for children:

1. Extend and improve Research & Data

- Carry out **comparable** research and collect data in all areas of European children's film including content, audiences, film literacy practices, production culture and circulation.
- Provide **mapping** for all areas of children's film and make it easily **accessible** on established websites (KIDS Regio/ECFA).
- Prompt the **European Audiovisual Observatory** to incorporate children's film as a category in all relevant research.

2. Emphasize Cooperations, Networks & Lobbying

- KIDS Regio and ECFA create formalised structures and build **strategic partnerships** to form a leading network representing children's media on regional, national and European level.
- Promote children's film as a meaningful cultural asset through a network of **advocates** within relevant European associations and institutions and appoint a political representative.
- **Project 15+**: Dedicate **at least 15 %** of funding, content in cinemas, on TV and platforms as well as in the academic curriculum of film schools to children's film.

3. Strengthen (Co-) Development & (Co-) Production

- Encourage the set-up of **Children's Film Screenwriting Programmes** which foster diverse storytelling for the young audience in many EU territories.
- Establish a **strategic infrastructure** which links co-development programmes with co-production and training in order to further develop the European children's film on a (trans-) regional/national level.
- Strengthen existing **Financing Forums** to ensure continuous (co-) development, (co-) production and financing of live-action feature films.

4. Reinforce Distribution & Marketing

- Create an infrastructure on a European level coordinating existing and implementing national initiatives which **provide access** for schools and children to European Film on a regular basis.
- Provide support for marketing strategies already in the development phase and incite the use of new and experimental ways including producers, distributors and exhibitors to **reach the young audience**.
- Introduce a **master's degree** on film marketing including seminars especially targeted at children's film as well as introducing a focus on children's film in existing training programmes.
- Produce and establish a **trademark opener** for European Children's Film screened in cinemas.

5. Enhance Education & Access

- Recognise film education and media for children as an **essential service** with the same status as any intellectual subject in schools, universities and training.
- **Provide training** for professionals including teachers and film makers on how to connect the young audience with film and meaningfully include them in the process of creating, commissioning and assessing films.
- Establish the cinema as **discovery space** and include **festivals** as agents and partners in providing access.

Working on this agenda will enable films for children to become more visible and more successful on the way to a situation in which making feature films for children is a natural and self-evident part of the European film culture and industry.

Weimar, June 28th 2019