

ACT STANDS BY AGORAEU’S BUDGET AND SCOPE

Brussels, 29 October 2026. The Association of Commercial Television and Video on Demand Services in Europe (ACT) calls on policymakers to protect AgoraEU’s budget and to preserve the broad and inclusive design of the Commission’s proposal.

ACT has strongly supported AgoraEU since it was tabled. It is a balanced, forward-looking and coherent approach to strengthening Europe’s media ecosystem. The Irish Presidency’s proposal to cut the programme’s budget by around 30% puts this ambition at risk. Proportionally the cut goes far beyond the reduction facing the EU budget as a whole, and comes as Europe seeks to strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of its media sector.

One of AgoraEU’s most important innovations is its inclusivity. For the first time, an EU programme brings non-news audiovisual and news media together in a single strand, open to the whole value chain: broadcasters, journalists, producers (affiliated and independent), distributors and cinemas. Audiovisual media services are among its direct beneficiaries. This is a welcome break with past approaches, which too often overlooked their contribution to media pluralism and cultural diversity, and drew lines between actors based on ownership rather than contribution. This distinction reflected a market that no longer exists.

The Commission's 2025 Media Outlook highlighted that growing concentration among major production groups ("super indies") and big tech, now dominate parts of the market, with operations and power exceeding those of national broadcasters.¹ Broadcasters, meanwhile, are often required to invest in and schedule independent production under EU and national rules, while being kept out of support schemes themselves. AgoraEU rightly moves past this asymmetry and sets the direction for European media policy: treating all those who contribute to Europe’s media ecosystem on an equal footing.

Budget pressure must not become an argument for rolling back the programme’s inclusivity. Amendments limiting eligibility to “independent production” would exclude the European media companies the programme was designed to bring in. In 2024, commercial broadcasters invested €24.6 billion in original productions, news and sport. Of that, €8.3 billion went to new external productions, and a further €4.5 billion went into acquiring and licensing European content.² This makes broadcasters a major source of funding for independent producers across Europe. Supporting independent production and keeping broadcasters eligible are therefore not competing objectives.

Member States have themselves recognised what is at stake. Just two weeks ago, the Council adopted conclusions on “inclusive democratic participation, and societal and community resilience”.³ They stress the importance of free, diverse and independent media backed by sustainable sources of financing. Cutting AgoraEU, the programme meant to deliver on this, would send the opposite message.

ACT therefore calls on policymaker to preserve both the Commission's proposed budget and the proposal's simple, open and inclusive design, by avoiding the exclusion of any category of actor from the programme’s scope.

¹ European Commission, Media Industry Outlook 2025, p. 36 and table 3.

² Oliver & Ohlbaum, At the heart of Europe’s audiovisual economy: how commercial broadcasters support growth, jobs, culture and trusted news

³ Council conclusions on inclusive democratic participation, and societal and community resilience