Beat: Arts

MIN.CULTURE CATHERINE PEGARD SIGNS A NEW EUROPEAN TREATY ON SERIES COPRODUCTION

TO SCALE UP AMBITIOUS DRAMA

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USPA NEWS - A few weeks before the prestigious Cannes Film Festival, which will take place from 12 to 23 May, France's new Minister of Culture, Catherine Pegard, has signed together with European partners the new Council of Europe Convention on Series Co Production during the Series Mania festival in Lille on 26 March. This article is written by our accredited senior cultural correspondent, based on information from official French and European institutions, and is not a report on site. According to the ministries, "the new European convention on the co production of series constitutes the first international legal framework devoted to the independent co production of series for television and streaming platforms", opening the way for deeper cooperation between European producers to "encourage the creation of ambitious series on a European scale". The convention aims to simplify cross border procedures, clarify partners' obligations and ensure a fairer sharing of rights and revenues in a market increasingly shaped by global platforms.

This article is written by our accredited senior cultural correspondent and is based on information released by the French Ministry of Culture, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and other official cultural institutions. This is not a report on site, and it draws on her long standing expertise, data driven insights and intellectual intuition to put this new European framework for series co production into perspective, at a time when Catherine Pegard has just been appointed Minister of Culture, succeeding Rachida Dati, who left the government in February to focus on her campaign for the Paris mayoral election.

A NEW EUROPEAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR SERIES

France's Minister of Culture, Catherine Pegard, and the Minister Delegate for Europe, Benjamin Haddad, have welcomed the signing of the new European Convention on Series Co Production, adopted under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Signed on 26 March during the Séries Mania festival in Lille, the text creates the first international legal framework dedicated to the independent co production of series for television and streaming platforms.

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CULTURAL DIVERSITY, SOVEREIGNTY AND THE ROLE OF THE CNC

For Paris, this new instrument fits into a broader European strategy to defend cultural diversity and cultural sovereignty at a time when series have become a major tool of cultural influence worldwide. It prolongs the commitments made since 2021 through the implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS) Directive, which strengthened obligations for broadcasters and platforms to invest in European works and reinforced the role of national funds such as the CNC in supporting ambitious drama series.

France also presents the convention as a form of recognition of the "genuine French series industry" that has emerged over the past decade, backed by public support and increased investment from broadcasters and platforms, and now increasingly visible on export markets. For the government, the new framework should consolidate this ecosystem by making it easier for French producers to partner with their European counterparts and to finance large scale projects aimed at international audiences.

CATHERINE PEGARD AND BENJAMIN HADDAD'S MESSAGES

"The European convention on the co production of series underlines the central role of cooperation in Europe in favour of bold, memorable series for all audiences," Catherine Pegard is quoted as saying, insisting that "this creativity is one of the strengths of our cultural model and must be further supported, particularly in the context of the next European budget." Benjamin Haddad, Minister Delegate for Europe, added that the convention "reminds us, as Europeans, of how much we owe to a shared imagination and common narratives", noting that with nine European states already among the first signatories, including France, Italy, Poland and

Greece, it “will play a key role in building a genuine European coordination space for audiovisual creation.”

Both ministers thanked Council of Europe Secretary General Alain Berset for choosing the Series Mania Lille festival as the venue for the opening ceremony, describing the event as an emblem of “the vitality, quality and international reach of European series”. By anchoring the signing in the heart of a major professional forum, the French government and the Council of Europe also send a signal to producers and creators that this convention is designed as a practical tool, not just a symbolic gesture.

Beyond the legal wording, this new convention will be judged on a simple criterion: whether it genuinely helps European producers to finance, co produce and circulate ambitious series in a market dominated by global giants. For France, which has long bet on cultural diversity and public support through the CNC, the Lille signing is less an end point than a test of Europe’s ability to turn principles into concrete opportunities for its creators.

THE CNC SEEKS TO REPAIR ITS IMAGE WITH SUPPORT FROM THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE
The National Centre for Cinema and the Moving Image (CNC) is France’s public agency in charge of regulating, financing and promoting film, audiovisual works, animation and video games, currently chaired by Gaetan Bruel, former chief of staff to Rachida Dati and successor to Dominique Boutonnat, who resigned in 2024 after being convicted of sexual assault. Its support fund expenditure is expected to reach 810.3 million euros in 2026, 15 million more than in 2025 and 16.3% higher than in 2019, underlining both the scale of the resources it manages and the political scrutiny now focused on how this money is used.

At the same time, the CNC itself is emerging from a period of turbulence that has forced the institution to defend both its model and its legitimacy. During a high profile hearing before the National Assembly’s Committee on Cultural Affairs on 14 October 2025, CNC president Gaetan Bruel insisted that the French support system is “ambitious and virtuous” and “does not cost the taxpayer a single euro”, recalling that the organisation is funded by levies on the sector rather than by the state budget and that its tax revenues have in fact grown more slowly than inflation and industry costs over the past decade.

THE CNC UNDER PRESSURE TO DEFEND AND MODERNISE ITS SUPPORT MODEL
Gaetan Bruel, CNC’s boss, also framed the planned 50 million euro transfer from the CNC’s resources in the 2026 finance bill as an act of solidarity with strained public finances, while warning of the fragility of cinemas, distributors and public broadcasters facing changing audience habits, competition from low cost, AI driven content and an increasingly aggressive global tax credit race. In earlier remarks to the Senate, he had reminded lawmakers that the CNC, born in 1946 in the wake of the Blum Byrnes agreements, underpins a model that has allowed France to remain a major cinema and audiovisual power with record post Covid admissions, a strong market share for French films and a dense network of local theatres without drawing on the state’s general budget

Against this backdrop, the new European convention on series co production also offers the CNC an opportunity to restore and modernise its image: as a regulator capable of responding to the five “ruptures” identified by its president cultural, technological, societal, territorial and geopolitical while continuing to defend France’s cultural sovereignty and to adapt its tools to a landscape transformed by platforms, social media and artificial intelligence. Whether the Lille agreement becomes a concrete lever for that renewal, or remains one instrument among many in a contested ecosystem, will largely depend on how quickly its promises translate into real projects, real audiences and real support for the professionals who keep Europe’s series industry alive. Source: ministry of Culture, CNC,Public Senate, National Assembly

As a newsroom that takes pride in including our accredited wheelchair?using senior political and cultural reporter, our editorial team is particularly attentive to questions of inclusion, accessibility and the place of disabled people in France’s cultural life. This perspective will guide our coverage of the new Minister of Culture’s agenda, and we will closely monitor whether future policies and budgets effectively improve access to culture for the 17% of the population living with disabilities and for all audiences currently left at the margins of major institutions.

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