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Leading figures from European film industry meet with EC Commissioners for cinema roundtable

26 September, 2012 | By [Martin Blaney](#)

Studio Babelsberg CEO Carl Woebcken, BFI Director Amanda Nevill, and European Film Promotion's president Christian Lemche were among the key movers and shakers invited to a high-level roundtable meeting in Brussels on Tuesday to discuss how the EU should support the European film industry.

The event had been organised by Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou [pictured], responsible for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, and her colleague Antonio Tajani, EC Vice-President and responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship.

Other participants included Dominique Malet, Director of Cofiloisirs, IFCIC Director Geraldine Segond, Laurent Vennier of the CNC's financial and legal department, and Kristian Kreyes of Brandenburg's ILB Bank .

With discussion on the makeup of Creative Europe in full swing as the industry awaits the European Parliament's report on the framework programme, the EC wanted to use this meeting to focus on a number of questions shaping the industry's future such as how to strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs and facilitate their access to finance as well as ways to promote competitive production facilities across Europe and help to develop the advanced technologies that will drive cinema in the future. In addition, discussion revolved around the question of encouraging cluster networking and cross-sectoral cooperation.

Speaking exclusively to ScreenDaily, EFP's Lemche said that "a good part of the meeting went with discussing the guarantee facility. From a European Film Promotion point of view, I thought it was important to hear that it is the intention that the guarantee facility should be open not only as an instrument for productions, but to a broad range of projects - including new distribution initiatives, for example."

Meanwhile, Studio Babelsberg's Woebcken told Screen that the two-and-a-half hour gathering had been "a very positive meeting. What was encouraging for us is that the European Union wants to support the improvement of collaboration between two or three European countries on productions. I doubt whether the discussion will have any effect on the Cinema Communication [which has to be renewed by the end of this year], but Commissioners Vassiliou and Tajani called on us to submit our views on how the European film industry could be improved in written form."

In addition, Commissioner Vassiliou pointed out at a press conference in Brussels today (Wed) when talking about Creative Europe's proposed loan guarantee facility that "it is also crucial that the cultural community and the national, regional and local authorities continue to make the most of all opportunities available at EU level, in particular - and let's not forget about that - those of the Cohesion Policy funds."

Indeed, the significance of using the EU's structural funds for cultural funds had been set out in a study commissioned by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education from KEA European Affairs and presented at a committee session on 19 September.

This cinema roundtable came just a week after EC President Jose Barroso met with a group of European artists and intellectuals, including Romanian director Radu Mihaileanu, Belgian visual artist Jan Fabre, UK arts producer Rosie Fenton, Hungarian writer György Konrad and ABBA's Björn Ulvaeus, to share his views on culture and the future of Europe.

"My vision of culture is not culture as an instrument. As science, culture is a way for people's fulfillment," Barroso said, proposing that the Commission organise an Agora on Culture from 2013. "Let's create platforms to communicate where women and men from culture debate Europe and where we all engage with citizens in a serious conversation about the future of Europe."

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- Anonymous | 26-Sep-2012 5:30 pm

Funding organisations need to do more to nurture talent. Currently they just take the money and line their pockets..... One org has a contract where they own the script taken for development for 10 years... Is that ok?

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