

JOINT STATEMENT - IMMERSIVE MEDIA FUNDING

AgoraEU Should Explicitly Recognise Immersive Media to Strengthen Europe's Cultural, Creative and Technological Leadership

A joint statement from European organisations working in immersive media, arts, culture and creative technologies.

XR4Europe and the undersigned organisations welcome the European Commission's proposal for AgoraEU as the European Union's future flagship programme supporting culture, media and civil society. We further welcome the European Parliament's position that "investment in democratic resilience and cultural vitality is an integral part of the Union's strategic autonomy" and its call for an increased AgoraEU budget of €10.72 billion.

AgoraEU provides an important opportunity to strengthen Europe's cultural diversity, democratic resilience and international competitiveness. We believe one important opportunity remains to further strengthen the programme by ensuring that extended reality and immersive media are explicitly recognised in the implementation of the MEDIA+ strand.

The legislative proposal for AgoraEU already recognises immersive reality as an integral component of Europe's media ecosystem. It defines media as including "films, series, video games, news and information, immersive reality and multimedia", alongside traditional broadcasting, publishing and audiovisual services.

This recognition reflects the European Commission's wider policy framework. The European Media Industry Outlook 2025 identifies immersive media as one of the media sectors demonstrating sustained growth, while the European Strategy on Web 4.0 and Virtual Worlds recognises extended reality as a strategic technology for Europe's future digital economy.

However, this recognition is not reflected in the currently defined structure of AgoraEU's MEDIA+ strand. Dedicated intervention areas are identified for audiovisual production, journalism and video games, yet immersive media is not explicitly represented despite already being recognised by the Commission as a distinct media sector.

Aligning the implementation of AgoraEU with the Commission's own definition of media and strategy will strengthen both policy coherence and the impact of the programme itself.

A decade of European leadership

Europe has spent more than a decade establishing global leadership in immersive media for arts, culture, heritage, education and games. European creators, studios, festivals, and museums have become internationally recognised pioneers of immersive storytelling, cultural heritage experiences, location-based entertainment and interactive media.

Unlike many digital industries where Europe remains dependent on non-European platforms and technologies, immersive cultural production is an area where Europe already enjoys genuine international leadership. This represents an important opportunity, not only for cultural leadership, but for technological sovereignty. As digital media continues to evolve, Europe must leverage the originality, quality, and diversity of its creative content, experiences, and intellectual property to strengthen its influence over the development of media technologies. Immersive media is one of Europe's strongest vectors towards achieving both goals.

Extended reality should also be recognised not simply as another creative discipline competing for cultural funding, but as an enabling technology that amplifies the impact of investments made across the wider cultural ecosystem.

Immersive technologies allow museums to extend collections beyond their physical walls, libraries to create new ways of exploring archives, heritage institutions to reconstruct inaccessible sites, performing arts organisations to develop new audience experiences, and cinemas to evolve into venues for location-based and interactive cultural exhibition. They improve accessibility for audiences facing geographical, physical, linguistic or economic barriers while enabling new forms of participation, education and cultural engagement.

Investment in immersive media therefore strengthens many other investments made through AgoraEU. It increases the accessibility, reach, sustainability and long-term value of Europe's wider cultural and creative sectors rather than competing with them.

From creation to audiences at scale

Europe has successfully invested in immersive content creation. The next challenge is ensuring that immersive works can reach audiences at scale.

The MEDIA+ strand rightly identifies creation, circulation, distribution and audience access as essential components of a healthy media ecosystem. The same ecosystem approach should be applied to immersive media. This includes supporting the adaptation of museums, cinemas, libraries, galleries and cultural venues through immersive technologies, equipment, workforce training and exhibition infrastructure, alongside touring programmes and European marketplaces connecting creators with exhibitors.

Europe's greatest competitive advantage is its audience. With more than 440 million citizens representing exceptional cultural and linguistic diversity, the European Union provides an unparalleled environment for developing immersive cultural experiences. Expanding exhibition opportunities across Member States will simultaneously improve access to culture, strengthen regional cultural infrastructure and create larger, more sustainable markets for European creators.

Experience from previous European and national funding programmes also demonstrates why explicit recognition matters. Where immersive media has been recognised as a dedicated funding area, ecosystems have flourished. Conversely, where dedicated immersive funding has disappeared and support has been divided exclusively between film and video game categories, immersive projects have frequently fallen outside the eligibility criteria of both. The result has been arrested ecosystem development despite growing demand and demonstrated creative excellence. AgoraEU presents an opportunity to avoid repeating this unintended consequence.

OUR RECOMMENDATION

We encourage the European institutions to ensure that immersive media is explicitly recognised throughout the implementation of the MEDIA+ strand:

1. Preferred approach: create a dedicated Immersive Media action within the MEDIA+ strand.
2. At a minimum: expand the existing Video Games action into Video Games and Extended Reality, reflecting terminology already used across the European Commission.

This would not represent a new policy direction. Rather, it would align AgoraEU with existing European policy, reinforce one of Europe's fastest-growing media sectors, and strengthen the programme's own ambitions for cultural diversity, accessibility, democratic participation, innovation and strategic autonomy.

As organisations representing Europe's immersive media ecosystem, we remain committed to working constructively with the European institutions to ensure that AgoraEU becomes the world's leading programme for culture, media and civil society, and that Europe continues to lead globally in the development of immersive experiences that embody European creativity, values and technological excellence.

SINCERELY,



XR4Europe



Eirmersive



XRBB



I3D Europe



EDFVR eV



Fraunhofer HHI



ESPRONCEDA



IMMERSION



VRINN



CIIC



XR Wallonia HITT



XR Hub Bavaria



NewImages



INVR.SPACE



XR Must



IMMENSIVA



KHORA



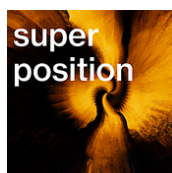
GLUK



Virtual Horizons



MIIL



Superposition



CORRESPONDANCES DIGITALES



IMMERSIVA XR