[FR] CNC facilitates initial film release via other distribution methods until cinemas reopen

IRIS 2021-5:1/29

Amélie Blocman
Légipresse

“Between mid-May and the beginning of summer, we will create a timetable for the gradual resumption of cultural activities,” said French president Emmanuel Macron on 31 March 2021 during his televised address announcing new restrictions on movement within France. The following day, the prime minister told parliament, “This reopening will take place as soon as the health situation allows it. The government will present this reopening strategy to parliament in due course.” Meanwhile, with more than 400 French and foreign feature films awaiting the reopening of cinemas, which have been closed since 31 October 2020, screen congestion appears inevitable.

“It is vital that each film reaches its audience,” said Dominique Boutonnat, president of the *Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée* (National Centre for Cinema and the Moving Image – CNC). With this in mind, on 1 April 2021, the CNC adopted an emergency measure in order to make it easier to release new films outside cinemas. The films concerned will be able to be shown for the first time via a distribution network that does not include the cinemas for which they were originally intended, without the need to pay back CNC funding. Unlike the similar measure put in place last spring, this one-off exemption will not be limited to video-on-demand, but will cover all forms of distribution, including DVD, television, subscription platforms, etc.

Examined on a case-by-case basis, applications will be discussed with industry professionals and can be submitted to the CNC as long as cinemas remain closed and up to one month after they reopen. However, support will not be granted on the basis of income generated outside cinemas, since this will remain dependent on the film being screened in cinemas.

The CNC president pointed out that this measure does not bring into question media chronology or the changes to exploitation windows currently being discussed within the film sector. If necessary, it could be supplemented with an agreement between distributors setting out a film release schedule, subject to the approval of the *Autorité de la concurrence* (competition authority), which the *Médiateur du cinéma* (cinema ombudsman) has asked for an opinion on such an arrangement.

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

Délibération n° 2021/CA/07 du 31 mars 2021 modifiant le règlement général des aides financières du Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée

https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000043336210

Decision no. 2021/CA/07 of 31 March 2021 amending the general rules on financial aid of the National Centre for Cinema and the Moving Image

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026