

[FR] Proposals for promoting France's audiovisual heritage

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The *Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée* (National Centre for Cinema and the Moving Image - CNC) entrusted Michel Gomez, former general delegate of the Mission Cinéma of the City of Paris, with the task of evaluating the conditions for the conservation, exploitation and promotion of France's audiovisual heritage. His report reveals a paradox: an abundant audiovisual offering but relatively limited public access to works over 20 years old. The main obstacles identified are economic (narrow marketplace), technical (obsolete media, costly digitisation) and legal (non-renewed copyright contracts, orphan works, liquidation of undertakings leading to loss of rights and material) in nature. The author recommends a structured heritage policy: extending the CNC's remit to include audiovisual heritage, an interoperable database, a high-priority digitisation plan (for works dating from 1980 to 2005), conservation standards and measures to promote the dissemination of audiovisual heritage, particularly as part of the obligations of on-demand audiovisual media services. On the legal front, he specifically suggests that the framework should be simplified and made more secure via rights renewal procedures, training for liquidators, and mechanisms for intervention by collective management organisations and the CNC for orphan works.

On the subject of unclaimed works, the report recommends defining a graduated intervention framework to prevent works from "disappearing" and no longer being able to be exploited. The private sector should be heavily involved by offering producers, distributors or publishers active in the market the possibility of taking over works or catalogues in liquidation for exploitation, with all the necessary guarantees for any authors who subsequently come forward. In the absence of a private buyer, the collecting societies (SACD, SCAM, Procirep) could intervene on a temporary basis as provisional agents to preserve their members' rights and manage the exploitation of these works.

Among the actions that could be envisaged, the report suggests amending the intellectual property code's provisions on unclaimed works (Article L.135-1 *et seq.*) by opening up the commercial exploitation of these works to private players, subject to expert appraisal of the EU Directive on orphan works, with full remuneration guarantees when a rightful owner emerges.

Culture Minister Rachida Dati said: “This is the first time that the subject of France’s audiovisual heritage has been addressed in a comprehensive way, and I am delighted that Michel Gomez’s report sets out concrete and ambitious proposals that I support in principle. I’m thinking in particular of his idea of extending the CNC’s support activities to include audiovisual heritage, setting up CNC funding for the restoration and dissemination of this heritage, and developing the distribution of audiovisual heritage via the INA’s Madelen platform in particular”.

État des lieux et propositions sur le patrimoine audiovisuel français, Rapport de la mission de Michel Gomez, remis au CNC, octobre 2025

<https://www.cnc.fr/documents/36995/156431/Rapport+Michel+Gomez+sur+le+patrimoine+audiovisuel+français.pdf/902c1703-7e26-441c-191e-b7154e371651?t=1760530928455>

Current situation and proposals on France's audiovisual heritage, report by Michel Gomez submitted to the CNC, October 2025

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