



Press conference of 1 October 2026

Cinema and audiovisual:
the *Autorité de la concurrence*
issues an opinion on
competition in the talent
representation sector

OPINION 26-A-06



OUTLINE

1. Background
2. How the talent representation sector works
3. The structure and competitive dynamics of the sector
 - High concentration
 - Strong network effects
 - Other economic characteristics
4. The recommendations made by the *Autorité de la concurrence*



PART 1

Background

BACKGROUND

Request

Considering that economic violence fell within the substantive scope of its work, the **commission of inquiry of the French National Assembly** (*Assemblée nationale*) into violence in the film, audiovisual, live performance, fashion and advertising sectors (chaired by Sandrine Rousseau, with Erwan Balanant as rapporteur) asked the Autorité de la concurrence for an opinion.

It is the first time that an administrative authority has examined this sector in such **depth**.

Methodology

The *Autorité* **consulted a number of stakeholders** during the inquiry:

- ➔ via questionnaires sent to a number of agencies and to the main associations representing artists, producers and casting directors;
- ➔ via hearings during the enquiry or the final hearing before the Board.

In particular, the *Autorité* **heard**:

- ➔ agencies such as Adéquat and UBBA;
- ➔ key sector associations such as SFAAL, ADA, USPA and UPC*;
- ➔ artists such as Guillaume Gallienne and Denis Podalydès;
- ➔ leading broadcasters, including Groupe Canal Plus, Netflix and France TV.

* Syndicat Français des Agents Artistiques et Littéraires, Association des Acteur.ices, Union syndicale de la production audiovisuelle, Union des producteurs de cinéma





PART 2

How the talent representation sector works

HOW THE TALENT REPRESENTATION SECTOR WORKS

The role of the talent agent

The French Labour Code defines the role of the talent agent as consisting of “*receiving a mandate, in return for payment, from one or more performing artists for the purpose of securing work for those artists and representing their professional interests*”.

In recent years, access to the profession has substantially expanded (no licence to practise required since 2010, register maintained by the French Ministry of Culture abolished in 2016).

Key role

- ➔ **developing artists’ professional careers** (seeking artistic projects, establishing contact with sector operators);
- ➔ **providing support** (maintaining artists’ visibility among sector operators, advising artists on artistic choices);
- ➔ **negotiating artists’ employment contracts** with producers.

Both producers and casting directors emphasise the importance of agents’ work in ensuring artists’ **visibility** and **recruitment**.



Talent agents are a **key interface in the sector** and maintain close relationships with producers responsible for recruiting artists, as well as with casting directors.

HOW THE TALENT REPRESENTATION SECTOR WORKS



The contractual relationship between agent and artist

Agency contracts are **most often verbal and based on a principle of exclusivity**. In practice, however, an artist may terminate their agency contract with their agent at any time.

Certain aspects of talent agents' remuneration is governed by the French Labour Code, which caps their **commission at 10%** of their artists' gross remuneration (since 1971).

The **10% cap appears to be perceived as both a maximum and a minimum (focal point)**, with artists unaware that more favourable terms could be negotiated.

In practice, producers pay the commission to agents on artists' behalf. As a result, artists have little or no awareness they are paying the commission, making it effectively invisible despite its impact on their earnings.

HOW THE TALENT REPRESENTATION SECTOR WORKS

The impact of the economic environment in the film and audiovisual industry on talent agents' work

Talent agents' work **depends largely on the dynamism of the film and audiovisual industry** and, in particular, on the financing of productions.

In France, financing is based on the principle that broadcasters and distributors downstream finance producers upstream. Since 2021, the inclusion of foreign on-demand audiovisual media services, such as Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon Prime Video, in the French financing system **has increased the proportion of big-budget productions in the French film and audiovisual ecosystem, to the detriment of lower-budget productions.**



The economic climate benefits the largest talent agencies, as major productions tend to turn to agencies with the largest and most sought-after talent rosters.

A director's chair is positioned on a dark, reflective floor in a dimly lit room. The chair has a wooden frame and a black fabric backrest. In the background, there are red curtains and some out-of-focus equipment, suggesting a film set or a stage.

PART 3

The structure and competitive dynamics of the sector

THE STRUCTURE AND COMPETITIVE DYNAMICS OF THE SECTOR

High concentration around two agencies

The sector is highly concentrated around two agencies:

- the Adéquat/Artmedia group;
- to a lesser extent, UBBA.

The remainder comprises a small number of mid-sized agencies (with revenues of over €1 million) and smaller agencies generating less than €100,000 in revenue.



This concentration has negative consequences for the sector as a whole:

- ➔ It **creates bottlenecks** in the artist casting process, with enquiries concentrated among the two leading agencies (longer lead times, less secure contracts and potentially higher production costs).
- ➔ It may **reduce access to artists for less established directors and producers**, as the leading agencies may be less inclined to respond to enquiries from less well-known operators.
- ➔ It may **give rise to conflicts of interest**, as larger agencies may be more inclined to prioritise certain clients over others.

THE STRUCTURE AND COMPETITIVE DYNAMICS OF THE SECTOR

Strong network effects

Agents act as intermediaries, connecting artists, who approach them to secure roles in film and audiovisual projects, with producers, who rely on their services to identify and engage suitable talent.

Two-sided market

- ➔ The more artists an agency represents, particularly high-profile artists, the more attractive that agency becomes to other artists. The same dynamic applies to producers.
- ➔ At the same time, producers tend to favour agencies representing a large number of artists or highly sought-after talent.
- ➔ As a result, larger agencies attract more artists and producers, further strengthening their appeal and position as key players in the sector.

Achieving critical mass is a major challenge for agencies, and it is difficult for new entrants or small agencies to expand in the face of established operators.



THE STRUCTURE AND COMPETITIVE DYNAMICS OF THE SECTOR

Other economic characteristics



Information asymmetries

The *Autorité* noted the existence of **information asymmetries regarding casting opportunities**. Combined with the principle of agents' exclusive representation, **artists are further inclined to turn to the largest agencies**, which have extensive networks of producers, in order to maximise their opportunities to secure roles.

The importance of cost control

Faced with declining budgets, **producers are increasingly inclined to turn to larger agencies** with extensive talent rosters, in order to control their costs and maximise their chances of finding the ideal profile.

Significant movement of artists towards larger agencies

Once they have established a degree of recognition, **artists frequently move to larger agencies**. This trend benefits these larger agencies, **which are able to take on these artists without having borne the significant costs** involved in developing their careers.

Lastly, the *Autorité* identified several economic factors, such as the **increase in the number of big-budget productions** and the **growing complexity of agency contracts**, which strengthen the appeal of larger agencies.



PART 4

The recommendations
made by the *Autorité
de la concurrence*

THE PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD BY THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY



Introduction of professional certification and increase in agents' training requirements

The *Autorité* considers that while such measures would further professionalise the role of talent agent, they **would not help to alleviate the sector's high level of concentration and the resulting negative consequences.**

Actors' access to productions

The *Autorité* notes that **mechanisms exist to facilitate direct contact** between artists and producers or casting directors, and recommends introducing incentives to encourage wider take-up by operators.

For example:

- making public funding conditional on open castings;
- increasing public funding where castings include new talent;
- requiring the publication of public information on roles being cast;
- introducing diversity clauses in producers' contracts.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE *AUTORITÉ DE LA CONCURRENCE*



Remuneration structure

Purpose of the cap

Despite the potential adverse effects of the 10% fee cap, the Autorité acknowledges that **it may be justified**. In this case, the cap was introduced to address abuses affecting artists who were in a weaker position vis-à-vis their agents. **Given the sector's current high level of concentration, there is no guarantee that similar abuses would not recur if the cap were removed.**

Updating the cap

Removing the cap would have uncertain effects and could lead to higher commission, particularly benefiting the largest agencies.

However, updating the level of the cap and informing stakeholders that commission rates may be set below 10% could help to mitigate some of the negative effects observed in the sector (the cap has never been revised since 1971 and the 10% rate is perceived as a reference).

THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE *AUTORITÉ DE LA CONCURRENCE*

Other recommendations

Better information for artists

The *Autorité* recommends **improving the information provided to artists on the terms of their contracts**, including the services provided by their agents, remuneration arrangements and termination conditions.

This would enable artists to discuss these matters, assess the services actually provided by their agents and compare them with those offered by competing agents, **thereby strengthening competition**.

In this regard, the *Autorité* encourages agents to **adopt written agency contracts as standard practice**.

Monitoring by the *Autorité*

Lastly, the *Autorité* recalls that:

- ➡ it may **use its *ex post* enforcement powers** at any time in the event of anticompetitive practices, whether agreements or abuses of a dominant position
- ➡ it may also **take action *ex ante* through merger control** (e.g. mergers or other forms of consolidation between talent agencies).

