

World politics, economics, music, sports, and cinema in 2026



What does 2026 hold in store for us in world politics, economics, music, sports, and cinema? Tec de Monterrey specialists discuss this year's trends.

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What does 2026 hold in store for us in world politics, economics, music, sports, cinema, and literature?

2026 is shaping up to be a key year for observing the evolution of **processes** that are already transforming politics, the economy, the climate, and even entertainment.

Tecnológico de Monterrey specialists discuss **trends and key aspects** they foresee for this year with the **Tec's news site CONECTA**.

US President Donald Trump at a press conference explaining the capture of Nicolás Maduro, President of Venezuela, on January 3, 2026. Photo: AFP



International politics: Widespread tensions and conflicts

On the international politics scene, **the year began with Venezuela**: the armed incursion of the **United States** into the country and the **kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro**.

According to international policy experts at Tec de Monterrey, this issue will continue to raise questions about regional and global geopolitics that will be widely discussed in the coming weeks and months.

Professor Gabriela de la Paz points out that we will have to see what actually happens with the Venezuelan government: *"There is a discrepancy between what (President) Trump and (Secretary of State) Marco Rubio have said about what they want to do"*.

She goes on to say that the Venezuela case also lends weight to other issues, such as US President Donald Trump's often-stated intention to take **control of Greenland**.

"The precedent also highlights the situation in Greenland, where Trump has just appointed a new envoy to press his request", she says.

*US President Donald Trump and Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.
Photo: AFP*



Professor [Iliana Rodríguez Santibáñez](#) points out that, general speaking, it will be crucial to continue addressing conflicts in 2026 that were not resolved in 2025.

"2026 may be a fresh year but it's already tainted; every decision adds to or detracts from stability".

She reminds us, for example, that The Economist's The World Ahead 2025 series had already predicted a **2026 marked by high uncertainty and realignment of power.**

"It remains to be seen whether these conflicts of attrition will continue or whether we will see purposeful moves toward serious ceasefires and negotiations".

Here are some of the international issues that our experts say we should keep an eye on this year, along with their current status:

- **Venezuela:** *Uncertainty over political direction and government following Maduro's kidnapping.*

*"The **Monroe Doctrine** is becoming a topic of discussion again. Doctrines do not expire. And this was the most important doctrine for the United States for almost 100 years", says De La Paz.*

*"**Trump reaffirms this idea of spheres of influence**, which would seem to leave the way ahead clear for **Russia and China** in their regions. Immediate action wouldn't be taken in any event", she offers.*

- **Ukraine:** *Expectations of continued war or a possible ceasefire in 2026 negotiated with the United States, Russia, Ukraine, and European or Arab mediators, based in a neutral European country.*
- **Outlook for Gaza:** *Expectations regarding sustaining an extended ceasefire supervised by the UN or by a multinational Arab force.*
- **Escalation in the Red Sea:** *Risks of attacks on commercial vessels and military response from naval powers with a direct impact on global trade routes.*
- **Indo-Pacific region:** *Tensions over possible military exercises by the United States, Japan, and Australia around Taiwan and the South China Sea in response to Chinese maneuvers.*



Paramedics walk over debris in front of a house and garage damaged by Russian bombing in Zaporizhia, Ukraine, on December 19, 2025. / Photo: DMYTRO SMOLIENKO / NurPhoto / NurPhoto via AFP

Democracy, ballot boxes, and disinformation: A political laboratory

According to Iliana Rodríguez, **2026 will also be a testing year for democracies** with elections taking place in different regions and a complex digital environment.

“It will be a democratic laboratory”. According to the specialist, there will be a new cycle of elections in several regions that will test the resilience of institutions in the face of social fatigue, populism, and misinformation.

And she envisages scenarios such as:

- *Campaigns in which the political center will try not to disappear amid the radicalism of the extremes.*
- *Electoral courts subjected to the most rigorous scrutiny.*
- *Media torn between the speed of networks and the responsibility to verify information.*

“These processes may result in a new equilibrium or they may consolidate more authoritarian leaders who are wary of international law and its norms, of a free press, and of the courts; or they may give way to a generation of leaders who understand that legitimacy is not won at the ballot box alone”.

Arising from this democratic laboratory, some of the events to take into account will be:

- **Elections in Latin America and Europe:** *Elections between illiberal projects and more institutionalist proposals.*
- **Election observation: The role of the OAS, the European Union, and the African Union** *as observers in high-risk processes.*
- **Network regulation: Laws designed to limit bots and misinformation in campaigns,** *inspired by debates in the EU and the United States.*
- **Constitutional rulings: Judgments that prevent forced re-elections or last-minute rule changes.**

Economic outlook for 2026: Interest rates

*“2026 is shaping up to be a year **of adjustment and transition** in the global economy”,* explains **Francisco Orozco**, professor of finance at Tecnológico de Monterrey and head of the Monterrey Region FAIR Center.

After a period of high inflation and restrictive monetary policies, central banks are beginning to change their stance, while artificial intelligence is starting to have more visible effects on business models, employment, and investment.

Interest rates: More accessible, but cautious, financing

One of the factors that will shape 2026 is the change in the interest rate cycle. *“Central banks have started lowering interest rates.”*

According to Orozco, this environment involves:

- **Lower financing costs,** *which facilitate investment projects.*

- Greater dynamism in **mergers, acquisitions**, and financial markets.
- Gradual reactivation of certain productive sectors.

However, he warns that the adjustment does not come without risk. *“Inflation is still knocking at the door”*.

Illustrative image of AI in finance / Photo by AYTUG CAN SENCAR / ANADOLU / Anadolu via AFP



Artificial intelligence: Efficiency, costs, and the labor market

In 2026, artificial intelligence will stop being a promise and will establish itself as a key economic tool. *“The use of artificial intelligence in business has become established.”*

Its main economic impacts include:

- Process **automation** and reduction of operating costs.

- Adjustments to staffing levels with fewer hires in administrative areas.
- Changes in the **work formats** and skills the market will demand.

“This speaks to the change in educational models and future jobs”.



Sports in 2026: Soccer World Cup, Checo Pérez's return, and the Central American Games

The New Year holds a lot in store as far as sports are concerned:

- *The soccer World Cup in Mexico, the United States, and Canada*
- *Checo Pérez's return to Formula 1 on the Cadillac team*
- *Winter Olympic Games*
- *Central American and Caribbean Games Santo Domingo 2026*
- *Flag football world championship*
- *World Baseball Classic*

Sergio Pérez will race with the new Cadillac team in Formula 1 this year.

Photo: AFP



Tec graduate and sports journalist Antonio Rosique said that diver Osmar Olvera is among the Mexicans expected to win a medal at the Central American Games.

*“Osmar (Olvera) **is almost guaranteed a podium finish**, and whatever success may come his way in pairs with (Juan) Celaya. Other important names to follow are Randall Willars and Alejandra Estudillo”.*

It is also worth noting that Mexico could do very well in the World Baseball Classic.

“The World Baseball Classic is highly contested because the United States is very strong, Japan is a two-time world champion, and the usual favorites are in there: the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela.

“But Mexico is also highly motivated by the achievements of Andrés Muñoz, Alejandro Kirk, and Randy Arozarena”, he says.

Climate in 2026: The year to move from commitments to action

“2026 has to be a year for putting words into action”, explains **Luis Fernández Carril**, Academic Manager of Sustainability at Ruta Azul (Blue Route), Tecnológico de Monterrey’s Sustainability and Climate Change Plan, and the Tec’s representative to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Fire in Ierapetra, Greece, 2025: one of the effects of climate change. / Photo by KOSTAS METAKSAKIS / ANADOLU / Anadolu via AFP



From climate commitments to compliance

According to Luis Fernández, in 2026 **we need to observe how countries begin to implement the climate commitments** they have just submitted to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**.

In other words, this will enable the production of an assessment concerning whether these promises are reflected in public policies, investment, and concrete decisions.

“The big issue in 2026 will be how countries begin to move forward on what they have just promised”.

Climate litigation and accountability

Another factor that will shape 2026 is the follow-up to **the International Court of Justice’s opinion on the responsibility of states in relation to climate change.**

Over the course of 2026, this legal basis is expected to **drive climate litigation and accountability mechanisms**, not only for governments but also for private sector stakeholders.

Cinema and streaming platforms in 2026

2026 promises some highly anticipated films, such as:

- ***Spider-man: Brand New Day***
- ***Avengers: Doomsday***
- ***Toy Story 5***
- ***SuperMario Galaxy***
- ***The Devil Wears Prada 2***
- ***The Mandalorian and Grogu***
- ***Supergirl***
- ***Digger (by Alejandro González Iñárritu, starring Tom Cruise)***
- ***The Odyssey (by Christopher Nolan)***
- ***The Hunger Games: Dawn at the Harvest***
- ***Dune 3***



Toy Story 5: Photo: Pixar

And while all these releases will undoubtedly be on everyone's lips, the focus will also be on **how content is produced, financed, and consumed**.

For **Ernesto Díez-Martínez**, film critic and professor of humanities at Tecnológico de Monterrey, next year will mark a turning point for the industry.

Artificial intelligence enters the audiovisual world

One of the most significant changes in 2026 will be the consolidation of artificial intelligence in creative and productive processes.

"The use of artificial intelligence will be the most important thing to occur in 2026."

What does this mean for cinema and audiovisual media in the film critic's opinion?

- **Increasing use of AI in production, editing, and post-production processes.**
- **Discussions on creativity, authorship, and the ethical use of generative tools.**
- *A period of transition during which creators and studios seek clear rules.*

"In 2026, we will have a much better understanding of the future of creativity thanks to artificial intelligence".

A strong 2026 with regard to blockbusters and the demand for music

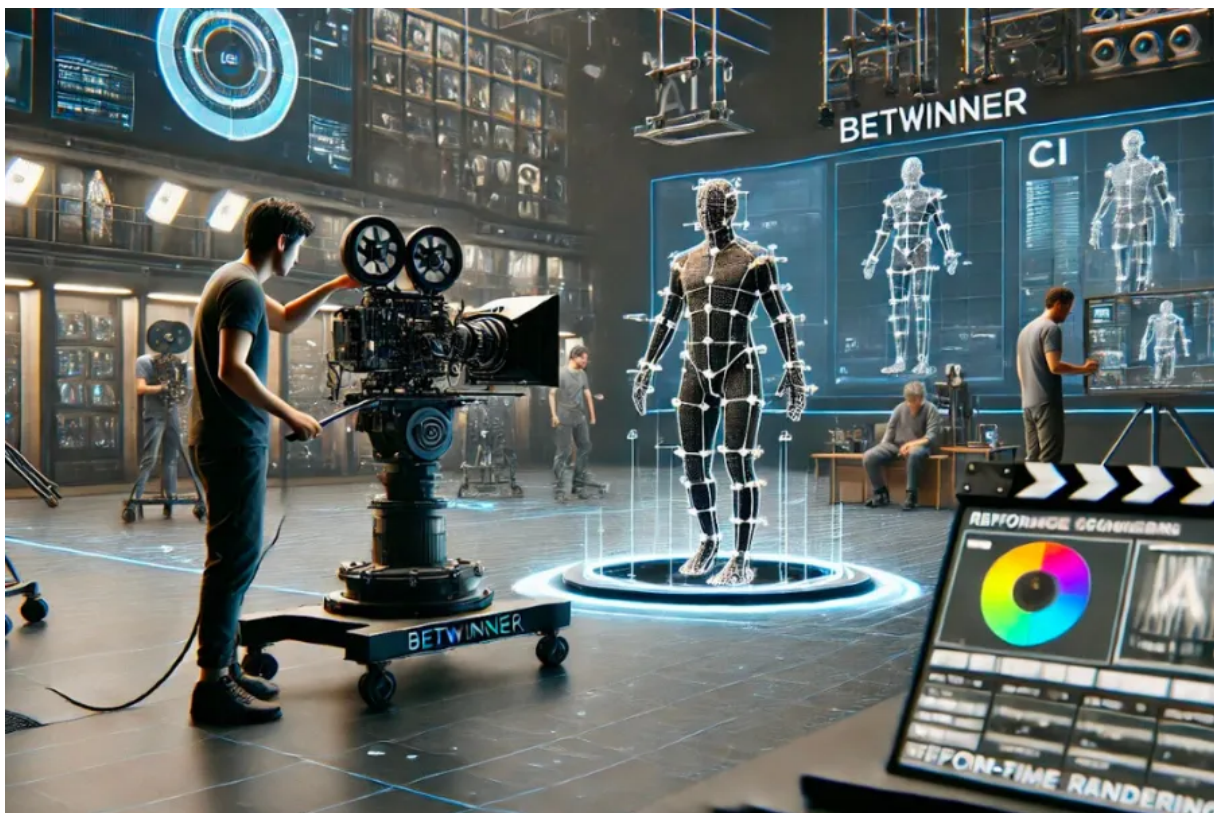
The 2026 film calendar points to an intense year of large-scale releases, especially in the summer.

“2026 is shaping up to be a very strong year for audiovisual productions, movies, and summer blockbusters.”

This phenomenon will have a variety of implications for the industry, such as:

- *High competition among large franchises.*
- *Growth in **demand for licensed music** for films and series.*
- *Heightened importance of work done on musical supervision and sound design.*

According to Ernesto Díez-Martínez, **this scenario opens up opportunities for musicians and creators** who do audio work for audiovisual media.



Movie illustration created with artificial intelligence / Photo: ChatGPT

Platforms and concentration: The weight of the big players

2026 will also be marked by strategic decisions made by streaming platforms and large media conglomerates.

“Regardless of who buys from whom, it’s a statement concerning how we’re going to consume content from now on”.

According to the film critic, this will have direct implications for:

- *The consolidation of streaming platforms and catalogs.*
- *Changes in the consumption habits of movies, series, and audiovisual content.*
- *Direct impact on the entire entertainment value chain.*

Production in Latin America: Opportunities for Mexico

The outlook for **2026 opens up significant opportunities for audiovisual production in Latin America**, particularly in **Mexico**.

“I see a 2026 replete with domestic productions and many opportunities for those in the audiovisual world”. Ernesto Diez foresees:

- *An increase in local production driven by streaming platforms.*
- *A greater need for technical and creative talent.*
- *Market expansion for film, audio, and post-production professionals.*

Illustration of music catalogs as a financial asset. / Photo by HELMUT FRICKE / DPA / dpa Picture-Alliance via AFP



Music in 2026: Artificial intelligence, catalogs, and an industry redefining its own rules

*“Beyond releases and tours, the focus in 2026 will be on **how music is created and monetized, and how it connects with its audiences**”.*

This is how **Alán Robles**, musician and director of the Bachelor’s Degree in Music Technology and Production at Tecnológico de Monterrey, explains it.

Artificial intelligence: From fear to writing rules

One of the major themes of 2026 will be the relationship between music and artificial intelligence. According to the musician, *“the debate will no longer be whether AI is making its mark, but **how it is regulated and integrated**”*. For example:

- *The growing use of AI tools in composition, production, and distribution.*
- *Open discussion on rights, licenses, and monetization of AI-generated content.*

“There has been a lot of uncertainty and fear among creators; 2026 will be key in defining how far it can be used”.

Music catalogs: From record labels to investment funds

Another trend that will become established in 2026 **is the purchase of music catalogs as financial assets.**

“We’re going to start buying shares in artists as if they were company shares”.

Alan Robles is of the opinion that *“the value of music is increasingly measured as an asset that generates returns, and we expect to see the emergence of **platforms for investing in catalogs from mobile phones**”.*

For Robles, this phenomenon transforms the relationship between art, industry, and capital.

Superfans and data: The industry’s new strategy

In 2026, the music industry will deepen its focus on **superfans**, relying on data analysis.

“Marketing today is using metadata analysis to get someone to save a song to their playlist”.

There will therefore be increasingly fewer massive investments and more direct connections with specific audiences, such as personalized experiences to strengthen the artist-fan bond (as was the case for Dua Lipa’s pop-up taco restaurant).

“This approach redefines how music careers are built in the digital age”.



Fans of British-Albanian singer-songwriter Dua Lipa strike a pose during the opening of her pop-up taco restaurant La Dua in Mexico City, 2025. / Photo by CARL DE SOUZA / AFP

Platforms and virality: TikTok as an industry filter

Social media will continue to be a decisive factor in 2026, especially TikTok. *"Record labels analyze TikTok and sign artists even if they don't have any songs released".*

Today, viral clips can launch entire careers, Macario Martínez being one example of this.

"And, of course, this model generates less risk for record labels by betting on already established audiences. But it will bring about changes in traditional criteria for talent and artistic development".

Festivals, concerts, and entertainment prices

2026 will also be marked by the consolidation of the festival and concert industry with a direct impact on audiences.

“I predict tremendous inflation in entertainment prices”. What can be observed:

- *Increasingly expensive tickets for concerts and festivals.*
- *Financial strategies such as interest-free payments to facilitate access.*
- *Less opportunity for the public to discover new artists outside major events.*

Cristina Rivera Garza, the Mexican writer who was tipped for the 2025 Nobel Prize in Literature. / Photo by SOEREN STACHE / DPA / dpa Picture-Alliance via AFP



Literature in 2026: Reading to sustain our humanity in a fast-paced world

For **Ana Laura Santamaría**, director of the Alfonso Reyes Chair and the Passion for Reading program at Tec de Monterrey, literature does not compete with digital immediacy, but rather offers depth, continuity, and meaning.

“Humans are, above all, narrative beings, because stories enable us to exercise our imagination and our identity”.

Books: Technology that won’t go away

ElIn 2026, far from being relegated by digital formats, books continue to be one of the most effective cultural technologies ever created by humanity.

Santamaría explains that their physicality, portability, and ability to preserve stories give them a long life, even in an environment dominated by screens.

“The book is an almost perfect technology; it seems to have a very long life ahead of it”.

In 2026, this validity will not imply immobility, but rather coexistence with other forms of access to reading.

Another aspect that is gaining ground is the strength of **women authors in Spanish literature**.

For Santamaría, the current moment marks a transformation that will continue to resonate in the years to come. *“The time of women has come. Their voices are ringing out powerfully”.*

This centrality is expressed not only in recognition, but also in a reinterpretation of the canon and the **rediscovery of female authors who have been fundamental to literary history**.

“Spanish literature is alive, powerful, and has enormous appeal.” In 2026, this literary community will continue to grow and diversify.

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