

## Newsletter # 17 - September 2009

### EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

#### European Parliament

##### MEPs re-appoint Barroso as European Commission President

On September 16, the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have elected Jose Manuel Barroso as President of the European Commission for a second five-year term. The reappointed President was elected in a secret ballot under the rules of the Nice Treaty with 382 votes in favour, 219 against and 117 abstentions. In his speech, Mr Barroso thanked the Portuguese Socialist Prime Minister José Socrates for his support and the European Parliament for its "enormous confidence" in him, affirming that his reappointment will give the Commission and its president "great authority". Nevertheless, the elected President claimed he would wait till the Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty (to be held on 2 October) before pronouncing on the new Commission Executive.

*European Parliament Press Release:*

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/008-60584-257-09-38-901-20090911IPR60583-14-09-2009-2009-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/008-60584-257-09-38-901-20090911IPR60583-14-09-2009-2009-false/default_en.htm)

*Press Articles:*

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/barroso-elected-lisbon-majority/article-185513?Ref=RSS>

<http://euobserver.com/9/28674>

##### Three final films shortlisted for LUX Prize 2009

On the occasion of the Venice Film Festival, the European Parliament (EP) has revealed the three finalists for the LUX Prize 2009 (*Eastern Plays*, *STURM* and *Welcome*). The EP will proclaim the winner on 25 November and will then pay for the subtitling of the film in the 23 European official languages as well as help its distribution in DVD.

*European Parliament Press Release:*

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story\\_page/037-60535-250-09-37-906-20090911STO60534-2009-07-09-2009/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/037-60535-250-09-37-906-20090911STO60534-2009-07-09-2009/default_en.htm)

#### European Commission

##### Prospect of the New Commission

On 29 and 30 October an EU summit will analyse the result of the Irish referendum (to be held on 2 October) and finalise plans for the new Commission. If the Irish referendum would conclude with a positive vote, the new Commission would have one Commissioner per country while in case of a negative vote the Commission would be reduced of at least one member according to Nice Treaty.

Among the actual Commissioners, Luxemburg Viviane Reding is expected to serve a third term with the same portfolio which may include a new "digital" portfolio. In Slovakia, the national government nominated Maroš Šefčovič, Ambassador to the EU, to succeed to Ján Figel Commissioner for Education and Culture.

Charlie McCreevy, Irish Commissioner for Internal Market and Services will also step down but no names have been assured so far.

*Press Article:*

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/opinion/new-european-commission/article-180216>

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🇱🇺 **Rue du Prince Royal, 87 - B - 1050 Brussels • tel. : +32 2 290 44 35 • fax. : +32 2 551 03 71 • email : info@ferainfo.org • www.ferainfo.org**

## **Euromed Audiovisual III adopted**

The European Commission has approved a budget of €11 million for the new Euromed Audiovisual programme. The programme will run for 36 months and will aim at developing and strengthening the film and audiovisual industries in Mediterranean countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Tunisia and Turkey.

*Press Article:*

<http://cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=112094>

## **Competition**

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### **Commission approves State Aid for France Télévisions**

The European Commission (EC) has approved €450 million state aid for France Télévision in 2009 according to the rules for the funding of public service broadcasters. The Commission has also opened an investigation into the long-term funding mechanism (worth €2 billion for 2010-2012) adopted by the country which consists in annual support and a subsidy from the public service broadcasting (previously the television licence). The Commission is concerned about the use of the taxes introduced by the reform and potential overcompensation for public service costs. France and stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the Commission decision and concerns before the EC final decision.

*Europa Press Release:*

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1264&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

## **MEDIA Programme**

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### **European Council granted €15m for MEDIA Mundus programme**

On 14 September, the Council of Ministers approved the MEDIA Mundus Programme for the years 2011-2013. With a budget of €15 million, the programme will replace the MEDIA International preparatory action with the aim of supporting cooperation between EU and third countries in the fields of distribution, training, promotion and audiences' awareness-raising.

*Press Article:*

<http://cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=112774>

*European Council Press Release:*

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/110108.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/110108.pdf)

### **EU supports 40 international film cooperation projects with €5m**

On September 18, the European Commission (EC) has announced a €5 million funding for 2009 for 40 cooperation projects between European film industry and film-makers of third countries. The subsidy takes place under MEDIA International preparatory action which runs from 2008 to 2010 and which includes projects in training, reciprocal promotion, distribution and film screenings.

*Europa Press Release:*

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1334&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

*Press Article:*

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/culture/eu-filmmakers-get-5m-funding-boost/article-185631>

## **Audiovisual Policy**

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### **Commission recommendation on MEDIA literacy**

Following a call from the European Parliament, the Commission adopted on 20 August some policy guidelines calling on EU countries and industry to promote media literacy across Europe through activities that help people to access, understand and critically evaluate all media from TV to digital communication technologies.

According to the “Digital Europe” report, EU citizens are becoming more skillful internet and computers users with 60% “digitally literate” and 56% of all Europeans go online at least once a week (compared to 43% in 2005).

*Europa Press Release:*

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1244&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

## Copyright

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### **Europeana doubles its archive but shows EU lack of common copyright solutions**

In a policy document on 28 August, the European Commission has announced its intention to bring the number of digitised works collected in Europeana (the European multilingual digital library) from the current 4.6 million up to 10 million by 2010. Europeana includes mainly books which are in the public domain and no longer protected by copyright law but for legal reasons the library does not include out-of print works (90% of the books in European national libraries) and orphan works (whose authors cannot be identified) which are still protected by copyright law. The Commission has launched a public consultation on these issues which will run until the 15 November 2009.

*European Commission Press Release:*

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1257&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### **Europeans unwilling to pay for online content**

According to a survey published by the European Commission, almost 50% of EU citizens are not willing to pay for online audiovisual content. The report shows a massive economy based on online piracy with 95% of music tracks and 80% of films downloaded. The recording industry – which is the most hit by online piracy – estimated that in 2008 over 40 billion copyrighted files were exchanged illegally across the world, while consumer organisations state that the volume of piracy is lower than the music industry estimates. In this situation, the creation of new business models such as digital stores like iTunes and Amazon was stated as essential to make internet users paying for digitals content.

*Press Article:*

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/infosociety/europeans-unwilling-pay-online-content/article-184642?Ref=RSS>

### **Google e-books settlement raises concerns in Europe**

On 7 September a European Commission hearing in Brussels gathered representatives from publishers, libraries, booksellers and authors’ associations in order to react to and question Google representatives on the US giant online book scheme. The “Book Settlement” is the result of a deal between Google and a group of US authors and publishers which allows the company to scan out-of-print and orphaned books and sell them online. The EU expressed its concerns especially regarding the potential monopolistic power of the company over access to digitised works, copyright and data protection. According to figures provided by Google, 10 million books have already been digitised of which 2-4 million are European. The company committed itself to digitise only out-of-print books which otherwise would not have a market and promised to have two non-US representatives on the board of its Books Rights Registry, which supervises the implementation of the settlement.

After the hearing the EU Commissioners Viviane Reding (Information Society and Media) and Charlie McCreevy (Internal Market and Services) in a joint statement highlighted the necessity of a fully respect of the copyright rules to ensure fair remuneration for authors, but also welcomed the project to digitise the global book heritage through public-private partnerships.

The hearing was organised at the request of the Council of EU Ministers and the European Parliament; the Google settlement is also due a final hearing by the US justice department on 7 October.

*Press Articles:*

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/innovation/google-faces-new-eu-battle-books/article-185200>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/08/technology/internet/08books.html? r=1>

*Viviane Reding and Charlie McCreevy joint statement:*

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/376&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

## Council of Europe

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### **Albania joins Eurimages**

Albania became the 34th member of the Council of Europe Eurimages as of 1 September 2009. The country will be able to apply for help from the co-production, distribution and exhibition funds.

*Council of Europe Press Release:*

[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=PR601\(2009\)&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=DC&BackColorInternet=F5CA75&BackColorIntranet=F5CA75&BackColorLogged=A9BACE](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=PR601(2009)&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=DC&BackColorInternet=F5CA75&BackColorIntranet=F5CA75&BackColorLogged=A9BACE)

### **Eurimages plans for digitisation in southeast Europe**

At the Cinelink Regional Forum during the Sarajevo Film Festival, Jovan Marjanovic - the Eurimages representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina - announced a plan to support digitisation in 25 sites in 4 countries. According to the plan, Eurimages would finance one-third of the conversion costs for each site (€60,000 per site) including 3D capability, a third would come from national resources and the residue would be directly financed by the exhibitors. According to Mr Marjanovic, Eurimages has enough funding to support digitisation in countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Turkey, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia who do not receive support from the MEDIA Programme.

*Press Article:*

<http://cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=112400>

### **Norway signs European co-production convention**

On 23 August Minister of Culture Trond Giske announced that Norway has signed the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production. Norway was the only country in the Nordic region not to have ratified the Treaty. Sweden and Denmark joined in 1994, Finland in 1995 and Iceland in 1997.

*Press Article:*

<http://cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=112073>

## Lisbon Treaty

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### **Support for Lisbon Treaty raise in Ireland**

The "Yes" campaign for the referendum on the Lisbon Treaty has given positive results with an increase up to 68% since the last poll on 11 September. According to the new poll, 17% expressed their intention to vote No, while 15% are still unsure.

The previous poll proposed by the newspaper Irish Times, gave the "Yes" at 63% compared to "No" support of 15% and 22% undecided.

*Press Articles:*

<http://www.independent.ie/national-news/lisbon-treaty/yes-lead-grows-on-the-final-lap-1897954.html>

<http://euobserver.com/18/28616>

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/frontpage/2009/0904/1224253822439.html>

### **Germany passes domestic reforms and steps closer to Treaty ratification**

On 5 September the Bundestag (Lower House) has approved the legislation which would make the Lisbon treaty more compatible with German law, thus allowing for the ratification of the EU document. 446 deputies from the Christian Democrats, the Socialists and the Greens voted in favour of a package of laws, and 46 voted against (mainly from the Left party). After the approval of the Upper House on 18 September, Germany's President Horst Koehler on 23 September signed the additional reforms needed to finalise the ratification process.

*Press Articles:*

<http://euobserver.com/9/28634>

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,647744,00.html>

<http://www.euronews.net/2009/09/18/way-clear-for-germany-to-ratify-lisbon/>

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/germany-ends-lisbon-ratification-saga/article-185722>

## IN THE MEMBER STATES

### Cinema Box Office & Figures

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#### European cinema admissions in the first half of 2009

The European Audiovisual Observatory has estimated 348 million tickets sold in the big 5 European markets between January and June 2009 with an increase of 3.8%. The most surprising figure is represented by the UK with a boost of 14.5% (the strongest result in seven years) followed by Germany (+6.5%) and in Spain (+7.9%). The Observatory reckoned that the France, UK, Germany, Italy and Spain all together collected 76% of the total admissions in the EU countries. Nevertheless, other countries such as Sweden (+27%), Poland (+16%), the Netherlands (+12.3%), Norway (+8.1%), Denmark (+7%), the Czech Republic (+6.8%), Hungary (+6.2%), Ireland (+1.8%) and Portugal (+1.3%) recorded an important increase despite the financial crisis.

*European Audiovisual Observatory Press Release:*

[http://www.obs.coe.int/about/oea/pr/cinema\\_H1\\_2009.html](http://www.obs.coe.int/about/oea/pr/cinema_H1_2009.html)

#### Sweden: First half of 2009 up by 27%

According to figures published by the Swedish Film Institute (SFI), admissions during the first six months of 2009 reached 7.5m, up 26.9% over the same period in 2008, registering the highest level since 2004.

Domestic films recorded 100,000 admissions and the second half of 2009 is very positive with 21 national films to be distributed. US films got the highest market share with 55.6% followed by British (3.4%) and French films (1.2%).

*Press Article:*

<http://cineuropa.org/cfocusnewsdetail.aspx?lang=en&treeID=1625&documentID=111936>

#### Denmark: Record summer admissions

Last summer registered a record in Danish cinemas admissions with 3 million tickets sold, up to 3% from the figures of the last year in the same period. Also, the market share for local films was the highest since 2005 at 20%.

*Press Article:*

<http://cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=112429>

#### France produced 110 features in first half of 2009

In a report presented by the National Film Centre (CNC), 110 films including 83 French initiatives and 27 co-productions were accredited in the first semester of 2009, 1 more than in 2008. Conversely, investment in French productions decreased by 33.6% (-€2.8m) compared to the same period in the previous year. This reduction is clearly explained by the absence of feature films with a budget over €30m creates a balance in terms of investment between big, medium and small productions. In the first six months of 2009, films with a budget under €1m represented 13.3% of productions (against 20% of the previous year) while productions with an estimated budget of over €15m represented only 4.8% (against 12.8% in the same period in 2008).

*Press Article:*

<http://www.cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=112771>

### Cultural and Audiovisual Policies

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#### Nordisk Film & TV Fond supports foreign buyers

Nordisk Film & TV Fond is going to support distributors outside Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden who bought some of the 13 Nordic films selected during the Toronto International Film Festival. The "International Cinema Distribution Support" with its total budget of €200,000 will provide a special cash grant to the foreign buyers to help them releasing the acquired titles in their countries. The grant is not subject to reimbursement and the deadline for distributors is on 1 December 2009.

*Press Article:*

<http://www.cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=112538>

### **Spanish broadcaster TVE forced to increase film investment**

After the decision of banning advertising from two public channels, Spain's Government introduced legislation which will oblige the national public service broadcaster (RTVE – Television Española) to invest 6% of its annual incomes in national film production. The new Audiovisual Law, to be introduced in 2010, provoked a strong reaction from RTVE, which maintains the law will oblige it to cut budgets in other areas such as the radio, since it will no longer be able to count on advertising. The draft law would require private broadcasters to invest only 60% of the current established 5% in film productions and the remaining 40% in TV productions.

*Press Article:*

<http://www.screendaily.com/news/production/europe/spanish-broadcaster-tve-forced-to-increase-film-investment/5005352.article>

### **Latvian filmmakers support independency of National Film Centre**

On 12 August, around 200 Latvian film professionals protested for the preservation of the independent legal status of the National Film Centre of Latvia (NFC). Filmmakers working in different studios and usually competing for state funding demonstrated together. Among other organisations, FERA expressed its support to the NFC and concern for the independence of the institution.

*Press Article:*

<http://cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=111917>

### **Italian government re-establishes €60m Entertainment Industry Fund**

The Ministry of Culture's General Direction for Cinema announced that the government will restore €60m for the Entertainment Industry Fund, €24m of which is directed towards cinema: €18m to production and €6m to exhibition.

*Press Article:*

<http://www.cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=112841>

### **UK Film Minister proposes UKFC BFI merger**

Siôn Simon new Film Minister has proposed a merger of the UK Film Council (UKFC) and the British Film Institute (BFI) into a single body. A board with representatives from the UKFC and BFI will evaluate the proposal and table its findings by the end of the year.

*Press Article:*

<http://www.cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=111933>

## **Cinema, Audiovisual and Internet Trends**

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### **Sally Potter screens new film premiere on iPhones**

Babelgum, a web and mobile content provider, released the premiere of the first episode of Sally Potter's new film (*Rage*) via mobile application for iPhones and iPods on September 21. It will be followed by the other episodes in the following week. The film itself has an episodic format as if shot by a schoolboy on his mobile phone over seven days.

*Press Article:*

<http://cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=fr&documentID=112422>

### **BVA to launch a Christmas ad campaign for Blu-ray**

The British Video Association (BVA) is launching a TV campaign worth £1m between November and December to boost the Blu-ray disc market. According to BVA, 3.1m Blu-ray DVDs were sold in the first semester of 2009, a rise of 231%. The campaign has received the support of major studios such as Sony, 20th Century Fox, Universal, Warner Bros and Disney.

*Press Article:*

<http://www.screendaily.com/news/digital/uk-ireland/blu-ray-to-get-boost-from-christmas-ad-campaign/5005380.article>

## **Polish public broadcaster TVP going digital**

Polish public broadcaster TVP will join the three existing commercial digital platforms with its free-to-air channels and nine pay channels. Market leader Cyfrowy Polsat has 2.8 million subscribers; Cyfra Plus has 1.3 million and N has 500,000. Piotr Farfal executive of TVP claimed that the new platform could attract 900,000 subscribers by 2010.

*Press Article:*

<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118008762.html?categoryid=19&cs=1>

## **YouTube may offer movie rental**

Google's video sharing site YouTube may become a new distribution window for films online. According to some sources close to the company, the website may be in early talks with Sony Pictures, Warner Bros and Lionsgate about making films streaming available on the site for rental. The price would be similar to other VoD services (around €4-5 per film) and the incomes would be shared 70% to 30% in favour of the studios.

*Press Articles:*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/03/technology/internet/03tube.html>

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/entertainmentnewsbuzz/2009/09/youtube-movie-studios-in-talks-on-streaming-content-for-fee.html>

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125192241524880801.html>

## **Copyright**

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### **UK Minister calls for US/UK collaboration on digital piracy**

David Lammy, British Minister for Intellectual Property, has called for collaboration between UK and US film industries in order to fight illegal downloading. Although representing important economies in both markets (earning £43.4bn in the USA and £11.6bn in the UK), the creative industries are losing millions because of illegal downloading (£612.5m in 2007). Mr Lammy claimed that the film industry needs to offer films at a reasonable price and educate consumers about the problems caused by piracy in order to encourage them to pay.

*Press Article:*

<http://www.screendaily.com/news/digital/uk-ireland/uk-minister-david-lammy-calls-for-us/uk-collaboration-on-digital-piracy/5005292.article>

### **ISPs protest as UK Minister proposes cutting Internet access for downloaders**

Following the proposal of the UK Minister for Digital Britain Stephen Timm to cut internet access to repeated illegal file sharing customers, the heads of some British Internet Service Providers (ISPs) such as Ian Livingston of British Telecom and Tom Alexander of Orange UK protested against the proposal in a letter to the newspaper The Times. According to the ISPs "disconnecting users from the Internet would place serious limits on their freedom of expression". The proposal seemed too severe also for nearly 100 artists who voted on 24 September to call on the Business Secretary Lord Mandelson to instead slow down the connections of persistent law breakers, rather than cut completely the access to internet.

Around 7 million of British people are estimated to regularly download films, resulting in an annual loss of £1.4 the British film industry.

*Press Articles:*

<http://cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=112097>

<http://cineuropa.org/newsdetail.aspx?lang=en&documentID=112471>

[http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts\\_and\\_entertainment/music/article6848502.ece](http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/music/article6848502.ece)

### **French lower house passes the Hadopi bill for the third time**

On 15 September the French lower house has approved for the third time the anti-piracy legislation which allows a special authority (Hadopi) to cut internet access to illegal downloaders imposing high fines and even jail for the worst offenders. The Hadopi bill was favourably voted by the majority of centre-right deputies with 285 votes against the 225 votes of the Socialist opposition. According to the law, users may face fines of €300,000 and up to two years in jail, while families whose children download illegally face lower penalties (a month of no internet access and fines of €3,750). In addition the law requires that wi-fi

consumers block unauthorised users on their internet connection. However, a judge will have to supervise possible sentences.

*Press Article:*

<http://euobserver.com/9/28673>

## OUTSIDE EUROPE

### **Canada launches national consultations on copyright modernisation**

Last July, Minister of Industry Tony Clement and Minister of Heritage and Official Languages James Moore launched consultations to gather Canadians' opinions on the issue of copyright modernisation in the digital environment. The consultations, which run till September 13, included an online discussion forum and a centre for posting detailed submissions. In addition, round tables were organised across the country to gather experts and organisations views on the revisions needed to make Canada a world leader in the digital economy.

*Industry Canada Article:*

<http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ic1.nsf/eng/04840.html>

### **MPAA tackles film piracy in India**

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) will collaborate with Adlabs and PVR Cinemas in India to fight piracy. The deal between the US organisation and several cinemas in India was launched on 7 September in Delhi and includes training initiatives for theatre employees to make them aware of illegal recording in theatres. According to the report "The Effects of Counterfeiting and Piracy on India's Entertainment Industry" published by US India Business Council & Ernst & Young, the Indian film industry lost \$959m and 571,896 jobs as a consequence of piracy.

*Press Articles:*

<http://www.screendaily.com/news/mpaa-joins-anti-camcord-piracy-initiative-in-india/5005397.article>

<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118008253.html?categoryid=1338&cs=1>

### **Ukraine Film Office launches co-production fund**

Ukraine Film Office has launched a co-production support programme which will grant three projects a year \$100,000 each. To be eligible for the grant, the productions have to spend at least 70% of their budget in Ukraine and at least one from director, screenwriter or leading actor/actress must have Ukrainian origin or citizenship. Projects will be selected by the programme investors and the Ukraine Film Office.

*Press Article:*

<http://www.screendaily.com/news/finance/europe/ukraine-film-office-launches-co-production-fund/5005832.article>

## FERA

### **FERA Activities**

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#### **EU Platform "Access to Culture" - Working Group "Creativity and Artistic Creation"**

On 16 September, Carla Coppola participated on behalf of FERA at the "Creativity and Artistic Creation" working group of the EU Platform "Access to Culture". Launched in June 2008 with the aim of advocating the best conditions for artists and ensuring access to the creative process for all, the Working Group concluded with the creation of a position paper addressed to the European Commission and the Member States. The meeting focused on a possible continuation of the Group in 2010 and on the communication strategy to adopt in the immediate and long term. The organisation members of the group will have the opportunity of expressing their opinion at the European Cultural Forum at the end of September.

#### **FERA writes to Latvian Prime Minister and Minister of Culture**

After having expressed its concerns about the cuts foreseen by the Italian government to the Entertainment Fund, FERA wrote a strong letter to the Latvian Prime Minister and to the Minister of Culture, stating its

concerns over the Latvian Government's decision to bring the National Film Centre under government control. FERA underlined that "in a free democratic state film must have adequate financial support, and remain politically and artistically independent of government control".

### **Questionnaire on Directors Contract and Remuneration**

FERA Member Associations have till **Monday 5 October** to send back to FERA office the completed Questionnaire that has been proposed by ARAS (Association of Czech Film Directors and Screenwriters) and developed by ARAS and FERA.

## **News from FERA Members**

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### **ARAS recent activities**

ARAS – the Czech Association of Film Directors and Screenwriters – is preparing a proposal to the Senate concerning the problems of national law on the audiovisual industry. In addition, the association is planning a deal with the Czech TV concerning the valorisation of the fee rates as well as lobbying the Parliament for a different voting system of the executive state TV.

ARAS website (in CZ):

[www.aras.cz](http://www.aras.cz)

### **ARRF recent activities**

For the second consecutive year, Cinéastes Associés, the low-budget production company created by ARRF (Belgian Association of Film Directors), produced two films (*Miss Mouche* by Bernard Halut and *Avec ma mère à la mer* by Alexis van Stratum). *Avec ma mère à la mer* has been selected at the FIFF, the International French Speaking Films Festival of Namur in Belgium (2-9 October). Previous productions included *Get Born* by Nicole Palo and *Liar* by Tom Geens. The 2010 call for the next two films has been opened.

ARRF website (in FR):

[www.arf.be](http://www.arf.be)

### **100 Autori view on the current situation of Italian audiovisual and cultural industries**

Speaking to his party, the Minister for Public Administration Mr Renato Brunetta has declared that Italian filmmakers are parasites, using public money to make films that nobody sees. The reasons behind this vicious attack are unclear, but it would appear linked to an internal battle among members of the Right party to appeal to the extreme views of the Prime Minister and against the cultural and political groups that have been holding Mr Berlusconi and his government to account over the "moral question".

Following events in Venice International Film Festival it appeared that the situation had been stabilised. Reacting to cuts in Italy's Entertainment Fund and the partial restructuring of financing, filmmakers decided to use the Venice festival as an occasion to discuss proposals for new legislation designed to create a National Centre for Cinema financed by a tax paid by television, internet and telecom operators, which would help to free the cinema industry from the need for government finance. The government, however, appears unwilling to discuss this particular issue. In addition, the cut funds have not been replaced with other sources of finance and protests are expected this coming autumn.

100Autori has been contacted by different groups (such as cinema owners) requesting that all those involved in Italian cinema meet to discuss the new law and new financing structures. We therefore intend to create a working group that will propose law changes to the Senate Cultural Commission.

100 Autori website (in IT):

[www.100autori.it](http://www.100autori.it)

### **Letter by Latvian Filmmakers Union concerning the National Film Centre**

The Latvian Filmmaker's community thanks you very much for the support of FERA in our fight against the institutional reform of the Latvian Ministry of Culture; it is a great feeling not to be left alone.

In order to overcome the crisis and to reduce the State expenses, the Latvian Government without warning or consulting anybody involved in the audiovisual sector was going to suspend the National Film Centre

(NFC - *the only* institution responsible for the Film sector) and transform it in a small department of the Ministry of Culture.

On 12 August, the day of the decisive negotiations with the Ministry of Culture, Latvian filmmakers organised a protest. Nearly 200 Latvian film professionals voiced their support for preserving the legal status of an independent organisation such as the National Film Centre of Latvia. However instead of striking and shouting slogans we were working; a film set was built around the Ministry of Culture and most of the people were engaged in a shooting of a short film titled *The Dream of Eisenstein* (a reference to the world renowned film director Sergey Eisenstein born in Riga). This short film, privately financed by the filmmakers themselves, was a statement about film as a form of art and a manifestation of our cultural identity. At the end of the protest the Minister for Culture Ints Dalderis appeared before the demonstrators and told that he agreed upon the proposal of the Film Council (an advisory body composed by audiovisual representatives) to modify the legal status of the National Film Centre from State Agency to State Budget institution. This is a purely juridical change that does not affect the independence of the National Film Centre.

On 7 September, this proposal was backed by the Committee of the Cabinet of Ministers, the last procedural step before approving a draft law.

The Filmmaker's Union of Latvia expresses its gratitude to all the organisations that have sent their letters of support.

**Ieva Romanova**

President Latvian Filmmaker's Union

[www.latfilma.lv/lks/](http://www.latfilma.lv/lks/)

*Some of the letters and photos of the protest are available on the following websites:*

[http://www.nfc.lv/info/?mnu\\_id=302](http://www.nfc.lv/info/?mnu_id=302)

<http://www.filmneweurope.com/news/latvia/latvian-filmmakers-support-national-film-centre>

## AGENDA – UPCOMING EVENTS

### **European Cultural Forum in Brussels 29-30 September**

On 29 and 30 of September Brussels will host the European Cultural Forum which will address different issues of the cultural industry. Among relevant representatives of political sphere and culture, Wim Wenders – film director and president of the European Film Academy – will give the final speech on Wednesday 30 September.

[http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/news1904\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/news1904_en.htm)

### **Dijon Film Forum 15-17 October**

The 2009 edition of the Dijon Film Forum organised by L'ARP (French Society of Authors, Directors and Producers) will take place from 15 to 17 October in France. This year edition will be dedicated to Claude Berri, founder President of L'ARP, and will host two days round tables on film, copyright and digital revolution.

*L'ARP website (in FR):*

[http://www.larp.fr/article.php3?id\\_article=906&actu](http://www.larp.fr/article.php3?id_article=906&actu)

### **Enlarged FERA Executive Committee meeting in Dijon on 16 October**

The Enlarged Executive Committee will meet in Dijon on 16 October to discuss the feedback to the business plan that will receive from FERA members and evaluate the next steps. The meeting will be hosted by L'ARP the French Civil Society of Authors, Film Directors and Producers.