

FERA

Federation of
European Film
Directors

Newsletter
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European film delegation met EU Budget Commissioner Lewandowski to discuss MEDIA Programme budget

István Szabó, President of FERA, the Federation of European Film Directors, and Dariusz Jabłoński, director-producer and President of the Independent Film Foundation, met EU Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget Janusz Lewandowski in Warsaw on Friday June 17, to discuss the prospects for the 2014 - 2020 EU budget period and the need to increase funding for the MEDIA Programme.

FERA Chief Executive Elisabeth O. Sjaastad and Jakub Duszyński from Gutek Film, representing Europa Distribution, also took part in the very positive hour-long meeting.

The Commissioner explained that in these times of crisis management and austerity measures, many Community Programmes will face cuts, but he was happy to announce that this would not be the case for MEDIA.

The proven success of the MEDIA programme makes it possible to, not only defend its current budget level, but even find room for an increase. The Commissioner said he is convinced this is "very effective use of taxpayers' money."

While being sensitive to the constraints of the current financial situation, the filmmakers told Commissioner

Lewandowski that a raise from the current € 755 million to € 1.2 billion for MEDIA over the next 7 year period would be the - still quite modest - amount required to meet our most acute needs.

Mr. Szabó stressed that audiovisual expressions play a major role in building European identity: "If Europe does not invest in its own motion picture culture, that expresses the hearts and minds of young Europeans, then those young Europeans will be shaped by pictures produced by others."

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EU Budget continued

On June 29 the European Commission published the budget proposal for the period 2014-2020.

The new 'Creative Europe' Programme proposed by the Commission will bring together the current Culture, MEDIA, and MEDIA Mundus programmes. The specificities of each sector will be catered for, including through a dedicated budgetary allocation, and a third strand will provide horizontal support to the creative and cultural industries in the form of a guarantee fund. The proposed budget for the Creative Europe Programme is 1.6 billion €, an estimated increase of 465 millions compared to the current budget.

FERA is positive to the proposed increase for the Creative Europe Programme, especially in the present economic climate, but to meet the needs of each culture sector we had hoped for more. Given the cost intensive nature of film and audiovisual works we are going to need a substantial part of the proposed increase. The MEDIA Programme has proven its European added value and success over the past 20 years, and the challenges we face in the coming years are more severe than those of our colleagues in other culture and creative industries. We hope, however, that the European Parliament and Council will agree to an even higher budget for culture, an area that can in fact deliver on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the next budget period - providing unique return on investment and with great untapped potential.

Download FERA's press release [HERE](#)
Read Screen Daily article [HERE](#)

European Commission launches Green Paper on online distribution of audiovisual works

On July 13 the European Commission published the *Green Paper on the online distribution of audiovisual works in the European Union: Opportunities and challenges towards a digital single market* which serves as the basis for a debate on whether and how the regulatory framework needs to be adapted to allow European industry to develop new business models, creators to find new distribution channels and European consumers to have better access to content throughout Europe. The views of all interested parties are sought on various aspects of online distribution of audiovisual works such as films, documentaries, TV dramas, animation films etc.

The Green Paper discusses rights clearance for the online distribution of audiovisual media services. An assessment is needed of the extent to which there are problems in this area, the precise nature of such problems and the policy options that could be considered.

It asks if additional measures should be taken at EU level to ensure adequate remuneration of authors and performers in relation to online use of works and performances for which they hold rights.

It also deals with certain special uses of audiovisual works such as the public policy missions of film heritage institutions and access by persons with disabilities to cultural material.

Replies must be submitted before 18 November 2011.

Download the Green Paper [HERE](#)

European Parliament Culture Committee Public Hearing on EU Audiovisual Policy

On July 13, the European Parliament Culture Committee held a public hearing on EU audiovisual policy in the digital era, featuring speeches by 4 invited experts, and followed by a presentation of the draft report by Polish MEP Piotr Borys on *European cinema in the digital era*.

The draft report calls on member states and the European Commission to financially support the complete digitisation of European movie theatres, especially through European structural funds.

Borys also points to the availability of loans at preferential rates with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the importance of the MEDIA Programme in supporting the digitisation process.

The report also focuses on film education, new modes of distribution and promotion of European productions.

FERA welcomes the very positive Borys report, remarkable also for the fact that this is the first time the European Parliament tackles this topic. FERA has submitted preliminary remarks on the draft report to Mr. Borys and has expressed a wish to follow his work on finalizing the report before it is put to a plenary vote in November.

Download the draft report *European cinema in the digital era* [HERE](#)



FERA calls for the immediate release of Iranian film director Mahnaz Mohammadi

Sign petition by FERA member SRF [HERE](#)

Iranian film director Mahnaz Mohammadi arrested in Theran

FERA calls for the immediate release of prominent Iranian documentary filmmaker and women's rights activist Mahnaz Mohammadi.

On June 26th she was picked up from her home in Tehran by security officers who refused to show a warrant for her arrest and was then taken to Evin prison, where many activists are being held.

Mohammadi has previously directed the short documentary *Women without Shadows* and contributed to Rakhshan Bani-Etemad's documentary *We Are Half of Iran's Population*, about women's demands of the presidential candidates in 2009.

Because of her political activism Mahnaz Mohammadi has been in the crosshairs of Iranian authorities for several years. She has had her camera and computer confiscated, as well as her passport. She could therefore

not attend the presentation of Reza Serkanian's *Ephemeral Wedding* in which she is the leading actress at the Cannes Film Festival in May, but she did manage to send a message that was read by Costa-Gavras :

«I am a woman, I am a filmmaker, two sufficient grounds to be guilty in this country. I am currently directing a new documentary about the women of my country. The struggle of woman for their identity is an essential element of their everyday life... and freedom is the word that is most missing from their daily life. I would have really liked to be among you, dear friends.

Unfortunately, not being allowed out of my country, I am deprived to share this joy with you. But I am still waiting and I have hope.»

ISP BT ordered to block piracy website in landmark UK case

A High Court judge ruled on July 28th that British Telecom (BT) must block access to a website which provides links to pirated movies. Newzbin 2 is a members-only site which aggregates a large amount of the illegally copied material found on Usenet discussion forums.

The landmark case is the first time that an ISP has been ordered to block access to such a site.

It paves the way for other sites to be blocked as part of a major crackdown on piracy.

BT and the Motion Picture Association (MPA), which brought the case, will be back in court in October to work out how the blocking will work. BT said it will not appeal the ruling.

Download Justice Arnold's ruling and read more on BBC's website [HERE](#)

NEWS

FERA President István Szabó serves as jury president at the 46th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

"We couldn't be more thrilled to have such a distinguished and legendary artist heading the Festival's jury", said Karel Och, KVIFF's Artistic Director. When asked what he was looking for while judging this year's Official Selection, Mr. Szabó answered:

"How do you recognize a good movie? Is it a feeling, an instinct? If there is something in it, which helps me live. If there is such a strong picture, which remains in my memory. If a film helped me defeat certain prejudices of mine, and I became fond of a person or a world. And if a film isn't boring."

The Best Director Award went to Pascal Rabaté for the film *Holidays by the Sea* (France 2011)

The complete list of award winners can be found [HERE](#)



Director Pascal Rabaté

Photo: KVIFF

FERA attends Polish Presidency conference "Competences in Culture" Warsaw 18 - 20 July

FERA Executive Committee Chairman Piers Haggard and Chief Executive Elisabeth Sjaastad both attended this expert conference on culture, audiovisual and copyright, one of the priorities of the Polish Presidency.

The main theme of the audiovisual section of the conference was *The Creative Potential Of Digital Archives*. Exchanging best practices of digital archiving, new approaches to valorization of archives that include collaboration with education and research centers, publishers, documentary film makers, and the public. To finance digitisation public/private partnerships, appeals to the public for donations, collaboration with educational publishers and the educational systems are some of the ways archives are meeting their funding challenges.

The copyright section of the conference bore the title *Management Of Copyrights And Related Rights In The Digital Environment*. All the possible solutions for licensing of copyrighted audiovisual works online in the multi-territorial environment was discussed, such as pan-European platforms comprising the repertoires of collecting societies and single EU-wide license based on application of the "country-of-origin" rule as implemented in the satellite-cable directive to all communication to the public offered by European media service providers on any media platform.

The issue of copyright infringements was also addressed, and recent experiences from the French HADOPI law were presented and debated.

ARRF co-hosted authors' day during Brussels Film Festival

The Brussels Film Festival in partnership with SACD, SAA and FERA's Belgian member ARRF organized an authors' day on June 28th. The events of the day included a panel debate on the digital conversion of cinemas in Europe and a "non-lesson" in cinema from award-winning directors Bouli Lanners (*Eldorado, Les Géants*), Fiona Gordon and Dominique Abel (*Rumba, La Fée*).

Participants in the panel debate were:

Gérard Krawczyk (film director, SACD France, ARP)
Piotr Borys (Member of the European Parliament)
Laurent Hebert (CST France)
Bruno Plantin (UGC)

The debate was moderated by André Buytaers (co-president of ARRF).



FERA CEO Elisabeth O. Sjaastad

Louder than Bombs

EDITORIAL

This is an editorial I never thought I would write.

I was just putting my suitcase in the storage room in my apartment building when a window in the stairwell opened and slammed shut with incredible force. Then I heard a big bang.

36 hours earlier I had come back to Oslo, my home city, from the Polish Presidency "Competences in Culture" conference in Warsaw. My taxi made its way through the slumbering streets and passed the government quarter, not far from where I live, all quiet and abandoned for the summer holidays.

The next day, I watched news reports from Brussels about the eurozone crisis summit, the second bail out package for Greece, and German Chancellor Merkel's statement that "the euro is not only a currency but a sign of deep solidarity." Meanwhile in Norway, a new poll showed that 70% of Norwegians are now against joining the EU. On the evening news Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, who is in favour of Norway joining the EU, was asked if he was happy - after all - that Norway is not an EU member and doesn't have to foot the bill for Greece. He declined to engage in debating the pros and cons of EU membership, because "the fact is that Norway is and will remain outside for several years to come."

The big bang I heard on Friday July 22 was the bomb that went off in the government quarter just down the street. Glued to the television set I then watched the horrific attacks unfold in real time.

The Prime Minister appeared on television stating emphatically that "we will respond with more openness and more democracy" – a concept that we are, incidentally, in debt to the Greeks for inventing.

By the evening it was clear that the attacker was a man two years my junior who grew up in the very same city, with plenty of opportunities to make something positive out of his life. Instead he had killed 77 people, among them 67 teenagers at the Labour Party summer camp.

And the question everyone asked was of course: WHY?

Then his 1500-page manifesto surfaced, a "compendium" and terrorist attack manual with the chilling title: *2083 - A European Declaration of Independence*. The troubling associative reference to the *American Declaration of Independence*, pointing to revolt against colonialisation – in his view by Muslims in Europe – and the right, even duty, to overthrow a destructive government also becomes a poignant reminder that he chose to ignore the core values the American declaration more famously contains:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness".

A man who had life, liberty and means to pursue happiness denied and deprived others of the same rights, and devoted himself to destructive political beliefs.

The attacks in Norway have ramifications beyond our borders, and the perpetrator has clearly demonstrated his ambition to exert influence in Europe.

The manifesto contains plenty of EU bashing, mainly through the inclusion of articles by his ideological role model "Fjordman" a 36-year old Norwegian blogger who relentlessly propagates "Eurabia" conspiracy theories. But there are also passages such as this:

"...EU cannot be properly understood simply as a Marxist organisation. It has always held the backing of Big Business interests who want easy access to greater markets. They do not automatically care about national sovereignty or borders, which are vital to the continued existence of any truly free society.... Upholding national borders has become more important in the age of globalisation, terrorism and mass-migration, not less.... The fight for national sovereignty is thus the fight for democracy itself,

since nobody has so far made any convincing model of a supranational democracy.”

Similar sentiments are often voiced by many eurosceptics across Europe. Alleviating this frustration clearly requires a wider effort - quite apart from the already announced increase in surveillance of extreme right-wing activists.

After all, the central issue for all political ideologies, whether liberalism or socialism, is to negotiate a fruitful relationship between the individual and society.

The question that then begs an answer is this: How does Europe respond?

It may not be appropriate to draw too many general conclusions based on the tragedy in Norway, but the fact that these atrocious crimes were not committed by a disadvantaged white male with no basis to enact a traditional working class conception of masculinity, nor by an alienated immigrant, also goes to show that no amount of prosperity or “economic growth” in itself provide individuals with a vision of what it means to lead a meaningful life.

The subculture that the Norwegian massmurderer was a part of seems to suffer from what Erich Fromm in his book *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* describes as group narcissism. In order to reduce it, “the misery, monotony, dullness and powerlessness that exist in large sections of the population would have to be eliminated. This cannot be accomplished simply by bettering material conditions.”

The *American Declaration of Independence* promotes equality, life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, but what is the corresponding “slogan” for the European Union? The Five Freedoms?

Not very inspirational or aspirational.

In these times of eurozone crisis it becomes painfully clear that the EU is first and foremost perceived as an economic union with a common currency of little sentimental value. And even the professed deep solidarity with Greece comes across as motivated by financial self-preservation.

The kids who were shot on Utøya island were the same age as when both the perpetrator and I became politically active. He joined a populist party that thrives on anti-immigration rhetoric.

Through my secondary school I got the chance to participate in the European Youth Parliament, where I chaired the Security- and Human Rights Committee that wrote a resolution proposing policies and strategies to combat various forms of discrimination in Europe.

At the European Youth Parliament sessions there was no contradiction in celebrating national cultural differences and feeling a shared European identity (regardless of ethnic origin), with John Lennon’s *Imagine* as the adopted “anthem”.

So how can the real European institutions support its citizens’ quest for identity and belonging? How do our politicians define a common vision or goal for Europe today? Apart from “smart, inclusive and sustainable growth”, I’m afraid I can’t quote anything, except former European Commission President Jacques Delors’ famous appeal that we have “to give a soul to Europe”.

Current EU leaders have yet to fill his shoes, but at least some of them are actively trying, through initiatives such as the annual “A soul for Europe” debate which will take place

during the European Culture Congress in Wroclaw, Poland on September 10 (which I will attend on behalf of FERA).

In his book, Erich Fromm goes on to say that we must reorient ourselves from *having* and *hoarding* to *being* and *sharing*, but this “will require the highest degree of active participation and responsibility on the part of each person in his role as a worker or employee in any kind of enterprise, as well as in his role as a citizen”.

So maybe it is time for President Barroso to step up and paraphrase John F. Kennedy: Don’t ask what Europe can do for you, but what you can do for Europe.

Or simply say, in the words of a director-producer colleague of mine: “The world is multicultural, if you don’t like it move to another planet”.

Elisabeth O. Sjaastad

ALAN PARKER CARTOON



*"I'm afraid I'm going to have to put you on a diet of Godard movies
and a repeat of 'Citizen Kane' twice daily."*

AGENDA

FERA will attend these upcoming events

August 31

Venice Film Festival

September 8 - 10

European Culture Congress

September 19

EC Cinema Expert Group on Film
Heritage meeting

September 20

Workshop on the study Digital
Agenda for European Film Heritage

September 22 - 25

FERA General Assembly in Croatia

*We wish everyone a
pleasant summer holiday!*