

The Approach of the Slovak Audiovisual Fund

to the European Commission's public issue of the "Consultation on Opportunities and Challenges for European Cinemas in the Digital Era"

The recently founded Slovak Audiovisual Fund, which was established on 1 January 2009 by the Act No. 516/2008 Coll. is aware of the fact that some types of cinemas in the Slovak Republic are threatened with extinction due to the costs related to transfer to digital technology and therefore it acknowledges the right to support the cinema digitizing process with public resources within the existing rules of the state aid and the notice made public by the European Commission.

The Slovak Audiovisual Fund provides the elementary conditions for cinema digitization support in accordance with the Notice. It is supposed that the support process will be joined by several subjects, including the municipalities and cities in the Slovak Republic. We would like to inform the European Commission that public consultations are being carried out at present, which will also comprise a survey on the topical state of the Slovak cinemas and on the expected effects as well as real possibilities of their digitization according the criteria agreed on and approved in advance by the Slovak Audiovisual Fund.

At present, there are about 200 cinemas with 257 screens in Slovakia, of which 11 have been digitized with the help of private resources. Of the 200 cinemas, about 7% is run by private subjects, the rest is administered by municipalities and cities.

The Slovak Republic welcomes the Notice and appreciates all the activities of the European Commission which strives to create tools for systematic support of the European audiovisual sector. For such small countries like the Slovak Republic the public appeal of the Commission brings the possibility of increasing the share of the European and Slovak work in cinemas, as well as of preserving the cinemas themselves.

To maintain the variability of cultural efforts and the space for their presentation via European cinema it is essential to preserve the varied distribution area represented by European cinemas, including the small cinemas and the "art houses". It is therefore inevitable at European, national, regional and local level to create the opportunities for cinema digitization and for putting together the available financial sources which are necessary for making this process more efficient.

Approved by the Board of the Slovak Audiovisual Fund
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