[MT] Promoting the Local Film Industry

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The government has launched two measures intended to boost the local film industry, namely the setting up of the Film Fund and the Film Commission. (1) Backed financially by the government and banks, the Film Fund's objective is to produce and market films and audio-visual products. At present the fund will aim at low-budget films for television. The fund exists in the form of Maltese Falcon Productions plc, the island's first homegrown production company. As a result of this development, the company recently signed a five-year memorandum of understanding with Allegro films Inc., a subsidiary of the Canadian distributor Coscient Group Inc. (2) The Film Commission has been set up to boost the local film industry. A Film Commissioner has been nominated but not yet appointed. Whilst the island's small film community agrees on the importance of having an entity within the government which understands the industry, its role still needs to be defined. Some would like the Commission to act as «one-stop-shop» for foreign film-makers, thus reducing the amount of bureaucracy involved in obtaining permits, government tax incentives etc., and also to advertise Malta overseas. It must be noted that to date «one-stop-shop» government agencies, whilst being an integral part of other pieces of legislation (such as the Malta International Business Authority Act, 1988repealed 1994 by the Malta Financial Services Centre Act; Industrial Development Act, 1988) have not, as yet, been put fully into practice.

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