[NL] Secretary of State Unveils Plans to Support Dutch Independent Films

IRIS 2006-5:1/28

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On 31 March 2006, Dutch Secretary of State for Education, Culture and Science Medy van der Laan sent the *Tweede Kamer* (House of Representatives) a letter announcing the proposed budget for Dutch films. The letter expresses the Cabinet's desire to make a strong gesture towards supporting Dutch independent films. To make these films interesting for an international audience, the Cabinet is prepared to invest an extra EUR 7.5 million in the artistic development of Dutch film makers as per 2007. With this increase, the total budget for Dutch film adds up to EUR 40 million a year.

Thus far, the Cabinet is pleased with the results of the Dutch policy on film. Overall, there has been a renewed interest in Dutch films, and films of general public interest are significantly on the rise. The policy will therefore be continued. However, the Cabinet is of the opinion that an impetus is needed to encourage the artistic ambitions of Dutch film.

The Cabinet will therefore invest EUR 6 million in the production of artistic films. *Het Nederlands Fonds voor de Film* (the Dutch film fund) will allocate part of the film budget to deploying a more adventurous policy based on film makers' personal choices for a few years. It is hoped that this will give talented film makers an improved opportunity to create cinematographic works. In addition, the Dutch film fund will receive a budget of EUR 400,000 to encourage international promotion and cooperation. A budget of EUR 1.5 million is granted to stimulate the availability of artistic films to a larger public.

In the presented scheme, the film producer is considered to be crucial to the development of Dutch film talent. That is why the producer should, according to the Cabinet, have greater responsibility and should become the key figure in the realization of films. To this end, the traditionally exerted influence and interference by the Dutch film fund and the public broadcasting organisations will be reduced.

There will be stricter rules to qualify for financial support. However, to encourage a greater variety of films, the financial aid will no longer be limited to a maximum per film. The Cabinet also plans to simplify access to financial grants in order to avoid bureaucratic procedures. The cooperation between the Dutch film fund, the

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public broadcasting organisations and the film sector will therefore need to be reformed.

The tax arrangement for film has recently been improved based on suggestions made by the film sector (see IRIS 2006-2: 17). In future, the complicated system of the tax arrangement will be replaced by other means to attract film investors. A new film institute is also being considered and should boost the sector by offering education as well as research and by supporting national as well as international promotion.

"Kabinet zet in op eigenzinnige film"

http://www.nieuwsbank.nl/inp/2006/03/31/R226.htm

"Cabinet supports independent films", Council of Ministers, press release of 31 March 2006

"Filmbeleid"

http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/15125.pdf

"Film Policy", letter from Secretary of State for Education, Culture and Science Medy van der Laan to the Tweede Kamer (House of Representatives), 31 March 2006

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