[SK] Bill on Audiovisual Fund

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The Slovak Ministry of Culture has submitted a draft of the new Act on Audiovisual Fund to the National Council of the Slovak Republic in August 2008. The draft passed the first reading in September 2008.

It refers to and is fully compatible with the Act No. 343/2007 Coll. – Audiovisual Act that became effective on 1 January 2008 and, among other things, it defines Slovak audiovisual works, introduces new obligations (e.g. record keeping) in the audiovisual sector and redefines the activities of the Slovak Film Institute.

The draft is also compatible with other Slovak Acts concerned (Act No. 308/2000 Coll. on Broadcasting and Retransmission and the Act. No. 618/2003 Coll. Copyright Act). At the same time it also reacts to an appeal of the European Council Fund, Eurimages, of which the Slovak Republic has been member since 1996, to the EU member states, to secure and improve their supporting systems for audiovisual productions.

On the basis of this Act, the Audiovisual Fund shall be created with the status of a public institution and start its activities in 2009. The Act counts two independent institutions – the Audiovisual Fund and the Slovak Film Institute as an organization within the founder’s competence of the Ministry of Culture that keeps the archive of the Slovak audiovisual works.

The main reason for this Act is the long term absence of a quantitative stable financial resource assigned exclusively for the support and the development of the Slovak audiovisual culture. Currently, the audiovisual culture does not have any state guaranteed and supported institutions orientated only on production and distribution of the Slovak audiovisual works as well as any sufficient primary recourses from the state budget.

The state support of audiovisual production is provided by a grant system of the Ministry of Culture called AudioVízia and covers at present ca. 15 % of the required expenses.

The conception of the Act is based on the following principles:

- the creation of the Audiovisual Fund as a main financial recourse aimed exclusively at supporting the Slovak audiovisual culture and industry;

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- securing the independence and professionalism of decision-making in the form of public institutions;

- defining stable financial resources based on a fund of contributions of those who perform their business activities also by using contents of audiovisual works;

- determining goals of supporting activities and transparent rules for using its recourses

- determining mechanisms of control.

The scope of activities of the fund includes besides supporting, strategic and planning activities in the audiovisual culture and industry in the Slovak Republic also granting the co-production statute according to the European Convention on cinematographic co-production.

The Slovak Audiovisual Fund enables three different forms of film support - grants, loans, awards or loan guarantees. The successful applicants should receive the money under predetermined and agreed conditions and for a time period longer than one year. The applications shall be considered by several independent professional commissions.

According to the introduced draft of the Act on Audiovisual Fund, the Audiovisual Fund should be financed from the state budget and contributions of users of the audiovisual works. However, the several concerned Slovak institutions (Institute for Media, Literary Fund and the Slovak Film and Television Academy) expressed their objections to financing the Audiovisual Fund this way.

Vládny návrh zákona o Audiovizuálnom fonde a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov

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