

[AT] Repertory and Regional Cinema Digitisation Aid

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Of the 578 cinema screens in Austria, 388 are digitised, most of them in commercial cinemas. The Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur (Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture - BMUKK) and the City of Vienna are now supporting the digitisation of repertory and regional cinemas.

The rapid conversion of commercial cinema screens from analogue to digital projection technology is putting increasing pressure on repertory and regional cinemas, especially since film distributors are switching more and more to digital film copies, including in the repertory cinema sector. It costs approximately EUR 80,000 to convert each screen; most smaller repertory cinemas cannot afford this from their own funds.

The BMUKK is providing a total of EUR 1 million in digitisation aid, half of which is earmarked for repertory cinemas. The BMUKK defines repertory cinemas as cinemas with a particularly high-quality programme that offer educational programmes linked to the films that they screen and are particularly used to host film festivals. Of the films they have shown in the past three years, at least 10% must have been Austrian and 30% European; they must have no more than five screens, a maximum of three of which have already been converted.

Repertory cinemas are entitled to a maximum contribution of EUR 20,000 per screen. Another condition is that the Land or municipal authority must also provide some of the funding. It is assumed that the aid will contribute to the digitisation of around 25 screens.

Regional cinemas, on the other hand, are entitled to a maximum contribution of EUR 5,000 per screen. These cinemas serve a wide public and offer a more diverse programme of films.

The aid programme is designed to support the digitisation of as many cinemas as possible, in order to promote Austrian and European cinema, particularly in the regions. The detailed eligibility criteria will be laid down by representatives of cinemas and film distributors. Around 100 screens will be digitised.

The City of Vienna is making EUR 150,000 available for the digitisation of repertory cinemas. There are currently 16 such cinemas in Vienna, with 27 screens whose projection equipment needed to be converted from analogue to

digital in order to remain competitive.

Cinemas that show film premieres are entitled to a maximum of EUR 20,000 per screen, while those showing older films can receive up to EUR 15,000. Aid is only available for cinemas that have already been categorised as repertory cinemas and receive support.

The purpose of the aid being offered by the BMUKK and the City of Vienna is to safeguard the future of repertory cinemas and, thereby, of independent, artistic and socio-critical film programmes.

Pressemitteilung der BMUKK vom 12. Oktober 2011, BM Schmied und StR Mailath fördern die Kinodigitalisierung mit über 1 Mio Euro

<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/ministerium/vp/20111012.xml>

BMUKK press release of 12 October 2011, BM Schmied and StR Mailath pledge more than EUR 1 million to support cinema digitisation

