[FR] Senate adopts bill on support for the French film industry at first reading

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Tabled by Céline Boulay-Espéronnier, Sonia de La Provôté and Jérémy Bacchi on 17 September 2023 and adopted by the Senate on 14 February 2024, the bill on support for the French film industry was drawn up on the basis of a report by the same authors entitled "Cinema fights back: between resilience and cultural exception, an important art form with a future" (IRIS 2023-7:1/24). The bill aims firstly to make cinema operators' lives easier by simplifying the management of unlimited-access cinema passes. Nearly 25 years after the passes were launched, Articles 1 and 2 of the bill abolish the automatic approval mechanism applied by the *Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée* (National Centre for Cinema and the Moving Image – CNC), while preserving and strengthening the guarantees for the relevant stakeholders. This should create new momentum for the passes, which tend to be used by people who watch an above-average number of French and art-house films.

The bill also creates a flexible model of distribution obligations to act as a safety net for cinemas. These obligations would force distributors to reserve part of the art-house film distribution plan for sparsely populated areas.

Finally, the bill requires film producers who receive CNC funding to respect minimum remuneration rules for authors, as well as environmental obligations. An amendment was adopted, stating that "sanctions will be imposed on line production companies that, on the one hand, fail to fulfil their prevention-related obligations and, on the other, are involved in a shoot during which physical or mental harm has been caused, resulting in a criminal sanction. Such a company should pay back to the CNC all financial support it has received."

The bill also aims to bolster measures to combat piracy, especially of films. Such measures would be sped up by introducing three changes: limiting the time between court decisions and requests to block mirror sites; simplifying the procedure conducted by the *Autorité de régulation de la communication audiovisuelle et numérique* (the French audiovisual regulator – ARCOM), which remains at the heart of the process; and expanding the list of people who can request that sites are blocked.

The bill has been submitted to the National Assembly for examination.

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Proposition de loi visant à conforter la filière cinématographique en France, adoptée en première lecture par le Sénat le 14 février 2024

https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/16/textes/l16b2218_proposition-loi

Bill on support for the French film industry, adopted at first reading by the Senate on 14 February 2024

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