

SUMMARY:

Solutions without money

Cine-Regio held its first East European meeting at CinePécs

Cine-Regio, the European Association of regional film funds, held its annual regional meeting for the first time in Eastern Europe, Hungary, during the CinePécs International Film Festival (6-8 Oct. 2010).

Over the last couple of years a number of regional film funds have been established in Hungary.

János Kereszneyi, CEO of the Southern Transdanubia Film Fund expresses: „With the presence of Cine-Regio here in Pecs, Hungarian producers have an unique opportunity for networking, knowledge-sharing and accessing financing outside Hungarian borders”.

Charlotte Appelgren, Secretary-General of Cine-Regio: „Cine-Regio has three objectives: knowledge-sharing between organisations, involvement in film policy making – in particular at EU level - and to strenghten the co-development and co-production of films. We do our outmost in being active on all of the three levels, especially in the lobby-part of it – but for this to succeed we need knowledge, facts and good examples. Cine-Regio is increasingly successful in making contacts and ensuring that the regional voice is heard with decision-makers in the European institutions”.

Cine-Regio was established in May 2005 with 13 film funds as founding members. Today, there are 34 members from 13 EU states, in addition to Norway, Serbia and Switzerland. Its newest member Krakow Regional Film Fund, joined Cine-Regio two months ago. However, it is not the number and budget size of members but their activity that counts.

In Hungary there are currently three regional film funds; Pécs was the first, then came Győr and Miskolc. „The Miskolc Film Fund’s budget is for operational and activity costs only, at the moment we are not able to support film projects” – says Péter Madaras, CEO of the film fund. They have established, however, their regional film archive that contains motion pictures (television and film) shot in the region, plus films presented at the CineFest Film Festival. There are over 3000 titles in the database.

With the support of the film fund, director Zsombor Dyga used Miskolc as film location. His latest production was shot entirely in the city of Miskolc. Madaras explains: „Although we can’t support the films directly, we try to assist and provide services where possible. E.i. we can encourage projects to look for shooting options outside the Capital of Budapest, and offer locations in our region and small villages for a discounted price or even for free.” The municipalities in Miskolc and Pécs are the institutions that established the two film funds, a fact which makes it easier to obtain shooting permits in the regions and to have the film crew spend a part of

its budget there. But, the economic situation of the Hungarian film funds is difficult, due to a tax relief system and since they yet have no funding support available aimed at the production stage.

Appelgren says: „The annual budgets of the Cine-regio members range from 1-15 million euro. The criteria for a film fund being a member of Cine-Regio is an annual budget of 1 million euro. Naturally, this cannot be expected from countries where the system is under development – a fact that made it possible for the Pécs film fund to become a member of Cine-Regio”.

Appelgren underscores: „Several now prosperous regional film funds in Europe, had to face the same difficulties as the film funds in Hungary. In Sweden, for instance, the regional film funds have become stronger over the years and despite the recent financial crisis some of them have an increased budget - all four film production centres in Sweden are members of Cine-Regio. Today one of the Swedish regional film funds has an annual budget of 10 million euro but they initially started out with a budget of 1 million euro. The number of feature films being produced in this region has increased from one to almost thirty feature films per year. The effect is that today film production is not only taking place in the capital Stockholm, but also in the regions, which means greater diversity and the promotion of local cultural identity and the building of regional infrastructure.”

According to Keresnyei regional film funds in Hungary is a big opportunity and a gateway to the Hungarian film industry: this regional film fund-system renders the possibility to make European coproductions. He is in corcord with Zoltán Kőrösi, President of Motion Picture Public Foundation of Hungary. They both express that Hungarian film’s place is in Europe. However, according to Keresneyi the future of Hungarian film funds finally depend on the central financing system and the cultural politics of the new government.