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Film Funding?

Eigtveds Pakhus is a famous venue for conferences in Denmark. This June, the cozy spot will host an event already considered in the film industry as a major meeting on film policy. The “Copenhagen Think Tank” organized by the [Danish Film Institute](#) (21.06.06 - 24.06.06) will invite leaders of the European cinematography, filmmakers, festival directors, distributors, exhibitors, policy-makers and educators to examine the European public funding system from all its angles.

Head and directors of EU institutions such as the UK Film Council, the Nordic Film and Television Fund, the Berlin Film Festival, the European Audiovisual Observatory, the French CNC are some of the expected speakers to attempt the meeting with the aim of re-defining the existing models and realizing the Cinema value to the European society

The organizers remind that for the past two decades, the European film industry has blamed its failures on limiting the dominance of US films in EU cinemas. For two decades, the film industry tried to find in film funding the response to the harsh situation of marketing a film in small territories. The insufficient size of the national markets would be compensated by subsidy to reduce the cost of a national exploitation to a level that can be covered by the market.

But only in few cases this approach was successful. As a good example, the small territory that is Denmark produced an average of twenty films with about 150.000 admissions and a box office share that is around 30%. This dynamic example is unfortunately an exception. If about seven hundred films are produced annually in Europe with the some public funding support, only few of these films will get the attention of the national or international audience, and thus, the revenues of these films will not cover their costs.

So what is wrong with the European funding system? The latest figures from the just closed Berlin International Film festival are encouraging: more people have attempted the festival with about 19,000 accredited guests from 120 countries, and over 150,000 tickets sold. German cinema can truly enjoy with not less than 56 home productions screened at the festival, from which four have been competing in the list of nineteen for the Teddy Awards.

Far from erasing the questions, the German magazine Der Spiegel echoes the public debate on the subject.” Does success justify hundreds of millions in industry subsidies?” The magazine recalls the reason of State funding in Germany: it had elevate the German film industry, which was stagnant for years and, stage now a comeback. The present success of German films stems from the government subsidies and tax incentives to film producers, Der Spiegel says.

The Berlin Film Festival WORLD CINEMA FUND also rightly presents its latest funding success. “PARADISE NOW” a Dutch, French, German co production on the Middle East conflict was the first project to be supported by the fund. It was later awarded with the Blue Angel for the best European film, it then received the Golden Globe for the best foreign film in January 2006. Today, the film by Hany Abu Assad is in the last race for the coming Oscar for the Best Foreign Film. The success of the movie both in festivals and later in ticket sales will largely justify the public funding that the director needed at the beginning.

What the Danish organizers of the Think Tank propose now, is to examine, confront and come up with answers to questions that are important for the cinematography in Europe and also in Asia. Questions

answers to questions that are important for the cinematography in Europe and, also in Asia. Questions on funding criteria, on funding mechanism and on the measurement of the success of a funding will be on the menu.

The State Funding has just recently found an institutional frame of development in Poland with the [Polish Film Institute](#). The PIS is the newest film institute in Europe. It was established in 2005 in accordance with the new cinematography law, passed by Polish Parliament. It is set up similarly to the mechanisms of film industry support existing in many countries of Europe.

In Asia also, similar questions are on the agenda. In Vietnam, the full-time National Assembly deputies discussed on Tuesday the 14th of February 2006 a Draft Law on Cinema. The discussions on the Article 23 of the Draft Law are an attempt of defining selection criteria for funding film with State funds.

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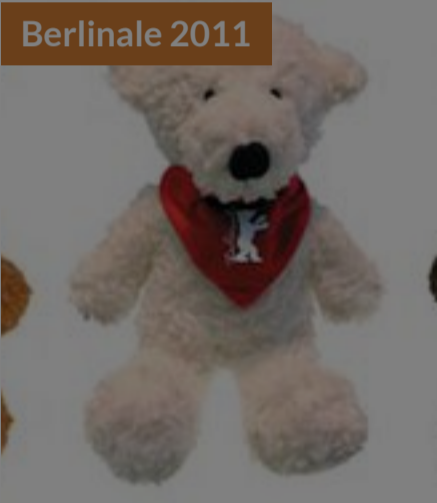
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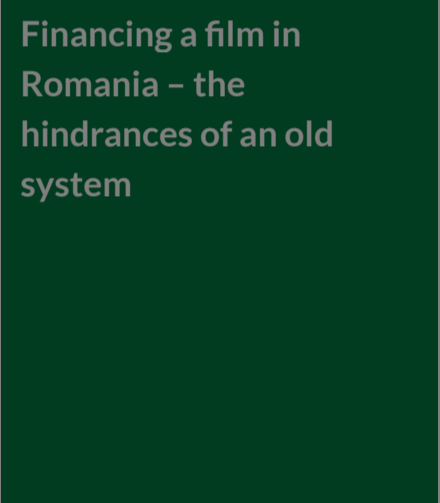
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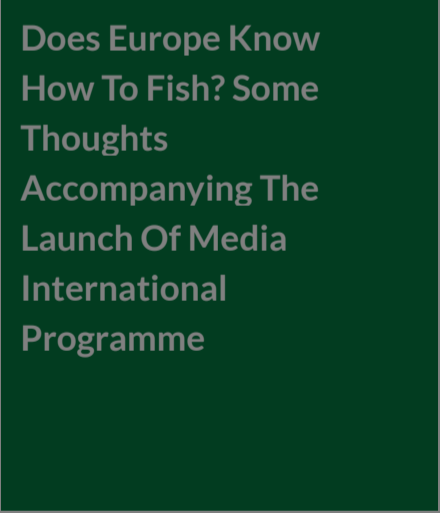
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