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On the Public Consultation on State Aid for Films and Other Audiovisual Works

The Nordic Councils of Artists - the interdisciplinary artists councils of Denmark, Finland, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Saamiland and Sweden - discussed the issues of the consultation at their meeting 21 September in Helsinki and agreed on the following general points of view.

The Nordic Councils would like to underline that it is important that EU rules and regulation continue to allow each member country to elaborate its own rules for public support to film and other audiovisual production. The fact that there should be left room for each member country to act is a.o. supported by the UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions from 2005, which also was ratified by the European Union. The Convention confirms right and duty of the member countries to have national culture policies that support cultural diversity and recognize the need for special treatment of cultural goods and services - audiovisual works included.

The point of departure for the elaboration of the schemes for aid must be the national needs rather than the idea of a European film identity. EU has at present 27 member countries - each with its own history and cultural background. The story telling is therefore different in each country.

As is the case with other art forms, film needs financial aid. Especially because of the rich diversity of languages this is a condition for film production in Europe. But this aid for film should primarily be regulated on national level and should be provided by national institutions and bodies, which we believe are the most competent to assess the proposals and applications from filmmakers in each country. The film applications of today are however to an increasing extent elaborated to match supposed EU rules and principles rather than the intrinsic aims and contents of the actual work.

Therefore the Nordic Councils of Artists find that several of the issues in the consultation material should not be regulated in detail by the European

Union, but should be part of the national culture policies of the member countries.

The Nordic Councils of Artists agree that the fast development within the audiovisual sector makes it necessary to adjust the schemes of aid, a.o. to comprise new ways of distribution of audiovisual works produced within the European Union, not least with the aim to facilitate the distribution of films in other European countries than the country of origin.

To handle the fact that film production and distribution are on different levels in different parts of Europe, the Nordic Council of Artists finds, that there should be a scheme for aid on European level that can help countries with poorer conditions to construct a better infrastructure for film.

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