EURIMAGES
Council of Europe Conseil de l'Europe

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GUIDE

Support for
theatres

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For all the latest information on EURIMAGES, please consult the Fund's web-site:
www.coe.int/Eurimages

Support application files should be sent to:

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I - INTRODUCTION

EURIMAGES is the Council of Europe Fund for the co-production, distribution and exhibition of European cinematographic works. Set up in 1989 as a Partial Agreement,[1] the Fund aims to promote the European film industry by encouraging the production and distribution of films and fostering co-operation between professionals.

1. Structure and membership

The Fund is managed by a Board of Management where each member State is represented. The list of members is available on the Eurimages website: http://www.coe.int/Eurimages.

The Board of Management determines the Fund's policy and the conditions on which it awards financial support. It also selects the projects for support. It generally meets five times a year. These meetings are devoted to the examination of applications for support. The schedule of meetings, with application deadlines, is available on the website.

The Board of Management elects its President from amongst the personalities proposed by the member states. The President's role is to represent the Fund on audiovisual policy matters, to chair discussions and to engage in an active dialogue with professionals from the cinema sector.

The Secretariat, headed by an Executive Secretary, under the responsibility of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, ensures the administration of the Fund. It prepares the meetings of the Board and implements its decisions. Film professionals may contact the Secretariat for any advice or information they may require concerning applications for support.

2. Programmes

The fund has developed four different support programmes:

- support for cinema co-production;
- support for theatrical distribution;
- support for theatres;
- support for digitisation of answer prints.

Two separate guides describe the support programmes for co-production and distribution. In this guide, you will find all necessary information concerning the support for theatres.

3. Support for theatres

The technical management of the support programme for theatres has been entrusted to EUROPA CINEMAS so as to ensure complementarity with the theatres support programme run under the European Union's MEDIA programme. Only theatres located in EURIMAGES member States that do not have access to support under the Media programme are eligible for the EURIMAGES programme of support for theatres.[2]

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[1] EURIMAGES member States: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey.

[2] Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Turkey

Theatres financed by EURIMAGES are integrated in the EUROPA CINEMAS network, which enables the exhibitor to benefit from the joint co-ordination, information and communication measures implemented by EUROPA CINEMAS. These activities are co-financed by the exhibitors, who pay EUROPA CINEMAS 5% (five per cent) of the amount of support granted to the theatre.

4. Objectives

The objectives of the theatres support programme are the following:

- to increase the programming in theatres and raise attendance for European films, with priority being given to non-national and Eurimages films. The term "Eurimages films" designates films which have been granted co-production support by EURIMAGES;

- to foster diversity in the screening of European films and support theatres' efforts to enhance the programming and promotion of European films;

- to develop a Europe-wide network of theatres, allowing joint initiatives between exhibitors and distributors, on the one hand, and with other European organisations that support theatres, on the other hand.

II - Regulations concerning support to theatres

1. Eligibility

Theatres located in EURIMAGES member States that do not have access to the European Union's MEDIA programme are eligible.[3] A “theatre” is considered as establishment run by an exhibitor, whether it has one or several screens.

Theatres must guarantee good projection conditions and audience comfort and be situated in national or regional capitals, university cities or other key cities or towns for cinematographic distribution.[4]

To be eligible, theatres must also satisfy the following criteria:

- commercial theatres[5] that have been open to the public for at least 6 months and operate with a box office/ticketing system and declaration of receipts,
- minimum number of screenings: 520 per year,
- minimum number of seats: 70,
- minimum admissions over 12 months: 20,000,
- technical equipment meeting professional standards,
- safety conditions complying with national law,
- pornographic theatres excluded.

The EURIMAGES Board of Management may nonetheless approve exceptions to the above criteria for single-screen theatres operating in specific exploitation circumstances.

2. Support access threshold

The theatre must ensure that of all the projections a screen a minimum percentage of European films are screened:

- 33% of all films programmed must be European films, representing at least 50% of screenings;
- at least half of these European film screenings must concern non-national European films (that is 25% of total screenings);
- in addition, a share of the European screenings, to be determined in the annual contract, must be devoted to the programming of EURIMAGES films;
- the films must be spread evenly over different screenings and different periods of the year.

These reference percentages may be modified on a case by case basis, by decision of the EURIMAGES Board of Management, taking into consideration the following:

- the total number of screens belonging to the same theatre under the same ownership or at the same address,
- the market share of European films in the country where the theatre operates,

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[3] As at 1 January 2009: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Turkey.

[4] For instance, towns where films are screened during the first week of national release.

[5] Businesses, companies, associations (or any other type of entity) owned either directly or through share ownership by citizens of the member states concerned.

- the theatre's results for the previous year,
- how long the theatre has been part of the network.

Where, for two consecutive years, a selected theatre is no longer able to achieve the required programming percentages, the EURIMAGES Board of Management may decide to withdraw the support and the award of the EURIMAGES/EUROPA CINEMAS label.

3. Commitments of the exhibitors of Theatres'

The theatres' exhibitors undertake to:

- annually provide EUROPA CINEMAS, by 15 January at the latest, the information requested in the programming report for the last year (for all films: title, director, nationality of the film or Eurimages film, date of national release, date of release in the theatre, number of screenings, total admissions and box office). This information must be entered in the EUROPA CINEMAS programming reports, by using in priority the Members Zone of the EUROPA CINEMAS Internet site;
- gradually introduce measures to promote and publicise European films;
- promote the European quality label on any publicity material issued during the term of this support contract by adding the following words "with the support of the EURIMAGES Fund of the Council of Europe" and the systematic screening of the trailer of EUROPA CINEMAS;
- send EUROPA CINEMAS the required documentary proof of programming and results.

4. Definition of European films

"European films" are qualified as full-length features, documentary or animation films, produced or majority co-produced by one or more European companies,[6] to which a majority of European professionals[7] have contributed. Films must have been recognised as national films by the European production countries.

Advertising films, those of a pornographic or racist nature and films advocating violence are excluded.

5. Amount and conditions of financial support

A contract between the exhibitor and the Executive Secretary, acting on behalf of EURIMAGES, sets out the conditions for awarding the support. It is concluded for a period of one year and is renewable.

The amount of the support is decided by the EURIMAGES Board of Management; if the theatre meets the programming requirements set out in the contract, EURIMAGES will contribute € 1 (one euro) maximum per non-national European admission in the theatre, including admissions to national films made in European co-production, subject to an annual maximum amount of € 15 000 (fifteen thousand euros). However, the EURIMAGES Board of Management may decide to award a bonus for the programming of EURIMAGES films, according to criteria to be defined in the annual contract and subject to an annual maximum amount of € 5 000 (five thousand euros).

[6] Having their registered office in a Council of Europe member State
[7] Nationals of Council of Europe member States

The support is payable in a single instalment after the EURIMAGES Board of Management has examined and approved the theatre's programming schedule and the corresponding report drawn up by EUROPA CINEMAS. Approval is in principle given at the second Board meeting held in the course of the year. The amount of support paid to the exhibitor will be reduced by the share payable by EURIMAGES to EUROPA CINEMAS for the implementation of joint initiatives via the EUROPA CINEMAS network.

If the theatre changes exploitation company during the course of the accounting period,, the support will be paid to the company managing the theatre at the time of the Board of Management's decision awarding the support and determining its amount, provided the managing company is willing to sign a new contract with EURIMAGES and undertakes to comply with the same conditions as provided for in the contract concluded with the former exhibitor.

6. Procedure

Applications should be sent to EURIMAGES – Council of Europe, Bâtiment Agora,
Allée des Droits de l'Homme – F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, which will forward them to EUROPA CINEMAS, and should contain:

- full particulars concerning the theatre,
- a detailed programming schedule for the last six months,
- copies of each publication published by the theatre,
- a certificate of receipts declared to the distributor,
- photographs of the theatre and the exhibitor.

Incomplete applications or those received after the deadline will be refused.

After the applications have been received by EUROPA CINEMAS, on the basis of a programme of visits organised by the relevant country's representative of the Board of Management, members of the "Theatres" Working Group and a representative of EUROPA CINEMAS will make an initial selection from among the theatres which have been visited. The final decision lies with the Board of Management, which takes account of their proposals.

7. Deadline

For theatres new to the network, the deadline for receipt of applications by the EURIMAGES Secretariat is 30 September of each year, at the latest, for a financial support for the following year.

For theatres already belonging to the network, the Board of Management will verify, in principle at the second meeting of the year, the conditions for maintaining the theatre in the network. The exhibitor will be informed of the decision within 30 days following the Board's meeting, and it will take effect as of 1 January of the current year.