



Mr.

José Manuel Barroso

President of the European Commission

Brussels

Belgium

Dear Mr. Barroso,

We would like to appeal to you on behalf of film distributors in the Czech Republic who are members of the Union of Film Distributors. Currently, the UFD has seventeen members including all movie distributors operating on the Czech market.

We would like to express our deep concern for the possible future of MEDIA programme. Our members are very concerned about reports related to intended reduction and eventual termination of the MEDIA programme activities. In our opinion, such a reduction or termination would cause a significant decrease in the circulation of European movies in the local market and would have an effect of decline in the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry in general terms.

The market situation in the Czech Republic is very complicated and it is therefore very difficult to distribute European movies without any public support - mainly due to the high costs associated with the theatrical distribution and also on account of the main aspects of the Czech film market - Hollywood and commercial production is highly dominant and European movies (if they are ever shown in cinemas) simply cannot compete with those commercial titles. In order to preserve the diversity of film selection offered to the audience in cinemas, it is necessary to sustain public support programmes such as MEDIA. Moreover, European movies represent very often the so called independent production where the situation is even more painful regarding their competitive strength.

MEDIA not only enables distribution of a variety of European audiovisual works but also supports many local production companies, film festivals and educates Czech film professionals. MEDIA has been active in the Czech Republic since 2002 and thenceforth supported 42 production companies with the total amount of 71 mio CZK (among the supported movies we can find titles such as Šílení (r. Jan Švankmajer), René (r. Helena Třeštíková), Protektor (r. Marek Najbrt), 3 sezóny v pekle (r. Tomáš Mašín) or Dům (r. Zuzana Liová). In the framework of MEDIA Distribution programme 115 European movies have been supported so far. Absolute majority of European movies that were distributed in the Czech Republic received the MEDIA support. We are talking about 14 distribution companies that were awarded a financial contribution. Most of them use this support on a regular basis. We also have to stress out the importance of the support destined for the distribution of Czech movies abroad. In terms of general importance of the MEDIA programme for the Czech audiovisual industry we should not omit the programme MEDIA FESTIVALS that supports the most important Czech movie festivals (Jeden svět, Anifest, Mezinárodní festival filmů pro děti a mládež ve Zlíně, Letní filmovou školu Uherském Hradišti, studentský Fresh Films Fest, Mezinárodní festival dokumentárního filmu v Jihlavě) and also the

programme MEDIA Training (there are many unique educational projects taking place in the Czech Republic – e.g. workshop for documentarists Ex oriente Film, the workshop dedicated to 3D animation called Anomalia and workshop for screenwriters called MIDPOINT).

However, the reduction of the programme or its complete termination would not only mean that the European films would most probably disappear from the Czech market but surely it would be reflected on a general social-cultural platform. Such kind of reduction would not lead to a consolidation of cultural diversity and dialogue between European cultural entities. On the contrary, it would definitely limit the availability of European movies to the general public and would thus restrain the possible inter-cultural dialogue.

On the ground of the reasons described above, MEDIA programme has full support of all associated distributors in the Czech Republic. On behalf of the distributors we hope and firmly believe that the MEDIA program will be maintained after 2013 and will thus allow the circulation of European audiovisual works to the public and the conservation of the film heritage as well.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jaroslav Pecka', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jaroslav Pecka

Secretary

Union of Film Distributors

Czech Republic

Prague, 22. February 2011