

**Press Release October 2007**

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## **CLOSER CO-OPERATION**

### **THE GOEAST FILM FESTIVAL'S FORUM "GERMAN-RUSSIAN CO-PRODUCTIONS" IN WIESBADEN SETS UP A WORKING GROUP ON CLOSER CO-OPERATION BY PRODUCERS FROM THE TWO COUNTRIES.**

Russian and German film producers want to co-operate more closely in the future. This was the conclusion of the goEast-Forum "German-Russian Co-productions" that took place as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Petersburger Dialogue in the German city of Wiesbaden. About 40 German and Russian producers, film makers and representatives of state film funding bodies took up an invitation by the goEast film festival and met in Hessen's state capital, Wiesbaden, last Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup>. The delegates formed a working group with six producers from each country. It aims to improve conditions for German-Russian co-productions and provide a point of contact for politicians. In the past ten years, there have been 13 German-Russian co-productions. The working group's first meeting will be at the Berlin International Film Festival 2008. In addition, goEast festival director and Forum founder Christine Kopf invited the group to another meeting at the eighth goEast Festival of Central and Eastern European Film in Wiesbaden in April 2008.

The goEast Forum showed that film makers know little about state film funding in each other's country. The Russian system seems obscure to German producers. And Germany's federal system appears complicated to Russians: there are federal funds provided by the German Federal Film Board (FFA) as well as funds provided by the individual Länder, or states. FFA Director Peter Dinges therefore wants to have information about German funding translated into Russian and publish them on the FFA web site.

Germany invests some 290 Million Euros a year into domestic film funding, Russia about 70 Million. Sergey Lazaruk, Associate Director of the Russian Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography in Moscow, promised to give special consideration to projects involving Germany when awarding funds for European co-productions at the end of this year. A formal film co-production agreement between the two countries is currently being worked on and Lazaruk said this treaty was being taken very seriously. The Wiesbaden group plans to get regular updates on the progress of these negotiations. It also aims to identify the problems that come up during production work in areas such as customs, money transfer and visas, suggest solutions and put forward other proposals on how co-operation between the two countries could be strengthened.

German and Russian producers hope that future co-productions won't be impeded by requirements that filming has to take place on the territory of the country that provides funding. Both countries currently make this a condition of funding. Karl Baumgartner, one of the German producers most active in co-operations with Central and Eastern Europe, stressed the importance of co-productions in opening up cinema markets. A certificate confirming a German contribution to a film enables German co-producers to apply for distribution funding. This gives Russian films a much better chance of reaching German cinema screens. Several Russian producers stressed the advantages of being able to apply for development funds in Germany – this option does not exist in the Russian funding system.

The Forum expressed a strong interest in regular meetings. Vocational training for producers would be welcome. There was also demand for round table discussions, for example on: what types of films are funded in Germany and Russia? What subjects are audiences in the two countries interested in? How are arthouse projects funded?

Audiences in Germany and Russia are interested in each other's film productions. This was evident in the success of NIGHT WATCH (Timur Bekmambetov, Russia, 2004) in Germany. The German production THE LIVES OF OTHERS (Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, Germany, 2005/06) has earned 370.000 U.S. Dollars at the Russian box office so far and got very good viewing figures on television.

**goEast would like to thank** the Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography in Moscow, the Russian Producers' Guild, the Fund for Social and Economic Support of Russian Cinematography, the German Federal Film Board, the State of Hessen, the Wintershall Holding AG, Skoda Auto Germany and Spielbank Wiesbaden for their kind support of the Forum "German-Russian Co-productions."

High-resolution press photos are available on request.

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