

Appeal to Support the Ukrainian Film Industry

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The Ukrainian State Film Agency (USFA), the country's central executive body of film industry, has appealed to the National Film Centre of Latvia (NFC) to support the survival of the Ukrainian film industry and film professionals in war conditions, when the funding for the industry has been dramatically reduced. The agency has opened a donation account and is addressing European and global institutions and citizens.

Maryna Kuderchuk, head of the Ukrainian State Film Agency (USFA), has signed a letter outlining the situation of the Ukrainian film industry - just a few years ago, a new rise in the industry began, national films won local and international recognition, Ukraine joined the co-production fund *Eurimages* and attracted the interest of foreign producers to film their projects in Ukraine, but the war started by Russia has stopped the growth of the industry and threatens its existence in general. At the beginning of 2022, the financing of the Ukrainian film industry was tripled, but with the beginning of the war it decreased 14 times, as the state budget was radically rearranged to ensure military and humanitarian needs. Professionals of the Ukrainian film industry continue to be active, both successfully fighting the information war, documenting war crimes, and maintaining the world's interest in the events, country and people of Ukraine. However, film production in the country has practically stopped, many film studios have been turned into humanitarian aid centres or bomb shelters, filming equipment has been donated to the needs of the front. Such a situation threatens everything achieved so far in the Ukrainian film industry, moreover, the film industry is an essential part of the national culture, therefore the country's film professionals are asking for European help in this crucial situation.

In order to save the Ukrainian film industry, the USFA has set up a special donation account <https://usfa.gov.ua/stand-with-ukraine>, and funds from this account will be used for specific and institutionally controlled needs - for the completion of state-supported films and, as far as possible, for distribution, and for the development of new projects, ensuring continuity in the industry's professional processes. The agency guarantees the transparency of money circulation and reports on the use of finances, promising to include the names of supporters in film credits; a video reel and publicity materials were also created to announce the initiative.

The USFA thanks all European colleagues who have already supported the Ukrainian filmmakers, and it is worth to note that Latvian film professionals and the NFC already co-operates with the Ukrainian colleagues in various ways. The upcoming documentary *Women without Men* by the Ukrainian director Marina Nazarenko about Ukrainians who have found refuge in Riga was supported in the NFC calls for film production applications. And two documentary projects that are being produced in co-operation between Ukrainian filmmakers, the Latvian production company *VFS Films*, and producer Uldis Cekulis - *Company of Steel* by Yuliia Hontaruk and *The Blessed Ones* by Andriy Lysetskyj were supported in the NFC calls for international film co-production applications.

This year, special screenings of Ukrainian films took place both as part of the May 4 Latvian Film Marathon and at the Baltic Sea Documentary Film Forum held in September, where four of the eight films in the programme for general public were about Ukraine and its people, while three Ukrainian films were presented in the industry section of the forum and their representatives used the opportunity to address potential financial partners, and two of them won cash prizes to ensure the production process.

The Riga International Film Festival, *Riga IFF*, starting on 13 October, has also announced a focus on Ukraine this year (<https://rigaiff.lv/en/programme-2022/focus-on-ukraine/?info=audience>) – a special programme with four Ukrainian films, two of them were screened at the Cannes Film Festival in May (*Butterfly Vision* by Maksym Nakonechnyi and *Pamfir* by Dmytro Sukholytkyy-Sobchuk). Two theoretical discussions on the common theme of *Colonialism in Film and Media* will complement the screenings.

The Ukrainian State Film Agency's information on industry needs and donation opportunities: <https://usfa.gov.ua/stand-with-ukraine>

Video call by Ukrainian filmmakers:

<https://www.nkc.gov.lv/en/article/appeal-support-ukrainian-film-industry>