

Slovak, Ukrainian or Polish minority co-productions supported by the Czech Film Fund

Czech Film Fund decided to support eleven minority co-productions with the total amount of EUR 800 000 (CZK 20 million) in the latest call. Czech producers behind six fiction features, three documentaries and two animated shorts, which succeeded in this call, are capable to build strong ties with partners from Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, Germany or Baltic countries.

Fiction Features

The highest amount in this call (EUR 116 000) received producer Ondřej Trojan and his company Total HelpArt T.H.A. for ***Emma and the Death's Head***. A psychological drama by director and co-writer Iveta Grófová (*Little Harbour* – premiered at the Berlinale 2017), which is planned as Slovak-Czech co-production, is set in the turbulent years of WW2 and tells a story of a Hungarian widow who shelters a young Jewish boy in her home at Slovak-Hungarian border. *Emma and the Death's Head* has already proven to be promising project last December, when it received EUR 330 000 from the Eurimages fund.

Producer Dagmar Sedláčková of MasterFilm, who recently co-produced drama *Butterfly Vision* which premiered in Cannes, was granted EUR 100 000 to co-produce Ukrainian-German-Czech dramedy ***The Editorial Office*** by director Roman Bondarchuk (*Volcano*). The film follows a Ukrainian researcher Yura and his friend who together witness an arson attack in the forest, which they manage to photograph. When his friend disappears the next day, Yura takes the photos to the local papers where he hopes to find justice and help for his friend. But it turns out that the local editorial office works a little differently than usual.

The journalistic work is also touched upon in the film ***Hunger Breakfast***, which is planned as a Lithuanian-Latvian-Czech film, with Mikuláš Novotný's Background Films co-producing on the Czech side with the support of EUR 80 000. Karolis Kaupinis, whose debut *Nova Lituania* was presented at the Karlovy Vary IFF 2019, tells a story about a protest action at Lithuanian television, whose employees went on hunger strike in 1991 during the occupation by Soviet troops desperate to keep the Baltic republics in the USSR.

That hunger strikes have indeed often helped to shape history will be evidenced by another Ukrainian-Czech collaboration (supplemented by Norway), ***Oxygen Station***. Czech company Silk Films received EUR 80 000 to co-produce Ivan Tymchenko's second feature, which is a story of Crimean Tatar rights activist, Mustafa Dzhamiliev, who became known around the world after going on a 303-day hunger strike in a Soviet prison because of his unjust conviction.

Two coming-of-age dramas have been supported in this call as well, both supported to the tune of EUR 80 000. Slovenian-Czech-Croatian ***Block 5*** by Klemen Dvornik, which is co-produced by Peter Badač's BFILM.cz on the Czech side, follows a shy girl who joins a group of skateboarders to help them save a playground with many years of tradition that is about to become a parking lot. Polish-Czech-Estonian ***Wet Monday*** by Justyna Mytnik, co-produced by Bionaut, is a story, with elements of magical realism, about a friendship of two girls who don't fit in with their peers.

Documentary Features

Among documentaries, the highest support went to the upcoming film ***Putin's Playground***, which follows the evolution of Vladimir Putin's policies and Russia's intelligence service's strategy to gradually build Russia back into a superpower. Polish-Czech-Norwegian-German co-production is led by director Konrad Szolajski and it is co-produced on the Czech side by Hypermarket Film (granted EUR 76 000).

Celebrated director Peter Kerekes, whose fiction feature *107 Mothers* was awarded at Venice FF last year, is set to focus on documentary filmmaking yet again, this time with ***Wishing on a Star***, planned as Italian-Slovak-Czech-Austrian-Croatian co-production. The film, co-produced by Daniela Jenčíková of Artcam Films on the Czech side and supported with EUR 40 000, focuses on the Neapolitan astrologist Luciana de Leoni d'Asparedo (63) who stands behind the travelling choices of those who think that travelling to a specific destination on their birthday will change their lives.

Michal Sikora's Lonely Production received EUR 20 000 to co-produce Slovak-Czech ***Fakir***. A documentary by Roman Ďuriš is a portrait of Dalibor, a Romani youth who has gone through a difficult adolescence and in a complicated life situation finds a new impulse in the Horror Circus Lánik, where he can artistically exercise his fascination with violence and pain.

Animated Shorts

Latvian-Czech ***Kafka in Love*** by Zane Oborenko, is one of two animated shorts supported in this call that are co-produced on the Czech side by MAUR film (granted EUR 80 000). Based on letters between the Prague-born world-famous writer Franz Kafka and his lover Milena, this ten-minute film depicts the waves of emotions taking place in a lesser-known part of Kafka's personality.

The other animated short granted the support by the Czech Film Fund is ***JOKO*** by Izabelą Plucińską. Polish-Czech-German film tells a story of a man who throws away his inhibitions and starts carrying influential people on his back. MAUR film was in this case granted EUR 48 000.

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