



Federation of European
Screen Directors

Fédération Européenne des
Réalisateurs de l'Audiovisuel

STATEMENT

Brussels, 17 December 2020

EU Filmmakers Standing In Solidarity With Their Faroese Colleagues Facing Censorship

FERA joins in support of Faroese filmmakers as the film support allocation process challenges their artistic freedom.

Over the last few months, they have experienced negative feedback from their film support system on grounds of immorality and incompatibility with Faroese culture.

The situation was brought to public attention early December, when the Minister of Culture of the Faroe Islands Jenis av Rana upheld in a interview his personal decision to refuse to approve a grant for animated TV series SKÚLA SCAM due to the use of “obscene language”, while the film had been recommended for support by local film fund Filmgrunnurin based on an artistic assessment.

Freedom of artistic expression requires artists and the cultural and creative sectors at large to be independent and free of any governmental censorship, political interference or pressures. This entails independence of expertise from ideology when assessing projects, as well as autonomy of the public funding allocation process from political authorities' influence.

We call on the Faroese authorities and Minister of Culture Jenis av Rana to ensure that such interference stops and can no longer be applied, as must be the case in a well-functioning support system in line with democratic values and respectful of filmmakers' artistic and creative freedom.

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Background Information

- BOLLIVINIR and BLISSED, short film projects by Katrin Joensen-Næs

Short film project BOLLIVINIR directed by Katrin Joensen-Næs was allocated a grant of 33.000kr while the film support system consultants advised her to to rewrite the story to “better fit Faroese culture” particularly in relation to sexual content in the script. The project is reportedly stalled to date.

<https://screendirectors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Bollivinir-svar.pdf>

When Katrin Joensen-Næs subsequently applied with another short film project BLISSED, the fund selection process rejected the project for similar reasons, referring to the BOLLIVINIR project in the rejection letter. BLISSED is about a sick woman, who suffers from sex addiction, and is powerless over her disease.

- SKÚLA SCAM, animated TV series directed by Tóki Jansson and produced by Jonas í Dali Wanger, a dark comedy series set in a school, by a 17-year-old filmmaker
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/Sk%C3%BAa-scam-751848945183363/>
- December 7, 2020 – Faroese TV newscast "Dagur & Vika" segment on the political interference with Minister of Culture of the Faroe Islands Janis av Rana stating that he intends to continue to get involved personally in the decision making process

Segment starting at 06:10 <https://kvf.fo/dv?sid=117355>

Interviews subtitled in Danish

<https://www.facebook.com/681434724/videos/10158860447094725/>

- December 8, 2020 – Faroese TV newscast "Dagur & Vika" segment with coalition government MP Beinir Johannesen defending the Minister’s decision

Segment starting at 07:02 <https://kvf.fo/dv?sid=117412>

- Related press clips (in Danish and Faroese)

<https://www.berlingske.dk/aok/17-aarige-toki-skulle-modtage-filmstoette-til-sit-foerste-projekt-indtil>

<http://www.listaportal.com/tidindi/2020/12/10/lisa-talar-og-minnir-jenis-armslongd>

<http://www.vp.fo/news/armslongdin-skal-vidkast>

<https://portal.fo/dagur-36434/bannast-ov-illa-jenis-vil-ikki-lata-studul-til-teknifilm.grein>

- December 15, 2020 – Danish Film Directors statement

<http://www.filmindir.dk/da/st%C3%B8ttetilkendegivelse-f%C3%A6r%C3%B8ske-filmskaberes-ret-til-kunstnerisk-frihed>

- December 16, 2020 – Freemuse statement <https://freemuse.org/news/freemuse-concerned-about-film-censorship-in-the-faroe-islands/>

About Us

Founded in 1980, FERA represents the independent voice of European film and TV directors in Brussels. With 48 organizations as members from 33 countries, it speaks for more than 20,000 European film and TV directors, representing their cultural, creative and economic interests at national and EU level.

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