

Protection of audiovisual copyright discussed in Ljubljana

Ljubljana, 6 September - Representatives of global organisations from the audiovisual industry started a three-day meeting in Ljubljana today to discuss the protection of copyright in the age of the internet. The meeting comes as EU countries are implementing the EU directive on copyright on the single digital market.

While the directive was to be transposed until June last year, only 16 EU countries have included it in their national legislation so far, which according to chief executive of the Federation of European Screen Directors Pauline Durand-Vialle means that a large part of the audiovisual community in Europe does not enjoy the rights introduced by the directive.

Slovenia is in the process of changing its legislation in this field. The government recently endorsed two bills expanding these rights, which are to be fast-tracked through parliament.

This comes after the country received two reprimands from Brussels because of the delay in transposing the directive. Based on its reply to the second warning, the European Commission extended the deadline for transposing the directive to 19 October 2022.

The audiovisual market has changed drastically in the last two years, as many people no longer watch TV as they used to but choose the films and series they like from streaming services providers, which mostly do not pay fees to authors, said Durand-Vialle.

In the long-term, this could lead to authors creating contents for even less money, she warned.

Cecile Despringre, the director of the Society of Audiovisual Authors, pointed to Italy, Spain and Estonia as examples of countries with advanced national copyright legislation. The European directive has brought no major changes there, she said.

Klemen Dvornik, the head of the Slovenian Federation of Filmmakers' Guilds, said the two bills that are to be passed in Slovenian parliament would be an important step towards protecting the authors of audiovisual contents.

Before the debate, the European office of the Audiovisual Authors International Confederation was officially launched in Ljubljana.

The confederation seated in Buenos Aires was set up two years ago to protect audiovisual copyright around the world and provide authors logistic and financial support.

It cooperates with different associations and collective organisations, including AIPA, the Slovenian collective rights organisation for authors, performers and producers of audiovisual content, which will be its regional seat in Europe.

The confederation's head, Horacio **Maldonado**, said the idea to set up an organisation to connect audiovisual authors, directors and screenwriters from five continents was floated a few years ago and it was realised during the epidemic.

He thinks these are very challenging time for authors, so they must be united and cooperate in their effort to explain it to the largest companies that are inventing new ways of operation in the digital age that they must share a part of their revenue with authors. This would create cultural diversity and enable different working conditions for the authors, he said.

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(STA)