Eurimages and Turkish cinema: history, identity, culture

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Chapter 2

THE STATE OF TURKISH CINEMA IN THE POST-1990 PERIOD AND EURIMAGES AS A NEW SOURCE OF SUPPORT

This chapter is composed of two main sections, the preceding one depicting the general view of the film environment in post-1990 Turkey and the latter focusing on Eurimages funding which is a fact that emerged in this period.

First, I will give the figures for the population, film admission, number of movie theatres and films in years, which will be followed by the data which shows the change in the movie-goers’ profile in 1990s Turkey. Then the penetration of American distributors to the film market will be briefly explained. Thus I will present a general picture of the film industry and provide information about the audience for whom the films are produced. The four new financial sources for filmmaking, which is a novelty of the 1990s, will be introduced before proceeding to Eurimages, which is one of those.

The section that introduces Eurimages is composed of three sub-headings. First, its philosophy – the reasons for establishing such a fund – will be explained. Then the history – some facts about its establishment process – will be given. Finally the mechanism of Eurimages - how the system works and the types of cinema support - will be explained.

Films, Movie Theatres, Film Admission

The reduction in audience size of Turkish cinema that had begun by the mid-1970s and continued on its trajectory throughout the ‘80s came to its ultimate conclusion in 1994: the total admission for domestic films was approximately 1.2 million in that year. The audience of foreign films also decreased during this period. 1995 witnessed the lowest admission for foreign films and also for total film admission (7.8 and 9.3 million respectively) (TSI 2010, 92). Comparing the data from 1970 to 2010 helps us to expose
the stunning change in the movie-going patterns of behaviour of Turkish people:

Table 1

*Population, Movie Theatres and Film Admission in Turkey: 1970-2010*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Number of Screens</th>
<th>Admission for Films</th>
<th>Annual Admission Per Capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>35,605,176</td>
<td>2,424</td>
<td>246,662,310</td>
<td>6.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>44,736,957</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>62,580,503</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>56,473,035</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>19,133,976</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>67,803,927</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>25,257,326</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>73,722,988</td>
<td>1,647*</td>
<td>41,064,394</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DIE 1973, 7, 11; TSI 2010, 8, 92; TSI 2011, 41; Yavuz 2011a; Yurdatap and Yavuz 2004, 22. When the figures for admission contradict in different sources, I used the bigger one.

* The number of screens denoted in 2010 belongs to the year 2009.

As seen above, although the population of the country is seen to increase over this period, the annual admission per capita is as low as less than one film per head of population in the recent twenty years. It is a very low number compared to 1970, the time of the heyday of Turkish cinema, when an individual watched almost seven films on average a year. The number of screens on the other hand decreases in the 1980s concomitantly with the general decline in Turkish cinema. Many of the movie theatres turned into arcades and car parks during those years. The number of screens actually reaches the minimum level of 281 in 1993 (TSI 2010, 92). Then it tends to increase regularly and Turkey hosts more than sixteen hundred screens by 2009. The reason for that increase despite the low number of movie-going individuals is, to a large extent, the splitting up of cinemas into smaller spaces in order to increase the number of screens and the opening up of new shopping malls, many of which contain cinema complexes.

The movie-goers throughout the 1990s and in the first decade of the 2000s preferred domestic productions. Considering the low number of released domestic films, the audience per domestic film is seen to be much higher than the audience per foreign film. For instance approximately 227 thousand people watched a domestic film on average
in 1990, whereas that figure was 80 thousand for a foreign one; the figures were approximately 377 and 125 thousand in 2000, 334 and 104 thousand in 2010 respectively. The data regarding the number of released domestic feature films between 1990 and 2011 are as follows:20

![Graph showing released domestic feature films in Turkey: 1990-2011](image)

Fig. 3. Released Domestic Feature Films in Turkey: 1990-2011

Following the recessive years of the 1990s, the uptrend of Turkish cinema in recent years is discernable on the graph. Starting in 2003, the number of domestic films and in the audience size has been gradually increasing. To give an example, the number of movie-goers was 38.5 million in 2008, 60% of whom preferred domestic productions; that is to say, Turkey reached the largest percentage of domestic films market share in Europe and fourth in the world after US, India and South Korea (Kaya 2009). The number of admissions in 2011 is approximately 42.3 million, 50% of which were for domestic films (Yavuz 2011b). A look at the box-office films reveals that there is no foreign film in the top ten list and only two in the top 20 films: *Titanic* - which is number two all over the world - (12th); and *Avatar* – which is number one all over the world - (17th) (Akınç 2011; Kaya 2009; All-Time Box Office 2011).22 Murat Çiçek, manager of a movie theatre chain,

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20 The data which are the basis of the graphs throughout the text are cited from the referred sources. The graphs themselves are formed by LY.
21 Source: Akınç 2012; Kaya 2009; Yavuz 2011a; Yurdatap and Yavuz 2004, 22.
22 'All-Time' lists for Turkish cinema refer to the information of last twenty years. There is no reliable data for box-office figures of previous years.
explained that in this environment cinema exhibition business in Turkey invests on the grounds of box-office success of domestic films in recent years, not the imported films (personal interview, Istanbul, 2 Apr. 2009). However, annual admission per capita in Turkey is still as low as 0.56 (by 2010).

**The Change of the Movie-goers’ Profile**

In addition to the decrease in the size of the audience in the post-1990 period, the profile has changed as well. Starting in the mid-1970s, the main audience which was composed of families – from small children to grandmothers - had withdrawn from movie theatres to their homes to watch TV and video films. A new group of young and mostly uneducated males had filled their seats to watch sex-comedies, *Arabesk* and violent B-films.

Now the recent audience of films in Turkey – from the early 1990s till today - is composed of more educated young people from the middle and upper classes. Two sets of data give a general insight into the socio-cultural profile of Turkish society in recent years. Figure 4 shows the literacy ratios in years and Figure 5 demonstrates the general population of the country.

![Fig. 4. Literacy Rate (Population 6 years of age and over).](image)

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It is discernable that the literacy rate gradually increased during the republican period and the filmmakers - year after year - are making films for a more educated target group, the majority of whom reside in cities. Moreover, a piece of research conducted in the three biggest cities (Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir) in 1994 provides a series of data regarding the change in profile of movie-goers by the 1990s. Notwithstanding my reservation that the time of the interviews made (the time of the day and which movies were screened at that time of the year) and the selected movie theatres (what genre of films they were screening) might affect the result of that research, the findings put forth a clear difference from the film audience of the past – a difference which I think more or less still holds today (figures 6 and 7).

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24 Source: TSI 2010, 10; TSI 2011, 43. ‘Urban population’ refers to the population of province/district centres and ‘rural population’ refers to the population of towns/villages.
Fig. 6. The Movie-goers’ Profile in the 1990s: Civil, Sex and Age Status.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{25} Source: Sinemamızda Seyircinin Kimliği 1994.
Professional Status (%):

![Professional Status Chart]

Educational Status (%):

![Educational Status Chart]

Fig. 7. The Movie-goers’ Profile in the 1990s: Professional and Educational Status.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{26} Source: Sinemamızda Seyircinin Kimliği 1994.
The data shows that the majority of the movie-goers are composed of single and educated people who are students or wage-earners between ages 15 and 30. Women appear as thirty per cent of the audience - this is probably explicable with reference to their minor role in almost every aspect of social life.

The Penetration of American Distributors

The introduction of American distributors to the Turkish film industry is an important phenomenon of the 1990s. Following the modification of the ‘Regulation for Foreign Capital’ (*Yabancı Sermaye Kanunu*) - that was designed to attract foreign investment to the country - in such a way to encompass the film business, Warner Bros and United International Pictures opened their representative offices in Turkey in 1989. Already advantaged by their healthy business infrastructure and good reputation, these distributors gained strength in just a few years and acquired a high market share. Including domestic *Özen Film*, film distribution businesses witnessed a competition between three leading companies from the beginning of the 1990s. Some of the Turkish filmmakers suffered under this oligopoly and held Americans in particular responsible for the fact that their films were not screened at movie theatres. Actually 195 out of the produced 553 domestic films could be released between 1990 and 2003 (Yurdatap and Yavuz 2004, 22). For instance, 108 of the released 154 films in 1993 were Hollywood productions whereas 11 were domestic (Dorsay 1994, 11). However, the American distributors did not hesitate to distribute a Turkish film when they perceived a box-office potential in it: for instance *The American* (*Amerikalı*-1993); *Istanbul beneath My Wings* (*İstanbul Kanatlarımın Altında*-1996); and *The Bandit* (*Eşkıya*-1996) are the domestic films which were distributed by Warner Bros. The box-office success of these films gave hope to almost everyone in the Turkish film industry: a domestic film was not necessarily to be watched only by a small number of people anymore; it could potentially satisfy a wider audience. In addition, through the agency of American distributors, Hollywood films could be screened in Turkish movie theatres simultaneously with the USA, or a short time after the world premiere. Another benefit that came with these distributors was the renewal of the movie theatres to which they contributed. Hence they turned into modern spaces in which people
could enjoy the relaxed atmosphere. Maintenance of many of those movie theatres had not been made after they started to host young male audiences for the aforementioned genres of films. The ticket prices, however, concomitantly became higher than before. There were 19 different companies distributing films in Turkey by 2010 (Yavuz 2011a).

**New Financial Sources for Filmmaking**

As the video device lost its popularity and accordingly the reason to produce for this market disappeared (it had replaced the system of regional operators by the 1980s), filmmaking became a higher risk business than ever in an environment with fairly low numbers in terms of films, audience sizes, number of movie theatres etc. For a producer, it was nearly impossible to make films depending on only her/his own capital. Hence a new solution to save the Turkish cinema was necessary and came into effect: this was the aforementioned novelty in financial sources. Four new financial sources emerged by the 1990s to support filmmakers. Since then, films have usually been able to receive support from one or more of them.

One of the new financial sources was private TV channels which started to broadcast in 1990. Acting with the motive of increasing their audience size, private TV channels gave pride of place to entertainment facilities which the state broadcasting company, TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), kept away from. The broadcasting policies of private channels are claimed to have had a degenerating influence on the society. These, it is asserted, are more observable especially when it comes to the reality shows, the style of transposing the news, and the entertainment programmes. In terms of the cinematic section, foreign TV series were screened on prime time at the outset. However, shortly after the push off, the broadcasters observed that old domestic films were in high demand by their audience. Those films were produced thanks to the financial support of the mass audiences of the 1960s and 70s; children of that era grew up to be parents in the 90s and adults became grandparents. Those people were demanding similar content on TV screens. Thus the foreign TV series were replaced by the old domestic films to be screened on prime-time. Having obtained this market information, some private TV channels decided to support the production of new Turkish films; they gained the rights for screening them after their exhibition in movie theatres. The TV
channels, however, did not prefer to be the main and/or majority co-producers of the films because the executives figured out that the re-screening of old films generated much more profit compared to producing new ones. By the same token, TV channels ordered either series which narrated similar themes to the old domestic feature films or commissioned the re-making of them as TV series. Thus, the number of domestic series produced has gradually increased in recent years. It should be noted that the state broadcasting company TRT engaged in the co-production of many feature films as well.

The filmmakers have also been supported by the Ministry of Culture. Treating cinema rather as a taxable entertainment facility than as an art, the state for many years (from the 1930s until the late 1980s) had evaluated Turkish films on censorship criteria. For the first time in history, the state started to supply monetary support for domestic films through the Ministry of Culture in 1990. Following this, in 1991, municipality tax on domestic films was abolished and it was set to 25% for the imported films. Taking the state’s unfriendly attitude towards cinema into consideration, these two steps are noteworthy. More than 40 feature films were financially supported (as much as 40% of their production budget) in the first half of the 1990s. Due to political instability and the short lives of the coalition governments, however, state support was interrupted for a few years by the second half of the same decade. In 1997 the municipality tax again started to be applied on domestic films and the tax on foreign films decreased to 10%, equalizing the two. Apart from the interruption for a few years, state support still continues. The ‘Law on Cinema, Video and Musical Works’ of 1986 was replaced with a new ‘Law on Assessment, Classification and Support of Films’27 in 2004. Films are now rated with reference to this legislation by a committee considering the film in accordance with criteria concerning human dignity, public order and morality, and the mental health of children and adolescents.

The third new financial source for Turkish cinema which came about after 1990 is the sponsorship of the business companies for films. Supporting a film financially, a corporation publicizes its reputation as well as benefits from tax advantage, since the amount of money employed for such activities is exempted from tax. The filmmaker in turn is able to avoid the risk of audience credit, and covers the partial expenses of a film in

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27 ‘Sinema Filmlerinin Değerendirilmesi ve Sınıflandırılması ile Desteklenmesi Hakkında Kanun’
advance. This is thus mutually beneficial - the sponsor company acknowledges that the money employed for a film will not turn back and the director does not have to worry about the box-office. Besides business companies, non-profit organizations such as foundations and associations have supported the production of a few films, the themes of which they assessed to be in accordance with their missions.

**Eurimages: Philosophy, History, Mechanism**

The fourth source that emerged to support Turkish cinema in the post-1990 period is the Eurimages funding which is at the heart of this research and will be examined hereafter. In this part of the chapter, I will first elucidate the philosophy behind the establishment of such a fund and then give the history and explain the mechanism of it. The relations between Eurimages and Turkish cinema will be covered in Chapter 3.

**Philosophy**

American cinema had become the world’s market leader by the 1950s. It had started to gain power during World War I and grew as an industry for the next three decades by means of transferring talented directors and other film professionals from Europe. It benefitted from the political climate there - stagnancy in the European film industry throughout the world wars in which almost all countries of the continent participated. Keeping this position since then, the trade deficit in favour of American cinema expanded, especially during and following the crisis experienced by the national film industries of Europe throughout the 1970s. By 1990, the market share of European (national and non-national) films in the European Union was 19.5% whereas US market share therein was 70% (Finney 1996, 15). Even in France, despite all the stricter protective measures taken in favour of national industry, US films took 55.9% of the market (MEDIA Salles, 21). The foreign films market was as low as 1.4% in the US in the same year per contra (Finney 1996, 15). In this environment, the ratio of European films to cross borders to be screened in another European country was 10% (Forbes and Street 2000, 23). In addition to the audience loss of European cinema in movie theatres, private TV channels were growing in Western Europe in the 1980s. Having a commercial approach to broadcasting
rather than what may be termed a cultural one, those newly-born channels did not care for showing national or European films but offered to the audience what they demanded - which was Hollywood films. State-owned channels unavoidably were influenced by this competition and acted in concordance with market principles.

Since the 1920s, European governments have been taking a series of steps in favour of national film industries as an intended measure against the rising market share of Hollywood in their countries. This has included the imposition of quotas, tariffs and restrictions on foreign productions; the requirement of broadcasting of domestic films on TV channels; and encouraging national film industries through subsidies or tax breaks. Co-production, one of the tools for raising finance and enlarging the market potential, between two or more countries of Europe had started in 1913: the first co-production in film history was Das Geheimnis der Lüfte, a full-length feature thriller by an Austrian and a French company (Robertson 2001, 19). The idea of pan-European cinema was prompted by a group of filmmakers headed by Erich Pommer, manager of UFA of Germany, in the 1920s (Rienstra 1998, 245-46). Increasingly a more and more common practice in Europe, a high number of co-produced films (especially those by France and Germany) materialized during the 1960s. Nevertheless, neither the protective methods exercised at the national level nor the co-productions practised through the initiative of companies have been effective enough to prevent European cinema’s audience and box-office loss over time. Under these circumstances, the idea of reinforcing European cinema on an inter-governmental basis emerged among filmmakers and professionals. What would be done was to follow an old tradition: co-production, which the European filmmakers practised for decades; and the opening up of the national markets to non-national European films with an organized and institutional approach. A film co-produced, thanks to the support of a supra-national institution, might have a greater potential for reaching international audiences as well as automatically being distributed in the co-producing countries.

On the other hand, by the end of the 1980s, the EU was proceeding to a single market and political union. From 1986 to 1993, more than two hundred laws in different fields were agreed upon with the intended purpose of achieving the free movement of goods, services, people and money, i.e. to open the frontiers and abolish the protectionist
measures in the member states of the EU. Those were presumably the most palpable steps in history to attain what Ernest Renan envisaged in his famous Sorbonne speech in 1882: “The nations are not something eternal. They had their beginnings and they will end. A European confederation will very probably replace them” (2006, 20). Such a confederation would be achieved through embracing the differences between nations and peoples. Jacques Delor, who served as the President of European Commission for two terms between 1985 and 1995, stated: “Europe has every reason to be proud of its cultural diversity but that cannot be an excuse for not having a united Europe. We need both healthy competition and increased co-operation” (quoted in Finney 1996, 3). Another statement of his implied the tradition and rationale for support of the arts in Europe: “Culture is and always has been a cornerstone of the European tradition. It’s nothing new for Europe to subsidize art – popes, monarchs and rich benefactors have done for centuries” (6).

Finally, Eurimages (2009a) described itself as an organization which ‘endeavours to support works which reflect the multiple facets of a European society whose common roots are evidence of a single culture’. That is put as the first of two main objectives of the Fund. Secondly, in terms of economics, it invests ‘in an industry which, while concerned with commercial success, is interested in demonstrating that cinema is one of the arts and should be treated as such’ (2009a). Ryclef Rienstra combined these two objectives together: “The meaning of the Fund has a cultural purpose but our actual job is mainly an economic one because we support with money” (personal interview, Amsterdam, 3 Nov. 2009).28 Instead of giving the money directly to their national industries, the member states agreed to pay it through annual fees in order to contribute to co-operation between film professionals from different member states.

In short, a number of reasons combined which prompted the establishment of a cinema support fund in order to contribute to European cultural identity and reinforce European cinema which was losing its audience against Hollywood. Nevertheless, that was not a real challenge to Hollywood as Rienstra explained:

No it definitely is not competition with America. We are dispersed in Europe. All

28 Ryclef Rienstra is the first Executive Director of Eurimages, served between 1989 and 1993.
countries would prefer their own national film industry, their own cultural identity and their own market share. That is, of course, why they have never been able to compete with the USA. You shouldn’t aim at that because what they can do in Hollywood, we never can. Let’s be fair - if you and I would like to go to a good film, wouldn’t that be an American in eight out of ten cases? What we want is to maintain what we are good in Europe and to protect the market share. (Nederlander Leidt, 1991)

Roberto Olla, likewise, stressed that the philosophy behind Eurimages was not to compete with American cinema financially but rather culturally: “I think Eurimages and the MEDIA programme [which will be explained in the following section] were created in the late eighties to make sure that Europe could keep on having films that would reflect the cultural identity of the countries it comprises. That does not mean that the objective was to fight the Americans. The idea was to let our society have its own mirror in a way, its own films” (personal interview, Strasbourg, 19 June 2009). So indeed, as we will see, the amount of financial support provided by Eurimages remains at symbolic level compared to Hollywood.

History

On the supra-national level, the first step was taken by the EU in 1963 to promote a common market in the community, followed by the directives in 1965 and 1968 to open the national markets to the films and distribution companies of the other member states (Rienstra 1998, 247-48). As the national film industries in Europe began to lose their audiences to Hollywood and accordingly lost power over the years, the indispensability of inter-governmental support was propagated more vocally among the cinema professionals. To respond to the demands, the EU introduced the pilot phase of MEDIA programme from 1986 till 1990. The EFDO (European Film Distribution Office-1988), EAVE (European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs-1988) and SCRIPT (European Script Fund-1989) were three of the sub-programmes started in this framework. The function of EFDO was to support the screening of low-budget European films in another two EU countries;

29 Roberto Olla is the current Executive Director of Eurimages, has been serving since 2008.
30 MEDIA: Mesures pour Encourager le Développement de l’Industrie de Production Audio-Visuelle.
EAVE dealt with training, development and networking for audiovisual producers; and SCRIPT supported the development of new creative scripts. Following the pilot phase, the MEDIA-I programme operated between 1991 and 1995 and has been extended - with the renewals and re-implementations - under the names MEDIA-II (1996-2000), MEDIA Plus (2001-2006) and currently under the name MEDIA 2007 until 2013. Throughout the process the projects have encouraged and funded the following areas: script writing; animation production; documentary; use of archive material; distribution; dubbing; subtitling; professional training and a MEDIA business school; European cinema exhibition sector; European film awards; the preservation and restoration of films; the stimulation of financial investment; the development of production digitisation. In addition to all members of the EU, EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) and Croatia have been part of the programme (Wood 2007, 8-14; European Commission 2009).

MEDIA, however, was initiated primarily as an industry-based programme and stayed that way: it aimed not at co-productions nor did it focus on cultural concerns and objectives. The first official attempt at the establishment of a pan-European cinema and television support fund had come from the French president François Mitterand and was rejected by the EU in 1984 (Vincendeau 1995, 133). Some of the member states were against such a fund because it was said that it meant in fact a movement of investment capital in production. In other words cinema was considered as an industrial activity, not a matter of cultural heritage and conservation. Moreover, there was anxiety about losing control of the national support mechanisms to Brussels: “The UK was absolutely against. Germany was not very much in favour” (Rienstra 2009). Thus, all attempts by the European Commission to establish a co-production fund failed. Thereafter France researched the possibility of setting up this fund within the framework of the Council of Europe. 31 All the member states of the EU were members of the Council of Europe and this provided the advantage that the member states could set up bilateral co-operation schemes wherein not all the member states had to participate. Agreements were on a

31 Council of Europe was established on 5 May 1949 as an intergovernmental co-operation with Treaty of London. Founding members are Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Royer 2010, 5). The objectives of Council of Europe are to: protect human rights, pluralist democracy, and the rule of law; promote awareness and encourage the development of Europe’s cultural identity and diversity; find common solutions to the challenges facing European society; consolidate democratic stability in Europe by backing political, legislative, and constitutional reform (Council of Europe 2009).
voluntary basis only and existed at various levels and fields. That framework was used for setting up a co-production fund, where the member states of the Council of Europe could sign if they so wished. It thus also opened up the possibility for non-member EU states to partake in the scheme. It resulted in the name of Eurimages - on the initiative of the French (Rienstra 2009).

Essentially, considering the European Cultural Convention (opened for signature on 19 December 1954) and several previous resolutions, recommendations and works on:

- European cultural co-operation;
- the promotion of audiovisual production in Europe; and
- film co-distribution in the European area,

the representatives of the Committee of Ministers of Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden resolved to set up a European support Fund for the co-production and distribution of creative cinematographic and audiovisual works on 26 October 1988 at the 420th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (Eurimages 2003, 2). The aims of the Fund were specified to be the following (3):

- Foster the co-production and distribution of creative cinematographic and audiovisual works in order to take full advantage of the new communications techniques and to meet the cultural and economic challenges arising from their development,

- Intensify co-operation and exchanges for the purpose of stimulating film and audiovisual production as an important means of promoting Europe’s cultural identity, and

- Take concrete measures in the financial field to encourage the production and distribution of films and audiovisual works and, thereby, the development of the programme industries.

The headquarters was decided to be in Strasbourg – where the Council of Europe is located - and the Fund started to operate on 1 January 1989. At the beginning there

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32 Council of Europe was located in Strasbourg for symbolic reasons. This city had changed hands between France and Germany three times in the 20th century and therefore was seen as a symbol of Franco-German reconciliation, which was thought essential to a peaceful future for Europe (Royer 2010, 5, 8).
were simply the 12 member states mentioned above participating. Twenty four new members joined the Fund since then to triple the number of participant states to 36 by the end of 2011. The member states - those except founders - and the years they joined to the Fund are as follows: Iceland, Norway and Switzerland (1989); Finland, Hungary and Turkey (1990); Austria and Poland (1991); Ireland (1992); Bulgaria (1993); Czech Republic (1994); Slovak Republic (1996); Romania (1998); Slovenia (2001); Latvia (2002); Croatia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2003); Estonia (2004); Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia (2005); Lithuania (2007); Albania (2009); and Russia and Georgia (2011). The United Kingdom acceded to the Fund on 1 April 1993 and withdrew on 1 January 1997. The members of the Council of Europe who have not agreed to be included in Eurimages until today are Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Liechtenstein, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, San Marino and Ukraine.

**Mechanism**

The resources of the Fund consist of the obligatory contributions (annual fees paid by the member states and associate members), voluntary contributions, repaid loans, sums derived from cancellations of support, interests earned on the Fund’s financial assets, other payments, donations or legacies.\(^33\) The contribution of a member state is determined each year by the national representative of that state according to a scale adopted by the Board of Management (will be called ‘the Board’ hereafter).\(^34\) The Board is composed of one national representative from each member state and currently meets four times a year. Each delegation should consist of at least two national representatives who can participate the meetings alternatively. The Executive Director, appointed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, is the responsible person for the proper operation of the Fund and he/she reports to the Board.

Any European state, be it a member of the Council of Europe or not, can apply to join Eurimages. The decision regarding accession is taken by the Board. In the case of a

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\(^{33}\) The rules and procedures that will be mentioned hereafter are derived from the official documents of Eurimages, in which detailed information can be found. Some of those rules and procedures have been amended in the past and some are possible to be amended in the future. The information given here are in effect by the time this text is written (2011). The bibliographic information of Eurimages documents can be found in the ‘References’ section.

\(^{34}\) The Board adopted to apply a new method by 1 January 2011 to calculate the contribution amounts, which takes into consideration the population, gross domestic product and the amount of support requested by filmmakers from a member state in previous years.
disagreement between the candidate state and the Board, the Committee of Ministers which is composed of the member states of the Fund enters the decision-making process and has the final say. A member state can withdraw from the Fund if they give six months notice before the end of the fiscal year. The assets of the Fund are held in the name of and the accounts are audited by the Council of Europe (but also are available to external auditors). The Fund is managed, and the resources are allocated, by the Board. All the costs and financial supports are expressed in Euro currency.35 There are four types of support: co-production; exhibition; distribution; and digitisation.

Co-production Support

Animations, documentaries and feature films with a runtime of 70 minutes or more, which are intended for cinema release, are included in the scope of co-production support. Any film containing blatantly pornographic nature, advocating violence or openly inciting against human rights is considered to be ineligible for support.

A co-producer first submits a film project to the national representative of his/her country. The mission of the national representative is to inform the other national representatives about the artistic merits and demerits (director, his/her works and reputation) and the economical state (co-producer, phase and likelihood of realization) of the project from his/her country and defend it – if convinced - in a strong and convincing manner. Nevertheless, a co-producer can also submit the project directly to the secretariat of the Fund. In this case, however, there is no reason for the national representative to defend a project he/she does not know. A project that is not defended by the national representative has nearly no chance of being supported by the Fund as the demanded amount is usually much more than the funding allows. In any case the representative concerned should be contacted prior to the Board meeting, otherwise the project is withdrawn from the agenda. As the projects fulfil the formal requirements at the meeting stage, the national representative executes a somewhat difficult task throughout, whereby he/she is expected to be fair and meticulous. In this sense, Eurimages meetings are places where conflicting interests are able to compete against each other: “It is for sure that the

35 The currency was French Franc before 2001.
representatives took into account the amount of money given annually and what they got out. We had fierce discussions about that” (Rienstra 2009). On the one hand the representative lobbies in search of other representatives’ support for the projects from his/her own country and on the other hand he/she has to decide between good and bad projects with an expert eye. This is in the nature of the selection process as there is an abundance of applicants and a limited amount of money. In a competitive environment where pros and cons arise under financial constraints and, given that artistic tastes inevitably cannot escape subjective judgments to an extent, it is probable that some films of high quality unfortunately have been rejected. Nonetheless, Mehmet Demirhan stated that around 80-85% of the supported decisions meet the professional expectations and a really good project is never ignored (personal interview, Istanbul, 7 Apr. 2009).  

The Board has the final say for the films to be supported but to make the decision process faster and more practical, a Co-production Working Group composed of at least one fifth of Board members is formed for each meeting. This is a balanced group of members from Northern, Central and Southern Europe, and from major contributor countries (France, Italy and Germany for the present). Each member state is assigned to take part in at least one of the five consecutive meetings. The group members examine all the projects that apply for funding, debate on them and resolve on the films to get support. The national representatives defend – if they will - the applicant film project(s) in which co-producers from their country take part, during the meeting of the working group. Then the Co-production Working Group presents the films – that they recommend for the support – and give their arguments to the Board (which is composed of all of the national representatives). Most of the time, the Board takes the advice of the working group; it is for sure possible to disagree with the Working Group’s decision and vote against but this is not the case because it is almost impossible for the national representatives who are not in the working group to read all the scripts (Van de Pas, personal interview, Amsterdam, 11 May 2010).

For an evaluated project, each member state has one open vote that is put down on the paper and later photo-copied and distributed to all members. Therefore each

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36 Mehmet Demirhan is the current National Representative of Turkey in Eurimages, has been serving since 2007.
37 Dorien van de Pas is the current National Representative of the Netherlands in Eurimages, has been serving since 2009.
member gets access to the for-and-against votes of other members. The support decisions are taken by two-thirds majority. A support decision, however, becomes valid only provided that this two-thirds majority has financially contributed an amount which constitutes at least half of the budget in terms of their annual fees. It is a valid claim to say that the major financial contributors to the Fund have a kind of veto power to an extent. These countries, however, individually contribute much less than half of the total budget and the veto power can be exercised only if three of them are against a certain project. Furthermore, there is no quota which defines criteria for lower or upper limits for the countries. Theoretically it is possible that a country’s projects may get all the amount set aside for support in a certain meeting or fiscal year but in reality this does not occur. Similarly, paying larger annual fees does not guarantee more support for a country’s projects, even though national representatives are concerned about what they get out of their investment. For instance, despite the high annual fees their government has been paying for years, Italian filmmakers get much less than that amount in return. In a similar vein Dorien van de Pas (2010) stated that Netherlands thought of pulling out of the Fund in 2009 because for years their contribution was much higher than the money they got back. This is likely because, as Barrie Ellis-Jones stated, “A very large proportion of the money has gone to co-productions coming out of smaller countries” (quoted in Finney 1996, 110).

The Board takes a ‘support’ decision on two grounds: one of the criteria is the quality of the work (the script); the other is co-production set-up. Olla (2009) stated that they judge the narration and dramaturgical quality of the script but not the content, i.e. there is no censorship. According to official Eurimages documents, the Fund also ascertains whether a project reflects and promotes the Eurimages aspiration to have contributions from a diverse range of national components to Europe’s cultural identity. Here a critical question emerges: what is the cultural identity of Europe? The possibility to define the concept of “European Work” was discussed in Assises de l’Audiovisuel in 1989 upon a request from Eurimages. An excerpt of workshop report was submitted to the Fund which pointed out the difficulty of such a definition:

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38 The procedural decisions, on the other hand, are taken by majority of the votes independent of financial contributions of the member states.

39 Barrie Ellis-Jones is the second Executive Director of Eurimages, served between 1993 and 1995.
On the one hand Europe has a multiplicity of cultures, specifically regional as well as cosmopolitan; it does, on the other hand, have a common history of ideas, of philosophy, science, folk-tales, literature, music and experience even if many school books relate a long tale of antagonisms and conflicts. Although a definition remains elusive, the common base of European culture becomes patently obvious when it is compared with the culture of the Ibu, Chinese, or American Indian… It is clear at this stage, however, that from a cultural point of view a work can be European only if its main creative springs, the writer and director, are European. (Eurimages 1989, 2)

A pragmatic and practical definition of ‘Europeanness’ was proposed in order to be able to label an audiovisual work. It was based on two conditions: firstly, the producer must be a member of a European nationality and secondly the work must have a certain number of points on the basis of crew (Eurimages 1989, 3). The European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production employed a similar scheme later in 1992, details of which will be given in the following pages. The attitudes of two executive directors of Eurimages, who served at different periods, at least at cinematic level, are parallel with the above view of what constitutes ‘Europeanness’. Rienstra wrote: “Seen in retrospect, European films may well exhibit specific characteristics, although presumably only when compared with American films, and to a lesser extent as an autonomous identity” (1998, 254). Olla, in addition, pointed out that there is not an exact definition of Europe’s cultural identity and any definition is likely to be partial and incomprehensive:

The only way one can define European culture is by placing it in contrast with non-European cultures, meaning you can only recognize a European film as compared to an American film. But defining a European film alone in terms of trying to find its own characteristics, this would be impossible, because there is such a diversity within Europe. That - finding a common ground among all the films that are produced in Europe - would be impossible. So, I think, the only way to define European culture and assign it a definition is to compare it to third cultures, like the American, the South American, the Asian, the African and so on. (2009)
So it is to be understood that there is no censorship for the scripts in so far as what European culture is and what it is not. In a similar vein, the location of the story is not important; it may be anywhere on the earth or space. Stories developed by European filmmakers are welcome provided that they are appreciated from the dramaturgical point of view: “There is no such thing as asking yourself ‘is this topic sufficiently European or not?’” (Olla 2009). On the other hand, “what the Board of Management clearly does not like is those films that are very national. They become co-productions only because they need money to accomplish their financing. There is no real will to co-produce and so the Board of Management refuses those films” (Olla 2009). The rationale is that projects which aim only at a domestic audience should be able to find the financing in their homeland or can rely on box-office revenues. Furthermore, there is no motive for a minority co-producer to activate the national support mechanisms for a film which will not address the audience in his or her country.

At least two independent co-producers from different member states should be involved in a project. One of the co-producers takes the initiative – titled the ‘majority co-producer’ - and usually has more impact on the form and the content of the film. An applicant project should be in compliance with the current regulations of the relevant states and also with the cultural objectives of the Fund. To be eligible for co-production support, a producer – whose main activity is cinematographic works - should bear a European nature, i.e. should be a national or legal entity of one of the member states, and should be independent of public or private broadcasting organizations or telecom companies. In a co-production involving two producers (a bilateral agreement), the majority co-producer cannot contribute a share of more than 80% and the minority co-producer cannot contribute a share of less than 20% to the total budget. If the budget of a film is forecasted to exceed 5 million Euros, the contribution of the majority co-producer can rise up to 90%. For a co-production involving more than two parties (a multilateral agreement), the majority co-producer cannot contribute more than 70% and each minority co-producer cannot contribute less than 10% to the total budget. A co-production between producers from member states and non-member states is also possible; in this case, the contribution of the co-producer(s) from non-member states cannot exceed 30% of the total

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40 At least three independent co-producers were required until 1998.
production cost. The rationale here is to ensure keeping the control of the project in the hands of the co-producers from member states.

As a cinema support fund of the Council of Europe which aims to promote co-operation between professionals, Eurimages requires the candidate projects to be European in terms of origin, investment and rights. The director of the film must have a valid passport or long-term residence permit from one of the member states of the Council of Europe. A points system, which relies upon the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production signed on 2 October 1992 and coming into force on 1 April 1994, was set to assess the European origin or character of a project. The production units of a feature film, documentary or animation are assessed with specific points to be counted (see Table 2).

Table 2

*The points given to each production unit:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Feature Film</th>
<th>Documentary</th>
<th>Animation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Script (writer)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music (composer)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First role</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second role</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third role</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameraman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound (recordist, mixer, engineer)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art director and costumes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio or shooting location</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-production location</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conception</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Design</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storyboard</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Decorator</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Backgrounds</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layout</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% of the expenses for animation in Europe</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% of the colouring in Europe</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compositing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Council of Europe 1996, 16; Eurimages 2011a.

41 Starting by 2010, obligation to have ‘European origin’ has been removed from the regulation but ‘European character’ condition has remained unchanged.

42 Eurimages has announced that co-production projects with non-European directors will also be considered eligible for support, starting by 1 January 2012.
The first, second and third roles in a feature film project are calculated on the basis of the days to be worked by the actors. A feature film project is considered to have a European character in the case that it achieves at least 15 out of 19 points. A documentary must achieve at least 8 out of 16 and an animation 14 out of 21. If a project does not achieve the required points but has access to national accreditation in each of the concerned co-producer countries, it may be considered eligible for co-production support, if a written confirmation of this is provided by the national authorities.

Eurimages is a top financier that becomes part of the process at the last phase: “We did that because it was impossible for us to verify the solidity of the national funding or the participation of the distributors. We could not judge the contracts, the validity and the solidity of financiers or their contributions. Before we say ‘yes’ to a film, they have to prove that all the participants are ready to commit themselves to this film and then at the end we step in. It has to be proven that all the partners are willing to co-operate, willing to invest in the project” (Rienstra 2009). Hence a project is expected to have obtained at least one of the following financial sources in each of the co-producing countries in advance: public support (including national, regional, local or supranational supports), television pre-sale, a minimum guarantee, or any other financial arrangement that could be accepted by the Executive Secretary of the Fund. A national or other type of received support facilitates Eurimages support but it is not an absolutely necessary condition. In those cases in which a good project cannot get any of those for any reason, Eurimages funding is theoretically still a possibility. The project must comply with copyright regulations in all of the countries the co-producer companies are established in and all co-producers must have ownership rights (joint ownership) on the negative of the film. Principal photography for a feature and a documentary and principal animation for an animation film project should not have started before the Board’s examination in order to be eligible for co-production support. In any case in which technical or climatic constraints force pre-shooting, the Executive Secretary must be informed about this. Principal photography or principal animation should be scheduled to start six months after the Board’s examination of the project. Applications for co-production support should be submitted in English or French and each co-producer in a project should contact the national representative of his or her own country in the Board. A project can be submitted to the Board and withdrawn
twice at most, and a rejected project cannot be re-submitted.\footnote{The right to submit and withdraw a project was three times at most before 2011.}

Regarding the cultural and economic objectives of the Fund pointed out before, each project is evaluated on the following artistic and production criteria:

- Quality of the script / level of development (story and theme (originality of content, subject), characters and dialogue, narrative structure, style (director’s intention, cinematic vision, genre, tone))
- Contribution of the creative team (experience of the director, producers, authors, scriptwriters, cast and crew)
- Circulation potential (festivals, distribution, audience)
- Artistic and/or technical co-operation between the co-producers
- Level of confirmed financing (and consistency)

The qualified projects get a conditionally repayable loan which is interest-free. The producers are allowed to reimburse the Fund on the basis of the revenues generated by the film. Thus, the producer is not expected to repay the loan in case the supported film cannot recover its costs and make profit. The reimbursement ratio of the loans was nearly zero at the beginning and has risen to around 5-6% by 2009 (Olla 2009). The main factor lying behind the rise of the repayment ratio is the measure introduced in 1994: according to a newly introduced rule, a producer who does not meet his/her contractual obligations cannot apply for a new co-production support. Nevertheless, the ratio is still low but apparently this is to be expected. Ellis-Jones explained: “We are operating in the pan-European culture and environment, where most producers expect to make their films via public funds, and not to actually do well in the market” (quoted in Finney 1996, 111).

The applicant projects should include the minimum 2K digital master copy for cinema release, compatible with DCI (Digital Cinema Initiatives) specifications or ISO (International Organization for Standardization) norms on D-Cinema.\footnote{This condition is in effect since 1 January 2011. ‘Digital Cinema Initiatives’ was created in 2002 as a joint venture of Disney, Fox, Paramount, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Universal and Warner Bros. Studios, which aims to establish and document voluntary specifications to ensure a uniform and high technical performance, reliability and quality control (DCI 2011).} The amount of the loan cannot be more than 17% of a film’s total production cost and can not exceed
700,000 Euros. The loan is allocated proportionately between the co-producers depending on their contribution to the budget of the film. In some cases, the allocation may be disproportionate in favour of the co-producer(s) from the countries where cinematographic production levels are low. All the member states except France, Germany and Italy are covered in this status. The Eurimages support must be mentioned at the beginning credits of the film just after the co-producers and in major publicity materials as well. DVD copies with English or French subtitles and the major publicity materials must also be submitted to the Fund after the completion of the film.

The data hitherto shows that approximately one third of the applicant projects have not met the requirements, and have thus been evaluated as being ineligible and disqualified beforehand; approximately half of the remaining projects have been awarded support through the Board meetings (Olla 2009). The Fund has contributed to the co-production of 1,421 films up to the end of 2011, 1,222 (86%) of which are features. The allocated amount accumulated to a total of 429.9 million Euros, feature films getting the lion’s share with a 95.4% ratio. The number of supported feature films annually varied from 15 to 83 and documentaries from zero to 21 in the past twenty-three years. 3 animations have been supported for the first time in 2009 (see Figure 8).

The annually allocated amount for the co-productions varied from 6.2 to 24.4 million Euros. Average co-production support awarded per feature film has been 335,672 and per documentary has been 75,858 Euros. Faruk Günaltay (personal interview, Strasbourg, 14 Nov. 2009) stated that member states who contributed larger amounts rather focused on big-budget projects which had the potential of commercial success whereas countries that have smaller film industries demanded support in the name of cultural diversity.

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45 Before 2008, the limit for financial support was 15% for the films with a total production cost of 1.5 million Euros or more and 20% for the films with a total production cost less than that amount, except 2000-2003 period. Two-scheme system was introduced by 2000. According to that system, the projects submitted primarily on the basis of their international circulation potential were in the Scheme 1 and the projects submitted specifically in light of the cultural and economic diversity of European cinema were in the Scheme 2. For projects in Scheme 1, the maximum support could not exceed 610,000 Euros for budgets lower than 5.4 million Euros and 763,000 Euros for budgets higher than 5.4 million Euros. For projects in Scheme 2, the maximum support could not exceed 380,000 Euros for budgets lower than 3 million Euros and 460,000 Euros for budgets higher than 3 million Euros. The system turned to single support mechanism in 2003.

46 Starting by 2010, non-proportional allocation of support has been available to all co-producers regardless of their country, thus including the mentioned big-contributor member states.

47 For the annual amounts, see Appendix-C.

48 Faruk Günaltay is the first National Representative of Turkey in Eurimages, served between 1990 and 2005.
**Exhibition Support**

*Europa Cinemas* was a project introduced in 1992 as the exhibition leg of MEDIA programme, objectives of which are to:

- Increase the number of screened European (non-national) films in movie theatres
- Increase the audience attendance to those films
- Attract the young generation to European films
- Promote diversity in the screened European films
- Develop a joint network of movie theatres throughout the member countries

The Europa Cinemas project has reached 2,891 screens of 1,057 movie theatres in 599 cities of 64 countries by 2011 (*Europa Cinemas 2011*). For the Eurimages member states...
countries which are not part of the EU and therefore have not got access to the supports of MEDIA programme, another exhibition support was initiated in 1993. Working within the framework of Eurimages and intended to be complementary with the MEDIA programme, this exhibition support is aimed at facilitating the integration of the movie theatres in these countries when they join the EU. 38 movie theatres in 27 cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Turkey benefit from the exhibition support by the end of 2011. The movie theatres of Albania, Russia and Georgia, which have recently joined the Fund, have the right to apply for exhibition support. The objectives of the theatres support programme of Eurimages are almost the same as the objectives of Europa Cinemas, except Eurimages focuses on the screening of Eurimages-backed European films whereas Europa Cinemas places its emphasis on attracting a young audience. The exhibition support is in the form of a subsidy, i.e. non-repayable. Movie theatres which get exhibition support belong to the Europa Cinemas network.

In order to be eligible for Eurimages exhibition support, a movie theatre must guarantee good projection conditions and audience comfort and be situated in national or regional capitals, university cities or other key cities or towns for cinematographic distribution. In addition, a theatre must also satisfy the following criteria (Eurimages 2011b):

- Commercial theatres - businesses, companies, associations (or any other type of entity owned either directly or through share ownership by citizens of the member states concerned) - that have been open to the public for at least 6 months and operate with a box office/ticketing system and declaration of receipts
- Minimum number of screenings: 520 per year
- Minimum number of seats: 70
- Minimum admissions over 12 months: 20,000
- Technical equipment meeting professional standards
- Safety conditions complying with national law
- Pornographic theatres excluded
Considering all the screens of a movie theatre, at least 33% of the total number of films programmed and at least 50% of all screenings in a year must be European. A ‘European film’ is defined as a full-length feature, documentary or animation film which is produced or majority co-produced by one or more European company/companies, in which a majority of the professionals who contributed are clearly European nationals, and the film must be recognized as a national film by the producing country or co-producing countries. Films of a pornographic or racist nature, films which advocate violence, and advertising films, are excluded. At least half of the European screenings (25% of the total) in a theatre must be non-national films. A definite percentage of the screened European films – the percentage is determined in the annual contract - must be the ones which received Eurimages co-production support. The screening of the European films must be spread evenly over the year. The Board may change the pre-agreed percentages for any case, depending on the total number of screens in a theatre, the market share of European films in that country, the previous year’s results and the to-date duration of the theatre’s membership in the exhibition support programme.

The contracts between the movie theatres and Eurimages are signed annually and are renewable per annum. A movie theatre which meets its obligations in the contract gets a maximum of €1 per admission for non-national European films and national films which are European co-productions; the amount of support is decided by the Board, which can be €15,000 maximum per annum. If it is clearly stated in the contract, the Board may decide to pay a bonus for the screening of Eurimages-backed films; this amount can be €5,000 maximum per annum.

Similar to the Co-production Working Group, a Cinemas Working Group has been formed to examine the applications of the movie theatres to be member of the Eurimages network. This working group consists of eight national representatives at most, chosen preferably from the member states which are in the scope of exhibition support. The Group proposes its support decision for the theatres to the approval of the Board.

**Distribution Support**

Distribution support of Eurimages is, just like the exhibition support, designed as
complimentary to the MEDIA programme. Thus the members of the Fund which do not have access to it - namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Russia, Serbia, “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, and Turkey – are eligible for distribution support by the end of 2011. A distributor who meets the following criteria can apply for distribution support (Eurimages 2011c):

- Head office is in one of the above mentioned member states or

- Head office is in one of the member states that have access to the MEDIA programme and wishes to distribute a film produced by one of the above mentioned member states

The applicant distributor should be a professional in the business who can prove that with his/her portfolio, and must have fulfilled his/her obligations in terms of the previous contracts with the Fund. A distributor can apply for the support of two films at most per meeting; the film(s) should be eligible for 35mm optical or equivalent digital cinema projections in conformity with the DCI (Digital Cinema Initiatives) standards. A distributor whose head office is in one of the co-producing countries of the film cannot apply for the support. An application which is rejected can be re-submitted only once, provided that the screening date of the film is estimated as after the Board meeting.

The film which is applied for must be a feature, documentary or animation with at least 70 minutes of runtime and should not bear a blatantly pornographic nature, advocate violence nor incite the violation of human rights, as in the case of co-production support. It must be produced either by a producer from one of the member states of Eurimages or at least 50% by the co-producers from member states. The film and the director of the film must be European in accordance with the terms of the aforementioned European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production. The film must be released in the country of origin not more than five years before the request for support decision and not be released yet in the covered region that it is indicated in the application. The film should have been released on at least two prints and the publicity materials for the film should refer to the Eurimages distribution support.

While taking a decision, the Board’s criteria are the quality of the film and the feasibility of the distribution plan. The priority is for the films that are co-produced via
Eurimages support, the feature films intended for children and documentaries. Financial support can be at a maximum amount of 50% of the expenses and cannot exceed 8,000 Euros per film. It is non-repayable.

Similar to the Co-production Working Group and Cinemas Working Group, a Distribution Working Group has been formed to examine the applications of the films to be distributed via the support of Eurimages. This working group consists of a maximum of eight national representatives, chosen preferably from the member states which are in the scope of distribution support. The Group proposes its support decision for the films to be distributed to the approval of the Board.

**Digitisation Support**

Film digitisation support was in effect between 2007 and 2010. The objective of digitisation support was to supply financial assistance for the production of a minimum of 2K digital masters of the films with the intention of digital cinema projection, VOD (Video on Demand), satellite and high resolution internet distribution. A project which has already received Eurimages co-production support but has not included the digitisation costs in the budget so did not benefit from digitisation support can apply for this support. A project could be submitted after the completion of the answer print and it can be submitted and/or withdrawn two times at most. A rejected project is not eligible for re-submission. The applicant producer has to be independent of public or private broadcasters and majority-owned by European shareholders. A producer who cannot meet his/her obligations to the Fund from previous contracts is not eligible. The maximum amount of support can be up to 80% of the digitisation costs or €30,000 and it is non-repayable. If a project has received this support, it is obligatory to put the following note in the end credits of the film, referring to the support: “This film was digitised with the support of Eurimages”.

The reason for ending that scheme was the obligation of producers to include the digitisation costs in their application for co-production support, starting from 1st January 2011. Instead, ‘Digital Equipment Support for Theatres’ has been launched for the

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49 The maximum amount was €10,000 before 2009.
installation of digital cinema equipment, aiming at the movie theatres in the member states that are in the scope of Exhibition Support. The amount of this support is approximately €20,000 per screen and Eurimages stipulates the mentioning of its support clearly and visibly in the theatre.

Conclusion

The Turkish film industry met with a series of novel occurrences in the 1990s and went through dramatic changes in terms of production practices, styles and the content of the films. Introduced by the advertising industry, the latest cinema technology has widely benefitted both the filmmakers and TV professionals. Insufficient production conditions are no longer a proper excuse for poor quality films since the mid-1990s. The films are not evaluated by a censorship commission, but are rated and certified by the Ministry of Culture. The demographics of the Turkish cinema audience have changed and the number of produced and released films has decreased, compared to the previous period. American distributors have penetrated the market; private TV channels have begun broadcasting; and new financial sources have emerged, namely TV channels, the Ministry of Culture, sponsorship from business and Eurimages.

Out of those four new sources of financial support, Eurimages is the only non-domestic supra-national one. Emerging as an idea among film professionals, Eurimages was established in the framework of the Council of Europe in 1988 by 12 member states to foster the co-production and distribution of creative cinematographic and audiovisual works and to promote Europe’s cultural identity. Accordingly two main objectives were set for the Fund: culturally to support works which reflect the multiple facets of the European society and financially to be concerned with the commercial success of films while treating cinema as one of the arts. The number of member states has reached 36 by the end of 2011.

Four types of support have been adopted by Eurimages. Co-production support mainly requires the collaboration of filmmakers from different member states and takes into account the quality of the work and co-production set-up of a project as criteria to support a film. Exhibition support is designed to favour the movie theatres of non-EU
members of the Fund. Distribution support is designed for non-EU members likewise and aims to increase the screening of European films outside the producing countries. Digitisation support was initiated for the production of digital masters of films but has been replaced by the digital equipment support for movie theatres.

18.7 million Euros is generated annually by the Fund for the production of 62 films on average. This hardly corresponds to the budget of a cheap American production; that is to say, Eurimages support remains at a symbolic level compared to the financing available in Hollywood.

The next chapter will focus on the experience of Turkey in terms of Eurimages and its first twenty years of Eurimages membership.