

AVANTI

A program to support
the South Caucasian Film Community
on creative, legal and technical levels

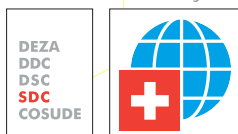
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Funded by the



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and Cooperation (SDC)

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"WE HAVE MANAGED, ALL TOGETHER, TO BREATHE SOME FRESH LIFE AND HOPE INTO THE FILM COMMUNITY."

Transfer of Power Speech by Pierre Agthe, Director of FOCAL
June 21, 2007

Dear IFA-SC Members, Dear Filmmakers from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia,
Dear Colleagues

It has been five years since we first came to the South Caucasus, to meet filmmakers in the three countries and to elaborate, together with many of you, what since became the AVANTI program.



The overall aim of AVANTI, defined by the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency, was very ambitious, inasmuch as it intended to contribute to the reinforcement of the social cohesion of South Caucasian society. In other words, the aim was to make a lever of culture to contribute to trans-national and peaceful cooperation in the region.

More concretely however, AVANTI wanted to provide the South Caucasian community of filmmakers with tools enabling them to participate successfully in the global audiovisual market, without compromising each country's creative vision, nor its cultural identity.

Another of AVANTI's main objectives was to encourage the development of a network of professionals open to new forms of collaboration, in South Caucasus and with international partners.

Did we succeed to achieving these aims?

Let's look at it in terms of facts:

- More than 100 producers, authors, directors, technicians and lawyers have received intensive training in scriptwriting, development packaging, budgeting, financing, promotion and world sales, intellectual property laws, copyright and authors' rights, direct sound recording and digital sound post-production;

AVANTI and IFA-SC was brought to life and supported thanks to:

Abdullayev Teymur
Sound Director, Azerbaijan

Abdullayeva Alina
Film Director, Azerbaijan

Abovyan Vartan
Deputy Head of the National Cinema Center, Armenia

Abrahamyan Armine
Writer, Producer, Actress, Armenia

Abroyan Sirakan
Film Director, Armenia

Adamia Levan
Film Director, Georgia

Agazade Mirsadig
Film Director, Azerbaijan

Agthe Pierre
Director of FOCAL, Switzerland

Akbarov Farhad
Sound Engineer, Azerbaijan

Aliev Nasimi Film
Director, Azerbaijan

Aliyev Abbas
Secretary of the Board, Filmmakers Union, Azerbaijan

Aliyev Shamil
Writer, Azerbaijan

Allahverdyan Zara
SDC Senior National Program Officer, Armenia

Amberg Lorenzo
Ambassador to, Armenia and, Georgia Switzerland

Amirah Kamal Elmiri
Producer, Azerbaijan

Anjaparidze Nino
Festival Director, Georgia

Arakelyan Arsen Film
Director, Armenia

Arakelyan Anahit
Sound Engineer, Armenia

Arakelyan Damien
Producer, Armenia

Arsenishvili Vano
Film Director, Georgia

Arshakyan Karen
Sound Engineer, Armenia

Asatiani Tina
Translator, Georgia

- 27 film projects – feature films, documentaries and short films - were developed from the original concept to the final production package;
- 6 short films, 3 documentaries and 1 feature film have been produced so far;
- IFA-SC has been set up, with the goal of assisting the film communities of the three countries in their efforts to grow into an established sector of society;
- IFA-SC has led 6 training workshops and extensive market research projects on national and trans-national levels;
- IFA-SC has acquired sound-recording and sound-postproduction equipment, which is at the disposal of the filmmakers in each country;
- IFA-SC has set up a solid network and successful cooperation with different organizations, working in the film sector and in other aspects of the cultural scene;
- IFA-SC is developing lobbying actions for the integration of South Caucasian filmmakers into the international film community; it has become a point of reference on the international level, and a key player here.

Above and beyond these facts, I consider that the program has contributed to:

- developing an understanding of the importance of collaboration on a trans-national level
- helping a generation of film entrepreneurs to adapt to today's guidelines for both film development and film production, and to face the film market as a world market
- improving legal enforcement
- providing access to feature films for young directors
- producing some good films
- awakening international interest in South Caucasian film productions

To me, these results are fantastic. Of course, as most of you know, tons of assessments, discussions, meetings, general assemblies, working groups, negotiations, compromises, communications, texts, reports, evaluations, etc., etc. went into these achievements.



Realizing this program has not been an easy job, given all the paradoxes, the national, corporatist and personal interests, the geo-political misunderstandings, the generational conflicts and even a few dramatic clashes. Yet there were also many extraordinary moments, whenever people managed to take the stakes into consideration and to collaborate for the sake of the project, for the sake of filmmaking and for the sake of a common interest.

Certainly, much still remains to be done. For example, we have not managed to involve the Ministries of Culture in the support of filmmaking as much as needed. Nor have we been able to build up stable co-production bridges. And the South Caucasian cinema is insufficiently present in Cannes and on the international scene.

But when all is said and done, I know that we have managed, all together, to breathe some fresh life and hope into the film community.

That is why I would like to extend my thanks to all of you who have contributed to this extraordinary adventure – to SDC for its financial, operational and creative support; to all the participants in the activities over the years; to all the experts, speakers and guests who have shared their know-how; to all IFA-SC's Members over

Asatiani Liana
Sound Director, Georgia

Aslibekyan Anush
Critic, Armenia

Avetyants Natalya
Media Manager, Armenia

Azizova Mehriban
Producer, Azerbaijan

Bagaturia Irakli
Producer, Georgia

Bashyan Paruir
Sound Engineer, Armenia

Beknazarov Genadi
Sound Director, Armenia

Bektashi Fikrin
Lawyer, Azerbaijan

Benke † Dagmar
Screenwriting Mentor, Germany

Berger Jacob
Film Director, Switzerland

Berishvili Tornike
Producer, Georgia

Bernier Ivan
Professor of law, Canada

Berthoud Jeanne
Film Director, Switzerland

Bideau Nicolas
Head of Film, Federal Office of Culture,
Switzerland

Bidou Jacques
Producer, France

Blaney Martin
Journalist Great, Britain

Busidan Eric
Lawyer, France

Bziava Tornike
Film Director, Georgia

Castera Gilles
Production Manager, France

Cherkezashvili Tamka
Interpreter, Georgia

Cheterian Vicken
CMI Caucasus Media Institute, Switzerland

Chieffo Vincent H. Lawyer
USA

Chkheidze Gaga
Director National Cinema Center, Georgia

Chkhonia Rusudan
Screenwriter, Georgia

Chknavorian Armen
Screenwriter, Armenia

Chlaidze Konstantin
Film Director / Deputy Director of the
National Cinema Center, Georgia

the years; to the Board, the executive team and the executive director. Finally, I want to thank the entire AVANTI Team and, in particular, my Swiss colleagues – Jeanne Berthoud and Luciano Gloor – who have coached the process along over the last two years..

Now FOCAL is leaving the set and you will have to go on shooting the film on your own. Except that, for the next two years, the financier remains the same, namely the SDC. That is why, as part of the transfer of power, I want to give you some tips for your future negotiations with Swiss people.



The first tip is PUNCTUALITY. Being on time is a major concern for the Swiss, and you lose half your chances in a negotiation if you arrive late. Punctuality is symbolized in Switzerland by the drastic exactitude of our trains. This will explain why all Swiss persons who enter a railway station will frantically look for the railway station clock, to see if they are in time or if the train has already pulled out without them. That is why you are getting a railway station clock, so you never forget punctuality.

The second tip is RESOURCEFULNESS. Negotiations with Swiss people go through lots of tests and hardships. Therefore you need a good survival kit, which is why you are receiving a Swiss knife.

It will enable you to prepare a tailor-made contract,

It will enable you to cut the negotiation knots between your needs and the other party's expectations,

It will enable you to carve out the final wording of the text

And it will enable you to open a bottle to celebrate the signature.



The third and last tip is RELAXATION. When you finally will have survived the negotiations and obtained a contract, you will be totally exhausted and need to relax. That is why you are receiving a Swiss music box.



Now that you are equipped and ready to face the challenges to come, I would like to convey my very best wishes for the future to you. I have gotten to know you as very warm, sensitive, committed, original and courageous persons. I am therefore fully convinced that you will go on fighting for the cinema, fighting to make your way to the market, fighting for better recognition by your audiences and authorities. All this because it is true that, in emerging countries more than anywhere else, filmmakers can be key players in unveiling cultural identities and thereby strengthening the overall development process.

In a few years from now, you will definitely be in Cannes! And then, please don't forget to make a little detour via Switzerland to say hello. We would be happy to see you again at any time.

Comé Joëlle
Producer, Switzerland

Cross-Najafi Rowena
Embassy of the United States of
America, USA

Darchiashvili David
Open Society, Georgia Foundation,
Georgia

Davituliani Elene
Sound Director, Georgia

Demetradze Irina
Translator, Georgia

Demetrashvili Goga
Designer, Georgia

Dostalizade Leyla
Producer, Assistant IFA-SC, Azerbaijan

Downs Clare
Script Doctor, England

Dürst Markus
Former SDC Regional Director South
Caucasus, Switzerland

Dziapshipa Anna
Art Manager, Georgia

Effenberger Julius
Lawyer, Switzerland

Eidenbenz Florian
Sound Engineer, Switzerland

Farajev Jamil
Head of the Section of National Film
Production at the Ministry of Culture
and Tourism, Azerbaijan

"I AM GRATEFUL TO FOCAL"

Words of address by Tako Tatishvili, Executive Director of IFA-SC



Tako Tatishvili, Executive Director of IFA-SC

Today is the third calendar day of the independent functioning of IFA-SC since July 1, 2007.

FOCAL is no longer active in the South Caucasus and IFA-SC is proceeding to implement activities for the success of filmmaking in the three countries.

But if we stand here today, if we promote calls for new training programs and if we are proud to co-operate on a trans-national level, it is only thanks to FOCAL's courageous initiative of knocking on the door of the South Caucasian filmmakers.

Nowadays, many people are proud to represent IFA-SC, to announce their membership, to point out their participation in IFA-SC's training and so forth. Yet, there are really a few people in particular who contributed to the successful establishment of the Association and the work-friendly atmosphere among the persons involved.

The personal contributions of Pierre Agthe, Jeanne Berthoud and Luciano Gloor have been an asset during the entire process. And, it all happened under the banner of FOCAL –an organization dedicated to supporting the film sector everywhere in the world, even in the South Caucasus, often denoted as "the rest of the world".

I am glad to realize that the last three- year-period was full of tough but also happy moments, full of losses but also many a success, and that IFA-SC has never had to travel the road alone. The whole long journey from AVANTI to the setting up of IFA-SC was a paradox: a junction point of cultural differences, compromises, and in-fighting, and yet a coming together in order to develop the film sectors.

On behalf of the Association, I am grateful to FOCAL's representatives for their belief and commitment. Utopia can come true – in the South Caucasus, that is now a proven fact.

I hope that IFA-SC will go on proving that it can ensure a long life of utopian projects and enjoy many more years in support of the film communities in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

That is what I feel would be the best form of appreciation on behalf of FOCAL and its representatives in person, on behalf of those standing at the root of AVANTI and IFA-SC.

Here's wishing FOCAL endless creativity, thousands of inspiring projects and IFA-SC's name as a partner for many more years!

"IFA-SC, set up only recently, has already proven itself worthwhile through its activities. It is a creation of all its founding members. Just as every parent wishes his child well, so I wish with all my heart that, firstly, IFA-SC will stay true to the intentions of its founders, but also that it will continue integrating and further developing the entire filmmaking realm of South Caucasus, and that it will become a trademark Association respected by the film sector as a whole."

Nariman Mammadov, Producer,
Azerbaijan

Farges Joël
Producer, France

Friedmann Julian
Agent, ScriptWriter Magazine, Great Britain

Gabashvili Giorgi
Minister of Culture, Georgia

Gachechiladze George
Film Director, Georgia

Galstyan Vigen
Producer/Film Director/Writer, Armenia

Galstyan Hovhannes
Film Director, Armenia

Gamreli Nino
Art Manager, Georgia

Gaon Igor
Council of Europe

Garaveliyeva Jamila
Manager, Azerbaijan

Gasanov Rasim
Producer, Azerbaijan

Gasparyan Arsen
Film Director, Producer, Armenia

Gegia Alex
Assistant, Driver, Georgia

FLASH FORWARD FOR SOUTH CAUCASIAN FILMMAKERS - THE FILM CONFERENCE

On the June 21, 2007, IFA-SC and FOCAL successfully brought together over 130 participants – representatives of the South Caucasian film industry and international guests – in Tbilisi for a Film Conference. Entitled Flash Forward for South Caucasian Filmmakers, the event offered South Caucasian filmmakers and other guests the opportunity to celebrate IFA-SC's first year of activity and to jointly envision their future collaboration as a strong, creative and successful film community. The Film Conference also provided occasion for FOCAL to extend a warm "good-bye" to its colleagues and friends in the South Caucasus.



The topic of the panel discussion held in the afternoon was "Why do we want to go to Cannes?" – For two hours, the panellists shared their personal experiences with the audience, and considered the impact of this crucial question on the development of filmmaking and filmmakers in the South Caucasus. The panel was composed by Nicolas Bideau (Head of Film, Federal Office of Culture, Switzerland), Esther Van Messel (Sales Agent, Switzerland), Jacques Bidou (Producer, France) and Kadri Kõusaar (Director, Estonia); it was moderated by Luciano Gloor (Producer and IFA-SC Consultant, Switzerland/Germany). After the discussion, the South Caucasian participants had an opportunity to network with their international colleagues.

In the evening, the Film Conference participants headed for the "Muza" Cultural Center, to enjoy the Flash Forward Party. The guests celebrated well into the night, listening to jazz music, dancing, and partaking of the lavish buffet. Four films were screened during the party: Curfew Hour by Levan Adamia, The Way Out by Nasimi Aliyev, extracts from Bonded Parallels by Hovhannes Galstyan and Enemies by David Matevossian.



On the day following the panel, the Ambassador of Switzerland to Georgia and Armenia, Mr. Lorenzo Amberg, received the participants, together with representatives of the diplomatic corps, in his Tbilissi residence, where useful informal discussions and contacts took place.

The event received broad coverage in the local press and the news. The international media were represented by Martin Blaney of Screen International and Sven Waelti of the Swiss magazine Ciné-Bulletin.



"I cordially hope that IFA-SC will join in with the rest of the powers seeking to overcome the film crisis in Southern Caucasus. The potential of a united Armenian, Azeri and Georgian front – which, moreover, promises to still grow and shift – is really good news for the future. The assistance provided to IFA-SC by the Swiss has been considerable and is invaluable. Therefore, my wish is for things not to go the way they have gone for so many of the regional and local NGOs – showing up on the scene but then doing NOTHING actively, simply wasting all the possibilities and strengths...The challenging activities being pursued by IFA-SC today give me reason to hope that things will be different in this case."

David Matevossian, Film director, Armenia

Germann Christophe
"Legal Adviser", Switzerland

Gevorgyan Lusine
Director, Producer, Armenia

Ghahramanyan Liana
SDC Administrative Assistant, Armenia

Gheerbrant Denis
Documentary Filmmaker, French

Giorgobiani Besarion
*Representative of Mr Zaza Urushadze,
Film Director, Georgia*

Gisler Marcel
Film Director, Germany

Gloor Luciano
Producer, Germany

Glurjidze Rusudan
Film Director, Georgia

Grigoryan Areg
Sound Engineer, Armenia

Gujabidze Ketevan
Film Director, Georgia

Gulmalyev Ogtay
*SDC National Program Officer,
Azerbaijan*

Gurchiani Tamuna
Art Manager, Georgia

Gutman Alexandre
Documentary Filmmaker, Russia

Gvindadze Nathalie
SDC Administrative Assistant, Georgia

Hagemann Martin
Producer, Germany

Hakobyan Hrant
Producer, Armenia

Harris Andrea
Eurasia Foundation

Harutunyan Arzuman
Film Director, Armenia

Hernandez Stephenie
Accountant, Switzerland

Herren Urs
SDC, Switzerland

WORDS OF ADDRESS BY MR. LORENZO AMBERG

Ambassador of Switzerland to Georgia and Armenia, on the occasion of the panel discussion during the Film Conference on the June 21, 2007, in Tbilisi

Distinguished guests, Dear friends,

One week ago we celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Georgia. Many people have asked us, in this context, what Switzerland was particularly proud of during this period. And without any hesitation, I was able to answer that our cooperation in the field of cinema is the flagship of our cultural links, including such aspects as institution-building and regionally oriented projects. We consider the creation of IFA-SC (Independent Film Maker's Association – South Caucasus) as a success story.



Lorenzo Amberg, Ambassador of Switzerland to Georgia and Armenia

This project represents an attempt to help keep part of the great South Caucasus film tradition from being totally atomized. And we are indeed very proud that IFA-SC still can bring together cineasts, producers, technicians and other professionals from the three South Caucasian countries, regardless of all the potentially divisive political issues between them. Ask any film lover in the streets of Yerevan, Tbilisi or Baku, and even of Moscow for that matter, and you will elicit a lot of positive feelings when you bring up a few names such as Sophiko Tschiaureli, the Georgian actress who played in the Armenian-Georgian co-production Chabarba; or the famous Azeri Musical Arschin Malalan, which was extremely popular in the South Caucasus and beyond. One of the unforgettable classics of Caucasian cinema is Mimino, where at one point Vakhtang Gigabidse and Frunzik Mkrtitschan indulge in a friendly debate over the respective advantages and beauties of Tbilisi and Yerevan. People like Paradjanov, who was an Armenian from Tbilisi, Tenguis Abouladze, and Vagif Mustafayev have made a name for themselves far beyond the Caucasus. By the way, the first major Azeri film, On the blue sea (Mavi Danizir Shahilinda), by Samed Mardanov in cooperation with Boris Barnet, is one of the French director (of Swiss origin) Jean-Luc Godard's favourites.

In September last year, the Festival Est-Ouest in the French city of Die was devoted to the cinema of the South Caucasus. This means that the South Caucasian cinema tradition exists and is well remembered. This tradition is a solid foundation for the future as well. Of course, we cannot turn back time and recreate something that no longer corresponds to our era. But we can try to preserve the best of it. Despite all the difficulties, IFA-SC has proven that the filmmakers of these three countries are willing to work together. One potential area of cooperation could be the regional presentation of three national productions, one from each country, within the framework of a regional festival. As I understand it, this is to be among the discussion topics for today's panel discussion. We are fortunate to have with us today Nicolas Bideau, the "Mr. Cinema" of Switzerland, who has done so much in the last few years to keep Swiss film production and promotion afloat. I am sure his input for the discussion will provide valuable insights.

I would like to say some special words of welcome to the filmmakers and officials from the respective ministries of culture from Armenia and Azerbaijan, whose presence today is a sign of how much they appreciate the creative traditions of South Caucasus. Their attendance at this meeting is a confirmation of their readiness to continue a joint, regional approach to film production. This is exactly the attitude favoured by the Swiss side. I wish all of you a very fruitful discussion.

"It is my wish that IFA-SC will be able to raise enough money to help develop the cinema industry in the South Caucasus. I wish IFA-SC good luck!"

Irakli Bagaturia, Producer, Georgia

Hoganesyan Susanna
Music Critic, Armenia

Huseynov Elmir
Producer, Azerbaijan

Iashvili Levan
Sound Engineer, Georgia

Ibraimbekov Rustam
Writer, Azerbaijan

Iosseliani Otar
"Film Director, Writer", Georgia

Isayeva Seriyekhanim
Producer, Azerbaijan

Isgandarov Parviz
Lawyer, Azerbaijan

Ismayilov Rasim
Azerbaijan

Jabarov Ali Isa
Film Director, Azerbaijan

Jaccoud Antoine
Writer, Switzerland

Jaeger Niculin
*Deputy Head of Mission, Swiss Embassy
Georgia*

Janelidze Dato
Film Director, Georgia

Janjgava Vasil
Manager, Georgia

"It was a great pleasure for me to take part in the film conference "Flash Forward for the South Caucasian Filmmakers", organized by IFA-SC and the Swiss foundation FOCAL.

In 2005, I participated in the first step of the AVANTI project. Since then, I have attended many useful events and meetings organized by IFA-SC.

As a filmmaker and producer, the conference "Flash Forward for the South Caucasian Filmmakers" gave me hope that the Caucasian film industry does have a future. As a member of this industry, I'm always ready to collaborate with IFA-SC."

Giorgi Ovashvili, Producer and Director, Georgia

« IFA-SC IS ONE OF THE FEW ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS ENGAGING IN MEANINGFUL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF THIS REGION. »

Words of address by Derek Müller, Regional Director, Swiss Development Cooperation in the South Caucasus

Dear Members of the Independent Filmmakers' Association South Caucasus
Dear Guests from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Switzerland and other countries
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure to address you today, the 21st of June 2007, on behalf of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. This occasion marks the day when the Independent Filmmakers' Association South Caucasus, a long-time partner of the SDC, becomes self-sustainable – in the sense that it will act as Switzerland's direct contractual partner for the next phase of cooperation on this project. This new role will entail, among other responsibilities, being accountable for Swiss taxpayers' money in a professional manner.



Derek Müller, Regional Director, Swiss Development Cooperation in the South Caucasus

After many years of support by and close partnership with the Swiss foundation FOCAL, the Independent Filmmakers' Association South Caucasus is well prepared for this endeavour. It is, therefore, a distinct pleasure to express our thanks and appreciation to FOCAL, represented here by its director, for the past years of challenging and fruitful cooperation within the framework of the AVANTI project.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Independent Filmmakers' Association South Caucasus is one of the few organizations in the Southern Caucasus (and the only one supported by the Swiss government) engaging in meaningful cooperation between the countries of this region. It is therefore an honour to welcome the representatives of the ministries of culture of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia here today and to thank these institutions for their highly appreciated cooperation, which – I have all reason to hope – is destined to become even more substantial in future.

As already mentioned, from next week on, the Independent Filmmakers' Association South Caucasus will become the direct partner of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for purposes of implementing the project known here as AVANTI. After many years of support to the film sector in the South Caucasus, this will be the last phase of Swiss cooperation on the project. I trust that the professionalism and marketing skills of the Association's management will convince other donor partners – and especially the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia – to increase cooperation with the Independent Filmmakers' Association South Caucasus. In this spirit, I have good trust that today's event will also contribute to making the Association better known to future cooperation partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues, I wish you a rewarding conference and an exciting evening.

Janjgava Irma

*Assistant Market Research IFA-SC,
Georgia*

Japiashvili Nino

Producer, Georgia

Javadzade Huseyn

Scriptwriter, Azerbaijan

Jendreyko Vadim

Documentary Film Director, Germany

Kacharava Vladimer

Producer, Georgia

Kajrishvili Tinatin

Writer, Georgia

Kamina Pascal

"Attorney at Law", France

Karapetyan Melik

Producer, Armenia

Karimov Gunduz

Lawyer, Azerbaijan

Kartsivadze Eka

Interpreter, Georgia

Kassouny Vrej

Animator, Painter, Armenia

Kavtaradze Irma

Lawyer, Georgia

Kbeyan Harut

Scriptwriter, Armenia

Keil Klaus

*"Former Head of the Filmboard
Berlin-Brandenburg", Germany*

Kerimov Teymur

Sound Producer, Azerbaijan

Khachatryan Ruben

Producer, Armenia

Khakimov Aleksander

Biologist, Writer, Azerbaijan

"WHY DO WE WANT TO GO TO CANNES?"

Selected statements from the panel discussion

"Do not make films for the US or Europe – make films for your own country! Tell your own story for your own people, for your own soul. Be true to yourself."

"Do not try to make a block-buster. It is pointless to compete with the big-name movies. You have to make your own films. Try not to imitate."

"Try to work with a low budget. Of course it is difficult to attain a high standard with but little money, but this forces you to be inventive and creative. Compensate a low budget with creativity. Do not shoot in the traditional way, because that means a high budget and makes you dependent on foreign money. Not every film has to be shot on 35mm. And sometimes money can even influence a film to go in the wrong direction."



"Invent your own style, try not to be politically correct, feel free –that's your only chance! Whenever our production company had one of its films screened in Cannes or Berlin, it was because that film was totally original." You have to find new ways – your ways. New ideas never come from the mainstream."

"Try to find money in your own country before approaching foreign producers and financiers. Why should a foreign producer be interested in your project, when you cannot even prove that people in your own country are interested in your project and want to support it? It is most important for the ministries of culture of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to support their filmmakers. You filmmakers have to lobby for that, and to force the governments to come up with funding."



"Being screened at the Cannes Film Festival is the most publicity a film can get – for two days! It comes and it goes, and then it is all over. The world will always be curious about "new things", but all too soon your film in turn will be "old hat". Festivals are always helpful, but sustainable filmmaking only works when you make a film for your own market. Therefore, it is important to work on continuity in your own country: to build up an infrastructure and an audience."

I hope that IFA-SC will never forget its trainees, and will continue in the same successful way. My wish would be for IFA-SC to organize not only training sessions but also joint work projects for professionals from Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

*Teymur Kerimov, Sound engineer,
Azerbaijan*



"DON'T SEE TELEVISION AS AN ENEMY OF THE BIG SCREEN."

Nicolas Bideau, Head of Film, Federal Office of Culture, Switzerland



Nicolas Bideau, Head of Film, Federal Office of Culture

"Even though some might think that the situation in Switzerland and in the South Caucasus is not comparable, I believe that there are many similarities to be noticed. During the eighties, Swiss cinema faced a serious crisis where Swiss filmmakers had to invent new ways to bring their art back into the spotlight. Counting on scarce public funding, the new generation chose television channels as its main financial partners. Through this partnership between the big and the small screen, Swiss filmmakers

managed to build a strong and stable industry, which nowadays is successful and uninhibited both in theatres and on TV.

Therefore, if I am asked to give some advice to South Caucasian filmmakers, I would definitely say: Don't see television as an enemy of the big screen. Take advantage of the money available there, don't be ashamed to make TV movies, create a fruitful emulation between television and cinema. Television gives access to a broad audience; don't underrate it because local audience interest is a crucial factor for the success of your cinematography in the future."

"I WANTED TO DO MY OWN FILM!"

Kadri Kõusaar, writer and film director, Estonia



Kadri Kõusaar, writer and film director

Kadri Kõusaar - born in 1980 - studied Spanish and literature at the University of Tartu. She has published two books, as well as cultural articles and reviews in the most important newspapers in Estonia. Magnus is her first film and also the first Estonian film to be invited to compete in the official selection of the Cannes Film Festival.

Kadri, your film was selected to compete in the "Un Certain Regard" category at this year's Cannes Film Festival. It is the first Estonian film ever to be invited to Cannes...

It was a completely crazy feeling to be selected for Cannes! We had just filled in the application forms and posted the DVDs for the Cannes selection committee. We did not hope anything... We knew that they have more than 5000 films to choose from... Three weeks later came the phone call from Cannes... But the craziest thing was that "Magnus" was invited by two different programs – "Un Certain Regard" and "The Directors' Fortnight" and I had to decide which programme to choose!

What was the most striking experience of being in Cannes?

I felt like Cinderella – after the parties when it was impossible to get a taxi, I just walked back barefoot to our apartment... All my evening dresses were borrowed; we were financially broke and overworked... and then all that glitz and glamour. Cannes is very bizarre experience existentially: you feel bigger than ever, but also smaller than ever... But all your doubts and sufferings just vanish, when people come to thank you after the screening, their eyes in tears...

Khodokyan Karine
Deputy Minister of Culture Department, Armenia

Khoperska Sophie
Accountant IFA-SC, Georgia

Khvedelidze Ekaterine
Producer, Georgia

Khvedelidze Beso
Producer, Georgia

Khzmalyan Tigran
Film Director, Armenia

Kipshidze Maia
Embassy of the UK, Great Britain

Kobaladze Vakhtang
SDC National Program Officer, Georgia

Kolar Cedomir
Producer, France

Koll Björn
Distributor, Germany

Kopyan Vardan
"Deputy Chairman, Council of Public Television and Radio", Armenia

Kostandyan Artyom
Lawyer, Armenia

Kõusaar Kadri
Film Director, Estonia

Krempke Thomas
"Director of Photography", Switzerland

Kuchaidze Maka
Sound Director, Georgia

Kukhianidze Malkhaz
Film Director, Georgia

"Kuntseva-Gabashvili" Nino
Lawyer, Georgia

Kurz Sibylle
Pitching Consultant, Germany

Kvatashadze Aleksander
Writer, Georgia

I wish IFA-SC health and a long life. IFA-SC is like glue – connecting and bringing people together. I hope that this quality will not get lost in the future, but that, on the contrary, it will become even stronger.

Arsen Arakelyan, Film director / Producer, Armenia

Lackner Erich
Producer, Austria

Lackner Denise
SDC CIS Division Program Assistant
Switzerland

Lagazidze † Levan
Film Director, Georgia

Le Hot Elizabeth
Counsellor for Multilateral Affairs in the
European and International Department
of CNC, France

Linder Toni
SDC Cultural Desk, Switzerland

Litmanovitsch Andreas
Sound Engineer, Switzerland

Lopez Estella
SDC Assistant, Switzerland

Mamedkerimov Ismail
Film Director, Azerbaijan

Mamedov Zaur
Sound Engineer, Azerbaijan

Mamedova Arzu
Film Director, Azerbaijan

Mamishev Elmari
Lawyer, Azerbaijan

Having the film in Cannes was the result of long road. How did you finance the film?

It was very difficult. Since I was a first-time director, the governmental Estonian Film Foundation did not give me any money – they did not want to take the risk. I had no connections, no money...

I had written the script and was negotiating with various producers. I had also shot a demo which I financed being a photo model for FHM... Some Estonian producers were interested, but turned away after Estonian Film Foundation had rejected the project. It often happens in Estonia that the producer will give up a project only because he cannot get any money from the Estonian Film Foundation.

I met Donal casually in London. He came to visit me in Estonia and overheard my phone calls with US producers who demanded that I make the film in English and locate it in New York, Brighton Beach. I of course rejected the idea... Suddenly Donal said he was willing to finance the movie himself out of his private savings. I am very grateful for him – he did it because he felt a strong personal connection to the story of "Magnus", Estonia and me.

What was your budget for the film?

We had only US\$ 60,000 – entirely out of Donal's pocket. We tried to save money wherever we could: We took only 21 days to shoot. Many people worked for free; only five actors got paid. We were shooting on HD. A friend bought a camera that we could use for free, and after the film he resold the camera. We had to buy the lights as well. There were no HMI in Estonia, so the producer bought them and resold them after the shooting. A friend sponsored all the gasoline bills after the shooting etc.

The funny thing is that the budget for going to Cannes was the same than the shooting budget! But this time the Estonian Film Foundation was happy to pay 70% of the necessary US\$ 60,000. For the other 30%, I had to beg for money, to find private sponsoring. At one point, I was not even sure that I could find all the money we needed to go to Cannes! The film had to be transferred to 35mm, the sound had to be transferred to Dolby, all the promotional material had to be prepared...

When Cannes selections were made public, sales agents started to call us and offer their services. And I even had an agent from Hollywood call up asking to represent me...

Do you feel more self-confident after the "Cannes experience"?

Definitely! It showed me what can be achieved through willpower. It took so much effort to have this film made, but we did it! We proved that it is possible to make a breakthrough with a tiny budget, first time director, first time producer, first time actors... Just because we had a story to tell...

What are your current plans?

I have a new film project, and right now I'm working on the script. The main theme will be gratitude.

"Magnus" - Synopsis of the film

Magnus is a sensitive boy from a family where nobody really cares about him. His parents consider that, given food and shelter, their children will just grow up on their own. As a child, Magnus suffers from a potentially fatal lung disease and he plays bizarre games to cheat death. Ten years later, modern medicine has cured the disease, but Magnus' death wish continues. After his second attempt to take his own life, his father's conscience finally awakens. He tries to convince his son to go on living, sharing with him his own unorthodox lifestyle. An uneasy and sometimes humorous relationship develops between Magnus and his father, leading to an unexpected conclusion...

(Source: official website of the Cannes Film Festival 2007)



For more information see the official website of the film: www.magnusfilm.com

"I am very grateful to the Association for giving me the opportunity to meet wonderful, extremely warm people from the three countries of the Caucasus and from Europe. Many of them have become my friends. The Association plays an important role in the development of South Caucasian film production; besides, it is a BRIDGE between the representatives of the film sectors of our countries. My wish is for this BRIDGE to provide a strong foothold, binding us all together with strong ties of friendship. May the Association always be the embodiment of earnest, friendly relationships."

Leyla Dostali-Zade, Producer,
Azerbaijan

Mammadov Nariman
Lawyer, Producer, Azerbaijan

Mammadov Jahangir
Chief Department of Cinematography,
Azerbaijan

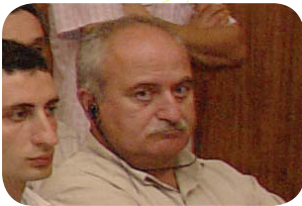
Markosyan Magda
Assistant IFA-SC, Armenia

Martirosyan Vahram
Writer/Journalist, Armenia

Matevossian David
Film Director, Armenia

Mchedlishvili Ioseb
Journalist/Critic, Georgia

Mehdiyev Huseyn
Chairman Guild of Film Directors,
Azerbaijan



THE FILM CONFERENCE - Reception at the Swiss Embassy on June 22, 2007

The Film Conference was also a unique public relations opportunity for IFA-SC to meet potential financiers. To support this purpose, His Excellency Lorenzo Amberg, Swiss Ambassador to Georgia and Armenia, organised a reception at his residence on the June 22, 2007. He generously hosted fifty guests: South Caucasian and international filmmakers as well as representatives from foreign embassies and other institutions. This gathering allowed the latter to discover IFA-SC's activities and familiarise themselves with South Caucasian cinema. The Ambassador's residence was a perfect venue for informal discussions among the guests.

THE ROLE OF IFA-SC IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS - as seen by official representatives of the Ministries of Culture from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

IFA-SC does a good and useful job. The workshops IFA-SC offers in different spheres are very much needed, and enable the participants to obtain European-level training.

Of course these training sessions mainly offer only basic knowledge, but I would hope that this basic know-how could be deepened and further explored. It would be good if IFA-SC could send selected participants abroad for training in film schools. The participants would then come back to their respective country with all their acquired know-how and help develop the cinema industry in the South Caucasus.

Vartan Abovyan, Deputy Head of the National Cinema Center of Armenia

IFA-SC continues what began with the AVANTI updating programme: to support filmmaking in the South Caucasus. Thanks to the training sessions organized by IFA-SC and the AVANTI updating programme, young and talented directors and producers have emerged and proven their worth. We are proud to announce that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan has supported, and continues to support new projects and films by this latest generation of filmmakers. We are grateful to FOCAL and SDC for laying the foundations for the careers of young and promising filmmakers.

Jamil Farajev, Head of the Section of National Film Production at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan



IFA-SC is a very important organization, and it is pursuing a policy that is exactly what the Georgian cinema needs to flourish. IFA-SC made the right choice by deciding to concentrate on sound equipment and the development of scenarios. These are the very sectors where input and support are most needed.

But IFA-SC represents more than training programmes: In former times we did not know what was happening in the cinema sector in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Nowadays, IFA-SC enables and facilitates contacts with the neighbouring countries and also with international experts and film professionals.

Konstantin Chlaidze, Deputy Director of the Georgian National Film Center



"IFA-SC has a very important peacekeeping, educational and unifying role to play within the film sector of South Caucasus. Thanks to the AVANTI project, which later grew into IFA-SC, links between the filmmakers of the three Caucasian countries have been restored. A common platform has been established, which slowly but surely is helping the filmmakers of our region to share the European model of film production. Much depends on further, correctly selected policy and work methods by IFA-SC. I wish that our links will become stronger, and I hope that films made in South Caucasus will become an important constituent of cinema worldwide.

*Maryam Oganyan, Film director,
Armenia*

Meier Ursula
Film Director, Switzerland

Melikova Nigar
Lawyer, Azerbaijan

Meyer Thomas
SDC Deputy Regional Director South
Caucasus, Azerbaijan

Mkhitarian Ashot
Producer, Armenia

Mkrtchyan Ashot
Director of Photography, Armenia

Mnatsakanyan Ara
Producer, Armenia

Mueller Derek
SDC Regional Director South Caucasus,
Georgia

Musa Oglu Elchin
Film Director, Azerbaijan

Mustafayeva Aynur
Producer, Azerbaijan

Muzaffarova Nonna
Film Director, Azerbaijan

Najaf Ilgar
Film Director, Azerbaijan

Najafzada Shamil
Film Director, Azerbaijan

Natter Wernfried
Line Producer, Austria

Navasardyan Levon

"FILM IS THE MOST HUMAN AND COMPELLING WAY TO TELL STORIES."

Collected statements about IFA-SC during the Film Conference

I wish IFA-SC good luck, and hope that the film projects developed during the training sessions conducted by IFA-SC will be able to be carried out, and that they make it to the screen!



Martin Blaney, Journalist, «Screen International», Germany

Due to the long and strong tradition of filmmaking in the South Caucasus, the development of cinema in the region is very important. Through its activities, IFA-SC contributes to the development of culture in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Maia Kipshidze, Deputy Director of the British Council in Georgia

Cinema is always in my heart. I am thrilled to see so many motivated people putting so much energy into the future of South Caucasian cinema.

Biruta Bera, Consul of the Republic of Latvia in Georgia

Film is the most human and compelling way to tell stories. Therefore, of all arts, film has the greatest potential to create intercultural dialogue and to encourage peace-making.

Andrea Harris, Regional Vice-President, Eurasia Foundation



I hope that IFA-SC will continue to work with the same energy, vigour and drive that I experienced during the Film Conference, and that it will be able to grow into a sustainable institution.

Sven Wälti, Journalist «Cine Bulletin», Switzerland

"What can I say about IFA-SC? You know, I liked AVANTI, the Regional Scheme and, generally, the entire SDC and FOCAL project. I think everything is going well, and that IFA-SC is doing its job! Maybe they should be more active and confident, have closer links with the media. (...) Relations with South Caucasian filmmakers should be more intensive. It should be a goal of the Association to become an extremely important organization for the film sector. (...)"

Rasim Hasanov, Producer, Azerbaijan



Sound Engineer, Armenia

Neimanis Egons

*Embassy of the Republic of Latvia,
Latvia*

Noschis Mathias

*Assistant to the Director of IFA-SC,
Switzerland*

Odisharia Givi

Film Director, Georgia

Oganyan Mariam

Film Director, Armenia

Olsen Mads

Film Finance Specialist Denmark

Ovashvili George

Screenwriter, Director, Georgia

Pagès Luc

*Director, Director of Photography,
France*

Paniashvili Nika

*Sound Engineer/Sound assistant
IFA-SC, Georgia*

Paniashvili Irakli

Film Director, Georgia

Parsadanyan Armine

Lawyer, Armenia

Paskevichyan Tigran

Film Director, Armenia

Perret Jean

*"Documentary
Film Festival Director", Switzerland*

Pertakhia Otar

Writer, Georgia

Pfaeffli André

Producer, Switzerland

Pirveli Rusudan

Film Director, Georgia

Polukhov Elkan

*Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
Azerbaijan*

Poylo Milena

Producer, France

Rabaglia Denis

Film Director, Italy

Ramishvili Tamuna

Lawyer, Georgia

Rasulzade Chingiz

Writer, Director, Azerbaijan

Rüegg Thomas

*Former SDC Regional Director South
Caucasus, Switzerland*

Rustamov Asif

Film Director, Azerbaijan

Rzayev Yaver

Film Director, Azerbaijan

Safat Ilgar

Scriptwriter, Azerbaijan

HOMAGE TO DAGMAR BENKE

Antoine Jaccoud, screenwriter, script consultant for the short film group within AVANTI

Dagmar Benke had a favourite film that she was wont to present and praise wherever and whenever she sought to encourage a certain freistil* — a certain audacity, a free-style approach to narrating a story. That film is the Macedonian Milcho Manchevski's *Before the Rain*, a dark and violent work whose loop-structured narrative fascinated her.



The life of humans, however, knows no such endless fiction-story loops. Dagmar passed away in the month of March, at the age of 48, depriving us of her gentleness and intelligence, and of an unbounded curiosity that drove her to consider hundreds of screenplays the world over in order to better them, or simply to prepare them for a life ahead. From her work with the ZDF television station's program *Das kleine Fernsehspiel*, Dagmar had acquired the wisdom and expertise of veteran script doctors, while avoiding their mannerisms. Her way was to set aside the "rules and tools" of the trade, in favour of lending an ear to all sorts of projects, each one of which she handled as unique. And this whether it would go on to make but a modest career for itself or else, like Jasmila Zbanic's *Grbavica*, end up receiving the Berlin Festival's Golden Bear.



Courage is still another virtue belonging to this most endearing colleague. At the close of winter, knowing that the end was near, she bade us farewell with a sweet lucidity that left us awestruck. No trace of bitterness. Her only regret was having to leave behind a husband and son whom she would have liked to love for a longer time...

It was a few weeks before the opening of the last Festival that, together, they buried the ashes of their wife and mother in the Bay of Cannes. Those of us who recently gazed out at the sea down there, having managed to steal a few brief moments away from the crowds and the whole downside of the film world on show, could not help feeling a sudden and overriding wave of sadness. It would be because Dagmar was such a beautiful person.

Dagmar Benke worked for FOCAL as a script consultant on several occasions, notably within AVANTI as mentor for one of the feature film groups.

**FREISTIL - DRAMATURGIE FÜR FORTGESCHRITTENE UND EXPERIMENTIERFREUDIGE.*

Luebbe Verlagsgruppe, October 2002

translated from the French by: Margie Mounier

A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE OF IFA-SC

By Tako Tatishvili, Executive Director of IFA-SC



It is not too ambitious to say that the creation and successful functioning of IFA-SC is a vivid breakthrough in the South Caucasus, and an example of the fact that culture is a field where trans-national cooperation can be effectively achieved. IFA-SC has managed to survive in a poorly developed sector as an example of regional cohesion. It is essential to maintain the role of the pioneer initiative, encouraging other small initiatives to make the same efforts and take the same risks.

IFA-SC continues to work in fields where it already has obtained experience and expertise, like training sessions to support the development of South Caucasian film projects, the promotion of films and the carrying out of analytical market research.

In the future, IFA-SC will also be exploring a new realm of endeavour, namely lobbying. Legal Recommendations will be elaborated with a focus on the main findings related to local structures. This will be followed by comparative analyses with regard to film support systems in the South Caucasus

IFA-SC is willing to contribute towards the establishment of a distribution system, and will thus be keen to initiate small activities supporting the above-mentioned process.

Up until now, financing for IFA-SC had been secured only via the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) IFA-SC will continue to work with its main sponsor for another two years, i.e. from June 2007 to July 2008.

Financial feasibility is one of the most problematic issues regarding the long-term existence of IFA-SC. For the moment, two other funding partners have shown up on board of IFA-SC: Open Society Institute Budapest (Soros Foundation) and Jan Vrijman Fund. They support IFA-SC in concrete activities, and we do hope that the list will be much more representative in the future.

European associations like IFA-SC are generally supported by public funding. Unfortunately, it is obvious that IFA-SC cannot rely on any kind of public contribution in support of its future functioning for at least the next ten years.

Thus, we plan to use the two years ahead to carefully research possibilities to achieve self-sustaining functioning as far as the IFA-SC's structuring and activities are concerned. There is no question but that an active fundraising policy will be applied to generate the needed resources.

The main point for us is to always remain committed to the support of filmmakers from the three countries of the South Caucasus!

"(...) I would like to focus on the priority projects to which IFA-SC should pay utmost attention.

There are two major problems that keep independent film-makers from implementing their main projects, and thus create obstacles for the development of South Caucasian cinema. These are: the absence of a legal basis for the development of local cinema and the absence of access to the international film market. As to the first problem, as far as I am informed, IFA-SC is currently elaborating a lobbying program to be implemented next year.

As for the second problem, the Golden Apricot Festival in Yerevan is already implementing a market project within the framework of the DAB. However, one problem arises in this connection: filmmakers from Azerbaijan do not have access to this market (for well-known reasons). Therefore, I suggest creating a similar Market within the framework of the Tbilisi International Film Festival.

Finally, I would like to mention our current and future sponsors. It is not a secret that our present sponsor – the SDC – finances us because IFA-SC reflects the interests of filmmakers in the three countries of South Caucasus. In my opinion, our future sponsors will agree to support IFA-SC only in such case as it enhances cooperation between the filmmakers of all three countries. Thus, the best example of such cooperation would be to implement a joint project. (...)"

Aram Zaryan, Producer, Armenia



MARKET RESEARCH – CINEMA IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

Summary of the Results

Saghinadze Gia
Producer, Georgia

Salimli Mirbala
Writer, Film Director, Azerbaijan

Samedova Sevinge
Producer, Azerbaijan

Sandini Michela
Embassy of Italy, Italy

Sardaryan Gohar
Lawyer, Armenia

Saredi Christa
Sales Agent, Switzerland

Sargsyan Izabella
Project manager, Armenia

Sargsyan Artur
Film Director, Armenia

Schlesinger Thomas
Script Doctor, Germany

"Schlüter Schierbeck" Katrine
Lawyer, Denmark

Semenov Sergey
Lawyer, Russia

Sepashvili Salome
Project Coordinator IFA-SC, Georgia

Shahbazyan Aram
Film Director, Armenia

Shekoyan Evgenya
Scripwriter, Film Director, Armenia

Shumakova Aliona
Producer, Italy

Sikharulidze David
Boom Operator, Georgia

I. Audience Research

In 2006, the research team carried out a public opinion survey in Tbilisi, Baku and Yerevan. The goal was to conduct a study of the social attitudes of the audience to various indices of film production. 500 respondents in each city, in an age range of from 15 to 55, were selected randomly.

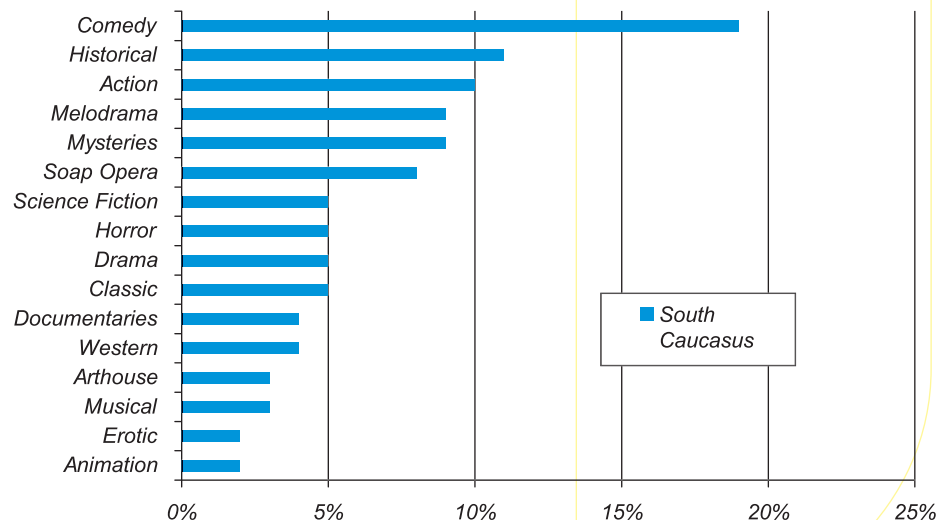
The research results revealed the essential factors that define audience preferences. We have also identified various specific, film-"customer" behavioural models.

There are a number of film production characteristics that consumers in the South Caucasus region hold in common. At the same time there are some differences between the three countries (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) of the region – differences that come not only from their individual national mentality, but also from the cultural and historical peculiarities of each country.

Religious differences, which are often a very important factor and determinant for society and demographic differences, in this case are of very little importance. Instead, the differences are political and social.



Which is your favourite film genre?



The most popular genre in the region is comedy (19%). People in the region also like historical (11%) and action movies (10%).

"My wish is for IFA-SC to bring European culture - film production and promotion – to the film sector of South Caucasus and help improve the unfavourable situation in the field of cinema. It should serve as an instrument that has no effect on our vision, values and cultural peculiarities."

Armen Chgnavoryan, Scriptwriter, Armenia

Silvanyan Hratch
Embassy of the Republic of Armenia,
Armenia

Solomanashvili Beso
Film Director, Georgia

Spurk Christoph
Planification Specialist, Switzerland

Steiner Dominique
Consultant in Organizational
Development, Switzerland

Suleymanova Vusala
Producer, Azerbaijan

Tadevosyan Anna
Film Director, Armenia

Tagiyev Teymur
Writer, Azerbaijan

Tanchik Igor
Translator, Georgia

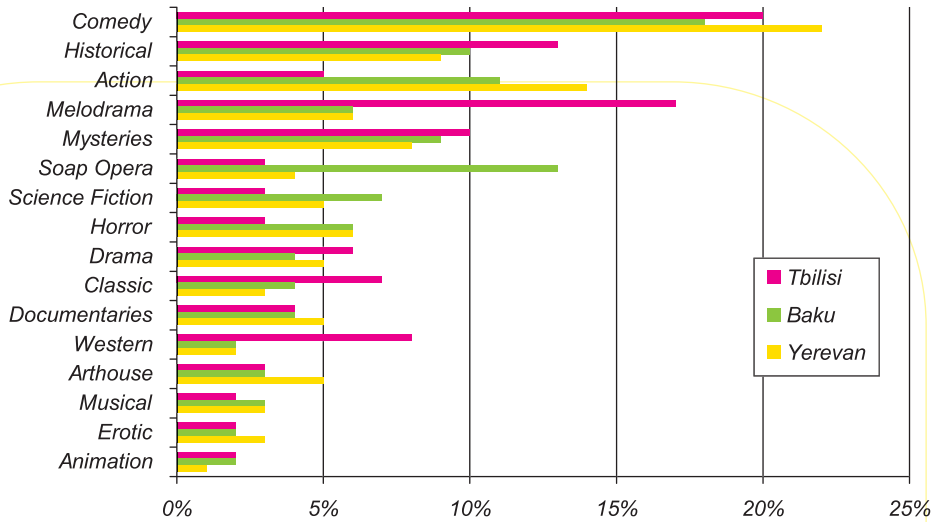
Tatishvili Tamara
Executive Director IFA-SC, Lawyer,
Georgia

Tsatsashvili Valeri
Sound Engineer, Georgia

Tsaturyan Karen
Sound Engineer, Armenia

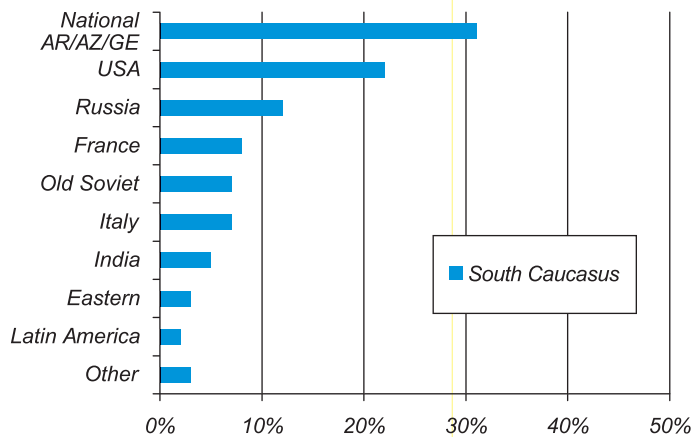
Tsereteli Wato
Art Manager, Georgia

Tsetskladze Irakli
Film Director, Georgia

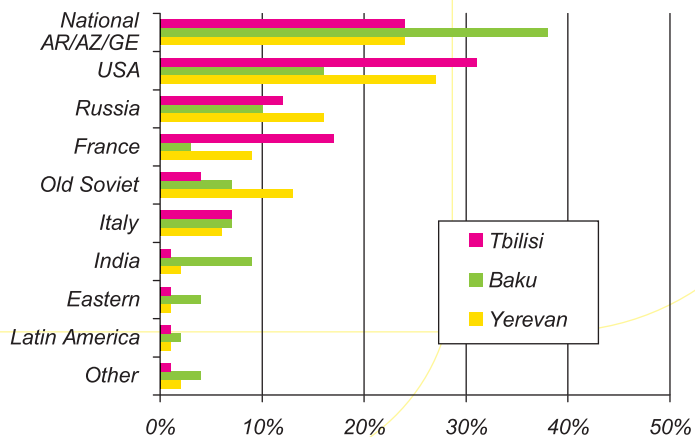


The main difference concerning genres in the region is that action movies are more popular in Armenia (14%) and Azerbaijan (11%) than in Georgia (5%). In Georgia, the most popular genre is comedy, and then comes melodrama (17%). In Azerbaijan, television serials are the second most popular genre (12.9% - Azerbaijan, 3.5% - Yerevan, 2.5% - Tbilisi).

Which countries do your favourite films come from?



The most popular films in the region after the national ones (31%) are American (22%), followed by Russian (12%), French (8%), Old Soviet and Italian (7%), Indian (5%).



"I think the Avanti program played an important role in my development: I understood what I have to learn and how I can gain the necessary experience. I am happy that once, quite by chance, I decided to apply for this program with my script. If this had not happened, I would indeed have missed a lot. It is very important to retain and improve what we have jointly built up during all these years. The future is in our hands. Viva IFA-SC !!"

Alina Abdullayeva, Film director, Azerbaijan

Tskhvediani George
Director/Writer, Georgia

Tsuladze Niko
Film Director, Georgia

Urushadze Merab
Sound Engineer, Georgia

Vahanyan Andranik
Lawyer, Armenia

van Messel Esther
Sales Agent, Switzerland

Vandevorst Els
Producer, The Netherlands

Varazi Vakhtang
Film Director, Georgia

Vatinyan Mikayel
Film Director, Producer, Writer, Armenia

Volynkin Mr.
Embassy of the Russian Federation
Russia

Vouillamoz Raymond
Consultant on European TV Programs,
Switzerland

Wätli Sven
Journalist, Switzerland

Weber Michael
Sales Agent, Germany

Wehrlin Marc
Deputy Director, Federal Office for
Culture, Switzerland

Wolschlagel Ursula
Producer, Austria

Khugashvili Edik
IFA-SC Chauffeur, Georgian

Mshvidobadze Zura
IFA-SC Chauffeur, Georgia

Yeghiyan † Hrayr
Film Director, Armenia

Yersin Luc
Sound Engineer, Switzerland

Zahner Philippe
Deputy Head CIS Division - SDC
Programme Officer South Caucasus
Switzerland

Zakareishvili Teng
Producer, Film Director, Georgia

Zamanov Ziya
Producer, Azerbaijan

Zanussi Krzysztof
Film Director, Poland

Zarian Aram
Producer, Armenia

Zhdanov Stanislav
Sound Engineer, Georgia

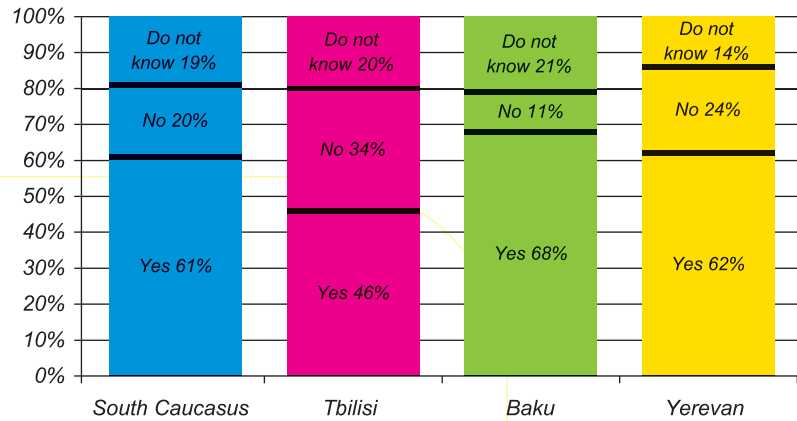
Zullo Claude
Eurasia Foundation

National, locally-produced films are most popular in Azerbaijan (38%), while in Armenia (24%) and Georgia (24%) they are second in popularity to American films.

In Armenia, after national and American movies, the favourites are Russian (16%) and old Soviet films (13%), in Azerbaijan – Russian (10%) and Indian (9%), and in Georgia – French (17%) and Russian (12%) movies.

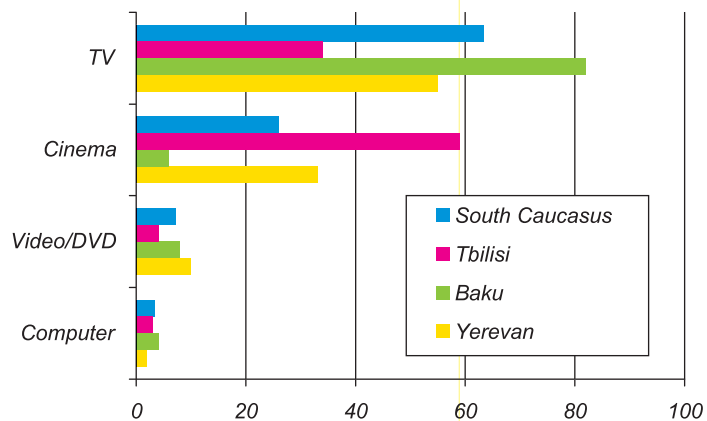
Indian movies have the biggest audience in Azerbaijan 9%, while French films (17%) have this distinction in Georgia.

Would you like to see joint South Caucasian films?



The biggest interest in joint films is expressed by Azerbaijanians – 68%. More than half of the South Caucasus audience (61%) expressed interest in joint Georgian-Armenian-Azeri films.

Where do you prefer to watch films?



63% of the region population prefers to see films on TV, 26% - at the cinema. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, most people (Armenia - 55.2%, Azerbaijan – 82.0%) prefer to see movies on TV, while in Georgia they prefer to watch films at theatres (58.8%).

II. Desk interviews (summary of main findings)

The in-depth interviews consisted of a thematic discussion held according to previously prepared guidelines. The average interview lasted about 40-60 minutes.

The interviews were held in different realms of cinematography and covered broadcasting companies, film production studios, festivals, cinemas and distribution

companies (since no distribution companies were identified in the region, the survey was extended to cover video/DVD shops instead). The guidelines, which were the same for all three countries – Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia – included different questions concerning various aspects of cinematography.

Festivals:

- Seven festivals are organized annually in the South Caucasus.
- Lack of funding is the main problem faced by festival organizers in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia.
- Tickets are never sold out in any of the countries.
- Publicity is achieved through the press, TV channels, advertisements and web information. There does not seem to be any concrete, strategic marketing or promotional plan developed in advance, which is also a result of the lack of funds.
- All three countries recognize the importance of festivals in such matters as developing cinematography, making new contacts and contracts, developing young professionals, making friends, and so on.
- There is very little interest in films from other South Caucasian countries, although these are sometimes presented at the festivals (mostly Georgian).

Movie Theatres:

- Georgia: 4 theatres, 2011 seats, ticket price US\$ 3-6
- Azerbaijan: 3 theatres, 1864 seats, ticket price US\$ 3.5-7
- Armenia: 3 theatres, 1180 seats, ticket price US\$ 1.4-4.20
- Ticket prices vary in different movie theatres in Azerbaijan, but not according to genres or show times. The same can be said about Armenia. In Georgia, ticket prices depend on the time for which a show is scheduled (evening shows are more expensive) and on whether or not they are premieres.
- The quality of movie theatres varies from country to country.
- The concept of ratings is not clearly understood by the Armenian and Azerbaijan movie theatre management, but they are applied in Georgia. Moreover, Georgians base their movie theatre strategy on the results of audience surveys.

Broadcasting Companies (excluding Azerbaijan*):

- In Armenia and Georgia, feature films have a very important role in the programming policy of their channels. This is due to the higher level of advertisements that films attract.
- The TV channel strategy and policy is very clear only in Georgia. Channels in Georgia and Armenia (with a less clear policy and strategy) try to present a mix of genres. Serials are very popular in both countries.
- TV channels' income in Georgia and Armenia comes mostly from advertisements.
- Because of the lack of funds, modern equipment, and qualified professionals, movie screenings on TV channels in Armenia is problematic. This does not apply to Georgia.
- National movies are very popular and have high ratings in Georgia, where the policy of all of the networks tends to favour Georgian movies. This is not true in Armenia, despite the fact that it does have one network that focuses on popularizing local movies.
- In Armenia and Georgia, there are no local distribution companies and people in both countries deal mostly with Russian distributors.

Production Studios:

- Armenia: 4 major companies. Production: approx. 9 feature films and 8 documentaries a year.
- Azerbaijan: 10 major companies. Production: approx. 8 feature films and 43 documentaries a year.
- Georgia: 3 major companies. Production: approx. 10 feature films and 4-5 documentaries a year.



"In 10 years' time, IFA-SC will be the most authoritative and respected organization in the film sector of South Caucasus, representing the renaissance of cinema in the three countries connected with IFA-SC activities. The IFA-SC founders will go down in the history of cinema of their countries and will continue to work successfully in their given field. We all know their names. If anyone is sceptical about this forecast, I suggest putting this message in a bottle of wonderful Georgian wine (previously shared with our friends from IFA-SC), burying it in a place known only to Tako Tatishvili (she can keep secrets) and opening it 10 years later. "The Faithless Will Be Disgraced", - as Zarathustra said (by the way, he was our compatriot)."

Ilgar Safat, Film director, Azerbaijan



- The lack of professionals, the lack of modern equipment and the lack of available funds are common problems in Armenia and Azerbaijan. The situation is better in Georgia (though it too lacks professionals), but some problems remain.
- The promotion of training is very important in the whole region of the South Caucasus.
- The production of movies is most problematic when it comes to feature films. In Azerbaijan and Armenia, more documentaries are produced, which is probably because they require less money.
- The studios of all three countries cooperate with Russian professionals, and there is a growing tendency to cooperate with foreign countries as well (mostly in Georgia).

DVD/Video Shops:

- It is quite difficult to prioritize the genres or types of films sold. Generally speaking, comedies, dramas, and blockbusters seem to be most in demand.
- Young people are mostly interested in buying/renting DVDs and videos.
- The respondents do not note any connection between price, demand and supply.
- It is also impossible to get any answers concerning suppliers - this issue seems to be secret.
- Most of the supplied DVDs/Videos are unlicensed illegal copies.

* The broadcasting companies approached in Azerbaijan were not willing to take part in the interviews.

NEXT STEPS... THE UPCOMING ACTIVITIES OF IFA-SC IN 2007 / 2008

2007

October

- Training in "Promotion of South Caucasian Films and Film Projects", follow-up workshop, Antalya Turkey

November

- Training in "Creative Documentary Project Development"
Call for applications is now open. Deadline for application: 14. 09.07
- Training in "Project and Script Development of South Caucasian Films", follow-up workshop

2008

February

- New training in "Project and Script Development of South Caucasian Films"
Call for applications will be published in autumn 2007

Summer

- Training in "Project and Script Development of South Caucasian Films", follow-up workshop

For any further information about IFA-SC, or if you would like to be included on its mailing list, please contact one of the IFA-SC offices

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