

REGIONAL SEMINAR IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Authors first: Copyright as the cornerstone of creativity and culture in the audiovisual sector

18-19 November 2025 | Skopje, North Macedonia

Marriott Hotel Plostad Makedonija 7 (Entrance from str. Maksim Gorki)

[Event page](#) | [Registration link](#)

Following the success of our first regional seminar in Belgrade (2023), AIPA, ZAPA and the SAA, in partnership with AZAS, are co-organising a second gathering. The focus is on empowering collective management organisations (CMOs) in Central and Eastern Europe so that screenwriters and directors can receive fair remuneration for the use of their works.

CMOs are an essential part of the creative and economic ecosystem that supports the continued existence of an audiovisual industry and the empowerment of authors to tell unique stories.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

18 NOVEMBER | AUTHORS, RIGHTS AND THE POWER OF A SYSTEM

13:30-14:00 | Registration and welcome coffee

14:00-14:30 | Opening remarks: framing the stakes and hope

- **Barbara Hayes**, Chair of the SAA (video greeting)
- **Gregor Presker**, the Slovenian Ambassador
- **Christophe Le Rigoleur**, the French Ambassador

14:30-15:30 | What happens when copyright works - and when it doesn't?

As with all creative sectors, copyright is at the foundation of the film and audiovisual sector, with authors being the first link in a complex value chain. Although they are visible at film premieres and festivals, screenwriters and directors are not necessarily well protected as co-authors of the audiovisual works. The panel will discuss how to build an industry by developing authors' rights first. Success stories about the positive impact of good copyright protection on audiovisual authors' earnings and cultural resilience will be presented and local voices will reflect on what is missing.

Moderator: Gregor Štibernik, Managing Director of AIPA (Slovenia)

- **Teona Strugar Mitevska**, screenwriter and director (North Macedonia) (via video link)
- **Jana Vozárová**, Director of LITA (Slovakia)
- **Kiril Gjozev**, Secretary General of AZAS (North Macedonia)

15:30-16:00 | Refreshment Break

16:00-17:00 | The author's journey - from script to payment: the copyright infrastructure

The panel will discuss the ingredients for an effective copyright infrastructure: what is needed in legislation to achieve authors rights' recognition, protection and enforcement, and the role of collective management organisations. The implementation of the 2019 copyright directives as a potential catalyst for change will also be addressed.

Moderator: Dejan Iliev, film producer (North Macedonia) *tbc*

- **Urša Menart**, screenwriter and director (Slovenia)
- **Srđan Dragojević**, screenwriter and director (Serbia)
- **Liina Trishkina-Vanhatalo**, screenwriter and director (Estonia)

17:00-18:00 | Recent developments in collective rights management: good practices and specific challenges in the region

Collective management organisations in the region depend on licences delivered by local authorities and the approval of tariffs to start collecting and distributing royalties to their members. There are still too many territories where audiovisual authors do not receive a fair share of the revenues from the exploitation of their works, and they struggle to exist on par with music authors. The panel will address these challenges, as well as the emergency of good practices, which are raising the region's profile.

Moderator: Dominik Skoczek, Managing Director of ZAPA (Poland)

- **Stefan Gelineo**, Director of UFUS-AFA (Serbia)
- **Gregor Štibernik**, Managing Director of AIPA (Slovenia)
- **Danko Stefanović**, Managing Director of DHFA (Croatia)
- *tbc*

19 NOVEMBER | BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM FOR THE REGION

09:00 - 09:30 | Welcome coffee

9:30-10:30 | What is a sustainable audiovisual environment?

While a repertoire can be based on the cultural film heritage of the past, it is essential to nurture the professional authors of today and tomorrow. In a highly competitive environment dominated by US productions, the creation, production and exploitation of European audiovisual works depend on a legal environment that provide public support, quotas and financial obligations to local production. The panel will explore what the ideal combination is for creating a sustainable audiovisual environment.

Moderator: Cécile Despringre, Secretary General of the SAA

- **Sylvia Biadun**, Deputy Director of ZAPA (Poland)
- **Hrvoje Hribar**, screenwriter and director (Croatia)
- **Klemen Dvornik**, director (Slovenia)

10:30-11:30 | Building an ecosystem in the Western Balkans

Considering the good practices in legislation and collective rights management that serve authors and foster a thriving audiovisual sector, the panel will discuss the most urgent measures that are needed to build an appropriate ecosystem in the Western Balkans.

Moderator: Uroš Rožič, Deputy Managing Director and Head of Legal of AIPA (Slovenia)

- **Kiril Gjozev**, Secretary General of AZAS (North Macedonia)
- **Evien Dako**, Managing Director of FAAD (Albania)
- **Lirak Celaj**, Managing Director of VAPIK (Kosovo)
- *tbc*

11:30-12:00 | Refreshment Break

12:00-13:00 | Closing remarks: “Skopje call - a joint declaration”

Followed by lunch

About

The SAA plays a key role in the region fostering exchanges between the CMOs, Intellectual Property Offices, national, European and international institutions. We provide a secure forum for learning, advancing best practices, and building the networks that strengthen authors' rights across borders.

The conference is hosted by AZAS, the organisation for the collective management of copyright and related film rights in the audiovisual sector in Macedonia. Its mission is to protect Macedonian authors, producers, and performers, and to ensure a fair, efficient, and transparent application and distribution of their collective rights.