

General Secretary Speech on "The economic possibilities and chances / choices of Greece for audiovisual productions"

It is with great pleasure that I am present at the beautiful island of Amorgos and at this important festival, which this year runs its eighth edition of operation.

The festival, through its various parallel activities, contributes to the development of cultural and congress tourism, promoting Amorgos island and our country. At the same time, it is the platform for productive reflection and constructive exchange of views on a number of issues such as environmental protection, lifelong learning and of course, cinema and tourism. That is why I would like to express my sincere congratulations to its organizers, who, with their personal love and passion for this place, have managed, within a few years, to establish this important initiative in an international institution.

Particular congratulations are to the President of the Amorgos Film Festival, Mr. Antonis Kioukas, who has won a lot of awards, for films, which in a few minutes show all the splendor and the beauty of Greece and its people. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Cinema, in addition to a dynamic means of entertainment, is one of the most lucrative economic activities that not only creates many jobs but directly promotes the image of a country.

Many are visiting an area, being motivated by the beauty of landscapes as well as cultural traditions captured in a movie. Indeed, according to a relevant study, the projection of an area through a cinematic production is usually more effective than advertising.

Following the "Lord of the Rings" movie series, tourist arrivals in New Zealand's Wellington increased by 40%. The corresponding increase in the United Kingdom where Harry Potter films were filmed is estimated at 50%, while in the United Kingdom in general it is estimated that about 10% of incoming tourism is due to the growth of the domestic film industry. In the region of Tsanakale, Turkey, the placement of the Trojan horse in public space caused an increase in arrivals by 73%. In our country, tourist arrivals in Kefalonia increased by 14% after the film "Captain Corelli's Mandolini", while a similar increase (12.3%) was recorded in Santorini after the film "Lara Croft-Tomb Raider".

Large foreign productions, in addition to attracting tourists from abroad, generate an increase in the country's GDP by € 39 million as a result of spending € 25 million on the shooting of a large European production data in Greece. In terms of employment, only one large foreign production can maintain over 755 jobs in the economy as a whole, of which 223 are in the sectors directly involved in production.

All the above, combined with its rich culture and history, its Polynesian character, the special diversity of its natural environment and its present tradition, make Greece unrivaled for the inexhaustible options it offers for all kinds of audiovisual works .

Being aware of these characteristics, the leadership of the Ministry of Tourism sets out an extremely extrovert national tourism policy.

Specifically, listening to the great desire of foreign producers to make audiovisual works in Greece, we have proceeded with a series of actions that radically changed the stiff legislative and bureaucratic conditions in our country, resulting in messages being more than optimistic. Indicatively I mention:

- In 2015 a dramatic serial shooting from South Korea was made.
- The series "The Durrells in Corfu", produced by ITV - the second-largest TV channel in the UK after the BBC - is filmed in Corfu and is already in the third round of the UK, while the second season is being shown in the rest of the world.
- Two major television productions from Russia, France and Belgium in Attica, Macedonia, the Peloponnese and the Ionian Islands were hosted in April - May 2017.
- We are opening a big co operation to the fastest growing outbound tourism market in India to our country by organizing familiarization and acquaintance trips with producers and creators of Bollywood to get to know the innumerable choices our country has to offer to their own needs of the film industry, thus dynamically promoting Greece into India.
- We continue participating in International tourism fairs, investment forums and film festivals, like the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival and of other States in US like in Florida and New York , in order to activate the interest of Investors to make films in our country.

Finally, I must mention that a big project is receiving flesh and bone, by the award - winning American producer and director Steven Bernstein titled "The Greek Cinema Plan in Syros ", which includes two stages: the Establishment of a Film School for students and the construction of permanent Film Studios on the island of Syros.

By the passage of Law 4487.2017, according to which the production of one audiovisual work is characterized as a cultural product and investment plan, in order to be subject to the investment regime of the law, a new, favorable and welcoming institutional framework is now in place to strengthen the domestic and foreign production of audiovisual works in Greece , so from now on, such important initiatives to take place here , without the obstacles of the past.

In this way, our country is established internationally as one of the most competitive choices for audiovisual media shooting. More over, in addition to domestic audio-visual industry and tourism, many other sectors, either directly or indirectly, are expected to be positively affected, such as the culture, trade, financial and insurance services, accommodation and catering services, transport, construction, artistic, recreational and technical activities, and other service providers.

I wish you wholeheartedly good luck in your events and thank you for your attention.