



## **Covid-19: Cinematographers World Report**

IMAGO aims to gather information from as many of our member Societies as possible, to keep our members informed about the situation for their colleagues cinematographers around the World in these especially challenging times.

We believe that the transfer of information and experiences can help inspiring us when we know how our other colleagues around the World work to aid and influence our Governments of the urgent need to implement financial aid for film production and culture sector, and all our colleagues who now experience income halting.

### **IMAGO and the Covid-19 / Coronavirus situation**

The Coronavirus situation will be a pandemic which will strongly affect us all economically. We are just 3-4 weeks into it, and although we do not yet know how it will develop or long the situation will last, we can already now see it will have devastating economic effects on many sectors and in many Countries. Film and TV-productions are being closed down and/or postponed, and the situation might last for months. A large proportion of cinematographers, if not the majority, work independently as self-employed/free-lancers. For those of us who are employed, regulations regarding income while temporarily laid off are in place in many countries, but for those of us who invoice for our work, which are many of us, the financial safety net is most often not satisfactory in place.

IMAGO wish to work with all our members Societies to exchange information and experience, hopefully to make all of us understand we are not alone in these troublesome times. Both your National Societies and IMAGO are doing our best to help, and also to influence your Governments and ministers about the critical situation many independent authors, artists and film colleagues will be in very shortly. It will be of utmost importance for national Governments to understand the need for granting special support packages to the film and culture sector in their country to secure their adequate survival in the months ahead. If this is not done in an adequate and satisfactory way, it will cause damaging and long-lasting negative implications for the whole film and culture sector in their Countries which may take years to recover. Solidarity is now needed more than ever between us.

Information from our member Societies will continuously be updated, and sent out with the IMAGO Newsletter.

In the meantime, all of us in IMAGO asks you to please do what you can for you and your families to stay safe.

**Best regards on behalf of the IMAGO Board, Paul René Roestad FNF, IMAGO President, and Louis Philippe Capelle, General Secretary**

## Reports from IMAGO Member Societies: 28 March 2020

### **Australia ACS:**

#### **Report by Ron Johansen President ASC**

Dear all Imago members,

The situation in Australia is the same with ALL production grinding to an abrupt stop.

Our ACS members and other industry colleagues are now either in isolation or attempting to find alternative work to keep their families functioning and to retain self-respect.

I don't have a crystal ball, but in time we will put this behind us but it will be some time.

To you Carlos and all our Imago friends I can only offer our emotional support at this time, but it is given freely and with great sincerity.

Stay strong.....

More information about the situation in Australia:

[Impact of Covid-19 on the screen industry](#)

[Australian screen industry bands together to seek government support](#)

Australia Survey on screen productions [here](#).

### **Austria AAC**

#### **Report by Kurt Brazda AAC. Chair IMAGO Working Conditions Committee**

In Austria, due to this exceptional situation, we find similar conditions in our industry as now anywhere else in the world. However, our only public broadcaster ORF is the main client for filmmaking alongside the publicly funded productions. The umbrella organization of Austrian filmmakers together with AAC is working on establishing a joint round table (currently of course only electronically) with the ORF, the public funding agencies, the production companies, the union and the chambers, in order to find solutions together and to prevent secret individual agreements. Since the situation really affects everyone, we hope that we can finally achieve this.

Our collecting society responded promptly and gives filmmakers very quick and unbureaucratic financial aid.

Thankfully, Fabian Eder, chairman of the collecting society and member of the AAC board, did a great job.

As member of the IMAGO Working Conditions Committee, I would also like to make general remarks:

I believe that the corona virus is about to change our society and especially the economy in general when people are ready to learn from it.

At least I believe this will have a major impact on the world of work, that still hasn't internalized the challenges of the 21st century in general. We now come to the point of how vulnerable it is, which is particularly evident in the current extreme emergency of small companies, freelancers and self-employed. These are almost defenseless in such a situation and will perish if the solidarity community does not help them as quickly as possible. The film industry is a blueprint for a future world of work, a new working environment has already become a reality in so many professional areas. This future belongs to the growing number of creative start-ups that no longer know the distinction between employed and self-employed because they no longer need it. New forms of teamwork are developed, forms that the film industry has long since realized. But what they all need is the existential protection through a society based on solidarity.

The corona virus teaches us that brutal competitive thinking no longer has a place in a world where everyone is at risk, regardless of where they are and how they are economically equipped. Combating this threat is only possible if we all stand together. We now understand again how important the democratic state is as the community of all citizens and how wrong it was to privatize more and more. It is inconceivable that the measures against the Corona Virus would happen on a private basis with the ulterior motive of making profit. It is surprising what suddenly becomes possible due to the general danger. Suddenly, human needs are ranked above economic interests, inviolable parameters like zero deficit and pressure to save suddenly lose importance. We unexpectedly experience that people feel responsible for each other, that acting in solidarity is now absolutely cool!

If we manage to keep this mentality beyond the threat of the virus, a general rethink could happen, especially in a new working world, (not only there), so that nobody is left behind. We talk about visions so often but far too little about their implementation. Right now is the chance to realize some of them, the right approaches can

already be found in the great current activities of our civil societies.

The IMAGO Working Conditions Committee must start right there, the public power of thousands of filmmakers has to be used effectively, because we all are also multipliers through our profession. The crisis also teaches us how crucial it is to strengthen professional associations and union representations and to encourage and support their founding where they do not yet exist. Who else could politically implement measures to safeguard health and help the people at risk of their existence due to the pandemic. As lone fighters, we have no chance.

However, we must not approach the matter naively, IMAGO and with it all other umbrella organizations must get to know the political structures exactly in order to be able to use them. This means that we can react quickly when the right moments happen. I think that overcoming the Corona Virus could create a time window in which we could effectively deposit our ideas of a decent work environment.

In Europe we need therefore the EU, the future of which is only conceivable based on social alliances. The Corona crisis clearly shows the need to catch up in this area. It is unacceptable that Europe as whole cannot set health and social policy regulations that are binding for all countries. (All co-productions are a special problem in this regard because the individual countries have different social regulations, which means that in this crisis there are blatant inequalities in the treatment of the filmmakers employed for these projects) This is a construction site where, as a professional group with political awareness, we have to work with many other allies. Outside Europe, we need the support and solidarity of all national member associations to help those in whose countries the working conditions are still poor. First we have to acquire knowledge of the living conditions of filmmakers all over the world.

However, the IMAGO Working Conditions Committee urgently needs to have general basic trust in order to be able to fulfil its political function. To have full support by all IMAGO members especially by the board is the only way we can react to new political constellations at the required speed. The corona crisis and how to overcome it gives us this opportunity.

Let's use it!

## **Belgium SBC:**

### **Report by Lou Berghmans and Louis-Philippe Capelle Co-Presidents SBC**

A sum-up March 25<sup>th</sup> [here](#).

These are measures that should absorb a first shock and a round-up is currently being made together with the various economic and cultural funds.

Based on these results, both the film and economic funds will sit down with our various governments that manage the budgets for our sector.

This takes some time, and we hope that this will be resolved quickly.

We have, however, invited all colleagues who are linked to the segment "image" via SBC to participate in this survey. We also approached, the camera operators, the different kind of camera assistants, grippers, gaffers and even graders. Belgium houses many of this kind of "einzeltgänger" who cannot rely on an umbrella association, and we think we must also give them a helping hand. Personally, I am convinced that this kind of solidarity should be an invitation to many.

But as Mike Eley also mentioned, at this moment, our absolute priority goes to all these health workers at the front-line who are doing an amazing job in helping us to get rid of this invisible "enemy".

We will keep you informed how it is evolving here and inform our members about your concerns sent by Imago.

## **Brazil ABC**

### **Report by Marcelo Trotta, President ABC**

Despite of the fact that the Brazilian federal government is severely cutting the funding of Brazilian culture, our film productions was doing fine. 180 features per year ( some of them awarded at 2019 Cannes and 2020 Berlin), 18 Netflix projects in production plus HBO, Amazon, TV Globo etc. It is been a week since all the productions stopped. Most of the population put themselves on quarantine and as for today my state's government determined an official lock-down, airports closed as it is happening in other countries. So far the official account is 57 deaths, 2.433 cases. The real number might be far bigger. Talking about the film crews, we are mostly hired as one-person companies so the labour rights are minimal. On the projects that were already shooting and stopped, usually the channels/streaming companies are paying for two extra weeks. This is happening with the HBO series I was shooting. For productions that were on pre-production it seems that they won't pay anything, except for directors. As for our federal government initiatives, we can't expect much. The present government is not positive to worker's rights and has frozen the fund for audiovisual since March 2019.

The ABC have made a survey to get more information about the situation of the ABC associates in relation to the COVID-19 crisis. Our country is so big and we need to get a more representative information.

### **The ABC Survey:**

People from several regions of Brazil answered our questions.

One third of the professionals were on feature films. The rest on series for Netflix, HBO, Globo, Globoplay, Fox, Canal Curta, Canal Brasil.

62% were on pre-production, 33% already shooting and 5% in post.

100% of the contracts are thru personal firms

In regards of payment, here is the situation:

One third of the professionals didn't received anything ( mostly the ones that were on pre-production- they've received the days they have worked only )

25% are still waiting for the channels/distributors decisions

10% received one extra week

15% received two extra weeks

17% received half of the agreed total fee ( mostly people working on short-scheduled productions )

It seems that all the production companies intend to get back to the projects when possible.

Half of them have an idea of when that would happen, in general June, July or August ( it is hard to say, thou – COVID-19 cases and deaths account are going up fast over here – some say the peak will be by the end of April but there are all sorts of opinions about that matter – we have postponed the ABC Cinematography Week to October )

## **Chile ACC**

### **Report by Maura Morales Bergmann, President ACC**

Even if I'm in Italy and in my house since 3 weeks, I will update you as President about my association in Chile.

In Chile, the government is not taking care about culture, we are at the very beginning of quarantine and it is not obligatory in every city and municipality.

In Santiago de Chile quarantine is starting today in 5 municipality but not in the whole city. There is a "toque de queda" (curfew) during the night from 22 p.m. to 7 a.m. that is not helping workers and the metro is still full of people We have received a survey form from the Union and from the Government, so actually they are working on something for us.

We would love, if Imago could help us giving examples or solutions to propose to our government.

Our associates are all in good health for now, all without job and all at home. We are preparing zoom activities like interviews from home and sharing courses and masterclasses through our google group.

Thanks to everyone to share your situation, it is very helpful and it makes feel closer one to the other.

## **Croatia HFS**

### **Report by Mario Sablic, President HFS**

The Covid-19 directly affecting the film industry in Croatia, report [here](#).

## **France AFC**

### **Report by Gilles Porte, President AFC**

The French government announces special measures to support free-lancers and intermittent workers.

More information about the measures [here](#) – and more information will follow soon.

## **Germany BVK:**

### **Report by Dr. Michael Neubauer, Geschäftsführung BVK**

Dear Colleagues,

Thanks for all the messages about the situation in the different regions of the world - terrorized by the terrible Corona-virus. In Germany we have a lock-down since March 20th. Work on set was stopped because of insecure working conditions. Everyone who can do is working in home-office. The film industry like many other parts of the economy is heavily effected - all cultural activities like concerts - theater - churches, .... restaurants,

shops (only food stores are open), hotels, taxi, all tourism activities, airlines, cruises, sports, etc. The whole public life is in a big break now...

Like many other institutions BVK has made bid efforts to spread out information not only to its own members but to the whole community of the cultural sector. Who understands German can take notice here:

<https://kinematografie.org/service/index.php>

In the first place BVK was active to stop the shooting activities in Germany because of personal safety of the film crew members, actors, etc... Since one week now we're working in BVK to guide our members through the difficult fields of the economic problems they have to face. There are some programs by the different governments in Germany as well as by the federal government in Berlin. How in the end some money will come to our fellows is not yet clear. Bavaria started to pay some kind of "first aid" - even to artists and filmmakers... There is a moratorium for three months of rents to be paid for flats and shops - if people can proof that they are not able to pay the rent. This is to prevent the loss of homes and shops... We expect this crisis to last for about two months - than possibly some social life starting again. Nobody can know that at this moment.

We hope that after this terrible intermezzo the world - even the world of filmmaking - will recover to a certain niveau again. On the other hand we believe that even more colleagues will leave the cultural sector and the film industry because of their experience that there is no security in this industry for them in such a kind of crisis. We understand the frustration of many film workers - and BVK has made clear statements to the press and the politicians about the unacceptable situation. The money from the people to the public broadcasters is not effected by this crisis. People in the stations are save and well paid. Those who produce the movies and programs to be broadcasted are lost in the rain....

We cross our fingers that everyone of you & your families will stay healthy.  
All the best to you - take care in these difficult times.

### **Germany has rolled out a staggering 50 billion Euro support for artists and the cultural sector.**

Report [here](#).

### **Norway FNF**

**Report by Trond Tønder, President FNF**

In Norway all productions stopped March 12th. Film workers worried about the virus, of course, but also their financial situation, since most people in the industry here, as in most of the world, are self-employed. Producers used the "force majeure"-clause to end contracts immediately, with no compensation for lost work. I think Kurt Brazda pinpointed this problem very precisely in his letter, and I too hope this will change the working conditions all over the world when this crisis is over.

Last week, our government presented support measures for small businesses, self-employers and freelancers. We can now apply for unemployment welfare, which is 80% of our average salary (up to a certain amount), after 16 days of unemployment.

The Norwegian Film Institute gives some extra millions to development, and hopefully this will result in new productions in the future. We still fear for the future of production companies, rental houses and post facilities, since margins are so small. Also, grants from the film institute is postponed, resulting in productions being delayed many, many months.

We are now conducting a survey among our members to get a more accurate picture of the situation. We will keep you posted.

Our best regards to all of our colleagues all over the world - stay safe and healthy and keep up the good spirit!

### **Sweden FSF:**

Satisfactory measures for cinematographers and other colleagues are not yet fully in place the FSF is reporting. The Swedish Society of Cinematographers are working nationally to make this happen, and are also collaborating with the Norwegian Society and the Norwegian Union to gather information how to best carry out this work. More information will follow shortly.

### **Denmark DFF:**

**Report by Jan Weincke, President DFF**

In Denmark all productions have been closed - Either postponed or completely cancelled. All cinematographers on contract will receive two weeks pay from the date of termination. After this they are entitled to a financial

support for being unemployed, that will match their average salary of the last three years to a maximum of 23.000 DKK pr. Month.

If you're hired as a firm the first two weeks payed by the production still applies - after that you can apply for compensation from the state, to a maximum of 23.000 DKK pr. Month. The production can also apply for a compensation for salaries and losses caused by the closing down of the production.

On productions where people have signed contracts it must be guaranteed that the cinematographer will return on the same terms, if production is resumed. This is valid until the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2020, but the financial support from the state will continue, if it is necessary. Luckily no cinematographers have been tested positive yet.

## **Greece GSC**

### **Report by Argyris Theos GSC**

Greece was among the first counties to implement measures and film community was among the first to understand the urgency. On March the 2<sup>nd</sup> the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, chaired by our own Yorgos Arvanites AFC GSC, decided to postpone the Documentary Festival, originally scheduled for March 6-15. All pedagogical institutions were closed on March the 11<sup>th</sup> and are gradually entering the e-learning era (most universities kicked-off, a significant amount of schools too. Stronger measures kept being implemented on a daily basis – they did it gradually to avoid panic.

Since the 23<sup>rd</sup> it is formally not allowed to walk in the street, and if one needs to move, he/she has to carry a document that defines the reason of his/her movement and his/her id.

With the exception of super markets and pharmacies, stores are closed and only e-shopping is possible.

Film and tv production is halted. This is a serious problem of course.

There is a temporary measure though: all companies that have been forced to close (this includes film-tv production) have to inform the state of the employees who have had to stop working. Then the people address the state for a small pension of 800 euros relating to the period between March 15 and April 30.

So those of us who were working on March 15<sup>th</sup> (the date of the measure) will get a small compensation.

Unemployment pension is possible but there are some bureaucratic obstacles related to the nature of the work of people working in "spectacle & listening". In two words it requires physical presence – not a necessity for most workers – and this will make things difficult. The bureaucratic issues were there before the measures though.

One other issue is that companies are now allowed to split work in half – they can have an employee work only two weeks per month and pay him half the money. Of course this is not an issue in film, but in studio tv production there might be issues.

The Good News is that measures have worked till now. We only have 743 confirmed cases, a much smaller amount than other countries with the same population (approximately 10 million)

We have proven quite disciplined too. I voluntarily quarantined myself when I arrived home from IAGA and (since today I am on the 14<sup>th</sup> day) I appear healthy.

## **INDIA ISC**

### **Report by Sunny Joseph, President ISC**

Dear Friends, and Colleagues,

Yes, indeed it is a terrible situation around the world and India is also moving into a similar predicament. Having the second largest population, you can imagine the potential disaster it holds. We are into the 3rd Day of complete lockdown. As of today, India has 800 patients and 18 reported deaths. Unfortunately, the maximum number of patients is in my state, Kerala - 176 and one death. And we are into the fourth day of lockdown. Kerala has a population of 34.8 million (2.76% of Indian population) and a population density of 896 per square kilometer (2011 census). So there is a very alarming situation in my state. It is alarming generally across India. The central government and local government are taking all necessary steps to fight the pandemic.

I am particularly happy with the humanitarian care our local government in Kerala is taking for all of us. Chief Minister, Com. Pinarai Vijayan says we are also ready to tackle the Corona at the medical front. Kerala government is implementing the following immediate measures:

- Doing a herculean task of tracking all the people (1000s) who came in to contact with the confirmed patients and putting them under observation.

- Food for all who need it - 800 community kitchens are already opened statewide, telephone numbers to call and food will be delivered at home. Food assured for animals and birds too, including stray dogs and monkeys.
- Medical help for alcoholics, since the availability of liquor is zero and there is a reported suicide by an alcoholic.
- Creation of a Volunteer Force of 250,000 volunteers.
- Two month's salary assured for all government workers.
- All 'guest workers' from other states who are stranded here (150,000 workers) will be allowed to stay back in Kerala and they will be provided with basic needs.

But in Delhi and other Metros, the migrant workers (1000s) are in exodus on foot to their villages, some 500-600 km away. It is a terrible sight. The next few days are critical to us in knowing the magnitude of the communal spread.

Film productions are also completely shut down. So there is a crisis in the industry. Most of the workers in the film industry (lighting assistants, carpenters, caterers, drivers, grips and so on) are daily wage earners. 2000 feature films per year, and 100 -200 workers per film, are approximately 300,000 workers all over India.

One good thing happening in Kerala and other parts of India is that Film Stars are volunteering to create Welfare Funds along with Unions and offering help to the needy. After all the film industry in India is almost 100% privately funded.

IMAGO already proved that however diverse we are, we can all work together for a common good. I am sure, after the Corona pandemic, there will be at least a new understanding among world leaders that we are all interconnected. Let love and compassion guide world leaders. WORLD IS ONE.

We are touched by the care expressed by IMAGO, especially by President Paul, and a big thanks to all of you.

With warm regards and prayers, Namaste.

## [Italy AIC](#)

### **Report by Luciano Tovoli AIC ASC**

Unfortunately the AIC activity is for now completely closed with the postponement until next autumn or winter of the Italian Microsalon with as a consequence. A huge problem with our sponsors-exhibitors which anticipated part of the expenses partly already spent for the preparation of a quite big event that was almost ready to be opened.

Also if so hardly hit by the virus with such a violence that could put on the ground the most strong human society forcing us to abandon momentarily our activities and often to be physically separated even by part of our close families, the *communication in solidarity* we are opening up on this IMAGO channel nowadays will maintains us alive during this hard battle and will also make us able to grow up as human entities with no space for animosity, lack of trust and sense of superiority.

Here in Italy we will need a deep breath for another minimum two weeks of time to start to understand what will be the future of our lives. Given the Italian sad world record in fatalities you can imagine in what direction today goes our personal and general concern. Why in Italy, in one of the most developed region as Lombardia (Milano), we have the incredible percentage of 8,3% when it should be 0,3 ? No answer to this question yet. We tend to believe that the infected persons are in a much more elevated number of the registered ones. Sure that we will prevail and everything will restart much healthier also if from a much lower economic standard level, but please stay safely at home with your families !!!

The AIC, also if materially shoot down, send to all of you our full solidarity!

## [Japan JSC](#)

### **Report by Akira Sako JSC**

Dear colleagues,

While the virus is now rapidly spreading in EU, we at JSC are also in very challenging situation. In particular, the number infected people has exploded since the Tokyo Olympics was officially postponed. This sudden explosion proves that government was underestimating the actual infection numbers to the citizen in order to carry on the Olympics.

Currently the schools are closed and almost all sports events, concerts and theaters are closed and people gathering are banned, and from this weekend cinemas will also be closed for a while.

The virus prevention measures are also affecting films products, and many projects are being postponed or cancelled. Therefore the people working in this industry are anxious about the future, as Japanese cinematography technicians are mostly freelancers whom have no financial protection.

While Makoto Watanabe JSC may report you later regarding the detailed situation from Japan, this is to quickly tell you what is happening here, and also to send our sincere wishes to you and your loved ones.

## Lithuania LGC

### **Report by Rytis Kurkulis, President LAC**

The situation around corona virus in Lithuania is such: official quarantine with all cinematographic productions cancelled or postponed. Projects scheduled to start later this year are now under question due to unclear economic situation. In recent years film industry in Lithuania experienced certain boom, with international projects from Netflix, HBO, different co-productions being shot here constantly.

That means we have a large number of local film professionals now unemployed. It will take probably a lot of time for the industry to recover.

The government is trying to find ways to support industries and businesses, if the film industry will be supported as well and how much is yet to be seen.

As for freelance cinematographers, which are absolute majority of us, at the moment there are two ways to get financial assistance. Self-employed persons who had to stop their professional activity due corona situation can apply for fixed monthly allowance, which is however not sufficient to sustain a living for longer period of time. Persons officially recognized as Art Creators can get support through Artists Social Security Programme . The problem is that not all of our members have the required Status of Art Creator and LAC is not in the list of Art Creator's Organizations due to bureaucratic obstacles.

We are considering to address the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture regarding this matter.

## Mexico AMC

### **Report by Carlos R. Diazmuñoz, President AMC**

Best wishes to everyone from the AMC, Mexican Cinematographer Society.

Mexico continues to receive hard blows left and right as the Mexican peso devaluates against the US dollar at an all time high and most productions have stopped except for irresponsible Producers and freelancers who will not stop no matter what.

Minimum wage is \$6.25 US dollars PER DAY and poverty will be struck hard with this global crisis as most of these poor citizens sadly live on a day by day basis and refuse to not go out on the streets to make a living. The Corona crisis is barely beginning and we only hope for the best as Mexican Citizens have taken actions on their own since the Mexican President did not take the crisis as a serious matter in the beginning suggesting that everyone should go out and enjoy their lives as only phase one was in effect and dismissed the situation that Spain and Italy were suffering.

The **AMC** has joined efforts with the Mexican Independent Production Company Association called **AMFI** that deals mainly in advertising and **Apertura**, which unifies international women Cinematographers working in the country as a large corporation announced they would not be paying their vendors more than 2 million dollars in months due to the crisis, even though the work had already been accomplished. After our letter was sent to this world wide and huge corporation, they accepted to change their policy and agreed to pay their debt sooner but I cannot confirm when that will be.

Just before the current global situation, we were also working very hard in an effort to change current abusive labour situations in our industry as we constantly work more than 14 hours per day (TV series and narrative films) and more than 20 hours as a norm in advertising and music videos. Not having lunch breaks has become the norm in advertising and also getting payed up to 6 months later or not getting payed at all due to the lack of written contracts also in advertising. Safety is not seriously regarded at all causing the death and injury of professionals and women have been abused in the work place as well. To accomplish an urgent change, we have joined forces with the Mexican Academy of Arts and Cinematography Science **AMACC**, **Apertura** (women's association of international Cinematographers) the Actors Guild called **ANDA**, equipment vendors such as **CTT**, **Revolution** and **EFD** , thousands of freelancers who are united and fed up of the situation and the list goes on of groups and individuals who cannot take it anymore and are joining this important effort started by the AMC. We obviously will be affected by not getting hired by some companies and Producers due to this needed movement.



As you can all read, the AMC has been very busy right before the world crisis and are saddened by the situation and can only hope for the best. Government cultural budgets have been cut directly affecting the number of narrative productions that was at an all-time high in Mexican history surpassing the Golden era in the industry of the 1940's.

We are afraid that our effort and progress to change the abusive labor situation in Mexico will be hindered by the lack of work and matters could get worse.

We admire the support some countries will received by their responsible governments.

I like to thank everyone in IMAGO for their continued effort in uniting all of us and also for the societies that have shared their situation.

## **New Zealand NZSC**

**Report by Amber Wakefield, Executive Officer, NZSC**

Kia ora members of IMAGO,  
Fortunately, New Zealand's geographical distance to other countries has allowed our Government time to grasp the magnitude of Covid-19, and a transparent "go hard, and go now" approach to minimise the effect is already in action.

Earlier this week, upon our first confirmed case of a community outbreak, all of New Zealand was put into complete lockdown. Only essential services such as police, hospital, pharmacies, and supermarkets remain open to the public. All other businesses either have to continue to operate remotely from home, or are closed. Included in lockdown is two of our most significant projects currently in production - the Amazon '*Lord of the Rings*' series and '*Avatar*' 2 and 3.

The Government has been quick to respond and has put together a COVID19 release package, including a wage subsidy applicable to freelancers and self-employed contractors. The COVID-19 Wage Subsidy & COVID-19 Leave Payment is being paid at a flat rate of:

- \$585.80 for people working 20 hours or more per week
- \$350.00 for people working less than 20 hours per week.

(New Zealand minimum wage is \$18.90 per hour)

This has alleviated the concerns and worries of freelance professionals to a degree in the short term. However, this will not suffice long-term, and more action and support will be required moving forward.

In response to this, a pan-sector action group has been formed to address the immediate and ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our industry. The team comprises of many key screen industry guilds and organisations, as well as major stakeholders.

The Action Group is currently undertaking talks with government stakeholders - including the Ministry of Culture & Heritage, the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, NZ Film Commission and NZ On Air - to discuss the effect of the COVID-19 shutdown on workers, productions and businesses within the sector.

To gain a better understanding of the needs of the sector right now, the group will be sending out a survey on Monday, March 30, to all screen workers. The data gathered from responses will help to inform us in more detail how they can help the sector over the short to medium term.

Over the coming weeks, the action group will continue its discussions with key stakeholders on ways to support the sector as well as how we can develop new projects and get productions back up and running once the Government has advised it is safe to do so.

The Government has also announced rent increase freezes and 6-month mortgage holidays or interest-only mortgage payment options. Details of which are being rolled out over the next few days.

These unprecedented times call for calm and proactive decision-making to protect local screen sectors and to ensure that when recovery happens – and it will – we are all ready to gear back up and get the screen industry humming again.

I, too, would like to thank everyone in IMAGO for their continued effort in uniting us all. To Carlos, whom my heart especially breaks for, we send much aroha (love) at this time.

From your friends the kiwis - kia kaha (stay strong) and be kind.

**He waka eke Noa (We're in this together)**

## **Poland PSC**

**Report by Piotr Śliskowski, President PSC**

Dear friends ,

Situation in Poland is also very difficult for all. The whole industry stops ... all film-, Tv- and commercial film productions are cancelled or delayed for unknown term ...

From today our government decided that most of our citizens should stay at home till 11th of April for now.

So situation is very difficult and we don't know how it will develop ...

I will give you more information soon.

I wish you all the best !!! Stay safe !!!

## **Slovakia ASK**

**Report by Lukáš Teren, President ASK**

Dear Colleagues, here is our brief report on the situation in Slovakia:

All projects Film, TV and Commercials were cancelled on beginning of march. Last weekend we had a transition between old and newly elected government. The Association of Slovak Cinematographers together with Slovak Film and TV Academy and all other film associations / NGO wrote an open letter to the new Prime Minister and new minister of Culture, asking for help and trying to establish dialog to find solutions together.

So far we are together making survey about the financial losses in the cultural and audiovisual space. Part of the survey are questions about the help solutions, like delay of tax payments and others ...

Something similar is also happening across Slovakia in other fields.

Now we are waiting for the new government to get oriented in this problem and bring us some solutions.

## **South Africa SASC**

**Report by Uwe Beckmann, President SASC**

We too have been affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic in our country and the effects on our members working here and internationally has been severe, we as a country are going into a Lock down @ midnight tonight , all productions have ground to a halt and only accredited news crews are able to do required shooting for updates.

We have two links below that could be of benefit to DOP's who had work cancelled through the NFVF, members would have to contact them directly

As the SASC we would support all the members with a letter to confirm their standing as SASC members.

Information about the South African Filmmakers Relief Fund:

<https://www.safrfund.org/>

The SASC Covid-19 Survey amongst members:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfAtXNnvmgtbKUXORr3dkj6XW-U1rKjB2OCXcJLLvhGS5fj-g/vie wform>

We wish to thank IMAGO for your offer to help and should the need arise we will be in contact with you.

I wish you, your loved ones and friends all the best in health and safety during this difficult time

## **Turkey GYD**

**Report by Dogan Sariguzel, President GYD**

We are in a complicated situation in Turkey as you can imagine. Government is not so transparent and we try to figure out what is going on in the country.

In the early days of coronavirus, one high level bureaucrat who dealing with control of broadcasts called the TV Serials Crews as "the brave ones, heroes entertaining bored self-isolated people".

Cinema TV Union and NGOs from the industry (including GYD) called all crews to stop working. You will find the joint call [here](#). The call stopped most of the productions but a few TV Serials are still continuing their productions.

Today another call is ready to be published at 13:00 Turkish Time to call the government to help the industry workers and colleagues. Personally I am not hopeful about the reaction of the government.

We are trying to do our best to stay healthy and in solidarity.

If you don't mind, I'd like to share your mails with the NGOs that I am keeping in touch to give examples how European and foreign governments and associations behave.

## **United Kingdom BSC**

**Report by Mike Eley, President BSC**

Dear colleagues and comrades,

As you may or may not know, the UK was put into severe lockdown last night by our government. Not quite Lombardy - we are still able to take a walk - but authorities are now able to enforce isolation from the streets. Unchartered territory for the UK.

I can imagine many of you already know how the industry is taking this crisis - with extreme trepidation and bewilderment at how it will resolve. The UK film and TV industry was going at 100mph ("a golden age!") until a few weeks ago, and then it hit the coronavirus brick wall.

But right now, nobody is thinking about work. It is all about the health workers and those at the front-line (although we all on the front line with this virus). I know that many of us are considering what we can do to help as auxiliary workers.

The BSC has opened up a WhatsApp group which proving a valuable outlet for views, encouragement, advice and humour. Other on-line support ideas are currently in the process of being set up - masterclasses and ad-hoc tuition via Skype, Zoom etc.

Our government has been slow to recognise the plight of the self-employed. We await an announcement soon that will hopefully alleviate the concerns and worries of millions of freelance professionals and the people who make up 90% of our film & TV industry.

Petitions have been signed, surveys filled out and letters written to the Chancellor. Wherever possible, we have referred to the extraordinary support that exists for freelancers elsewhere in Europe. In reality, I think the best lobbying is done from within. But you all set a great example!

From your friends in the UK, we send you best wishes, good health and as we say here..."chin up!"

### **BSC report from UK regarding *Self-employment income Support Scheme*, 28<sup>th</sup> March**

This scheme will allow you to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of your trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 per month for the next 3 months. This may be extended if needed.

#### **Who can apply**

You can apply if you're a self-employed individual or a member of a partnership and you:

- Have submitted your Income Tax Self Assessment tax return for the tax year 2018-19
- traded in the tax year 2019-20 are trading when you apply, or would be except for COVID-19
- intend to continue to trade in the tax year 2020-21
- have lost trading/partnership trading profits due to COVID-19

Your self-employed trading profits must also be less than £50,000 and more than half of your income must come from self-employment. This is determined by at least one of the following conditions being true:

- having trading profits/partnership trading profits in 2018-19 of less than £50,000 and these profits constitute more than half of your total taxable income
- having average trading profits in 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 of less than £50,000 and these profits constitute more than half of your average taxable income in the same period

If you started trading between 2016-19, HMRC will only use those years for which you filed a Self-Assessment tax return.

All British citizens who are eligible will be contacted by the HMRC with information on how to apply for this scheme.

## **Ukraine UGC**

### **Report by Oleksandr Kryshtalovych UGC**

Allow me to express our sincerest gratitude for support and encouragement from UGC and all Ukrainian film community.

We have quarantine measures from 13 of March till 24 of April all over the country. There are 219 infected, 4 healed, 5 death... Many projects are postponed or closed for today. But difficulties in the film industry were appeared earlier, from January:

- We had a long and not transparent head appointment process in the State Film Commission (which made 90% of all contracts for film and TV production).
- All state funding contracts were postponed.
- The film industry has used all extra funds during January-February.

The film industry in Ukraine just become alive after full ruination in the 1990th. During the last 5 years, we observed and made big efforts in the rapid growth of film making. In the last year, we made 16 features, 9

documentary films (that is near 80% growth). Our films were awarded on VIFF, BIFF, Sundance, etc. But the situation is close to declining now.

Our government is going to cut state funding for 90% of all culture supporting programs, and the film and TV industry without consultations. All petition from culture and cinematography communities were written. Today we have online protest meeting against that decision. We are not giving up.

I wish all of us to stay in a good mood and healthy!

## USA ASC

### Report from Kees van Oostrum ASC NSC SBC. President ASC

Dear members of IMAGO

The impact of the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and the deeper developing financial hardship for our industry has been severe. All production in the United States closed down during the last week, except for some VFX and post-production people that can work from home, and future production seems to be on hold at least until the end of June. The new United States stimulus bill that is expected to be approved within the next 24 hours will offer some relief to all Americans, but it will probably be no more than 1250 to 2000 dollars per person as a one time gift. In response, several industry unions, organizations, and businesses have stepped up to offer emergency assistance.

For your information, this is where entertainment industry workers can go for help during the coronavirus crisis:

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/business/story/2020-03-24/entertainment-industry-offers-string-of-funds-for-help>

All members of the ASC sympathize with all our colleagues around the world, and it is a comforting feeling to all of us that we are not alone. We feel that together we will get through this and rise again.

### A message from ASC President Kees van Oostrum to members of the ASC, shared with members of IMAGO:

#### Why Our Solidarity Is Now Essential

Last month, I promised you the follow-up article on the Art of Cinematography. I announced it as “In the Doghouse” and started writing the somewhat satirical interpretation of how my monitor tent on set is sometimes considered “the doghouse,” and how our position as cinematographers on set and in postproduction often parallels the life of Snoopy.

However, while I was writing this, the world turned upside-down and it seemed superfluous to write about that subject at the moment. Instead, I had people asking me — as well as wondering, myself — if cinematography is still relevant in the current state of the world.

Meanwhile, I have seen colleagues disappear in quiet retreat, driven by the unrelenting mandate to isolate. Yes, it’s a human condition; in times like these, we resort to the basics of family and personal well-being, and suffer the result of social isolation and the fear of economic hardship.

However, I could not escape the thought that we have been here before. The Spanish Flu, or the 1918 flu pandemic, began in January of 1918 and lasted three years. Five hundred million people were infected, making it one of human history’s most deadly disease outbreaks. It is estimated that 17 million to 50 million people died, though the figure may actually be closer to 100 million.

What is of interest to me is that 1918 also, in a way, marks the beginning of Cinematography. During the preceding years, camera operators had predominantly documented the various atrocities of World War I. As noted in the book *American Cinematographers in the Great War*, “The impact of the First World War cannot be fully comprehended by reading statistics about the millions of casualties. These are in the end only figures. Some images tell a far more striking story. After four years of fighting, when on 11 November 1918 the guns fell silent, the frontline area between the English Channel and the Swiss border had changed into a completely devastated landscape. Treeless, scarred by mine craters and endless trenches zigzagging through muddy fields and ruined villages — these relics from the Great War as seen from a bird’s eye view resembled an horrendous scene from Dante’s *Inferno*.”

Later, in the year the war ended, there was an influx of fiction silent movies. 1918 is the year we saw films such as D.W. Griffith’s *Hearts of the World*, Ernst Lubitsch’s *Carmen*, and Charlie Chaplin’s *A Dog’s*

*Life* — just to mention a few of the escapist movies, romances and comedies trying to move our thoughts to better, future times. There was a yearning for positivism that, despite the disastrous onslaught of the Spanish Flu, persevered against all odds — like recognizing suffrage, women’s right to vote.

The following year, the American Society of Cinematographers was founded under the motto “Loyalty, Progress and Artistry” — with Loyalty first, following a worldwide trend of revisionism at the time. The ASC founders also changed the title of “cameramen” to “cinematographers” because they wanted recognition as artists. And they supported “progress” to advocate education.

In the past 100 years, we endured the Second World War, lived through Vietnam and endured 9/11, and all in all, the world population banded together and came out stronger.

Today we are facing a similar situation. Fear and uncertainty have taken hold of all of us. But we can find solace in history — that the human condition will survive and prevail. And yes, in what we do as individuals, as artists and technicians, we must hold this trust in our work. Although we cannot practice it today because our world has shut down, it will open up again soon, and our conviction that we do what we love will make us rise again. In the meantime, it is important that we stay in touch, communicate, and talk about the past and the future.

I want to prepare for the day when my front door is wide open again and let the dog out.

### **[Joint IMAGO/FERA effort to influence European decisions makers](#)**

IMAGO is also working with other author’s Federations, FERA (the Federation of European film directors), ECSA (The European Composer and Songwriter Alliance), EWC (The European Writers’ Council), FSE (The Federation of Screenwriters Europe), on campaigns towards influencing both the EU and national governments, to urge decisions-makers to avoid creating inequality between the employed and self-employed workers and free-lance community during these difficult times.

Read the joint statement [here](#).

### **[Netflix announces 100 mullion USD Fund for out-or-work film and TV workers.](#)**

The Covid-19 outbreak has brought the film and tv-industry to a standstill, but Netflix is stepping in to ease the financial burdens of it’s workers.

More information on [Nofilmschool.com](http://Nofilmschool.com)

And at the Netflix website [here](#).