

Panihida Germany // Republic of Moldova, 2010

Even if the **financial aids** specifically conceived for the coproduction of short films are rare, they do exist in certain parts of Europe. The Robert Bosch Stiftung **grant** for example, contributes with up to 70 000 Euros for each coproduction project between Germany and Eastern European Countries. The projects can be fiction, documentary and animation. German/Moldovan project Panihida was the 2010 winner of the fiction category.



Recently one of the oldest women living in a small village in Moldova died in one of the houses. Young and old generation come together in order to say goodbye to her. Tradition collides with modern spirit, people from far away return and meet people who have never left the village. During the Panikhida – the orthodox burial-ceremony – it comes an explosion of emotions, memories, facts and absurdities.

Panihida (Germany/Republic of Moldova, 2010)

Genre: Fiction

Length: 58 min.

Director: Ana-Felicia Scutelnicu

Production: Weydemann Brothers, (Germany)

Producer Jonas Weydemann shares the experience of working with that institution and having coproduction as a goal in itself, not just the means of getting a short film done:

Why have you chosen coproduction? Was it your intention and that of the director from the beginning of the project?

The story of Panihida is based in a little village in the Republic of Moldova. As we had never produced a film in this country before, it was logical to produce together with somebody from there. Not only regarding the organization, but also the story, it was very important to get the best out of the project. After we met the director Ana-Felicia Scutelnicu at the Wendland Shorts Film Festival in the northern part of Germany, where she pitched her idea, we decided at the very beginning that we would do Panihida as a German - Moldovan coproduction.

Have you had other previous experiences with coproduction?

We had already had experiences with coproduction in other projects and will always continue in this way of producing films. For most of our films coproduction makes sense, based on the story, the production conditions or due to financial reasons. But we always look carefully at each project, because a coproduction isn't always the most adequate solution. In every country the production conditions are different and you have to adjust to them.

How does the Robert Bosch foundation follow the project once the grant is given, or do you have total freedom to work with the budget once the project is awarded the grant?

During the nomination process they look carefully on the teambuilding of the coproducers; they are really interested in you and your idea. A very professional jury nominates and awards the projects and follows up also in postproduction. They are there if you need help or advices but give you creative freedom. To find good partners they even have an Internet platform. But of course another advan-

Festivals & Awards

Winner of the "Silver Stork" at the Wendland Shorts Festival 2009.

Winner of the Robert Bosch Coproduction Prize 2010.

Jonas Weydemann

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Jonas Weydemann takes his first steps into the film business in San Francisco, where he attends workshops at the Hollywood Film Institute. In several film production companies in Munich, Berlin and Hamburg he gains experience and later studies film production at the German Film and Television Academy Berlin (dfbb). Since 2007 he is programming director at the short film festival Wendland Shorts and participates in the IDFAcademy and the Berlinale Talent Campus. Together with his brother he founds in 2008 the production company Weydemann Bros. in Berlin and Cologne.

tage is the amount, up to 70 000 Euro is a considerable amount of money for each category: live action short film, creative documentary and animation short film.

Do you think this very same film could have been done with a single country production, or with another grant than the Bosch grant?

Panihida is an arthouse film, realized in a small and very poor country with non-professional-actors and based on a treatment, not a scripted plot. I am sure that the financing of this project would have been very difficult or even impossible without the support of the Robert Bosch Foundation. From the very beginning it was clear in our mind that we had to do it as a coproduction.

What suggestions or advice can you give to other producers and directors who are looking to do their film in coproduction?

Look carefully at the partner you choose as a coproducer. You will have to work for a long period of time together and you have to understand each other very well. You have to find solutions for a lot of difficult situations throughout the film production. Don't choose a coproducer just for the possible money you could generate. If you choose well, you will have a great film, a good experience and a business partner for further projects.