

AUTHORS FIRST: Copyright as the cornerstone of creativity and culture in the audiovisual sector

Regional seminar on audiovisual authors' rights in Central and Eastern Europe

18-19 November 2025, Skopje

Skopje Marriott Hotel

Plostad Makedonija 7 (Entrance from str. Maksim Gorki) 1000 Skopje, North Macedonia

A regional seminar to address the specific challenges of the Western Balkans

AIPA, ZAPA and the SAA organised a first regional seminar on audiovisual authors' rights in Central and Eastern Europe in October 2023 in Belgrade. These seminars are part of our efforts to empower collective management organisations (CMOs) in the region 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.

This is why empowering audiovisual authors' CMOs is crucial. The SAA plays a key role in the region fostering exchanges between the CMOs, Intellectual Property Offices, national, European and international institutions in and out of the region, advancing best practices and providing a secure forum where one can learn from the others.

This seminar in Skopje aims at helping regional authors, CMOs, and policymakers:

- + Understand how copyright works as an economic and cultural driver in the audiovisual sector.
- + Learn from SAA members how strong systems are built and why it matters.
- + Begin mapping out a path toward authorship recognition, protection and sustainability.

Draft programme

Tuesday 18 November 2025 (afternoon): Authors, Rights, and the Power of a System

13:30: Registration and welcome coffee

14:00 - 14:30: Opening speeches: framing the stakes and hope

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

- + SAA members share success stories: earnings, impact, cultural resilience
- + Local voices reflect on what they're missing

Key message: "You can't build an industry without building authors' rights first"

15:30 - 16:00: Refreshment Break

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

- + What is needed in legislation for rights recognition, protection and enforcement
- + The role of CMOs
- + Impact of the 2019 copyright directives

17:00 – 18:00: What is a sustainable audiovisual environment?

- + The value of a strong repertoire
- + Quotas, investment obligations, public support to production

Wednesday 19 November 2025 (morning): Skopje call: Building an ecosystem for the region

9:00: Welcome coffee

9:30 – 10:30: Recent developments in collective rights management: good practices and specific challenges in the region

10:30 – 11:30: Building an ecosystem in the Western Balkans

11:30 - 12:00: Refreshment Break

12:00 - 13:00: Closing Remarks and joint declaration - copyright is not optional!