

Region in focus: Bucharest-Ilfov

Bucharest-Ilfov Region, formed by Bucharest, Romania's capital and Ilfov County – is located in the central part of the Romanian Plain in southern Romania. Bucharest is the largest urban agglomeration of the country; its numbers approaching 2 million inhabitants represents more than 85% from the total region's population.

Romanian legend says that the city of Bucharest was founded on the banks of the Dambovitza River by a shepherd named Bucur, whose name literally means "joy". His flute playing reportedly dazzled the people and his hearty wine from nearby vineyards endeared him to the local traders, who gave his name to the place.

Known for its wide, tree-lined boulevards, glorious Belle Époque buildings and a reputation for the highlife (which in the 1900s earned its nickname of "Little Paris"), Bucharest is today a bustling metropolis. For this reason film productions began shooting in Bucharest and it did not take long for international producers and filming companies to discover and appreciate the rich historical heritage of the city.

In fact, **more than 200 productions have been filmed**, entirely or partially in Bucharest and its surrounding areas, most of them in the last ten years. Renowned individuals from the film industry have linked their professional activity to the town of Bucur.



Photo: courtesy of Bucharest Ilfov Regional Development Agency

Directors such as Costa-Gavras - Amen, Francis Ford Coppola - Youth Without Youth, Katja von Garnier - Blood and Chocolate, Klaus Menzel - What About Love and Tommy Wirkola - What Happened to Monday to name a few.

Actors such as Andy Garcia (Modigliani, What About Love), Sharon Stone (What About Love), Tim Roth (Youth Without Youth), Tom Berenger (Diplomatic Siege), Olivier Martinez (Blood and Chocolate), Wesley Snipes (7 Seconds, The Detonator), Steven Seagal (Attack Force, Born to Raise Hell, The Mercenary: Absolution), Cuba Gooding Jr. (One in the Chamber), Jean-Claude Van Damme (Six Bullets), Nicholas Cage (Ghost Rider 2), Vinnie Jones (The Mercenary: Absolution), Gerard Depardieu, Harvey Keitel, Laura Morante (A Farewell to Fools), Willem Dafoe, Glenn Close, Noomi Rapace (What Happened to Monday) all have filmed in the city.

It is not just the aesthetic of the city and its surrounding area that encourages producers and directors to come to Bucharest, but the quality and professionalism of the Romanian actors and filming crews to be found locally. Romanian studios, such as Castel Film, are perfectly positioned to connect to local resources.



Photo: courtesy of Castel Film



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Moreover, starting from July 2018, the Romanian government approved the new **state aid scheme for film and television productions:**

- 35% cash rebate of the amount of funds spent in Romania and an additional 10% for explicitly promoting Romania
- 50% rebate on the withholding tax for all foreign cast and crew part of the local budget.

The scheme is open to feature films, medium and short fiction films, TV series, direct-to-video, internet and any other support films, documentaries and animated films.

The Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency's (ADR-BI) participation in the Green Screen project was motivated by the constant pursuit and involvement of the institution in influencing policy instruments, both in its daily activities and also through various projects. The reemergence of the Romanian film industry, the increasing interest towards green industries in the region and ADR-BI's relations with Castel Film (the largest film studios in the country with more than 60% of the audio-visual production market share attracting significant foreign productions to Romania) made our institution a worthy partner for Green Screen.

More opportunities for the audio-visual production industry and its value chain mean development of this sector but also an increase in the carbon emissions – unless we strive to change something. This is why the core of the project fits right at home in the Bucharest-Ilfov Region – an emerging sector that needs to adapt to the challenges and take steps to a greener business model. Environmental sustainability is crucial to the competitiveness of the audio-visual production industry and for attracting film productions.

Of course, the use of **green practices in the region is still at an early stage** but talks with the representatives of the film industry, with relevant stakeholders, local and central policy makers have showed us that **there is a growing interest** in this subject. We want to learn from our partners and participation in the Green Screen interregional learning process will enable ADR-BI and key stakeholders to work towards the alignment of environmental practice in the Romanian AVP industry to a benchmarked standard agreed by all partners. ADR-BI and its stakeholders will learn from the more experienced regions about budgets and finance models needed by this type of development and will lead by example applying green practices in their daily work routine – reducing waste, resource consumption, switching to more sustainable technologies, all of which will contribute to the development and sustainability of the region.

Some measures have already been taken: in June this year, during a workshop at Castle Film Studios organized by ADR-BI, the project partners and relevant stakeholders from each region were shown concrete steps that are being taken by the industry in a bid to go green – **LED lights technology, recycling and reuse of materials and sets, nonpolluting technologies to generate energy**. Green practices are also present in the studio's cafeteria in a bid to reduce food waste and lower the number of plastic items – leftovers are used to feed pets and ceramic and metal dinnerware have replaced plastic.

For Bucharest-Ilfov Region knowledge transfer, financing and support for growth and collaborative approaches to carbon reduction represent key elements for all sectors and will lead to a better life and sustainable future.