



EKOME S.A.

National Centre of Audiovisual Media
and Communication

Press Release

**Press Conference EKOME | Nu Boyana Hellenic Film Studios
Thessaloniki: a hub for international audiovisual productions**

Within the context of the 60th Thessaloniki International Film Festival, Panos Kouanis, President and CEO of EKOME, Nu Boyana Film Studios CEO Yariv Lerner and York Film Studios CEO John Kalafatis held a joint Press Conference, during which the new "**Nu Boyana Hellenic Film Studios**" venture was presented.

The press conference was attended by Minister of Digital Governance Kyriakos Pierrakakis, the Governor of the Region of Central Macedonia Apostolos Tzitzikostas, local authorities, representatives of the local art, academia and business community. The project of the construction of the new film studios in Themi, Thessaloniki, which is the culmination of the partnership between Nu Boyana Film Studios and York Studios, was presented to the public.

Panos Kouanis, President and CEO of EKOME, thanked Thessaloniki Film Festival for hosting the press conference, and all the stakeholders who support the work of EKOME. He pointed out that "EKOME, during its two-year existence has already accomplished a lot and has yet much more to do." He also underlined that "EKOME is the proof of the continuity of the Greek state", a guarantee for investment and growth in Greece.

Minister of Digital Governance **Kyriakos Pierrakakis** hailed the creation of EKOME stressing that "we will invest in EKOME so that more steps are taken in a very short period of time". He pointed out that the State will continue to support the work of EKOME with initiatives both in terms of the nature and competitiveness of the cash rebate program and in terms of reducing bureaucracy, in investing in the work of the Film Offices, and in allowing for "even more studios and even more international productions of such caliber" to come to Greece.

In his address, Governor of Central Macedonia **Apostolos Tzitzikostas** expressed his vision "to make Thessaloniki and Central Macedonia a center of audiovisual, film and television productions in Southeastern Europe" and he particularly thanked Panos Kouanis for his commitment to the vision of "putting Greece on the map of audiovisual production", which led "governments to adopt legislation and economic initiatives that make Greece a highly competitive area for large-scale audiovisual productions". He expressed the Region's readiness through the establishment of the Film Office to serve every major production that would wish to shoot in the Region.

Thessaloniki Film Festival Artistic Director **Orestis Andreadakis** welcomed EKOME and the Nu Boyana Hellenic to the Festival, stressing that the Festival is the place where "we develop the films of the future" and expressed the Festival's active support to the project.

York Studios CEO **John Kalafatis** thanked the Greek state for its support at all levels to the venture of building the new film studios, stressing that what is being planned is unprecedented by Greek standards. "We start with 8 sound stages and anticipate to build at least 13", and this is a prerequisite for inviting productions of high standards and budgets, which will have a direct and indirect impact on Greece's economy and visibility, along with offering many young people an opportunity to fulfill their dream. Mr Kalafatis said that according to estimations, construction work will begin in a few months and that "the shooting will be feasible to begin even before construction is complete, starting 2020". Regarding job opportunities, he noted that jobs are created directly by incoming productions estimated to be "from a few hundred to a few thousand", but also, indirectly, from the economic benefits of a production.

For his part, Yariv Lerner, CEO of **Nu Boyana Film Studios**, expressed his gratitude to the previous and current Greek administration for their support in implementing the cash rebate program in Greece and explained that this is not simply an investment incentive for money spent in the country. A project, when completed, leaves behind something important, namely the "film effect" on the place where the project was shot. A movie advertises a destination for free, but it takes a lot of effort and a lot of difficulties to overcome until it is finished. "We need the support of many people when we bring together 2,000 people to produce a work of art," said Mr. Lerner, who expressed his enthusiasm for the new venture, calling on the public to visit the facilities in Bulgaria, where young Greek professionals are being trained thanks to the EKOME internship program, a project that will continue in Thessaloniki with the opening of the new studios. Concluding, he announced that "we are ready to start work tomorrow" provided there is the necessary support from all parties involved in the construction of the studios.

During the press conference it was noted that the **total value of the investment** when completed, including property, construction and equipment cost, is expected to reach 20m euros. The estimate is that the total area of the investment, located in the wider Thermi area, will reach 25,000 square meters. According to investors, the goal is to service Millennium Films productions as well as other Hollywood production companies (e.g. Netflix, Universal, Paramount) interested in the incentives that Greece now offers. Upcoming projects for Nu Boyana Hellenic to be shot in Greece are feature films "The Legend of Sinbad" and "Red Sonja", and TV series "Undisputed".

Photo Captions

- Photo 1a- (from left to right) Yariv Lerner - CEO of Nu Boyana Film Studios, John Kalafatis - CEO of York Film Studios, Panos Kouanis - President and CEO of EKOME
- Photo 1b- (from left to right) Elise Jalladeau - General Director of the Festival, Apostolos Tzitzikostas - Governor of the Region of Central Macedonia, Kyriakos Pierrakakis - Minister of Digital Governance, Stavros Kalafatis – Member of Parliament, Alexandros Thanos – Deputy Governor of Tourism Affairs of the Region of Central Macedonia

- Photo 1c- (from left to right) - Alexandros Thanos – Deputy Governor of Tourism Affairs of the Region of Central Macedonia, Yariv Lerner - CEO of Nu Boyana Film Studios, John Kalafatis - CEO of York Film Studios, Panos Kouanis - President and CEO of EKOME, Apostolos Tzitzikostas - Governor of the Region Central Macedonia, Kyriakos Pierrakakis - Minister of Digital Governance, Stavros Kalafatis – Member of Parliament
- Photo 1d - (from left to right)- Panos Kouanis - President and CEO of EKOME, Yariv Lerner - CEO of Nu Boyana Film Studios, Orestis Andreadakis - Artistic Director of the Festival, Elise Jalladeau - General Director of the Festival, John Kalafatis - CEO of York Film Studios





