

The Emergence of The Film Festival Industry in The Republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan During The Years of Independence

Oromov Shakhzod
Karshi State University, Uzbekistan



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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study investigates the development of the film festival industry in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, with a focus on its role in cultural diplomacy, regional integration, and the promotion of national cinema in the post-Soviet context. **Method:** A historical and qualitative approach was employed, involving the analysis of archival sources, policy documents, and contemporary case studies of film festivals in both countries. **Results:** The research reveals that film festivals in Central Asia have evolved from Soviet-era ideological instruments into vital platforms for cultural expression, artistic innovation, and regional collaboration. Uzbekistan has emerged as a regional leader in hosting international film events and reviving cultural diplomacy through cinema. However, challenges remain, including inconsistent funding, low organizational standards, and the persistence of outdated thematic content. **Novelty:** This study provides one of the first comparative assessments of film festivals in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, offering a nuanced understanding of their dual historical and contemporary roles. It highlights the potential of film festivals to contribute to national identity formation and regional soft power while calling for institutional reforms and creative diversification to enhance global visibility and impact.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the film festival industry in the Republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan during the years of independence marks a significant cultural evolution shaped by both historical legacy and modern regional cooperation. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, these nations began to reclaim and redefine their cultural identities, with film festivals emerging as powerful platforms for artistic expression, national representation, and international dialogue. Film festivals not only celebrate cinematic achievements but also serve as a reflection of social and political change, offering insights into the aspirations and challenges of newly independent states. In Uzbekistan, the Tashkent Film Festival established a central role in promoting national cinema and fostering collaboration across Central Asia, while Kazakhstan took the lead in organizing multiple international festivals recognized by global film associations. Similarly, Turkmenistan's initiatives, such as the "Turkmenistan and World Cinema" festival, have showcased the country's cinematic talents and strengthened regional ties. Despite financial and organizational challenges that led to interruptions in some festivals, the cultural significance of these events has persisted, particularly in fostering regional

solidarity, mutual understanding, and creative exchange. As the governments of Central Asia renew efforts to strengthen diplomatic and cultural bonds, film festivals have regained importance, supported by high-level initiatives such as consultative meetings of state leaders. The renewed emphasis on cultural diplomacy highlights the role of cinema as a unifying force capable of bridging borders and building shared regional narratives. This article examines the historical trajectory, current status, and future prospects of the film festival movement in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, emphasizing its cultural and diplomatic significance.

RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology of this article is based on a qualitative doctrinal and comparative legal analysis, focusing on the application of international private law doctrines to cross-border “green” agreements. The study systematically explores and interprets foundational doctrines such as the autonomy of will, the principle of closest connection, imperative norms, public order, *Lex Mercatoria*, and harmonization principles, drawing on authoritative sources like the Rome I Regulation, Hague Principles, and UNIDROIT instruments. Legal doctrine was examined through a review of scholarly literature, international conventions, model laws, and judicial decisions to understand how these doctrines are applied across various jurisdictions including the European Union, United States, and Uzbekistan. Case studies were used to illustrate real-world applications and challenges, such as contractual disputes involving environmental regulations and the limitations of current conflict-of-law rules. The comparative approach enabled the identification of common trends, differences, and legal gaps in the regulation of sustainable development within private international law frameworks. The analysis also incorporated policy documents and court rulings to assess how environmental priorities are increasingly influencing contractual interpretation and enforcement. The methodology allowed for an interdisciplinary perspective that integrates legal theory with international environmental concerns, reflecting the growing importance of ecological values in transnational legal practice. Ultimately, the research supports normative recommendations for further development of legal instruments that promote sustainable contracting practices on a global scale, aligning environmental protection with cross-border commercial cooperation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Currently, Central Asia is gaining a very good position in world cinema [1]. It has become a tradition to hold international film festivals in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. These film festivals, along with films from leading countries in the world, first of all, film products from the countries of the region are shown [2]. In general, Tashkent is known as the center of traditional film festivals in Central Asia. It should be recognized that Kazakhstan is in first place among the Central Asian countries in terms of holding international film festivals. Currently, 4 film festivals are regularly held in Kazakhstan: the Eurasia International Film Festival, the Shaken Stars Almaty

International Film Festival, the Astana International Film Festival of Action Films, and the Bastau International Film Festival of Student Films and Film Schools [3]. In particular, the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan has organized the Eurasia International Film Festival, which is the only one in Central Asia, an important film forum in the CIS and Baltic region [4]. This festival is registered with the International Association of Film Producers (FIAPF) and has been held since 1998, and has been held annually since 2010. The festival concept stems from the geopolitical position of the countries at the crossroads of Eastern and Western cultures. The competition program includes films from Europe, Asia, the CIS countries and Central Asia [5].

In the fall of 2008, the International Film Festival "Turkmenistan and World Cinema" was held in Ashgabat. The festival program included works by filmmakers from different countries of the world [6]. The international film festival "Kyrgyzstan - the country of short films", founded in 2011, showcases the best modern works from the CIS, the Baltic states and Georgia [7]. The goal of the festival is to increase the relevance of short films and search for new horizons for cinema [8].

Of course, these film festivals are useful for the development of cinematography, they are also important in the cultural life of the country [9]. However, one of the main shortcomings of the festivals is their relatively low organizational level. The main reason for this is related to funding, for example, it was due to lack of funds that the "Shaken Stars" and "Astana" international film festivals were canceled in 2015 [10].

One of the main tasks of film festivals is to be a bastion of bright ideas, to raise painful questions about society, art and life in general. However, most of the films submitted to the film festival selection are patriotic, and such films were created only in the Soviet Union, even in the 50s of the last century. Naturally, Western film producers are not interested in such films, they are attracted by new, original films [11].

The "Uzbekistan Soloists" chamber orchestra participated in the "Turkmenistan: Spiritual Treasure of the Musical Art of Humanity" festival held in Ashgabat on April 7-12, 2008, while 11 films by Turkmen filmmakers were shown at the Days of Turkmen Cinema held in the Tashkent region, Tashkent and Samarkand on August 14-20, 2008. Turkmen artists also regularly participate in the "Sharq Taronalari" international music festival held in Uzbekistan every two years [12].

The unity of filmmakers, like representatives of other cultural spheres, is also important in strengthening friendly relations between the peoples of the region. Because through cinema, mutually beneficial contacts are established, knowledge and experience are exchanged. This will contribute to the proliferation of quality films and bring fraternal peoples closer together [13].

Thus, the holding of cultural days, which became a tradition during the Soviet era, has become a legacy for the Central Asian countries that have gained independence. Only these cultural days have acquired a new content and form, and as a cultural event devoid of any ideology, they are gaining practical importance in the rapprochement of national cultures and in enriching each other. Especially in the first years of independence - 1993-

1998, during the actions aimed at establishing and intensifying political and economic ties with fraternal republics, the expansion of cultural cooperation was also significantly revived. For this purpose, at the initiative of the government of Uzbekistan, events were held in the Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to widely celebrate the cultural days of each other's countries [14]. These cultural events contributed to the expansion of political and economic ties between the countries and the further consolidation and rapprochement of the peoples of the region. Since the 2000s, due to economic difficulties, the holding of cultural days in the countries of the region has ceased. In the period after 2016, with the initiative and efforts of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, with the restoration of brotherly and close-neighborly relations between the countries of Central Asia, the Days of Uzbekistan have been widely celebrated in Turkmenistan. The holding of Cultural Days was also emphasized at the Consultative Meetings of the Heads of State of the region, as it opens up wide opportunities for regional integration and, in general, for economic, political, and spiritual and cultural rapprochement and mutual cooperation [15].

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : This study finds that the development of international film festivals in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan has played a pivotal role in promoting national cinema, fostering cultural diplomacy, and enhancing regional cooperation in the post-independence era. These festivals have emerged as vital platforms for showcasing Central Asian identities and narratives to both domestic and international audiences.

Implication : The findings suggest that film festivals can serve as strategic instruments for cultural policy and soft power, strengthening national identity while facilitating cross-border dialogue and artistic exchange. Their expansion has the potential to elevate the global presence of Central Asian cinema and contribute to broader regional integration.

Limitation : The research is primarily qualitative and based on secondary sources, with limited empirical data on audience reception, economic impact, or institutional performance of the festivals.

Future Research : Further studies should focus on the comparative effectiveness of film festivals across Central Asia, including audience impact assessments, stakeholder interviews, and longitudinal analysis of institutional development to inform more sustainable and globally competitive festival models.

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* **Oromov Shakhzod (Corresponding Author)**

Karshi State University, Uzbekistan

Email: oromovshaxzod01@gmail.com
