**ENCOURAGING RESULTS FOR EUROPA CINEMAS ANNOUNCED**

**AT ANNUAL CANNES EXHIBITORS’ CONFERENCE**

**EUROPA CINEMAS ANNOUNCES WINNER OF THE 2nd INNOVATION PRIZE**

**AWARD GOES TO THE BELGIAN CINEMA BUDASCOOP IN KORTRIJK**

**Sunday 19 May 2019: Europa Cinemas held its annual Exhibitors’ Meeting in Cannes today at the Carlton Hotel.**

**Th**e latest figures for 2018 are very encouraging for Europa Cinemas.

The Network has once again grown its audience for European films – 42 million admissions for European films in 2018, with increased results in 23 countries across Europe. Thanks to the presence of Europa Cinemas in 674 cities and towns across Europe, the Network exhibitors offer exceptional visibility and a long life on screen for all forms of European production – fiction, documentary and animation.

“it is the wide diversity of films on offer that characterizes the Europa Cinemas network. This allows films from many countries including those outside Europe to be succesful within the Network. Shoplifters, the Kore-Eda film which won last year’s Palme d’Or had 73% of its admissions from within the Network, for example. Like every year, the top performing films contain many titles from Cannes, such as Cold War, Everybody Knows, In The Fade, Dogman and Girl. With 6 out of 10 screenings dedicated to European films, our cinemas are clearly identified as places of gathering and exchange by their neighborhoods or cities. Furthermore, thanks to social networks and in-depth knowledge of the community, our cinemas know how to maintain close links with their audience. The Survey we publish for Cannes, “The Knowledge Economy. How Data is transforming Audience Relationships”, is a good illustration of the scope of these practices, “ Claude-Eric Poiroux, General Director of Europa Cinemas, commented.

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**EUROPA CINEMAS’ INNOVATION PRIZE**

The cinema Budascoop, part of BUDA Kunstencentrum in Kortrijk (Belgium) and directed by **Kristof Jonckheere,** has won the second Europa Cinemas Innovation Prize. Initiated with the support of Creative Europe/MEDIA, the Prize celebrates standout innovative projects and approaches by network cinemas. It consists of an award of €10,000, and a commitment from the winner to use the money to invest further in the cinema’s innovation policy.

The winner was chosen by a Jury of four film experts: Christian Thomas (CEO, Distributor, Imagine Films, Belgium); Boglarka Nagy (Executive Director CICAE, Romania/Europe); Laura Houlgatte (CEO of UNIC, Belgium/Europe) and Jean-Marc Lalo (Architect, Atelier Architecture Lalo, France).

**Declaration of the jury:** “The Jury unanimously decided to award the 2019 Innovation Prize to the Belgian cinema ‘Budascoop’ located in the city center of Kortrijk. Founded in 2006, this three-screen art-house theatre part of BUDA Arts Centre is managed by Kristof Jonckheere. He set three core goals for this venue: the inclusion, diversification and participation of audiences and in particular young people. These are major commitments for the city of Kortrijk where some 20% of inhabitants live in precarious conditions. By means of a general and inclusive approach which brings together these three focuses, Budascoop developed in 2018 a series of actions (CinéMOATn, Film Camp, ROOTS, Furniture for Kids et UITpass) for young newcomers and youngsters in socially vulnerable positions. This specific target group got the opportunity to attend creative workshops along with other young people from various backgrounds. Mentored by professionals, they get involved in the cinema life by choosing and promoting films and organizing events. Budascoop also managed to reinvent its environment to make it welcoming and comfortable for the young visitors and it offers a reduced fee system for all moviegoers. Thanks to these targeted actions, the cinema has increased by 50% over a year its Young Audience numbers.In awarding this Prize, we want to highlight how network cinemas aspire to become inclusive venues offering accessibility solutions for everyone through local and inspiring initiatives easily and realistically applicable to other venues.”

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**EUROPA CINEMAS LABEL – DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT**

For the 17th year in a row, EUROPA CINEMAS LABEL will be awarded to one of the European films screened at the Directors‘ Fortnight by a jury composed of 4 exhibitors of the Network :

**Monika Inčerytė**(Kauno kino centras “Romuva”, Kaunas, Lithuania)

**Denis Lecat** (Cinéma Le Relais, Saint Georges de Didonne, France)

**Christos Ringas** (Athinea, Athens, Greece)

**Jelena Vojvoda** (Kino Samobor, Samobor, Croatia)

The winning film will be announced on Thursday 23 May.

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**Europa Cinemas in 2019:**

43 countries / 724 cities / 1,194 cinemas / 2,990 screens

Europa Cinemas is supported by Creative Europe/**MEDIA**, Programme of the European Union (Brussels), **CNC** (France), **Eurimages** (Council of Europe, Strasbourg), **FFA** (Germany),

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