



**PRESS RELEASE OF THE 22nd EUROPA CINEMAS NETWORK CONFERENCE
PARIS, 1ST-4TH DECEMBER 2022**

Paris, December 7th, 2022

KEY POINTS

- The Europa Cinemas Network Conference in Paris was **the biggest in its history**, with 600 delegates from 52 countries.
- The Conference celebrated **the 30th anniversary** of the founding of Europa Cinemas and a Network that now covers **739 towns and cities in 42 countries and 3,059 screens**.
- The event included around **80 case studies** and presentations by cinemas across Europe, highlighting positive trends.
- The event saw the launch of **two Charters**, setting out the Network's position and principles on **Gender Balance and Inclusion** and **Environmental Sustainability**.
- It also included the launch of a **Roadmap** to turn the Charters into sustainable action.
- The Conference included presentations of results and findings from the first **COLLABORATE TO INNOVATE** projects, and the launch of a third edition of the €1,5 million scheme, backed by Creative Europe MEDIA Programme.
- The Conference recognised that European cinemas needed to fight in an extremely challenging environment but the tone was **positive and optimistic**.
- The Conference screened **16 films** and gave the **Best Programming Award** to Kino Pilotu (Prague, Czech Republic) and the **Entrepreneur of the Year Award** to Lumière Cinemas (Antwerp, Mechelen, Brugge, Belgium)

AGENDA AND FACTS

Europa Cinemas chose Paris this past weekend to hold its 22nd Network Conference and celebrate its 30th Anniversary. More than 600 delegates from all over Europe and beyond, including the United States, Japan, Colombia and Canada (52 countries in total) joined the 4-day event. It was the biggest network event in Europa Cinemas' history. Exhibitors, distributors, producers and sales agents shared new ideas in order to keep supporting circulation and visibility of European films.

With a clear agenda of recovery and renewal, the Network Conference focused on responding to the current challenges facing cinemas across Europe, among others:

- Getting audiences back to cinemas and adapting to changing trends and audience expectations.
- Reviewing the pricing policy and developing innovative audience loyalty schemes and ticketing deals.
- Testing new distribution and programming patterns.
- Diversifying the cinema experience.
- Making cinemas accessible and inspiring for younger audiences.
- Diving into data and using research and data to get a picture of audiences.
- Using social media to create an active knowledge base.
- Investing and building physical and online marketing strategies.
- Using diversity and green strategies to help win audiences.
- Enhancing the cinema experience: renewing the theatre environment and services.
- Strategic use of one-off events to creating long-term value.

Across four days, starting with screenings of 16 European film previews and including focused panels and workshops, the Conference addressed key concerns of network exhibitors head on, finding practical solutions. The event was once again a hive of activity with the presentation of numerous case studies and sharing of best practice, to help members on their road to recovery in the wake of the pandemic and in the face of now burgeoning energy, environmental and humanitarian crises facing Europe.

Though many topics were addressed, with invaluable examples and insights from some of the European most innovative exhibitors, the four key takeaways include:

INVESTMENT IN CINEMA AS A CULTURAL AND SOCIAL IMPERATIVE

The future of film as an artform was discussed on various panels across the conference, beginning with a session on French film industry (production, distribution and exhibition) where the host country outlined and evaluated their current situation, looking at the challenges and opportunities ahead. One major takeaway from the French model, which is bolstered by financial support from the CNC (Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée) and other governing bodies, is that investment in cinema as a cultural and social hub is crucial.

Veronica Kaup-Hasler, City Councillor for Culture and Sciences in Vienna emphasised the significance of cinema spaces for social cohesion. "I invest in different sectors of the arts because we need it more than ever. We survived COVID by watching films, by reading books and listening to music. We have to reconsider what a cinema is – stepping outside of the simple economic model. We have to put money into arthouse cinemas so that they are able to thrive." Kaup-Hasler also stressed the importance of cinema as an artform for all: "We can't solve future questions with the answers of the past. Everyone who sold off water and other essential items now have to buy them at higher prices. All our studies show that people have less and less money. This leads to exclusion and creates tension in society. We need to come together so that people are not left alone at home in society. It is imperative for a healthy and democratic solution."

Metka Dariš (Director, Kinodvor, Slovenia) and Europa Cinemas Board Member agreed: "Someone has to pay for cinemas to be able to do these things and to provide it for the community."

OPTIMISM AS AN ESSENTIAL TOOL

Optimism and pessimism came through as two competing themes but, as the Network's existence proves, optimism prevails. Summing up the debates at the conference, moderator Michael Gubbins (Partner, Sampo Media) said all cinemas were essentially optimistic:

“Cinemas choose to put their energy and love and passion into arthouse cinema, and are now in an existential fight. You are an optimist because you believe you can win: if you stay in the fight, you’re an optimist.”

Speakers suggested that the European cinema retained its power and cultural relevance but the key task was to remind audiences who have yet to return after the pandemic and, more importantly, to win over a new generation.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE & CINEMAS AS CENTRES FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

Following months of work in focus groups and workshops gathering across Zoom and further developed in Europa Cinemas Innovation Lab in Bologna, the Network presented **two Charters** for adoption at the Conference. These Charters aim to help guide the network members in creating effective and measurable action in environmental change, social inclusion and diversity.

The conference saw the launch of a roadmap of action, intended to turn the principles of the Charters into sustainable actions for all cinemas. Network cinemas offered practical examples of work that further the Charter principles.

It encourages participation and progress among all members across Europe through collaboration and innovation and the provision of practical pathways to ensure a shared mission achieves measurable results in the context of national and regional economic, social and environmental development, national policy and local market realities.

Details of the charters, roadmap action plans and case studies are available to journalists on request.

INNOVATION AT THE HEART OF CONNECTIVITY AND WIDER EUROPEAN COLLABORATION

Launched in 2021, with the financial support of the Creature Europe MEDIA Programme of the European Commission, COLLABORATE TO INNOVATE is built around three core ideas:

- **Innovation:** recognising that new approaches, practices and processes were necessary to deal with the new realities in terms of culture, audience, society, technology and industry,
- **Collaboration:** in the sense of partnership and network building within Europa Cinemas and beyond,
- **Sustainability:** meaning both environmental responsibility but also innovation that can be replicated and shared for efficient and effective, long-term development across the network and beyond.

Following the first iteration of the fund, a session of presentations showed positive change and learning thus far with implications for future projects including the adoption of *Cineville* in Bruxelles and Austria – Cineville is an unlimited cinema pass subscription initiative first launched in the Netherlands. The success of bringing it to additional markets in Europe has sparked hope that the initiative could even be rolled out across European countries.

“Films need exhibitors to reach the public and cinemas of course need films to renew their audience. They all share the same demand for quality” concluded Claude-Eric Poiroux (Europa Cinemas General Director).

EUROPA CINEMAS AWARDS

The winners of the **Europa Cinemas Awards** were also announced in Paris. These annual awards honour the outstanding work of the best cinemas in the network, which includes 1,217 cinemas (3,059 screens) in 739 cities in Europe. The Europa Cinemas Awards have been celebrating the excellence of network cinemas since

2002, concentrating on awards for best programming and young audience activities, as well as a prize for the most entrepreneurial exhibitor in the network. The 2022 winners are:

Best Programming: Kino Pilotu (Prague, Czech Republic)

Entrepreneur of the Year: Lumière Cinemas (Antwerp, Mechelen, Brugge, Belgium)

Europa Cinemas was founded in 1992 with funding from the MEDIA Programme and from the CNC. It is the first film theatre network focusing on European films. Its objective is to provide operational and financial support to cinemas that commit themselves to screen a significant number of European non-national films, to offer events and initiatives as well as promotional activities targeted at Young Audiences.

EUROPA CINEMAS in 2022
42 countries, 739 cities, 1,217 cinemas, 3,059 screens

Europa Cinemas is supported by **Creative Europe / MEDIA** (European Commission, Brussels), **CNC** (Paris), **Eurimages** (Council of Europe, Strasbourg), **Institut français** (Paris)

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