

PRESS RELEASE

Paris, 23 November 2010

15th Europa Cinemas Network Conference, Paris
Renewing Cinema Audiences in the Digital Era

Inaugurated by **Mr Frédéric Mitterrand**, Minister for Culture and Communication, the 15th Europa Cinemas Network Conference saw a new record of attendees when it welcomed nearly 700 professionals from 48 different countries of Europe, the Mediterranean, Asia and Latin America to Paris from 18th to 21st November 2010. Alongside them, **Wim Wenders, Claude Miller, Thierry Frémaux, Julie Gayet** and researchers **Olivier Bomsel** (France), **Gundolf S. Freyermuth** (Germany) and **Tom Troscianko** (United Kingdom) took part in the event and participated in the debates. 12 European feature films were also screened as preview premieres to the Europa Cinemas Network members.

The debates focused on three central questions: the reality of the transition to digital, new trends in audience behaviour and the diversification in film theatres' activity, especially with regard to the Net generation.

The Conference managed, in a very positive way, to highlight the imaginative resourcefulness of exhibitors and the abundance of initiatives which make good use of social media, now widely-used. The debates emphasised the need for Media Literacy education and to keep alive our film heritage, as well as how new technology will allow the film theatre to adapt its offer to spectators' demand.

Several concerns of the independent exhibition sector were also addressed during the Conference. The economic crisis is manifesting itself in several European countries as worrying cuts in their cultural and audio visual budgets. This situation particularly affects theatres that take risks with their programming.

The position of independent exhibitors faced with the transition to digital who, across many small markets, receive neither contributions from distributors nor public funding, is even more serious. All evidence points to how these cinemas will not have the means to carry out the transition to digital and will close their doors for good, striking a damaging blow to the dissemination of European film. Screen Digest estimates that between 5,000 and 6,000 cinemas across Europe will find themselves in this situation.

Several participants also regret that the DCI recommendations exclude all projectors other than 2K. Other quality devices, however, have appeared on the market, such as the 1.9K, and have been tested by certain Network exhibitors. Thus it has become clear that it will be necessary to plan for this lighter and more affordable equipment to conform to security standards.

The exhibitors present showed interest in learning about the situation in France, where the law supervises the market and where the CNC (Centre national du cinema et de l'image animée) has put in place a mechanism to deal with any disparity in access to the VPF. No other country has, to date, established such an operation.

The Conference also saw the first exhibitor-distributor bilateral meeting, the aim of which was to address, with as much transparency as possible, questions that affect their general interests. This meeting brought together distributors, exhibitors, equipment providers and third-party operators.

The exhibitors showed themselves to be, on the whole, positive about their future and demonstrated this with much imagination and initiative during the three days. The advent of the digital era has inspired them and reinforced their conviction that film theatres remain an essential part of Cinema. As Mr Frédéric Mitterrand reminded us at the inauguration of the Conference, the film theatre remains "the birthplace of film".

Europa Cinemas Awards 2010

The 2010 Europa Cinemas Awards for the best Network exhibitors went out to:

- Best programming: **Skalvijos Kino Centras**, Vilnius (Lithuania)
- Best Young Audience Activities: **Kinodvor**, Ljubljana (Slovenia)
- Entrepreneur of the Year : **Watershed**, Bristol (United Kingdom)

The award-giving ceremony was held at **Cinéma Le Balzac**, a member of the Europa Cinemas Network. The prizes were awarded by actress and producer **Julie Gayet** and director **Claude Miller**, President of Europa Cinemas, in the presence of German director **Wim Wenders** and **Thierry Frémaux**, General Delegate of the Cannes Film Festival and Director of the Institut Lumière in Lyon. Images from Wender's documentary in 3D, *Pina* - an homage to the choreographer Pina Bausch - were screened for the first time in public. This was followed by a programme of short films by the Lumière Brothers, some of which were in 3D and in colour, presented by Frémaux and restored by the National French Film Archives and the Bologna Cinématheque.

The conference kicked off on 18th November at **L'Entrepôt** cinema, another member of the Europa Cinemas Network, with **12 European preview-premiere screenings**: *Attenberg*, *Cirkus Columbia*, *Black Bread (Pa Negre)*, *Le Bruit des glaçons (The Clink of Ice)*, *Essential Killing*, *If I want to whistle, I whistle (Eu cand vreau sa fluier, fluier)*, *Just Between Us (Neka Ostone Medju Nama)*, *Never Let Me Go*, *No Fear (Niente paura)*, *Oxygen (Adem)*, *Le Quattro Volte*, *When We Leave (Die Fremde)*.

Europa Cinemas 2011 :

68 countries – 566 cities – 1005 cinemas – 2778 screens

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