



IFF Prague – Febiofest forms part of the new Association of Czech Film Festivals

The International Film Festival Prague – Febiofest and six other major Czech film festivals – Anifilm Liberec, Finále Plzeň, One World, Summer Film School Uherské Hradiště, Jihlava IDFF and Zlín Film Festival – have come together to create the Association of Czech Film Festivals. This organization should enable festivals to efficiently solve the long-term problems facing the film festival scene, which have only intensified due to the complicated pandemic situation in the Czech Republic.

"I am very happy we have co-created an organization for film festivals which will also welcome other festivals as associate members. It is time we established a new, modern, professional system for financing film culture in the Czech Republic. Film festivals, who by bringing the best, most interesting productions from around the world contribute to the development of complex critical thinking in young people, are undoubtedly an intrinsic part of this," says IFF Prague – Febiofest's director **Kamil Spáčil**.

The issues facing Czech film festivals had been mounting even before the pandemic hit. The widening divide between growing expenses on the one hand and stagnating revenues on the other were pushing festivals – including those with years- and decades-long traditions and a loyal audience base – to the very limit of sustainable existence. The Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing restrictions simultaneously made the problem more apparent and significantly exacerbated it.

The organizers of seven major film festivals in the Czech Republic, aware of how indispensable film festivals are for the film industry and keen to help keep them functioning, decided to create an organization which would become a platform for cooperation and advocate on their behalf when dealing with state, local and international institutions, both governmental and non-governmental. The founders are also open to trying new forms of shared film distribution, contributing to the development of film-related education and collaborating with other festivals.

The resurrection of the festival scene will certainly only be possible through connection and mutual support among cultural institutions. It is too early to predict what Czech culture will look like in the post-pandemic days; one of the Association's central goals, however, is to preserve the festivals' role as beacons of culture, always bringing their audiences a much-needed dose of art, shared experiences and discussions on current social and artistic topics. And, above all, the feeling of relief when all this is finally possible again.

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