

European cinemas celebrate exceptional summer as industry looks to the future with confidence

Brussels, 8 September 2026 – Following an exceptional summer for cinemas across Europe and against the backdrop of an upbeat Lumière Summit in France, the International Union of Cinemas (UNIC), representing cinema operators and trade associations across 39 territories, is hailing the latest box office results as “a powerful demonstration of public enthusiasm for the Big Screen and the theatrical experience”.

According to [Gower Street Analytics](#), global box office reached a record \$4.645 billion in August 2026 – an all-time high for August and the strongest monthly result of the decade so far.

Results were particularly impressive across Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), where box office was up 88% year-on-year, marking the eighth consecutive month of double-digit growth. Year-to-date box office across the region is 29% ahead of 2025, with the summer closing on EMEA’s highest-grossing month since 2019.

The momentum has been felt across a wide range of European territories.

France recorded 19.9 million admissions – its best August since monthly records began in 1980 and twice the level of the same month in 2025. In Italy, meanwhile, cinemas enjoyed their best-ever June-August period, with 20.8 million admissions and €162.3 million in box office receipts, culminating in the strongest August ever recorded by Cinetel.

Germany registered year-on-year growth of 53% and Finland 41%. Gower Street also reported significant year-on-year increases across markets including Spain (+71%), the Netherlands (+77%) and the UK & Ireland (+80%).

A strong film slate is at the heart of this performance, with audiences attracted by international blockbusters including *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* and *The Odyssey*, alongside successful local productions, such as French two-part epic drama *De Gaulle*, the German comedy *Steckerlsfischfiasko* and the Spanish family franchise *Tadeo Jones 4*. And there is more to look forward to in the weeks and months ahead, with major releases including *Digger*, *The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping*, as well as *Dune: Part Three* and *Avengers: Doomsday*.

The figures provided a particularly positive backdrop to the [Lumière Summit](#) (7 September), which brought together leading figures from across the global moving-image industries to discuss the future.

UNIC was strongly represented at the Summit through its President, Jaime Tarrazón, alongside key members from across the exhibition community. Together, exhibitors participating in the Summit represented around 80% of global cinema admissions. Their participation underlined the central role of cinemas in the wider conversation about the future of the moving-image sector.

The [Lumière Declaration](#), adopted at the Summit in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, notably reaffirmed the enduring value of the theatrical experience, recognising cinema's unique ability to turn creative works into collective experiences which generate cultural, social and economic value. It recognised that “sustaining theatrical exhibition is a shared interest across the sector” and highlighted the reinforcing relationship between thriving cinemas and a diverse film offer.

Laura Houlgatte, CEO of UNIC, commented: *“This summer has provided a powerful demonstration of public enthusiasm for the Big Screen and the theatrical experience. Audiences across Europe turned out in huge numbers for major releases, once again showing the extraordinary ability of cinemas to bring people together around films that become cultural events.*

“The sector has every reason to look ahead with confidence. With an exciting slate still to come in 2026 and beyond, our collective priority must be to build on this momentum – ensuring a strong and diverse supply of films, continuing to invest in the cinema experience and giving audiences compelling reasons to return to the Big Screen again and again.”

Jaime Tarrazón, CEO of UNIC, added: *“I was proud to represent UNIC at the Summit. The Declaration rightly recognises that sustaining theatrical exhibition is a shared interest across our industry. That message came through strongly, not least during the discussion on theatrical exclusivity, where voices from across the sector made a compelling case for the unique value of cinemas and the Big Screen experience. It was great to see so many key figures come together for open and constructive discussions about the opportunities and challenges ahead.”*

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