

**For immediate publication**

## **DIVERSITY AND INNOVATION KEY TO SUCCESS FOR EUROPEAN CINEMA INDUSTRY, SAYS UNIC PRESIDENT**

**Barcelona: 19 June 2016 – During a keynote address at CineEurope 2017, UNIC President Phil Clapp has today highlighted the importance of innovation and diversity for the continued success of the European cinema sector.**

Welcoming one of the most diverse programmes for the event to date, Phil Clapp thanked in particular the European Commission for their support of this year's edition of CineEurope, hoping it was the beginning of a broader engagement with the show.

Reflecting on the trends and developments that had shaped the industry in recent times, he also acknowledged the need for continuing collaboration across the sector, noting that:

*“While some territories risk being seen as turning their faces away from outside influences, in an increasingly consolidated and connected World, we can surely all learn from each other’s experiences and viewpoints.”*

Reporting on strong performances across the majority of UNIC territories in 2016, he praised the ongoing investment and creativity shown by cinema operators and their business partners, noting that:

*“Despite all of the evidence to the contrary, some still seek to present the modern cinema sector as a ‘traditional’ or backward-looking industry. Nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed the need to innovate – to find new ways of engaging audiences - is our very lifeblood.”*

Nevertheless, he insisted that the sector still faced challenges when it came to ensuring that it was equipped to respond to the changing needs and tastes of the public. He point out that for the sector to be as diverse and innovative as audiences demand, it had to address the lack of gender balance in its business structure. He announced that UNIC will later in the week launch a pilot mentoring scheme for rising young female professionals in the industry.

Finally, in closing he paid tribute to the leadership of outgoing UNIC CEO Jan Runge, who is moving on after six years. His efforts had, he said, helped put cinema back at the centre of European film policy.

## **Notes for editors**

A copy of Phil Clapp's keynote speech is attached to this Press Notice (check against delivery).

### The International Union of Cinemas (UNIC)

UNIC – the International Union of Cinemas – represents the interests of cinema trade associations and cinema operators covering 36 countries in Europe and in neighbouring regions.

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### CineEurope

Organised in partnership with the Film Expo Group, CineEurope – UNIC's official annual convention – each year brings together cinema professionals from over 50 countries. The 2017 edition of the show takes place from June 19-22 in Barcelona and involves a growing number of film and product presentations from major international as well as European film studios, a cutting-edge trade show, as well as a seminar programme exploring latest industry trends in European cinema exhibition.

**PHIL CLAPP, PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL UNION OF CINEMAS  
KEYNOTE ADDRESS - CINEEUROPE 2017 - MONDAY 19 JUNE  
[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]**

On behalf of UNIC, I am delighted to welcome you to CineEurope.

Every year, working with Bob and Andrew Sunshine and their supremely-talented team, we aim to bring you the most engaging and diverse programme of screenings, slate presentations, panels and seminars as well as new products and services on the trade show floor.

In doing so, we of course rely on a large number of sponsors and industry partners, all of whom deserve our thanks and recognition.

That is particularly true when it comes to our colleagues in film distribution.

This week we will bring you no less than 12 slate presentations and five great screenings.

Please do make a note of the screenings up on the slide behind me.

There can be no better illustration of the diverse range of film content that is such a unique feature of the European cinema market.

On that note, I wanted to thank Lucia Recalde and colleagues from the Creative Europe Media programme at the European Commission. Their support of CineEurope – in particular the inclusion of a selection of European films as part of the UniFrance presentation on Thursday afternoon – is hugely welcome.

We very much value our partnership with the Commission and this is we hope just the beginning of a broader engagement with the show.

I also want to welcome colleagues from some of the largest cinema operating companies in the World, many of them visiting CineEurope for the first time.

Like all of us, they are drawn by the opportunity to learn more about the shared trends and developments that shape our global industry.

While some territories - including my own - risk being seen as turning their faces away from outside influences, in an increasingly consolidated and connected World, we can surely all learn from each others' experiences and viewpoints.

In our own particular region, 2016 was another year of growth for European cinema.

Beating a twelve year record, admissions across UNIC territories were over 1.28 billion, an increase of 2.8 per cent.

Beneath that headline figure, the performance of the Czech Republic, Poland and Russia is particularly noteworthy, confirming Central and Eastern Europe as a key region for growth.

Currency fluctuations meant that the trend for box office was perhaps less clear-cut, but the €8.4 billion total across UNIC territories again included some startling successes.

In Europe – and across the globe - the strong performance of our sector is underpinned by unprecedented levels of investment in every aspect of the cinema-going experience.

Investment by colleagues in film production and distribution, ensuring that European cinemas have an ever-broader choice of content for all audiences. Released across a 52 week, 12 month calendar.

But also of course investment and innovation by cinema owners. In new technologies, in social media and marketing and in data and analytics.

Despite all of the evidence to the contrary, some still seek to present the modern cinema sector as a ‘traditional’ or backward-looking industry. Nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed the need to innovate – to find new ways of engaging audiences - is our very lifeblood.

To make that case, in February, UNIC published the report *Innovation and the Big Screen*. This gave a snapshot of the wide range of developments underway across the European sector – from chatbots to cinema on demand, from virtual reality to personal subtitling.

The report showcased a wealth of new ideas, all established with the intention of further improving the cinema-going experience.

Those case studies come from every corner of Europe, confirming that innovation is not the preserve of any one territory or sub-sector.

But equally of course, neither is it that of one group of people.

There is ample evidence that the best innovation – and the best-performing businesses – arise when the widest possible range of voices is heard.

And here lies a particular challenge for our sector.

It is after all one that will live or die according to its ability to respond to the changing needs and tastes of the public. But the profile of those making decisions on its future differs in a number of ways from that of our audiences.

And nowhere is that more apparent than when it comes to gender.

A snapshot of audiences across a number of UNIC territories shows an at least equal split of male and female cinema-goers, but more commonly a slight majority of females.

Yet spend any time at this convention – or at most industry events – and you will see that senior executives in our sector are overwhelmingly male.

That's an observation borne out by the little data we have. The slide behind me shows just a sample of the territories where we know the numbers of female executives – and there are many more where this important information is simply not tracked.

The reasons for this are many, and often historic. But we can have no excuses. If we are to be as efficient, as diverse and - yes – as innovative as our audiences demand, then we need to pull on widest possible range of talent.

Basic arguments of fairness of course apply, but those present at this morning's excellent seminar on these issues will know that the business case for change is overwhelming.

Everyone has a role to play here. For its part, UNIC will later this week launch a pilot mentoring scheme for rising young female professionals in the industry.

But we will also be looking to promote a broader campaign for change, something we will return to over the coming months.

In closing, I wanted to reflect on the fact that at the end of the week we will rightly thank those instrumental in the success of this show over a number of years.

But I wanted today to thank one person who has been key to the success of this convention in the six years since we brought it to the beautiful city of Barcelona.

But who has also shaped the huge steps that UNIC – the European cinema trade body – has made during that time.

Jan Runge has led UNIC with great skill, intellect and energy. As a result, we have not only seen off a number of potential challenges to the future success of our industry. We have helped put cinema back where it belongs. At the centre of European film policy.

In the coming weeks, Jan is moving on to new challenges in the sector, and we welcome Laura Houlgatte Abbott as his successor.

Before he does so, I would ask you to join me in showing our appreciation for his immense contribution on behalf of the industry.

Thank you for your time this afternoon.

**[END]**