

CELEBRATING EUROPEAN CINEMA AT CINEEUROPE 2026

CineEurope 2026, Barcelona: 22 June 2026 – Phil Clapp and Laura Houlgatte, President and CEO respectively of UNIC – the International Union of Cinemas – have welcomed delegates at the opening ceremony of this year’s CineEurope.

In their CineEurope 2026 opening address, they celebrated the continued strength and dynamism of the European exhibition sector, while highlighting the key conditions required to secure its long-term success.

While acknowledging the strong momentum seen across many global cinema markets in recent months, they stressed that sustaining this positive trajectory will depend on preserving a healthy, competitive and diverse marketplace. They underlined the need for a strong and varied film slate throughout the year, meaningful periods of theatrical exclusivity, sustained marketing support for films of all sizes and a balanced, mutually beneficial relationship across the value chain.

“European cinemas rely on a healthy, competitive and diverse marketplace,” they noted. “That means a strong flow of films throughout the year – from major studio releases to local productions and independent works. And meaningful periods of theatrical exclusivity that allow films to build value, cultural impact and audience engagement.”

They welcomed recent moves across the industry recognising the importance of preserving longer theatrical windows, while cautioning against excessive concentration of content and distribution power. *“We all depend on each other, and we’ll succeed or fail together,”* they observed.

The two welcomed the encouraging performance of the European cinema sector during the first half of 2026. More than fifteen European markets recorded double-digit – and in some cases triple-digit – growth compared to the same period last year, demonstrating the enduring appeal of the cinema experience and the strength of the current film slate.

They highlighted the continued importance of international studio content in driving admissions across Europe. Titles such as *Project Hail Mary*, *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*, *The Devil Wears Prada 2*, *Michael*, *Scream 7*, *Wuthering Heights* and *28 Years Later: The Bone Temple* were cited as examples of the breadth and strength of the upcoming release slate.

At the same time, they emphasised the vital contribution of local productions to the sector’s success. In Spain, *Torrente Presidente* generated more than one million admissions in its first four days of release and has already become the highest-grossing film of the year to date. France saw exceptional results from *Marsupilami*, which attracted more than six million admissions, while Croatia’s *Svadba* became the most successful local film ever released in the territory. In Italy, *Buen Camino* achieved the remarkable feat of overtaking *Avatar: Fire and Ash* at the national box office.

They also underlined the continued investment being made by cinema operators across Europe to enhance the audience experience and commented *“what makes European exhibition so remarkable is its extraordinary diversity: from multiplexes and family-owned cinemas to arthouses and independent venues, all contributing to one of the most vibrant cinema cultures in the world.”* From Premium Large Format (‘PLF’) screens and luxury seating to boutique concepts, dine-in offerings, accessibility initiatives and sustainability strategies, exhibitors of all sizes and in all locations continue to innovate and respond to evolving consumer expectations.



UNION INTERNATIONALE DES CINÉMAS
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF CINEMAS

The UNIC leaders also highlighted a number of key industry initiatives that will be celebrated during CineEurope 2026.

Together with Boxoffice Pro, UNIC once again recognises Europe's leading cinema operators through the fifth edition of the Giants of Exhibition: Europe ranking. They noted that the companies featured in the list are headquartered across 20 countries and operate in almost 40 territories, illustrating both the scale and diversity of the European cinema sector.

They also underlined the continued growth of UNIC's flagship people and leadership initiatives. The UNIC People Programme continues to support exhibitors in attracting, retaining and developing talent across the sector, while the Women's Cinema Leadership Programme celebrates its tenth edition this year. Since its launch, this mentoring scheme has grown into a network of 212 women from 119 companies across the international cinema industry, reflecting UNIC's ongoing commitment to fostering the next generation of cinema leaders.

In addition, they welcomed Eddy Duquenne in his new role as Chair of the Global Cinema Federation and praised his ambition to help build a positive and forward-looking narrative for the global exhibition industry.

They also reaffirmed UNIC's commitment to representing cinema operators at the European level. *"Whether on copyright, accessibility, sustainability, film and audiovisual regulation or public funding, our role is to ensure that the voice of cinema operators is heard clearly in Brussels and beyond,"* they said.

The ceremony marked Phil Clapp's final CineEurope opening address as President of UNIC following thirteen years in the role. His successor will be announced shortly.

Notes for editors

A copy of the keynote speech is attached to this Press Notice [check against delivery].

The International Union of Cinemas (UNIC)

The International Union of Cinemas (UNIC) is the European cinema trade association, representing national cinema associations and cinema operators across 39 territories in Europe and neighbouring regions.

CineEurope

CineEurope 2026 is taking place from 22 to 25 June 2026 at the Centre Convencions Internacional Barcelona (CCIB) in Barcelona, Spain. CineEurope is the longest running and most successful European convention and trade show for major, regional, and independent cinema professionals. CineEurope will feature exclusive screenings and product presentations of upcoming films, sponsored events, timely and informative seminars, and the CineEurope Trade Show. CineEurope is the Official Convention of the International Union of Cinemas/Union Internationale des Cinémas (UNIC).

The Film Expo Group

The Film Expo Group is the premier organiser of events in the motion picture industry. The Film Expo Group produces CineEurope, held in Barcelona; CineLATAM, held in Miami; and CineAsia, held in Bangkok.

Further enquiries

kjaronczyk@unic-cinemas.org | +32 4 84183910