

EUROPEAN CINEMA TRADE BODY UNIC VOICES STRONG OPPOSITION TO PLANNED ACQUISITION OF WARNER BROS. BY STREAMING GIANT NETFLIX

Brussels, 5 December 2025: UNIC, the European trade body representing cinema exhibitors and their national associations across 39 territories, has today voiced its strong opposition to the planned acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery by Netflix.

As elsewhere, cinemas in Europe rely on one product for their viability: films. And to ensure they can attract and successfully serve the widest possible audience, that flow of content needs to be consistent and diverse, with an exclusive period of release supported by effective marketing. By that measure, the planned acquisition of Warner Bros. by Netflix fails in every regard.

Explaining the organisation's deep-seated concerns to the proposed deal, Laura Houlgatte, CEO of UNIC, commented:

“Were it to be allowed to go ahead, this deal represents a double risk.

If a studio disappears, that will inevitably mean that cinemas will have fewer films to screen for their audiences, leading to reduced income and significant cinema closures and job losses in the industry.

And in many ways, this is worse than the acquisition of one movie studio by another, as we saw with Disney's acquisition of 20th Century Fox a decade or so ago.

Both in its words and actions, Netflix has time and again made it clear that it doesn't believe in cinemas and their business model. Netflix has released only a handful of titles in cinemas, usually to chase awards, and only for a very short period, denying cinema operators a fair window of exclusivity”.

Phil Clapp, President of UNIC and Chief Executive of the UK Cinema Association, added:

“Europe's cinemas, from independent one-screen theatres to larger arthouses and multiplexes, have unique role in the communities they serve in bringing people together for a shared cultural experience. In doing so, they cater for every taste, ensuring that the widest possible audience can discover and enjoy a rich variety of films. Beyond their direct contribution to GDP, job creation, taxes and rental payments, cinemas also create immeasurable value for the entire film industry.

“Regulators evaluating the planned acquisition of Warner Bros by Netflix must take into account the potential risk any deal presents to every facet of that role, and its consequences for the cinema exhibition sector and the wider public.

Any reduction in the diversity and quality of content arising from this acquisition, combined with the potential loss of cinemas and jobs, would have a profoundly damaging impact on Europe's cultural landscape.

UNIC will do all it can to make those potential impacts - and its strong opposition to this deal – clear to competition authorities in Europe and elsewhere.”

About UNIC, the International Union of Cinemas

The International Union of Cinemas is the European body of cinema trade associations and key operators, covering 39 territories across the region and 43,500 screens. We promote the



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cultural, social and economic benefits of a vibrant cinema-going culture in Europe and provide a strong and influential voice for European cinema operators on issues of shared interest.

Contacts

phil.clapp@cinemauk.org.uk

lhoulgatte@unic-cinemas.org