

Transilvania International Film Festival is part of SMART7, a cooperation network for innovation in industry and festival culture

Transilvania International Film Festival has joined forces with other film festivals in Poland, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, Greece and Iceland for SMART7, a network that connects similar goals and visions from different European cultural and geopolitical areas. The main purpose of this alliance is not only to respond to current needs, but also to define common trends for future growth and development of industry and festival culture.

The network is composed of the following film festivals: *New Horizons International Film Festival (Poland)*, *IndieLisboa International Film Festival (Portugal)*, *Thessaloniki International Film Festival (Greece)*, *Transilvania International Film Festival (Romania)*, *FILMADRID International Film Festival (Spain)*, *Reykjavik International Film Festival (Iceland)* and *Vilnius International Film Festival Kino Pavasaris (Lithuania)*.

This partnership aims to create a working network and a forum for shared knowledge as a pipeline to: enrich the experiences of the festivals and their teams, promote the professionalization of the sector, develop new audiences and expand the exhibition circuit for European cinema.

Diversity, inclusion and a deep commitment to sustainability are the cross-cutting pillars that support this network. In view of the new challenges facing the industry and the need for professionalization within the sector, the network has decided to develop a common cooperation strategy to promote innovation in festival culture.

Supported by Creative Europa MEDIA and the European Festival Networks, SMART7 is the result of a natural collaboration process between seven agents. They had already worked together in the past and share a similar vision of the sector's future. The funds obtained through this call will help to develop a professional framework that favors the implementation of a full activities program aiming to create a forum for international exchange and learning.

Over the next two years, four workshops dedicated to Festival professionals will be held on topics crucial to the industry: programming and audience development, sponsorship and fundraising, promotion and sales, sustainability and green practices. The initiative will be open to participation of other cultural agents in order to amplify the impact of the experience and to boost and strengthen the cultural industry in general.

"Internationally there are networks for many branches of the industry, from cinemas to sales agents, which allow their representatives to meet, exchange experiences and best practices. This is essential both for increasing international collaborations and for good individual development. The SMART7 network aims to do exactly this, which is so necessary at the level of film festivals. The formalization of collaborations

that have developed so far in an organic way will allow us to learn from each other and join forces to offer the audience the best possible experience", says Claudia Droc, International Relations Manager, Transilvania IFF.

At the same time, SMART7 will have a **Competitive Section**, a collaborative and coordinated itinerant program among the festivals with a selection of seven films chosen for their artistic value and narrative proposal. The film selection will represent all the member countries in the network and will be screened in each of the Festivals that make up SMART7. The section's prize will be 5,000 euros and is intended to support emerging filmmakers. The jury will be formed by university students from each country, thus encouraging the development of young audiences and their familiarization with European cinema.

The films taking part in the Competitive Section must be made by emerging filmmakers committed to new narratives and innovative cinema language. The vast majority of the selection (six out of seven films) will come from countries with low production capacity (Poland, Lithuania, Greece, Romania, Portugal, Iceland) but with great international potential.

'Smart 7' will thus become a channel to showcase and promote films to a wider public, while generating a new meeting place between emerging filmmakers and audiences.