

**PRESS RELEASE – 2016-04-07**



## ***Eight Film Agents Jump on 2016 SOFA***

*Nikolaj Nikitin announced the new round of SOFA participants at 51<sup>st</sup> International Film Festival Karlovy Vary*

*SOFA – School of Film Agents is a training programme designed to actively support the development of projects that structurally strengthen national film industries and cinematic landscapes in Europe. SOFA helps its participants to develop their ideas into a concrete project package ready for application to funding sources so they become reality. This is what makes SOFA unique on the international film scene because its focus is on cultural managers or film agents and not on producers and directors. The fourth SOFA workshop takes place from August 19-28, 2016 in Wrocław, this year's European Capital of Culture.*

*Within the framework of the 51st International Film Festival Karlovy Vary, SOFA Director Nikolaj Nikitin announced the names and projects of eight participants to take part in the fourth edition of the workshop initiative. »Promoting film education, creating alternative ways for film distribution and audience development as well as maintaining Europe's cinematographies – these main goals propel the eight up-and-coming film agents who we have selected for the fourth SOFA edition«, Nikitin says. »Once realized, their projects will help strengthening the structural framework of their home film industry and film culture as new solutions to foster the awareness and distribution of European film production and to create new jobs for young film professionals in the audiovisual sector.«*

*At the presentation in Karlovy Vary, Nikitin was joined by SOFA mentors Riina Sildos, Miroslav Mogorovic, Roberto Olla, Katriel Schory and Tamara Tatishvili. Together they introduced the »line-up« of participants and their projects at SOFA 2016:*

### ***Lizaveta Bobrykava, Belarus***

*Project: »Bel:Cinema (Belarus Empowerment Lab: Cinema)«; establishing an educational and practical center in Minsk highlighting the potential of local media creatives*

### ***Iris Elezi, Albania***

*Project: »The Albanian Cinematèque«; creating a platform for film culture, its education and promotion in Tirana*

### ***Inesa Ivanova, Lithuania***

*Project: »Baltic View – Online & Cinema Space«; foundation of a distribution initiative consisting of an online viewing space and cinema events for films from the Baltic region*

**Terezie Krizkouska, Czech Republic**

*Project: »NaFiLM – National Film Museum«; establishing a museum for Czech film history*

**Tekla Machavariani, Georgia**

*Project: »Nushi – Film Media Package«; establishing a cultural and educational print media-package containing news and information for Georgian film industry*

**Dumitru Marian, Republic of Moldova**

*Project: »Chisinau. Hub for European Films (CHEF)«; modernization of the movie theatre Odeon as a place for European films*

**Magdalena Puzmujzniak, Poland**

*Project: »FULL SPECTRUM International Film Festival«; film festival promoting and enabling gender balance and women's empowerment in film*

**Julia Sinkevych, Ukraine**

*Project: »Ukrainian Film Promotion«; promoting Ukrainian films and filmmakers internationally*

*The relationship between audiences and their local film production is permanently weakening in many European – especially Eastern European – countries. Young and creative cultural entrepreneurs are developing ideas about sensitizing and re-gaining these audiences with alternative approaches to their national cinema. But not only the audiences, also the film industry in general benefits from the implementation of structurally invigorating projects like digitizing cultural centres in Lithuania (FRONT – Film Republic of Networked Theatres by Kestutis Drazdauskas), establishing a mobile film studio for production and educational purposes in Poland (Cinebus by Malgorzata Tusk) or installing the first regional film fund in Romania (Transilvanian Film Fund by Cristian Hordila) to name just three examples from the three first SOFA editions.*

*During a ten-day workshop in Wroclaw, Poland, the selected participants work with a prestigious group of experienced industry professionals at their proposals. The whole training focuses on productive exchange in all fields of cultural work: transnational communication, leadership-building, cultural education as well as examining public and private financing possibilities in the creative industries in the respective countries. »Creativity knows no nationality«, Nikitin says, having designed SOFA as a pan-European think-tank for the future of cinema.*

*SOFA – School of Film Agents is a joint project of the Filmplus gUG (Cologne) and the Fundacja Filmplus (Warsaw) together with the City of Wroclaw and the Polish Film Institute, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, the Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation, the Goethe-Institut Central and Eastern Europe, the Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, as well as the Film Commission Poland and the Wroclaw Film Commission, and supported by EAVE – European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs.*

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