

**SOFA – School of Film Agents launches pilot workshop in Vilnius,
focusing on public-private project financing and investment**

In addition to its existing workshops in Tbilisi (Georgia) and Warsaw (Poland), SOFA – School of Film Agents is launching a third workshop in Vilnius, Lithuania. Between 11 and 15 September 2018, selected SOFA alumni will get the chance to present their projects in front of experienced private investors and representatives of European public film funds. With this new workshop, SOFA offers its participants and their cultural projects direct access to potential financing partners from the public and private sector.

SOFA – School of Film Agents offers training for up-and-coming cinema professionals in developing, financing and realizing innovative projects for national and international audiences. The initiative is unique in the international context because it is aimed not at directors and producers, but at cultural managers, agents and ambassadors within the cinema industry, from Central and Eastern Europe, Germany, Greece, Israel, Central Asia, and the Caucasus.

Since 2013, SOFA has actively supported projects relating to the European cinema market and the structural development of national film industries. Through collaboration with highly-qualified experts and experienced professionals within the cinema industry, the initiative helps participants to fully develop their project ideas, prepare them for financing, and realize them effectively. This, in turn, boosts the regional development of cinema culture and the local film industry. The pilot workshop in Vilnius will offer added value to selected SOFA alumni, as it explores alternative ways of financing cultural projects in the field of cinema. The Vilnius edition will bring SOFA alumni together with potential financing partners from the public and private sector.

Five agents and SOFA alumni active in the film industry have been selected: Iris Elezi (Albania), Miroslav Mogorovic (Serbia), Lizaveta Bobrykava (Belorussia), Inesa Ivanova (Lithuania), and Dorina Oarga (Romania). SOFA's Head of Studies, Nikolaj Nikitin, explains: "With the newly created pilot, our SOFA workshop programme reaches three stages, and a year-round training structure: from now on, each year we'll hold one workshop for participants focusing on project development (Warsaw), and one focusing on project marketing (Tbilisi). In addition, the newly established Vilnius workshop will be open to all SOFA alumni and will focus on private-public financing/partnership. We're very grateful to our main partner, the Lithuanian Film Centre, and to the German Federal Foreign Office, for making this dream come true! We're especially pleased to be holding our new workshop in Vilnius, a vibrant city with an active cultural life – particularly as Lithuania is prospering economically and is very active in the field of cinema and new media right now."

Participants in the SOFA Vilnius event will learn from two highly experienced cinema industry professionals, Juliane Schulze and Thierry Baujard from Media Deals. Media Deals organises European Investment Forums in a range of European countries, providing opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors to meet up and discuss investment and partnership opportunities.

After two days of intensive training with their instructors, participants will present their project ideas to financiers and representatives from a number of European public foundations: Cathrin Frisemo (mentor, connector, investor from Sweden), Eugene Smyth (investment manager at Dublic BIC VC Funds, Ireland), Veikko Maripuu (co-founder and managing partner at Head Capital, Estonia), Robert Balinski (head of the International Relations Department at the Polish Film Institute, Poland), and Rolandas Kvietkauskas (director of the Lithuanian Film Centre, Lithuania).

The SOFA Vilnius workshop is funded by the Lithuanian Film Centre and by the German Federal Foreign Office.

We thank our funding partners, as well as the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, the Goethe-Institut Vilnius, the Embassy of the German Federal Republic, the Mayor of Vilnius City, and the Vilnius Film Office.

About SOFA:

SOFA – School of Film Agents is a programme of workshops aimed at strengthening national film industries and the European cinematic landscape, as well as kickstarting projects in the realm of cinema. SOFA helps its participants to develop their ideas into concrete projects, opening up new avenues towards application for financing programmes and final implementation. SOFA's focus on cultural managers and film agents rather than producers and directors has made it a unique programme on the international film scene.

www.joinsofa.org, www.facebook.com/SchoolofFilmAgents/

For further information, press materials, and interview requests please contact:

Marijana Harder
mail@marijanaharder.com
+49 177 79 42 871
www.marijanaharder.com

SOFA School of Film Agents

c/o Filmplus gUG
Venloer Straße 214
50823 Köln
Germany