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Cottbus, November 10, 2008

### **Six sizzling festival days in the autumn**

### **Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier visiting the 18th FilmFestival Cottbus**

On Tuesday, 11th November 2008, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Brandenburg's Minister President Matthias Platzeck will be visiting Cottbus as patrons of the 18th film festival. Numerous guests from the world of arts, politics and business are expected at this event in the Grosses Haus of the Staatstheater in Cottbus. Petra Maria Müller and Kirsten Niehuus, managing directors of Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH, and Frank Szymanski, Lord Mayor of the City of Cottbus, will attend the event as representatives of the festival's main supporters.

Other highlights are set to be provided on this evening by the Oscar-winners Istvan Szábo, the festival's honorary president, who will be presenting his latest work *RELATIVES* as a German premiere in Cottbus, and Allan Starski who received the coveted trophy for his set design of *SCHINDLER'S LIST* and is now serving on this year's International Festival Jury.

On the film side, the festival week will begin with the German premiere of the Cannes prize-winner *TULPAN* by Sergei Dvorzevoy in the presence of the producers Bulat Galimgeyer (Kazakhstan), Raimond Goebel and Thanassis Karathanos (both Germany). The international co-production, which was largely made with Russian and German support, also kicks off the feature film competition. The event will also feature the Philharmonic Orchestra and the ballet troupe of the Staatstheater Cottbus. Ola Rosiak and Max Ruppert, presenters of the programme "Kowalski trifft Schmidt" from the media partner Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, will serve as the MCs for the evening.

In total, 136 films from 30 countries will be screened during the festival, of which 62 will have their German or international premiere in Cottbus.

Among more than 450 accredited professional visitors from 39 countries, there will be some 70 filmmakers coming to Cottbus for the presentation of their works. Thus even more people than ever before being here speak with the audience about their films. All of the 10 films in the Feature Film Competition will be introduced in person. The following guests have announced that they will be coming to Cottbus: the directors Anca Damian (Romania), Sergej Dvorzevoy (Russia), Mikhail Kalatosishvili (Georgia), Vladimir Kott (Russia), Kornel Mundruczo (Hungary), Arsen Anton Ostijic (Croatia) and Michal Rosa (Poland), the actors Jiri Mádl (Czech Republic) and Vyacheslav Krikunov (Russia) as well as the producers Karl Baumgartner (Germany), Evgeny Gindilis (Russia), Irena Hejdova (Czech Republic), Kira Saksaganskaya (Russia), Julia Schaginurova (Russia) and Pavel Strnad (Czech Republic). The Short Feature Competition will include the directors Alena Davidova (Russia), Asif Rustamov (Azerbaijan) and Marina Wroda (Ukraine) as well as the producer Bozenka Mistrzak and the director of photography Michal Stajniak (both Poland) on hand for Q&As.

With more than 20 guests attending, the region of this year's Focus "New Cinema from the Baltics" promises to attract particular attention: the directors Rene Vilbre and Andri Luup will be here from Estonia, the directors Janis Kalejs and Janis Poskus as well as the actors Artuss Kaimans and Ksenija Sundejeva from Latvia, and the producers Inga Jasulaityte and Ieva Norviliene will be coming to Cottbus from Lithuania to present their latest films.

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Another Oscar prize-winner - Jiri Menzel (Czech Republic) - has said that he will be coming for the Retrospective "1968: the Prague Spring and the Aftermath". In addition, the Berlin film scholar Hans-Joachim Schlegel and the Czech contemporary witness Marta Simova will be available for discussions and film talks.

The directors Marat Sarulu (Kyrgyzstan) and Katya Shagalova (Russia) as well as the producer Karsten Stöter (Germany) will be attending the screenings of their films at the first "Russian Day" to be held on Wednesday, 12th November.

On Saturday, 15th November, Minister President Matthias Platzeck will close the festival's 18th edition in the Stadthalle Cottbus with the presentation of the Lubinas (main prizes of the International Festival Jury). The prize-giving ceremony moderated by Christian Matheé from the media partner Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg will be followed by a preview screening of the German family story NOVEMBER CHILD in the presence of director Christian Schwochow as well as the actors Hermann Beyer and Adrian Topol.

Prizes with a total value of 67,000 Euros will be presented at the festival, a significant increase over last year (2007: 64,000 Euros). The International Festival Jury will this year include the Kosovo-born actress Arta Dobrosi (LORNA'S SILENCE), the deputy managing director of German Films, Mariette Rissenbeek, the Russian FIPRESCI president Andrei Plakhov, the director of the Israel Film Fund Katriel Schory, and the Polish set designer Allan Starski.

All films, times and information can be found at [www.filmfestivalcottbus.de](http://www.filmfestivalcottbus.de), or [www.connecting-cottbus.de](http://www.connecting-cottbus.de)

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**Main Supporters** of the FilmFestival Cottbus are the Land Brandenburg – Ministry of Economics, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH, and the City of Cottbus.

**First Partner** is Vattenfall Europe Mining & Generation.

**Media Partners** are Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg RBB, radioeins, Lausitzer Rundschau, zitty Berlin, spreeXtra, FNE Film New Europe.

**Organizer** of the FilmFestival Cottbus is pool production GmbH.

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