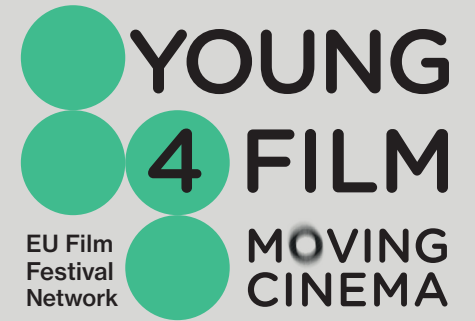


Sustainability and Social Awareness Charter



As part of the Young4Film
European Film Festival Network
In years 2023–2024



Introduction

In the face of global challenges, characterised by climate change, social inequalities and cultural fragmentation, the five European film festivals in the Young4Film network recognise the urgent need to take on an active role. Our understanding of ecological and social awareness is based on our awareness of the challenges posed by our planet's diminishing resources and the urgency of sustainable action. We also recognise the importance of inclusive and respectful coexistence and emphasise the role of cultural education and networks for future generations.

This Sustainability and Social Awareness Charter is the first result of the 2022–2024 project period and formulates the fundamental principles, goals and commitments that serve as guidelines for targeting young festival visitors and for organising and implementing events for young audiences. The Charter is not a static document but rather a dynamic framework that is continuously being developed. In recent years, all network partners have already consistently pursued a wide range of endeavours towards sustainable thinking and action in the context of their film festival activities – in social, ecological

and economic terms. Sharing these experiences, identifying further fields of action and finding solutions for individual or joint problems were the aims of the regular dialogue within the network.

The Charter recognises the sometimes very different conditions and frameworks under which the participating film festivals operate. Regardless of their urban or rural character, size or regional or national circumstances, each festival brings unique perspectives and experiences that are invaluable to the network. This heterogeneity is not only valued but actively integrated into the joint evaluation and development of programmes for young audiences.

The Charter serves as a platform to celebrate this diversity while creating a common framework that includes all voices. This creates a dynamic network that not only utilises the individual strengths of the festivals but also promotes a collective identity – based on the principles of sustainability and social awareness.

As a European film festival network, we are committed to the European Green Deal, which aims to make the 27 EU member states climate-neutral by 2050. We want to do what we can to help limit global warming and comply with the Paris Climate Agreement.

Approach

In the context of European film festivals, sustainability and environmental protection primarily relate to a responsible organisation of events that takes into account both the ecological and the social dimensions. As part of our cultural film education programmes, festivals aim to sensitise young audiences to sustainable issues and promote critical thinking. By integrating environmentally friendly practices and presenting relevant film content, we try to make a significant contribution to social transformation and raise awareness about the urgency of environmental and social challenges. In this charter, we, as a European network of film festivals, commit ourselves to actively contribute to the promotion of sustainable culture in our region and fulfil our own responsibility.

Objectives of the Network

The European film festival network **Young Programmers for Young Audiences!** or in short **Young4Film** pursues the explicit goal of attracting and retaining a new audience. The participating film festivals from five different European countries are specifically developing film programmes for and with young visitors. A part of this two-year project was also the central question of how the programmes for young people can be linked to raising awareness about ecological, social and diversity-sensitive topics and perspectives.

The aim is to raise awareness on two levels: firstly, in relation to the structure and organisation of the new offers for a young audience and, secondly, in terms of content. Accompanied by a sustainability expert, several joint workshops and exchange meetings were held in 2023 and 2024 to develop a common understanding. The results of this collaboration are set out in this charter and represent the commitment of the film festivals involved in the network to continue driving forward the necessary ecological and socially just transformation in the cultural sector.

The festivals that were part of the network in the 2023–2024 project period include the **Kino Otok – Isola Cinema International Film Festival** (Slovenia), the **Beldocs International Documentary Film Festival** (Serbia), the **Vilnius Short Film Festival** (Lithuania), the **Piccolo Grande Cinema** (Italy) and the **Motovun / Cinehill Film Festival** (Croatia).

1

Understanding Sustainability

Ecological sustainability stands for minimising the ecological footprint of offerings for young audiences through environmentally friendly practices in planning, implementing and following up events. All film festivals have identified their own areas of action in which they see a potential for further reducing their ecological footprint. Appropriate measures are being initiated and monitored.

Social sustainability aims to actively involve young people in cultural processes and give them a voice. By promoting diversity and inclusion, film festivals create spaces in which different perspectives and experiences are heard. The Charter encourages film festivals to develop programmes that specifically address the interests and needs of young viewers while also addressing social issues. By promoting dialogue between generations and involving young people as young curators in the programming, film festivals strengthen a sense of community and help young people feel part of an active and responsible cultural community. In this way, social sustainability is understood not only as a goal but also as a living process that ensures the long-term cultural participation of young people.

Economic sustainability aims to manage the financial resources of film festivals responsibly while finding innovative ways to fund and support cultural programmes for young people. This includes developing partnerships with local businesses, sponsors and funding institutions to create a stable financial base that enables festivals to maintain their programmes and offerings in the long term. Integrating sustainable practices into the organisation of events – such as resource-saving logistics or environmentally friendly materials – not only reduces the ecological footprint but also creates an awareness of responsible business practices.

In the field of cultural film education activities, sustainability is understood as a holistic approach that encompasses ecological, social and economic dimensions.

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Principles and Values

The Charter is based on a number of fundamental principles that should be taken into account in all Young4Film activities in the field of cultural film education for a young target group. They enable a responsible and future-oriented cultural film education that encourages young people to actively participate in social discourse and contribute their own perspectives.

Environmental protection: A strong commitment to environmental protection is essential for the sustainable development of our society. The festivals strive to implement environmentally friendly practices in all areas of their organisation – from the selection of venues and the resource-saving use of (sustainable) materials to minimising the ecological footprint of events. In addition, the awareness of ecological issues is raised among the young target group, cooperation partners and employees in order to spread the concern, the necessity and the opportunities for action.

Respect for diversity: The film festivals recognise and value the diversity of human experiences and cultural backgrounds. This includes not only the consideration of different ethnic, social and gender perspectives but also the (pre-)selection of European films that are as diverse as possible. This diversity creates a richer and more inclusive film offering that reflects the interests and identities of young viewers.

Social justice: The festivals are actively committed to ensuring that all voices are heard and represented. This includes their targeted selection of films from underrepresented groups and them promoting the participation of diverse voices in the decision-making processes. By breaking down barriers and facilitating access to cultural resources, we help reduce social inequalities and create a more equitable cultural environment.

Intercultural dialogue: The exchange between different cultures is actively promoted in order to create understanding, empathy and respect. This is achieved through round table discussions, workshops and other interactive formats that facilitate dialogue between actors, filmmakers and the young audience. Such encounters not only offer space for critical discussions about cultural differences but also strengthen a sense of community and cooperation across cultural boundaries. The international exchange between the respective Young Programmers groups of all participating film festivals also offers a wide range of options for action.

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Social Responsibility

The social responsibility of film festivals is a central element of the Charter and encompasses a variety of aspects aimed at having a positive impact on the community. The film festivals are aware of their role as cultural actors who can actively contribute to social development.

Promoting education and participation:

The film festivals aim to constantly develop their audiences and promote European – especially non-national – films to the target groups of primary and secondary school pupils and students. To this end, they entrust young curators with the responsibility of becoming part of the festival teams, while their film programmes and promotional materials are made available to young audiences at all the festivals in the network. The selected films are accompanied by original digital educational materials that are made available to other film curators, film educators and teachers to ensure that their reach extends beyond the Young4Film network and wider partnership.

Access to culture for all: The film festivals strive to break down barriers and provide access to cultural events for as many population groups as possible. This can include measures such as reduced ticket prices for pupils and students, low-barrier to barrier-free venues and information as well as special programmes for disadvantaged groups. These initiatives will ensure that more and more young people can participate in cultural offerings and experiences.

Raising awareness of diversity, inclusion

and social issues: The film festivals attach great importance to diversity and inclusion, both in the selection of films shown and the people involved. Gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other identity factors are taken into account. The film festivals also use their reach to draw attention to relevant social issues. By selecting films that address social injustices, environmental issues and other pressing problems,

they encourage reflection and promote dialogue among young audiences. Accompanying materials developed by the young people themselves as well as guided round table discussions and panel discussions create additional space for dialogue and reflection.

Fair working conditions and responsible

behaviour: The festivals are committed to fair working conditions for all employees, which include appropriate pay, job security and opportunities for professional development. In addition, they attach great importance to ethical conduct in all areas of their organisation. This includes transparency in communication and a responsible HR policy that promotes diversity and ensures equal opportunities. Respectful interaction with one another forms the basis for a positive working atmosphere and contributes to the long-term stability of festival organisation.

Commitment to local communities: The film festivals recognise the importance of their local communities and are actively involved in their development. This is done through cooperation with schools, social institutions, NGOs, educational institutions and local artists. By promoting local talent and providing platforms, film festivals help strengthen local cultural life and create a network of supporters. By working closely with various stakeholders, they realise joint projects that create added social value. These partnerships not only strengthen the network within the cultural and creative industries but also enable a more efficient use of resources and the creation of synergies.

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Concrete goals for the Promotion of Sustainability

The film festivals develop individual measures to promote sustainability in their work, particularly with regard to programmes for young target groups. These measures are based on a comprehensive analysis of all activities to reduce the ecological footprint implemented to date. Specific fields of action and the associated activities are listed below. They are closely linked to the regular film festival work and are intended to serve as a guide. The aim is to systematically integrate sustainable practices into the festival organisation and at the same time raise the awareness of young people about ecological issues.

Internal organisation: Defining clear responsibilities and forming sustainability teams, cooperating with green consultants, networking and participation, selecting fair services.

Energy efficiency: Implementing energy-efficient lighting and media technology, avoiding or optimising cooling and air conditioning systems.

Energy supply: Using sustainable energy sources for heating and transitioning to green electricity.

Mobility: Promoting sustainable travel options and transportation solutions for festival visitors, for example.

Target group offers and products: Selecting locations that are as environmentally friendly as possible or adapting them under sustainable criteria, providing sustainable catering options and environmentally conscious accommodation, a responsible design of products, for example, in merchandising, digitalising and reducing printed materials, sustainably designed and realised printed products.

Materials and waste management: Avoiding plastic, promoting recycling and upcycling initiatives, developing waste reduction strategies and effective waste separation practices.

Climate adaptations: Overcoming the challenges of summer heat, improving resilience to heavy rainfall and promoting biodiversity (as part of festival operations).

Educational programmes for young visitors: Developing programmes with a focus on environmental topics, promoting discussions on sustainable film productions and strengthening environmental awareness among young audiences through activating and creative projects.

Content & communication: Demonstrating a visible commitment to sustainability, active participation and cooperation with stakeholders.

Impact: Evaluating the festival's environmental impact by using a "handprint" approach that focuses on measuring positive contributions to sustainability efforts.



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Intersectional Perspectives

The film festivals are aware that various influencing factors must be considered intersectionally in order to ensure a comprehensive and equitable implementation of sustainable practices.

Social framework conditions: It is of great importance to understand the social structures and their influence on the goals formulated in the Charter. Factors such as education systems, social inequalities and cultural norms can significantly influence how sustainable practices are adopted and implemented. In order to meet these challenges, targeted cooperations with educational institutions should be established. These partnerships make it possible to realise cultural mediation offers developed by the network that promote awareness of sustainability and, at the same time, improve access to information and resources for marginalised groups.

Diversity of perspectives: The Charter also emphasises the need to include different perspectives and experiences in the decision-making process. This includes the consideration of gender, ethnicity, social class and other identity characteristics. An inclusive approach ensures that as many voices as possible are heard and solutions are developed that meet the needs of a diverse community.

Financial resources: Access to financial resources plays a decisive role in the implementation of sustainable measures. The film festivals are actively committed to using funding in a targeted manner to support activities for a young target group with a high ecological and social benefit.

Long-term strategies: Intersectional approaches require not only short-term solutions but also long-term strategies to promote justice and equality in the context of sustainable development. This can be achieved through continuous training, awareness-raising measures and the creation of platforms for the exchange of best practices.

Obligations of the Network Partners

The film festivals strive to establish clear and binding principles for all network partners in order to support sustainable development in film festival work, especially with regard to the planning, organisation and implementation of offers for a young target group. At the same time, there should be room for individual adaptations by allowing partners to bring in their own approaches and, at the same time, fulfil the common goals.

Compliance with specific environmental standards: All network partners undertake to comply with individually named and defined environmental standards at their events for young audiences and within their organisational structures. This means that, based on their status quo at the beginning of the network partnership, they commit to implementing further measures to reduce waste, energy consumption and CO2 emissions, among other things. The measures are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they are in line with the latest scientific findings and best practices. It is also recommended that a transparent monitoring system be introduced to enable the partners' progress to be documented and made publicly available.

Regular training on sustainability and social awareness: All employees who are actively involved in the Young4Film network partnership (regularly) take part in training on sustainability and social awareness wherever possible. This training should create a common understanding of sustainable, social and diversity-sensitive practices and enable employees to implement them in their day-to-day work. In addition, the aim is to set up a mentoring programme that promotes the exchange of experiences and best practices between the network partners.

Involving young people in the development of sustainability strategies: The network partners endeavour to actively involve young people in the development of strategies to promote sustainability and raise social awareness. Through workshops,

creative competitions or discourse spaces, for example, young people should be able to contribute their ideas and develop innovative solutions that are integrated into the planning and implementing of events organised by the network for a young audience. This strengthens the commitment of young people and promotes a sustainable culture based on the values of the next generation.

Active collaboration with local communities: In order to promote the exchange between a film festival and the community and to address and support local concerns, it is recommended that each film festival enters into at least one partnership with a local organisation as part of its outreach activities for a young target group. The partners can work together to realise existing projects or develop new ones that bring both environmental and social benefits to the region. This includes, for example, integrating local artists, craftspeople or service providers into the programme for young people and supporting initiatives to promote environmental protection and social justice locally.

Reporting on progress: The network partners are required to prepare regular reports on their progress in relation to the above-mentioned commitments and to share these within the network. These reports should not only document the goals achieved but also highlight the challenges and possible solutions. This transparency makes the partners' commitment visible and creates a culture of learning and continuous improvement within the network.

Educational programmes to promote sustainability and social awareness


The cooperation to date has given the Youg4Film film festivals a common understanding of the importance of developing a young audience. For this reason, efforts in this area will be further expanded and the topics of sustainability, environmental awareness, gender equality, integration, diversity and representativeness will be given greater consideration in the conception of the programmes. This additional conceptualisation and design of offers for a young target group is a holistic approach that imparts to young people both knowledge and practical skills. In this way, they are not only informed but actively involved in the process of change – they become ambassadors of ecological and social sustainability in their communities and beyond.

Possible focal points that can be combined in the implementation could be:

Accompanying workshops on environmental topics: In addition to the regular educational programme, workshops can introduce young people to key environmental topics, such as climate change, biodiversity, waste prevention and sustainable resource use. These workshops are designed not only to impart theoretical knowledge but also to promote practical skills, for example, by teaching the participants how to reduce their own ecological footprint or how to initiate sustainable projects in the community.

Discussions about sustainability and diversity in film productions: In the educational programmes, the topics of sustainability and social responsibility in film production are discussed in order to convey an understanding of the conditions in the international film industry. They reflect on how ecological practices can be integrated into the production process and on the significance of gender issues and the representation of ethnic and social groups – in front of and behind the camera – in film production.

Programmes on resilience and self-care: In view of the psychological stress caused by climate crisis fears, the educational programmes also offer content to promote resilience and self-care. Workshops teach strategies for coping with stress and emotional support in the context of environmental crises. Participants can learn



techniques for mindfulness, meditation and ways of dealing with fears and worries about climate change. This should help them develop a positive attitude and actively contribute to solutions.

Promoting social awareness and diversity: A central component of the educational programmes is the promotion of social interaction and the acceptance of diversity. Through interactive formats such as group projects, cultural exchange events and round table discussions on topics such as social justice and inclusion, a space is created in which young people can come into contact with each other. These encounters enable the participants to familiarise themselves with different perspectives, break down prejudices and develop empathy. Workshops that deal with the challenges of a diverse society sensitise participants to the importance of hearing different voices and working together to find solutions to social problems. This not only raises awareness of social issues but also promotes a strong network of young people who are actively committed to an inclusive and sustainable future.

Promotion of competences: A central goal of all educational programmes is not only to impart knowledge but also to promote action skills. Participants should be empowered to independently initiate projects or get involved in existing initiatives.

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Communication Strategies

It is important to the network to use various communication strategies not only to make the commitment to sustainability and diversity visible and ensure transparency but also to create a space in which all participants and interested parties can learn from each other.

Announcement of the Charter: The film festivals publish the Charter on their websites and share it via their social media channels.

Regular updates: Regular updates are published in order to communicate progress in relation to the formulated sustainability goals in a transparent manner. These can take the form of blog posts, newsletters or social media posts. Special sessions or panels can also be organised as part of the networking events or film festivals at which current developments are presented. This not only promotes awareness but also encourages other players in the industry to take similar measures.

Open communication: The saying "Do good and talk about it" serves as a guideline for the film festivals' communication strategies. Emphasis is placed on open and honest communication in order to build trust and present the commitment authentically.

Interactive formats: Interactive formats such as Q&A sessions or workshops can be offered to actively involve the audience. Here, participants have the opportunity to ask questions and exchange ideas directly with those responsible. Such formats promote a sense of community and a shared commitment to the goals of the Charter.

Transparency and Reporting

Annual reports: The film festivals produce annual reports containing information on sustainable practices implemented, such as energy consumption and diversity initiatives. These reports are understandable for different target groups and are published publicly on the website.

Feedback sessions with young participants and festival visitors, as well as employees:

Regular feedback sessions, for example, through surveys or workshops, allow young visitors and employees to express their opinions and make suggestions for improvement. This helps us understand the perception of the measures and address the needs and obstacles in a targeted manner.

Adaptation of the strategies: Based on the results of the reports and feedback, an analysis is carried out to identify strengths and weaknesses. The film festivals adapt their strategies accordingly and communicate the changes transparently to all those involved.

The following mechanisms make the commitment to sustainability visible and promote a continuous improvement process.

Partnerships and Networks

The importance of partnerships and networks cannot be overemphasised in order to promote the exchange of best practices and achieve common goals in the field of sustainable cultural film education and festival work.

Cooperations with film festivals in the Young4Film network and beyond: Festivals benefit from the exchange of experiences and best practices. Joint initiatives, such as film series or events on the topics of the Charter, strengthen the visibility and quality of the programmes for a young target group.

Collaboration with institutions in the field of cultural education: Partnerships with educational institutions and NGOs that are active in the areas of sustainability and diversity enable the development and implementation of high-quality programmes for a young target group.

Exchange of best practices: Regular network meetings promote the exchange of ideas and solutions, which leads to innovative approaches and tackles challenges together.

Building long-term relationships: Maintaining long-term partnerships is crucial to success as they build trust and ensure sustainable collaboration.

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