



Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

KVIFF INDUSTRY DAYS: THE PROGRAM FOR FILM PROFESSIONALS IS EXPANDING AND INTRODUCING A NUMBER OF NEW INITIATIVES

The festival continues to expand its program for film professionals, creating new opportunities for the industry to meet, discover upcoming projects and engage with the key challenges shaping today's audiovisual landscape. With the continued support of the PPF Foundation, the Film Industry program is structured around two complementary strands — *Cinematic Focus* and *Screen Focus* — responding to the evolving needs of audiovisual professionals in Central Europe. KVIFF Industry Days 2026 will take place from Sunday, July 5 to Wednesday, July 8, at the Kaiserbad venue.



“Our programs, held as part of the KVIFF Industry Days, offer film professionals—creators, producers, distributors, and sales agents—a unique opportunity to respond to new trends in the development of the audiovisual industry, which has undergone significant transformation in recent years. We are pleased that Oneplay is becoming a new partner of



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the KVIFF Industry Days, as it is not only a key player in the field of streaming services but also a major supporter of domestic auteur filmmaking. We also see one of the fundamental missions of the Karlovy Vary festival as supporting new talent, for whom we aim to create not only space for their own creative work but also to facilitate paths toward realizing their projects. Through our KVIFF Talents program, we have supported more than twenty projects to date, and many young, talented creators have taken part—several of whom are already receiving awards for their films,” says Kryštof Mucha, Executive Director of the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, adding: “We are also pleased that the festival can host new initiatives such as the Book-to-Screen project, which fosters collaboration between the film and publishing industries.”

KVIFF Promises Broadens Its International Scope

The festival platform *KVIFF Promises*, formerly known as KVIFF Eastern Promises, has long introduced projects to producers, distributors, festivals and sales agents, and now drops its former regional designation to reflect its expanded scope. With a renewed focus on Central Europe and an openness to projects from across the globe, *KVIFF Promises* strengthens its position as an important meeting point for international co-production and discovery.

The platform continues to showcase emerging talent through its collaboration with the Midpoint Institute, presenting projects from the *Feature Launch* program. Established mid-career directors from Central Europe will be highlighted in the *KVIFF Central Stage* showcase, with Switzerland joining the line-up of countries presented last year.

First Edition of Book-to-Screen at KVIFF

This new joint project is launched thanks to brand new collaborations with Frankfurter Buchmesse, Svět knihy (Book World) and Moravian Library in Brno and with the support of the PPF Foundation. It will present to producers up to 10 book titles suitable for film or series adaptation coming from the region of Central and Eastern Europe. Its long-term goal is to create a market for film rights to adaptations of literary works from the region, thereby strengthening cooperation between the film and book industries.

Publishers and literary agencies from Central and Eastern Europe that own film rights were invited to submit titles with strong film potential by April 30th, 2026. An international jury composed of representatives of the organizing organizations is currently in the process of selecting 5-10 works from the submitted applications. These will be presented to domestic and foreign producers on July 7, 2026. In addition to book presentations, the



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program will also include a panel discussion focused on film adaptations and a networking meeting for all participants.

Inspired by a similar project, Books at Berlinale, which has been successfully organized by Berlinale Co-Production Market and Frankfurter Buchmesse since 2006, the *Book-to-Screen at KVIFF* aims to bring stories from Central and Eastern Europe to a stronger acclaim.

"The PPF Foundation was established in 2019 to help Czech talent find and open up paths to the world. Three years ago, we were there at the inception of the CEE Book Market program section at the Svět knihy Praha literary festival, which today plays an irreplaceable role in the international trade of works by Czech authors. At the same time, we supported the Czech Republic's participation in the Frankfurt Book Fair, which we view as a unique opportunity to present Czech literature and culture in general to a German-speaking audience. And because we believe it makes sense to create and support synergies between projects in which the PPF Foundation is involved, while also drawing inspiration from best practices abroad (in this case, the collaboration between the Berlinale film festival and the Frankfurt Book Fair), we have also supported a new initiative by the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (KVIFF) dedicated to film and television adaptations of literary works. "I am delighted that in this collaboration, we all see the potential for new opportunities and benefits for Czech and Central European culture," says Jana Tomas Sedláčková, a member of the PPF Foundation's Board of Directors, describing the creation of the Book-to-Screen at KVIFF program.

"Literature is one of the most important sources of inspiration for cinema, television and screening platforms. With Books at KVIFF, we are creating another meeting place for publishers, agencies and filmmakers to discover new stories for film and series adaptations. At the same time, we want to raise the profile of literary voices from Central and Eastern Europe and give them a stage in the international film context. Together with our partners, we look forward to further deepening the dialogue between the book and film industries in Karlovy Vary," says Juergen Boos, director of Frankfurter Buchmesse.

"We are delighted to be involved in the creation of this project, which, thanks to all the organizations involved and the support of the PPF Foundation, has the potential to become the most significant event of its kind in our region. It has succeeded in connecting the book and film industries, opening up new avenues not only for Czech authors abroad but also beyond the literary sphere," emphasizes Tomáš Kubíček, Director General of the



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Moravian Library in Brno, which is preparing the Czech Republic's Guest of Honour appearance at this year's Frankfurter Buchmesse.

“Book World Prague sees literature as a living source of stories with the potential to transcend the boundaries of both media and language. The Book-to-Screen at KVIFF project represents an important step towards bringing strong voices from Central and Eastern Europe to international audiences through film and series production,” says Radovan Auer, Director of BOOK WORLD PRAGUE.

Industry Program: From True Crime Ethics to Alternative Distribution

The Film Industry program will once again feature a series of presentations, panel discussions, and workshops with leading experts in the fields of audiovisual media, cinematography, and television series production from the Czech Republic and abroad. The program will focus on topics such as high-quality production values, the ethics of true crime stories, alternative film distribution, as well as innovative approaches to storytelling and private equity financing of projects. In collaboration with the Czech Association of Audiovisual Producers and the State Audiovisual Fund, the Czech Film Forum will offer a traditional discussion platform, where Czech producers and filmmakers review the past year and name challenges they are facing in the current film ecosystem. The program will also include a presentation of currently available AI tools. In collaboration with the ICDA, part of the program will focus on casting issues in Central and Eastern Europe. This year, KVIFF will also host, for the first time, a meeting of the Board of the European Film Academy, which annually awards the European Film Awards.

International Casting Directors Association at KVIFF

On Thursday, July 9, The International Casting Directors Association (ICDA) will present its annual Semiramis Award for Excellence in Casting. The award recognises outstanding achievement in casting and honours the creative contribution casting directors make to the success of film and television.

Alongside the award presentation, ICDA will host a dedicated series of panels and masterclasses exploring the craft and impact of casting in contemporary filmmaking, with several dozen international casting directors in attendance.

Following last year's presentation of the Semiramis Award at the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, ICDA continues its partnership with major international festivals to highlight the vital role of casting directors.



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“This year marks a defining moment in the history of our profession,” said ICDA President Lana Veenker. *“So far, in 2026, we have celebrated the first European Casting Director Award, followed by the first Oscar for Best Casting. Recognition of casting at this level affirms its place at the heart of the filmmaking process. Karlovy Vary, with its longstanding commitment to auteur cinema and new voices, is a natural setting to explore the creative role casting plays in shaping the films we see. We are delighted to be guests of the festival’s 60th edition, with a program dedicated to the artistry and vision that casting brings to the screen.”*

The International Casting Directors Association (ICDA) is a global network of professional casting directors working across film, television, and new media. The association fosters artistic exchange, promotes professional standards, and advocates for the recognition of casting as a central creative discipline in storytelling.

Global Media Makers Residency Comes to Karlovy Vary

In collaboration with the U.S. embassies in Bratislava and Prague, and Film Independent, the Los-Angeles based non-profit organisation supporting independent filmmakers, *KVIFF Industry Days* will host the U.S. Department of State’s Global Media Makers Residency, a focused program for 14–20 independent producers from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Designed as an intensive, hands-on residency, the program will explore new approaches to private financing and draw inspiration from the U.S. film industry. Through curated sessions, case studies and direct exchange with international experts, participants will gain practical insight into financing structures, packaging strategies and international collaboration, while also actively participating in *KVIFF Industry Days* and engaging with the *KVIFF Promises* program.

Oneplay Joins as Partner of Screen Focus Sessions

Building on the introduction of its series-focused strand last year, the festival continues to expand its program to reflect the growing importance of broadcaster and streaming-driven content in Central Europe. The Screen Focus strand welcomes a new key partner, Oneplay, which will support a range of panels, masterclasses and presentations tailored to today’s audiovisual professionals.

Producers, commissioners, and talent will have the opportunity to connect around topics such as international co-production, regional storytelling, export potential and premium production values. With the support of Oneplay and the presence of leading regional players, *KVIFF Industry Days* will place a stronger spotlight on the specific creative and industrial dynamics of episodic and multi-format content.



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“I am very proud that, following last year’s successful initiative within the CME Group, we are this year fully developing our partnership with KVIFF Industry Days under the Oneplay brand. We see the combination of these two strong brands as a logical outcome of the transformation of the entire market. Major festivals were historically the domain of film, but today’s audiovisual industry is an interconnected space in which television and streaming platforms play a crucial role,” says Daniel Grunt, CEO of the Nova Group, adding: *“Our goal is not only to present our own content, but to actively co-create a professional environment for networking and supporting all creators. Within the Screen Focus Sessions section, we want to be a partner that understands regional trends in a broader context and, together with the festival, continues to raise the bar for quality and production value in Central Europe. In doing so, we build on our long-term strategy of creating premium content that succeeds not only with audiences in the region, but also at festivals and among industry professionals.”*

KVIFF Talents Program Presents New Projects

Part of the *KVIFF Promises* platform, the *KVIFF Talents* program has supported bold and dynamic approaches in cinema and other areas of audiovisual production in the Czech Republic and Slovakia since 2022. This year, it will once again support six audiovisual works in the concept stage, selected from more than one hundred submitted projects. The selected participants will receive development funding, mentoring from industry experts, the opportunity to present their projects at a special event during the Karlovy Vary IFF, facilities for producing proof-of-concept videos, stays at film festivals, and residency programs in Karlovy Vary.

In the Feature Pool, dedicated to feature-length films, three projects will be presented.

Exposed, the feature fiction debut by director Klára Tasovská, produced by Lukáš Kokeš, is set against the backdrop of the semi-legal queer milieu of socialist Czechoslovakia. The mysterious thriller, unfolding over 24 hours in Prague during the 1980s era of “normalisation”, tells—through the story of a young female photographer—a universal story of personal dilemma and the courage to stand up for one’s own version of reality.

The intimate drama ***Nera*** is the feature fiction debut of director Ivana Vogrinc Vidali and screenwriter Darja Miková. The story follows Tereza, a recent high school graduate whose life is upended by a relentless diagnosis that gradually robs her of her sight. She is rescued from despair by Nera, a guide dog in whom she finds a kindred spirit, but she soon encounters the limits of a system that has trained Nera for absolute obedience and the suppression of instinct.



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The project ***Until We Leave***, the debut of screenwriter Lucia Čížinská and produced by Tereza Wiński, tells the story of four women in their thirties who travel to France to visit a close friend with a terminal illness. Their shared trip gradually turns into a confrontation with their own lives, relationships and visions of the future. This intimate drama blends elements of tragicomedy and an observational road movie.

In the Creative Pool, dedicated to projects of any audiovisual format, two fiction series and one animated film will be presented this year. The series ***Burning Witches***, written by Martina Babišová and Věra Starečková and produced by Dagmar Sedláčková, is set in the 17th century on the Bohemian-Polish borderlands and follows noblewoman Katuše as she attempts to save her sister from being burned at the stake while also striving to emancipate those around her.

The Inhalatorium, the feature-length animated debut by director and animator Bára Anna Stejskalová, follows a thirteen-year-old girl who arrives at a mountain sanatorium to treat her asthma. When her friend disappears and the staff refuse to speak of him, she sets out with others to trace his steps.

The final project of this year's *KVIFF Talents* is the series ***K-Dream*** by director Adam Sedlák and producers Linda Krejčí and Monika Soukup, which tells the story of NIKŮ, a European obsessed with K-pop. After failing to launch his career as a K-pop star, he returns to Europe to found the first K-pop idol academy in Berlin. The lead role will be played by Adam Mišík, who is also involved in the project as a co-screenwriter.

In previous editions, the program has supported a total of 23 projects. Its participants have included, among others, recent Czech Lion award winners such as director Terézia Halamová and producer Natália Pavlove, as well as director and screenwriter Dužan Duong.

“Supporting young and talented creators has long been one of our key areas. We see the KVIFF Talents program as a unique platform that enables the creation of new projects while fostering authors in cultivating their creative potential under the supervision of experienced experts. We feel there’s great value not only in financial support, but also in opportunities for consultations, sharing experience and establishing professional contacts. This kind of environment is crucial for creating strong and original stories that can appeal to both Czech and international audiences. We’re happy that the ČEZ Foundation is a part of this initiative and that it’s contributing to developing a new generation of creators in



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Czech and Slovak audiovisual production,” says Mgr. Michaela Ziková, MBA, Director of Marketing and Sponsorship, Vice-President of the Board of Directors and Director of the ČEZ Foundation.

“For me, supporting young talent is a very personal issue. I joined Mattoni in an entry-level marketing position and was given the chance to develop, learn and grow. Thanks to the trust and space the company gave me, I gradually worked my way up to the role of CEO. This is precisely why I believe in the importance of providing opportunities to the next generation, as it can fundamentally transform their professional and personal paths,” says Ondřej Postránský, CEO of Mattoni 1873.

“We have been connected with KVIFF Talents for two years, and we’re delighted to continue this collaboration. We see Oneplay not only as the leading domestic streaming platform, but also as a space for new visions, talent, and the courage to try things differently. That’s why working with the emerging generation is key for us—whether it’s students from our CME Content Academy, collaborations with FAMU, or young talents from the secondary school in Panská. We want to give creators both the space and the support they need to grow and create without unnecessary barriers. We’re proud to have been involved in projects by Diana Cam Van Nguyen and Daria Kashcheeva, and we believe that within KVIFF Talents, filmmakers are being discovered who may one day help shape the future of Oneplay Originals,” says Head of PR & Communication Michal Prokeš.

“Partnering with the KVIFF Talents program is a natural step for us. The Karlovy Vary Region is in a unique position – it’s home to an international film festival and also a region with growing potential in the cultural and creative sectors. By supporting the fourth edition of KVIFF Talents, we aim to connect this potential with specific opportunities for audiovisual creators. KVIFF Talents focuses on attracting precisely the type of creators that we want to warmly welcome to the Karlovy Vary Region – bold individuals with original projects and the desire to push the boundaries of audiovisual production. Our partnership isn’t just about visibility at the festival. It’s a signal that the region is a supporter of the creative economy and is publicly committed to it,” says Ing. Vlastimil Veselý, Director of the Business Development Agency of the Karlovy Vary Region.

Partners of *KVIFF Talents* are the ČEZ Foundation, Mattoni mineral water, Oneplay, Business Development Agency of the Karlovy Vary Region and Forbes.