And the LUX Prize for European cinema goes to... "Auf der anderen Seite" ("On the Edge of Heaven")

The Turkish-German co-production "On the Edge of Heaven" ("Auf der anderen Seite") won the first edition of the European Parliament LUX (light) Prize for European cinema. The German Actress Hanna Schygulla received the trophy from EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering in front of the Members of the European Parliament, and representatives from the other films in competition. MEPs voted for the winning film from a short-list of three.

Hans Gert Pöttering said: "Today, we are experiencing a premiere: 50 years after signing the Treaty of Rome, the European Parliament is awarding for the first time the newly created cinema prize "LUX".

With this prize we want to award annually a film that raises attention to current social questions that affect our continent and highlights European Integration especially. Furthermore, the award is supposed to highlight the richness of linguistic diversity within the European Union and to support the artistic production of the cinema sector.

We are sending a strong signal for multilingualism and aim to breakthrough the logic of economic efficiency that often results in lack of translations in some countries of the EU. We want to work equally with all official languages, so that every European citizen can watch the film in his/her own language."

Hanna Schygulla said: "This is a film that gives hope and is not blind to the brutality, the cynicism and the horrible tension that sometimes can lead to terrorist attacks."

The three films that were in competition are listed below. They were selected by a 17 member jury composed mainly of people working in the cinematic professions:

- Auf der anderen Seite (The Edge of Heaven), by Fatih Akin
- 4 juin, 3 saptamini si 2 zile (4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days), by Cristian Mungiu
- Belle toupurs, by Manoel de Oliveira

Each film was shown nine times, from 1 October to 18 October 2007, within the European Parliament in Brussels in a 90 seat cinema room specially conceived and built for this purpose.

Present in Strasbourg

For Auf der anderen Seite, the producer Klaus Maek.
For 4 juin, 3 saptamini si 2 zile, co-producer Philippe Avril.
For Belle toupurs, the director, Manoel de Oliveira, Michel Piccoli, leading male actor
and co-producers Miguel Cadhile and Serge Lalou.

The jury

Only MEPs who have seen all three films during the screenings or extra muros, could exercise their right to vote. The film which gains the highest number of votes will be the winner.

The prize

The LUX Prize consists of assistance in kind in the form of subtitling and video-to-film transfer (kinescopage) of the winning film in the 23 official EU languages. There will also be an original language adaptation for the deaf and hard of hearing.

If the winning film has already been sold for projection in cinemas in some countries and subtitled for the purpose, the nature of the prize (e.g. assistance with production of the DVD) will be determined by agreement between the European Parliament and the film’s appointed representatives.

The trophy, inspired by a representation of the Tower of Babel which forms the LUX Prize’s visual identity, will be given to the laureate. The trophy is made by the Belgian artist, Jocelyne Coster.

About the winning film: Auf der anderen Seite

Director: Fatih Akin
Co-production: German-Turkish
Length: 122’, Year: 2007
Original language: German
Award: Cannes 2007 – Screenplay Prize
With Nurğül Yesilcay, Baki Davrak, Nursel Köse, Tuncel Kurtiz, Patricia Ziólkowska and Hanna Schygulla

The film shows the relation between six people whose lives become connected through a series of events happening in Germany and Turkey. Ali, who decides to move in with the prostitute Yeter to escape from his loneliness. His son Nejat, who is not happy with the arrangement, but changes his view on his father’s friend, when he realises that she sends most of what she earns to her daughter in Turkey. When Yeter dies in an accident Nejat goes to Turkey to look for her daughter Ayten, but is unaware the 20-year old daughter who is a political activist has fled to Germany to escape the Turkish Police. Here Ayten meets Lotte, at German student. She is invited to stay with Lotte, although Lottes mother Susanna is not in favour. Ayten is then arrested and deported to Turkey, where she is sent to prison.

When Lotte goes to Turkey, but her effort to secure Ayten’s release seems doomed to failure. She happens to meet Nejat and they become flat-mates. A tragic event prompts Lotte's mother Susanne to travel to Istanbul to continue her daughter’s quest. As he grows closer to Susanne, Nejat feels the need to be reconciled with his father, who now lives in Turkey, by the Black Sea. He decides to go and look for him.

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