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PRESS RELEASE

East West Index Survey: Pandemic wiped out one in four films from festivals in 2020

Fresh data from the [East West Index 2021](#), which analyses the representation of different regions at documentary film festivals, was presented today during the debate *Back to “Normal”?* at Marché du Film / Cannes Docs, co-organised by the Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival.

The data collected at 14 European film festivals in 2020 and 2021 have shown that **as a result of the pandemic most festivals have decided to cut the number of selected films** in their programme. This reduction amounts to 22% in total, with some of the film festivals in focus (such as IDFA, DOK Leipzig and Dokufest Kosovo) having to reduce their programme even more dramatically – to one third or even a half compared with the “regular” year 2019. As a result of the cuts, one in four or five films is missing from festival programmes.

*“In terms of regional balance we can see that the programme structure has not changed much, but if we focus on the details, we see how dangerous this trend of cutting down the festival programme can be: **The underrepresented regions were even less represented during the Covid year.** Of course, the number of films is not the only key criterion when analyzing the impact of film festivals, but losing such a big space for filmmakers might affect the diversity of presented films and change the European film infrastructure”,* says Marek Hovorka, director of Ji.hlava IDFF which has been behind the regular East West Index surveys in the past years.

The survey has also shown that **some European documentary festivals shifted their focus towards national or regional films** that attract wider local audiences, live and/or online. This decrease in diversity may also be influenced by the financial situation of the entire festival sector which had already been challenged before the pandemic.

The East West Index was originally **launched by Ji.hlava IDFF in 2019 with the aim to point at the unbalanced representation of East European filmmakers at festivals in Western Europe** and to follow the trends related to representation of other regions at European festivals – including Africa and Asia. [The East West Index 2021 can be downloaded here.](#)

The survey was further discussed at the event by European EMERGING PRODUCERS – Volia Chajkouskaya (Belarus), Vanja Jambrović (Croatia), Karim Aitouna (France) and Mario Adamson (Sweden). **The recording of the debate is available [here.](#)**

The names of the eighteen EMERGING PRODUCERS 2022 – the up-and-coming generation of European documentary producers – were also announced at the event. The participants of the programme will be provided with educational, promotional and networking support during the coming year and attend workshops at Jihlava (October 2021) and Berlin (February 2022).