

FERA EXPRESSES ITS DEEP CONCERN FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF JAFAR PANAHI

Press Release – 19 May 2010

The Federation of European Film Directors expresses its continuous concern for the safety and well being of Iranian Film director Jafar Panahi who was arrested with his family in Teheran on 1 March.

This year Mr Panahi should have been a member of the jury at the Cannes film festival. Instead he is in jail and, as announced yesterday by an Iranian journalist during the press conference for the film *Certified Copy*, Mr Panahi has started a hunger strike to protest his arrest.

Mr Panahi is one of the leading voices of modern Iranian cinema and he has won prizes worldwide including the Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival for his debut feature *The White Balloon*.

European film directors wish to re-affirm their strong condemnation of such an attack on the freedom of speech, and once again call for the immediate release of Jafar Panahi.

FERA is the European federation of national associations of film and television directors. Established in Venice in 1980 by a small group of far-sighted directors, it has grown to include 37 associations from 31 European countries. FERA is based in Brussels, Belgium.

The current President of FERA is István Szabó (elected in 2008). Previous presidents are: Liv Ullmann, Manuel Gutierrez Aragon, Francesco Maselli, John Boorman, Robert Enrico, Juan Antonio Bardem, Krzysztof Zanussi, Ettore Scola and Peter Fleischmann.

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