



**Federation of European
Screen Directors**

Fédération Européenne des
Réalisateurs de l'Audiovisuel

PRESS RELEASE

2 October 2024

Ken Loach takes over the Honorary Presidency of EU Filmmakers' network FERA

On 30 September, FERA members gathered in General Assembly unanimously elected Ken Loach as their new Honorary President.

After studying law in Oxford and a brief spell in the theatre, Loach was recruited by the BBC in 1963 as a television director. This launched a long career directing films for television and the cinema, from *Cathy Come Home* and *Kes* in the sixties to *Land And Freedom*, *Sweet Sixteen*, *The Wind That Shakes The Barley* (Palme d'Or, Cannes Film Festival 2006), *Looking for Eric*, *The Angels' Share* and *I, Daniel Blake* (Palme d'Or, Cannes Film Festival 2016).

Reflecting on his remarkable career, FERA Chair Bill Anderson noted:

"Ken Loach has been a rigorously authentic director balancing fierce, passionate humanity with a gentle sense of humour on our screens for 60 years. His dynamic commitment to social justice carries him beyond the screen stories he so eloquently directs – setting films "against a background" of inequality or poverty is not enough for him: he demands we set our stories against injustice directly. Action is foreground. Ken is an inspiration."

In his induction speech, Ken Loach reminded the filmmakers assembled of the privileges and responsibilities of directing films:

"In our films we can contribute to collective memory because our history, the history of the people, is written out by those in power. We have the task of bearing witness and making films that bear witness to what is happening. If we can make that contribution, then we contribute to the struggle against the power. [...] So we are few, but it's a big task."

He succeeds Jasmila Žbanić in the role, whose riveting contribution to discussions on Filmmakers at War and to FERA's Directors' Voice podcast projected a strong image of directors' unique authorship and craft. Her uncompromising vision as a filmmaker and unique ability to tell personal stories against a backdrop of significant political and historical events are an inspiration to the European filmmakers' community.

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About Us

Founded in 1980, FERA represents the independent voice of European film and TV directors in Brussels. With 46 organizations as members from 31 countries, it speaks for more than 20,000 European film and TV directors, representing their cultural, creative and economic interests at national and EU level.

Honorary President: Ken LOACH

Ambassadors: Marco BELLOCCHIO (Italy), Isabel COIXET (Spain), Agnieszka HOLLAND (Poland), Michaël R. ROSKAM (Belgium), Charles STURRIDGE (UK), István SZABÓ (Hungary)

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