



FIPRESCI Newsletter #5

February 2026

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1. Introduction

Dear colleagues,

February is always named Berlinale, a key gathering every year. FIPRESCI was quite active in 2026, with a wide range of activities.

This is our biggest jury of the year: 12 members gave 4 awards to films loved by critics in all festival sections: Competition, Perspectives, Panorama, and Forum. More than 20 country delegates met in our annual informal section meeting that became a new tradition in Berlin.

Hosted by dear colleagues of Arab Cinema Centre, FIPRESCI organised its first Berlinale cocktail party in years, in which not less than 150 colleagues from all over the world gathered for a drink, and to witness the announcement of the five films nominated for our first Documentary Grand Prix.

We would like to thank Berlinale's head of press Frauke Greiner, protocol officer Maïke Dietrich, and our jury coordinator Schayan Riaz for their generous effort and support during those extremely busy days of cinema.

And now, we invite you to take a look back at the highlights of **February**.

Yours truly,
FIPRESCI Board

2. News

FIPRESCI Documentary Grand Prix 2025: Nominees Announced



In January, the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) and the Millennium Docs Against Gravity festival announced the launch of the Documentary Grand Prix. This new award will be given to the best documentary film of the year. Members of FIPRESCI from around the world will vote, making this award one of the most important distinctions in global documentary cinema. **Now, FIPRESCI and MDAG are pleased to share the list of nominees for the new award. The first ever winner will be announced at the Opening Ceremony of the 23rd MDAG in May 2026.**

[Discover the nominees](#)

FIPRESCI cocktail party at Berlinale



Did you make it to the Film Critics' Cocktail Party at the Berlinale? **See if you can spot yourself in the moments captured by Muhammad Hamed** and relive an evening of lively conversations, shared impressions, and festival spirit.

[Discover the photos](#)

FIPRESCI annual gathering at Berlinale



Each year during the Berlinale, FIPRESCI members come together for the federation's traditional annual gathering — a moment to exchange updates, reflect on current activities, and discuss future directions. **As the second largest meeting of the federation after the**

General Assembly held in September, it serves as an important forum for dialogue, coordination, and strengthening professional ties within the international critics' community.

Photos of the meeting

FIPRESCI supports children's cinema at Berlinale



Panel talk about visibility, responsibility, and the future of film criticism with the focus on children's cinema, hosted by Berlin Critics' Week, the European Children's Film Association (ECFA), FIPRESCI and the German Film Critics Association (VdFk).

Tarr Fragments



Hungarian film critic **György Báron** reflects on the life, legacy, and solitary grandeur of **Béla Tarr**, tracing the reverence surrounding the filmmaker across festivals, institutions, and audiences worldwide. Through fragments of memory and farewell, Báron considers what Tarr's cinema meant—and what it leaves behind in a changed world.

[Read here](#)

3. Juries

In February, FIPRESCI juries were held at:

- 76th Berlin International Film Festival
- 17th Bengaluru International Film Festival
- 55th International Film Festival Rotterdam

Among the winning films: ***Soumsoum, the night of the stars*** by Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, ***Animol*** by Ashley Walters, ***Gondhal*** by Santosh Davakhar...

Click [here](#) for the Berlinale FIPRESCI award ceremony pictures by our official photographer Muhammad Hamed.

All festival reports are available on our website



Rotterdam: Jake Wilson (Australia), Joyce Roodnat (The Netherlands), Gustavo Herrera Taboada (Peru), Jenny S. Li (China), Dina Pokrajac (Croatia)



Bengaluru: Laurentiu Bratan (Romania), Rekha Deshpande (India), VK Joseph (India)



Berlin: Jessica Matthys (Belgium), Saleem Albeik (Palestine), Aina Randrianatoandro (Madagascar), Alfredo Guillermo Friedlander (Argentina), Roberto Baldassarre (Italy), Dana Duma (Romania), Juan Carlos Lemus Polanía (Colombia), Rolf Rüdiger Hamacher (Germany), Amirata Joolae (Iran). Not in the picture : Yannis Raouzeos (Greece), Anne Küper (Germany), Ursula Kähler (Germany)

4. Next month...

What to look forward to in March:

- FIPRESCI Platinum Award to be announced at the **Sofia International Film Festival, Bulgaria.**
- FIPRESCI debut juries will attend **Malmö BUFF International Film Festival, CPH:Dox, and D'A Barcelona.**
- **Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival: Critics' panel discussion on "The rising importance of documentaries and how critics can deal with it"** at the Kanellopoulos auditorium inside the cinema museum at the Port of Thessaloniki, Wednesday March 11, 3-5 pm.

5. Outro

Farewell to Frederick Wiseman, who passed away on February 16.



Rest in peace, [Frederick Wiseman](#) (1930-2026), whose monumental documentary work over the decades included two FIPRESCI prizes: for *Near Death* (Berlin 1990) and *Ex Libris* (Venice 2017). FIPRESCI member Joshua Rothkopf wrote about *Ex Libris* in his Berlinale report: "In a perfect world, it would be a blockbuster, one ending with all viewers picking up newly minted or renewed library cards on the way out." **Full review** [available here](#).

GIF from *Titicut Follies*, 1967

See you next month !

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