

EKOFILM is one year away from turning 50. Starting today, filmmakers can submit films to be considered for the 49th edition of the festival.

Brno/Prague, 24 May 2023 - Starting today, filmmakers can submit their films to the 49th edition of EKOFILM. The oldest environmental film festival in the world, organised by the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, will take place again in Brno from 6th to 8th October 2023. This time it will focus on the topic of water. Filmmakers can submit films made after 1st January 2021 on the portal www.filmfreeway.com until the end of June. Registration fee is charged again this year. The amount will then be divided by the winning filmmakers as prize money. Twenty-five films will make it through to the competition finals and will compete for prizes in the individual competition sections as well as for the traditional Festival President's Award and the Grand Prix - the Main Prize of the Festival of the Minister of the Environment.

EKOFILM introduces the Czech audience to the world's top films. For Czech viewers, it is perhaps the only possibility to enjoy these films on the big screen, says Ladislav Miko, former Minister of the Environment and current member of the President's Advisory Council, who has been the President of the festival for the 8th year. I am convinced that this year will once again be a showcase of world-class quality.

A new feature this year is the opening of all three competition sections to creators worldwide. Traditionally, the competition for feature-length environmental films called Beauty of Nature will be complemented by the international competition for medium-length films and individual segments of documentary series called Visions of Nature. The competition section will be completed by a competition of short films with a new title In a Nutshell. *The format of medium-length films and single episodes of TV documentary series dealing with environmental issues cannot be missing at EKOFILM. In these shorter formats, filmmakers often deal with interdisciplinary encounters with ecology. The section will offer the audience environmental topics seen from the perspective of economics, sociology, architecture or philosophy. We have replaced the category originally covering Central European works with a section focusing on the overlapping of ecology on an international scale, explains festival programmer Jitka Kotrlová.*

This year the festival will be dedicated to the theme of water. *Water is essential for life on our planet and it is up to us to protect it. This year's theme focuses on the importance of water conservation and solving environmental problems linked to water. The Ministry of Environment has also dedicated this year's festival to water from a legislative perspective. We have introduced an emergency amendment to the Water Act, which should contribute to better dealing with accidents like the one on the Bečva River in the future, preferably so that they do not arise at all. The government also approved a new regulation that tightens the reporting threshold for cyanide. Constitutional water protection and a range of adaptation measures are also our priorities so that we do not lose water in the future due to*

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ongoing climate change. Our expectation is that the festival films and talks will contribute to the debate on how we can protect water and how each of us can contribute to improving the situation, says Environment Minister **Petr Hladík** on the upcoming 49th edition of EKOFILM.

The main festival venue should be the Scala cinema, as in previous years. *Since it is unclear at the moment whether the cinema will be open, we are already negotiating alternative venues*, says **Karel Hrivňák** from the Key Promotion agency. *The audience can certainly look forward to discussions at the Faculty of Social Studies and we have tentatively agreed with the Brno Zoo, where the EKOFILM family day should take place*, he adds.

A closer connection between the Brno Zoo and EKOFILM offers itself. We are united by nature conservation and the desire to show people that nature conservation is essential for the continuation of life on this planet, adds **Radana Dungalová**, Director of the Brno Zoo. The organisers will unveil the full programme at the beginning of September.

Festival's web: <http://www.ekofilm.cz>

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