

PRESS RELEASE

Monday, 17th July 2023

Minister McEntee launches cinema competition to mark 100th anniversary of film classification in Ireland

Competition one of a number of events to mark the centenary

Minister for Justice Helen McEntee TD has today (17.07.23) announced a series of events to mark the 100th anniversary of film classification in Ireland. One of the first pieces of legislation to be passed by the Irish Free State, the Censorship of Films Act 1923 was signed on 16th July 1923, setting up the office of Official Censor of Films. The focus has evolved over the years from censorship to classification, with the current body called the Irish Film Classification Office.

Events to mark the centenary include an in-cinema competition promoting awareness of the various film classification categories and a refreshed IFCO logo; an IFCO classification workshop on Culture Night (22nd September), and an event with the Department of Justice; the National Archives of Ireland and IFCO in October as part of the Decade of Centenaries.

The IFCO competition will commence in cinemas from today (17.07.23). The competition promotes the new IFCO logo and includes cryptic doodles of well-known films with an Irish connection over the past 100 years from each of the IFCO classification categories (G, PG, 12A, 15A, 16 and 18). The on-screen competition will challenge cinemagoers to identify the films, with an opportunity to win an iPad. The competition will run until 27th September 2023. Further details and the entry form can be found on the [IFCO website](#).

IFCO will host an event on Culture Night (22nd September) where the public will be invited to participate in a practical classification workshop at the IFCO Offices in Dublin. As part of this event, participants will be given an insight to how the IFCO guidelines are applied in practice to a piece of content.

Meanwhile, the Department of Justice, the National Archives of Ireland and IFCO will host an event in October to mark the Centenary of the Office, as part of the overall Decade of Centenaries. In addition to looking at the evolution of film censorship / classification over the last 100 years, the event will mark the start of a process to transfer remaining IFCO records to the National Archives. These records comprise the individual decisions on films reviewed by IFCO and its predecessors, and those subject to appeals to the Classification of Films Appeals Board.

Commenting, Minister for Justice Helen McEntee said: "Cinema has always been a huge part of Irish life, both in terms of entertainment and our creative output. I am delighted to see -

from the IFCO Annual Report 2022 - that the Irish cinema industry is returning to pre-COVID levels in terms of box office revenue and attendance. It is expected that revenues in 2023 could exceed the pre-pandemic peak of €119m in 2019. This is being driven by a strong slate of international releases and some fantastic Irish content, including *An Cailín Ciúin*, which was largely shot in County Meath.

"The evolution from censorship to classification over the past 100 years in a way reflects the growing confidence of our country and the self-assured, outward-looking, and diverse society that we are today. I look forward to the range of events that will be held over the coming months that will explore that journey.

"Film classification impacts cinema fans young and old the length and breadth of the country and it is important that parents, in particular, understand the classification system. I am delighted to launch this related cinema competition, which I think will challenge cinephiles' knowledge of the Irish cinema landscape."

Director of the Irish Film Classification Office, Dr Ciarán Kissane added: "We are delighted to have Minister McEntee kick-off our centenary celebrations today, starting with our logo refresh. While on the face of it, our logo change may seem minor, but it is hugely significant in representing the work of our Office. The change is from the red of 18s classification to the green of PG (parental guidance). This reflects the important guidance nature of our work - 75% of the theatrical certificates issued by IFCO in 2022 were with PG, 12A or 15A. These all allow parents and guardians to make the final decision about whether a film is suitable for children in the relevant age category. Only 10% were 16 or 18. We know from recent research that IFCO is trusted to provide reliable age ratings and this refresh maintains the strong association and heritage of the IFCO brand."

IFCO is currently running a public consultation on its draft Strategy Statement 2023-2025, which sets out its vision for audio-visual content regulation that empowers the public and promotes plurality.

Dr Kissane added: "The Office has evolved hugely over the past 100 years, from the strict censorship function of the 20th Century to the current classification remit that is more appropriate to our modern society. Our role in providing trusted guidance that reflects and shapes audience expectations remains the core of our activities. Our Strategy Statement will set the focus of the Office over the next three years, and we are interested in hearing from a diverse range of people on how we can best balance the right to freedom of expression with protecting audiences from harmful and illegal content. As part of this, we will gather feedback from our Culture Night event to inform the review of our Guidelines and we would encourage everyone with an interest in film classification in Ireland to have their say on our draft Strategy Statement."

Details of the Culture Night and Decade of Centenaries events will be announced in due course.

ENDS

Media Contact:

Síona Cahill/ Joanne Ahern, DHR Communications, Tel: 087-753 0255 / 087-988 1837.

Notes for Editors:

- Details of the IFCO classification system can be found on www.ifco.ie.
- The public consultation on the IFCO draft Strategy Statement 2023 – 2026 runs until 1st August 2023. Extensive research was carried out by IFCO and Behaviour & Attitudes to inform the strategy. The research and details of the public consultation can be found [here](#).
- Maxwell Photography will issue images to photo desks this afternoon to mark the launch of the IFCO competition.
- Dr Ciarán Kissane is available for interview, on request.