



# UNICA

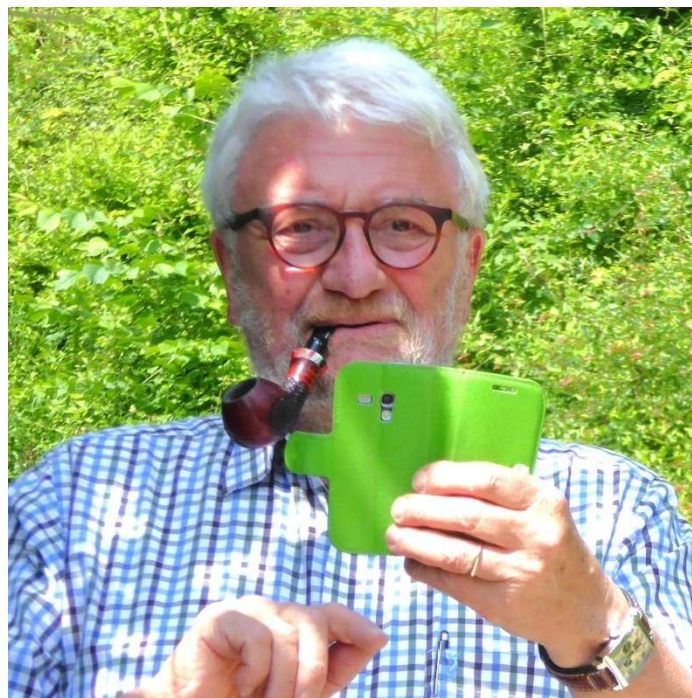
UNION INTERNATIONALE DU CINÉMA

MEMBRE DU CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DU CINÉMA, DE LA TÉLÉVISION  
ET DE LA COMMUNICATION AUDIOVISUELLE AUPRÈS DE L'UNESCO

## **UNICA mourn the loss of its former Vice President, BERNHARD LINDNER**

**Bernhard passed away on Sunday, 21 April 2024** in Plochingen at the age of 78.

I had often seen Bernhard Lindner, before I met him. When he was coopted to the UNICA Committee in 2014 to prepare a report on the choosing and workings of UNICA juries, I noted his quiet, calm demeanor. In 2015 he and I were both elected to the Committee. He remained Vice-President until the end of the COVID years in 2021.



Bamberg 2016 - Foto Rolf Leuenberger

He wasn't quiet and calm. He did not suffer fools gladly. He liked order. He embodied the old traditions of Deutsche Bahn, when that railway system was exemplary. But he rarely lost his temper. Control and dignity were always part of him. He also had a paternal, friendly nature. It was he, who taught me to build pauses into committee meetings. He wanted to smoke his pipe, but realised we would all be better for regular breaks.

There is a whole story to be told about Bernhard's work in clubs and the BDFA (the German film association). He started making films in 1962 and was a co-founder of the Regensburg Film Club in 1970. He was a member of the Esslingen Amateur Film Club (FACE) and of the film group of BSW Stuttgart. In the 2000s he rose to be a Vice-President of BDFA. That organisation will surely tell his story from their point of view and celebrate his work and his memory in its own publications.



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He had been a distinguished jury member, jury leader and interlocutor at national and international film festivals since 1978 (including among others UNICA, BRNO, IDAF, FISAIC). Within BDFA he was a jury expert of the Landesverband der Filmamateure (Regional Association of Film Amateurs) Baden-Württemberg since 1997.

His great areas of expertise for UNICA were the evaluation and analysis of problems and – outstandingly – as a jury co-ordinator helping jurors from many countries to work together at our festivals. His great mission became to help jurors do their job as well as possible, with all the support they might need.

His constant refrain was that he would like to make films again himself if he had more time, but “only” had enough time to watch films, discuss them and still learn from them.

He served on juries at UNICA 1989, 1996, 2004, 2010, 2013, 2015 and 2017. As a member or chairperson of the jury, he was always concerned to identify an author’s objective and themes from their films. He was interested in how the film maker chose to present their message. Although a self-confident man, he insisted on the need to collect and listen to various opinions in order to capture the full scope of the films.

On committee he would sometimes sigh as discussion drifted into byways, but he listened.

He was ready to tackle change. With Rolf Leuenberger and Eugy Van Gool, he worked on the plans for how UNICA might continue in the post-COVID years, when numbers of visitors were dropping and it was harder to find countries to serve as hosts. Those plans led to the “new UNICA” we have seen in Locarno and Comacchio, and will see in Poznan. Congress has become a shorter event which is significantly cheaper for both the organisers and visitors.

He was a tower of strength after I stepped down. Although he refused to take the title of President, that is the role he played as he guided UNICA through those difficult years of lockdowns, Zoom meetings and the impossibility of group travel. The whole UNICA family will admire his strength and determination as we sadly mourn his loss.

He is not forgotten. At every formal toast, I hear Bernhard insisting we “clink glasses at the bottom - where they are stronger.”

My last memory of him was at Pontelangorino near Comacchio, where we all enjoyed an excellent meal. When the band switched to faster rhythms, lots of people were dancing. In one corner Bernhard and Birgitta were jiving: both smiling and clearly very much in love.

*Dave Watterson*  
*Former UNiCA President*

