

AWARD WINNERS 2025

The 27th edition of East-West co-production market connecting cottbus (coco) is still ongoing with further matchmaking and networking events, yet this year's award winners of the two project sections – feature films in development in cocoPITCH and works in progress in cocoWIP – were announced tonight already:

The **cocoPITCH Audience Award**, a cash prize of €1,500, goes to the best pitch presentation of a project in development and is voted for by all industry participants. The audience chose **THE INSPECTOR'S DEBT** by director Teodora Markova and producers Kristina Despotova and Martin Markov (Mirrormind) from Bulgaria.

This year's cocoPITCH jury was comprised of Marianne Ostrat (Alexandra Film), Elisa Pirir (Stær) and Tommaso Priante (Luminalia), who deliberated on four awards:

The **Avanpost Award** was handed out to **THE INSPECTOR'S DEBT**, presented by director Teodora Markova and producer Kristina Despotova (Mirrormind) from Bulgaria. Romanian post-production outfit Avanpost will provide the project with in-kind services up to €15,000. Stated by the jury, "the filmmakers have made a smart and close observation regarding a recent shift in society and how women are perceived. They are expressing their concern about the erosion of empathy through a unique character and a moving story."

The Croatian Audiovisual Centre presented the **HAVC Project Development Award**, a €5,000 cash award towards the further development of one project. It went to **ASTANA INTERNET STARS** by director/producer Assel Aushakimova and producer Dana Sabitova (24 FPS) from Kazakhstan - "for the determination and braveness to bring to the international screen a genuine and rebellious portrait of a conservative society".

The **Producers Network Award**, consisting of free accreditation to the Producers Network at the Marché du Film in Cannes 2026, went to Valeria Borkovcová (nutprodukce, Czech Republic), the producer of cocoPITCH project **ATTENTION WHORES** (directed by Alica Bednářiková), "for her great potential and dynamism and to help Valeria gain momentum to consolidate her network and bring this upcoming project to an international spotlight".

The new **Phont Dynamic Subtitling Award**, consisting of up to €1,000 in-kind expressive and inclusive subtitling services in every language for the social media campaign of a cocoPITCH project, was handed out to Darya Zhuk's **EXACTLY WHAT IT SEEMS**, presented by producers Volia Chajkouskaya (Allfilm, Estonia) and Veta Krechetova (TurnstyleTV, USA). The jury chose the project "to amplify the voice of filmmakers forced into exile and support their effort in preserving a dying language as they bring on screen a cinematic love letter to their home country Belarus".

The **MIDPOINT Consulting Awards** went to three cocoPITCH projects, each receiving an in-depth script consultancy. The winners, announced by MIDPOINT's programme coordinator Soňa Morgenthalová, are **ASTANA INTERNET STARS** (director/producer Assel Aushakimova & producer Dana Sabitova/24 FPS, Kazakhstan), **ATTENTION WHORES** (director Alica Bednářiková & producer Valeria Borkovcová/nutprodukce, Czech Republic) and **SAROS** (director Ozan Yoleri & producers Ilgım Coşar/Monday Films and Sinan Kesova/Vigo Film, Turkey).

The 2025 cocoWIP jury was comprised of Alexandra Cruz (The Yellow Affair), Yianna Sarri (Hellenic Film & Audiovisual Center) as well as Lukáš Moudrý (Studio Beep) and Robert Wunsch (D-Facto Motion). They deliberated on two awards:

Sponsored by German post-production studio D-Facto Motion, the **D-Facto Motion WIP Award** of €35,000 in-kind services plus up to €1,000 for additional expenses went to Nikola Ljuca's **IS THE SKY BLUE?** (Serbia/Slovenia/Croatia/North Macedonia/Greece/Bosnia and Herzegovina/Montenegro), presented by producer Nikolina Vučetić (Biberche Productions, Serbia). Stated by the jury, "the project touched us with its strong and deeply moving characters, a well-crafted script, and a powerful story told in a unique and engaging way. It also tackles a socially relevant topic that feels both timely and important".

The **Studio Beep Sound Post-Production Award**, consisting of €6.000 in-kind services sponsored by the high-end studios based in the centre of Prague, was handed out to **THE LION AT MY BACK** (Cyprus/Luxembourg/Greece), presented by director/producer Tonia Mishiali (Bark Like A Cat Films, Cyprus). The jury selected the project "for its strong creative vision, very personal approach, and deep humanity".

Congratulations to all the winners!

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