

## Press release

Geneva, 15. September 2017

### The FIFDH becomes a Foundation

Driven by growing success and by the expansion of its activities, Geneva's International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH) has acted to reinforce its structure by becoming a foundation.

The FIFDH is an independent tribunal which takes place every March parallel to the session of the United Nations' Council on human rights.

Founded as an association, the Festival has gradually turned into a reference of international scale. Its approach is both artistic and social, while its forum format allows for filmmakers, activists, artists, human rights defenders and experts to convene and exchange in front of an audience of all ages. For its 15th edition in 2017, the Festival team organized 146 events in 43 locations across the Greater Geneva region, as well as in Lausanne, Orbe, Biel and the Vallée of Joux, attracting more than 36'000 festivalgoers.

To reinforce its governance and better prepare future developments, the FIFDH association, created in 2002 by its founder Mr. Léo Kaneman and presided over by Mrs. Cynthia Odier, has this week decided to pass the baton to the new FIFDH foundation. Mr. Bruno Giussani, European director of TED conferences, will preside the Foundation's council alongside Mrs. Marie Heuzé, vice-president of the Cartooning For Peace Foundation, Mr. Yves Daccord, director of the Red Cross, Jacques de Saussure, former senior partner of the Groupe Pictet, and Cyril Troyanov, lawyer and senior partner at the Altenburger Firm LTD legal+tax.

Mr. Kaneman will remain the Festival's Honorary President. The full operational team, led by Mrs. Isabelle Gattiker, will remain in place.

The shift in the Festival's governance takes place on the eve of the anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, signed on December 10th of 1948. *"70 years on, our moment in history is unfortunately marked by a decline in respect for human rights and challenges to the very notion of universal human rights"*, underlines Bruno Giussani. *"The festival will continue its commitment to the defence and promotion of human rights, retaining the strong moral vision of its founder Léo Kaneman and the successful drive which the Association instilled for over 15 years. We take this responsibility with utmost respect and admiration for the work accomplished"*.

*"The festival is both an observatory and an essential relay for those who fight around the world in often difficult and dangerous territories to uphold the defense of human dignity"*, claims Isabelle Gattiker. Its anchoring in Geneva places it at the center of a network of events and initiatives in favour of human rights around the world.

*"We plan on reinforcing our collaborations with the 160 partners who support the Festival, including many foundations and organisations both private and public, as well as the City of Geneva"*, claims Mrs. Gattiker. The role of the scientific council and the Circle of Friends of the Festival will also be expanded.

The next edition of the International Film Festival and Forum on human rights will take place in Geneva and in surrounding French-speaking Switzerland between March 9th and 18th 2018.

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