

Article – LUX Prize winner: "Petrunya is an example of cinema's power to change things"



“It’s a story of Petrunya, a young woman, who defies the rules of her society in order to seek justice and to find her true place in society.” That’s how the North Macedonian director described her film [*God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya*](#), which is a North Macedonia/Belgium/Slovenia/Croatia/France coproduction. Mitevska was inspired by a true story that took place in in Štip, a small town in North Macedonia five years ago, when a young woman caused uproar by taking part in – and winning- a race traditionally reserved for men.

In most of the Orthodox Christian world, the Epiphany holiday on 19 January is celebrated by means of a race for the holy cross that a priest throws into a lake or river. The cross is supposed to bring the winner good fortune for the whole year.

A story about gaining confidence and finding your true self

Petrunya is an overweight, 32-year-old, unemployed history graduate, who is constantly put down by her overbearing mother. When she finds herself in the place where the race for the cross is taking place, her impulse to jump in the freezing water comes from her frustration with the situation she is in.

“In the beginning she is almost an anti-hero, said Mitevska during a [Facebook live](#) after receiving the prize. “You don’t believe that she is capable of anything and then she empowers herself and realises her true self. And this is an important message especially for us women. I know for me confidence has been and actually still is a big problem. To be able to say ‘I have the right to do this’. This is what Petrunya goes through. It’s a feminist movie but we can all identify with the strife for justice.”

In the film, Petrunya causes uproar in the local community and the church accuses her of stealing the cross. Under pressure from the priest, the police inspector brings Petrunya to the station and puts her under pressure. “Why don’t I have the right to a year of good fortune?” she asks defiantly.

The power of cinema

“Petrunya is an example of the power of the cinema to change things,” said Mitevska, noting that when a young woman jumped for the cross in Štip this year, there was no fuss and the priest just gave it to her.

During the [award ceremony](#) on 27 November, Parliament President David Sassoli said: “Cinema is one of the many simple keys that can help us unlock the door to an understanding of the reality in which we live. The LUX Film Prize provides us with an extraordinary opportunity to do just that.”

[ESMA publishes responses to consultation on aligning MiFIR to the changes introduced by EMIR Refit](#)

27 November 2019

MiFID – Secondary Markets

Post Trading

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) has today published the responses it received to its consultation on aligning the Markets in Financial Instruments Regulation (MiFIR) requirements to the changes introduced by the revision of the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR Refit).

The responses are available on [ESMA’s website](#).

Press release – EU budget 2020 approved: investing more in climate, jobs and the young



Parliament has obtained altogether an additional €850 million for its priorities.

- Over half a billion euros more are ear-marked for climate-related expenditure;
- Plus €302 million for research projects;
- Plus €133 million for network infrastructure investments (Connecting Europe Facility)
- Plus €50 million for Erasmus+ and plus 28.3 million for the Youth Employment Initiative (with an additional €50 million to be added in 2020 if necessary);

Overall commitment appropriations for 2020 total €168.7 billion (1.5% increase as compared to 2019); payment appropriations total €153.6 billion (+3.4% over 2019).

Council formally approved the agreement reached with Parliament on 25 November, Parliament approved the budget on Wednesday by 543 votes to 136, with 23 abstentions. It was then signed into law by EP President David Sassoli.

Details on the budget agreement of 18 November [can be found here](#). Further background information can be [downloaded here](#).

Quotes

Members of the parliamentary negotiating team made the following statements during the plenary debate:

Johan Van Overtveldt (ECR, BE), Chair of the Committee on Budgets:

“This is a strong, responsible and future-oriented budget. We must have the courage to continue in this direction in the future. We must now opt for a long-term budget for 2021-2027 that does indeed take into account, in an explicit, clear and bold manner, our citizens’ needs. A budget that focusses on innovation, competitiveness, climate, infrastructure, security and migration management – which are the areas where Europe can absolutely offer added value compared to actions at national level.”

Monika Hohlmeier (EPP, DE), lead rapporteur (Commission section of the budget): “€850 million more for climate change, especially in the areas of research and innovation, young people and digitalisation. We have achieved a great deal to create jobs and increase the competitiveness of the European Union. We have succeeded in increasing the budget lines dealing with climate protection by €504 million and in ensuring that next year more than 21% of expenditure will be climate-related. This clearly exceeds the EU’s 20% target.”

Eider Gardiazabal Rubial (S&D, ES), rapporteur for the other sections: “This is a very positive agreement for the European Union. But we are still far away from the 1.3% GNI budget we are demanding for the long-term financial framework 2021-2027; far from the ambitious budget that could be a turning point in the fight against climate change and inequalities.”

Background information

Payments refer to what is to be concretely spent in the year of the budget, i.e. 2020. Commitments, on the other hand, are the whole amount that can be spent over several years for a given project or programme.

The European Parliament and the Council had 14 days from the date of the informal agreement (18 November) to approve the joint text. Once approved by both institutions, the President of the EP signs the budget and declares it definitively adopted.

[Press release – God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya” wins the Parliament’s 2019 Lux Film Prize](#)



President Sassoli congratulated the three finalists and said:

“It is not always easy to deal with the complexities of our daily work without getting caught up in the technicalities of parliamentary activities. We must also be able to communicate emotions and use new languages. The LUX Prize provides us with an extraordinary tool to accompany us in this endeavour. We must seize the opportunity to examine issues such as immigration, the right to healthcare, feminism and political ethics through the films showcased by the LUX Prize. Tackling the climate emergency, our colonial past, or discussing our model of society through cinema is a stimulating challenge that must be encouraged. We are the only Parliament in the world that awards a film prize. Let us be proud of it.”

The President added: “I want to say once again: we must be particularly proud of the LUX Prize, our Parliament’s prize, of the directors and authors we have had the privilege to meet. Long live freedom of expression, long live European cinema, long live the LUX prize!”.

[“God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya”](#) by Teona Mitevska, is co-produced in North Macedonia, Belgium, Slovenia, Croatia and France. It tells the story of a young unemployed woman who wins the race for the holy cross during the Orthodox ceremony of Epiphany. She suddenly has access to a religious tradition usually only open to men. The film is seen as a significant contribution to the feminist struggle against conservative societies.

The other two films shortlisted for the 2019 prize were: The documentary [“Cold Case Hammar skjöld”](#), a Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and Belgian co-

production by the Danish director Mads Brügger and “[The Realm](#)” by Rodrigo Sorogoyen, coproduced in Spain and France.

A press conference by EP Vice-President Klara Dobrev (S&D, HU), Culture Committee Chair Sabine Verheyen (EPP, DE) with the directors and producers who worked on the three films is scheduled after the award ceremony, for 15.30. Watch live [here](#).

More information on [2019 Lux Film Prize](#) and the [films selection](#) process.

[Press release – Parliament approves €4.5 million in EU aid to Greece after cyclone damage](#)



Between 23 and 26 February 2019, exceptionally heavy rain and storms hit Crete, in particular the western part of the island. The resulting floods and landslides caused the loss of human life and have had disastrous consequences on infrastructure and economic activities – roads and agriculture were particularly affected.

Now that the proposal has been approved by Parliament and Council (8 November), Greece should receive €4,552,517 in financial assistance, minus 10% (€455,252) already paid out to Greece as an advance, mainly to help restore transport infrastructure and support clean-up operations.

You can read about the initiative in the [Commission's proposal](#) and in the [draft report](#) by rapporteur [Eva Kaili](#) (S&D, GR), approved by 669 votes in favour, 7 against and 17 abstentions.

Background

The EUSF was set up in 2002 in response to disastrous flooding in central Europe in the summer of that year. A list of all [EUSF interventions](#) to date is available.

Money from the EU Solidarity Fund can be used to support reconstruction efforts and cover some of the costs of emergency services, temporary accommodation, clean-up operations and to protect cultural heritage, thereby relieving the financial burden borne by national authorities in the wake of natural disasters.