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PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday 31st January 2024

Increase in number of films classified for cinema release in 2023 – IFCO

Barbie tops both cinema and home entertainment charts

The Irish Film Classification Office (IFCO) classified a total of 1,134 theatrical works in 2023. This includes feature films, short films, and cinema trailers. While feature films (512) and shorts (17) were up 4% on 2019 figures, there was an 8.3% drop in the number of trailers submitted for classification (605). This coincided with the SAG-AFTRA actors' strike. Overall, the number of theatrical works classified last year is almost back to the 2019 pre-pandemic peak of 1,169.

In line with IFCO's role in providing trusted guidance, more than 75% of works classified for cinema screening were in the PG, 12A or 15A categories. Some 12% were in the 16s category. Seven per cent of films classified in 2023 received an over-18s certificate.

Films originating in the United States (28%) accounted for the most films categorised for Irish cinema release last year, marginally ahead of India (27%). This was followed by the UK (15%); Rest of the World (13%); Europe (11%) and Ireland (6%).

Total box office revenue was €101m, up 10% on 2022 figures. Barbie, Oppenheimer, and The Super Mario Brothers Movie were the top three cinema releases in 2023 in terms of box office revenue.

Commenting, Director of Film Classification, Dr Ciarán Kissane said: "Every film shown in cinemas in Ireland – bar cinema clubs – must be classified by IFCO ahead of screening. As the film classifier, our aim is to give audiences the information to allow them to make an informed decision on what they – or their children – see at the cinema. We publish our classification decisions on our website – www.ifco.ie - ahead of each film's release. This sets out clearly and simply our classification decision - more than 75% of the works we classified for cinema screening last year met the criteria for an advisory classification."

He added: "We are also pleased to see cinema returning to its 2019 pre-pandemic peak. The screen actors' and writers' strike, while focused in the US, had an impact here in the form of the number of movie trailers classified for Ireland. This is because the strikes resulted in uncertainty around the 2023/2024 release schedule. Last year, we classified 1,134 works for cinema release, in 2024, we anticipate this will be more than 1,200."

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IFCO is also responsible for classifying home entertainment DVD and Blu-Ray in Ireland. It classified 978 such works in 2023 (down from 1,532 in 2022). This comprised 542 feature films, 406 DVD extras (interviews etc), and 30 trailers. Just 5% of these received an over-18s rating. Just under 280,000 DVD and Blu-Ray discs were sold in Ireland in 2023. As with the 2023 cinema releases, Barbie, Oppenheimer, and The Super Mario Brothers Movie also topped the home entertainment charts, based on the number of units sold.

Dr Kissane said: "While the sale of DVDs and Blue-Ray discs for home entertainment was down by more than a quarter in 2023, compared with 2022 – it is still a significant market in Ireland. Sales declined by over 50% during the pandemic as shops were closed and streaming service subscriptions expanded rapidly. While the market for discs remains unpredictable, IFCO certification is required for all content that distributors want to make available in shops in Ireland. Therefore, home entertainment certification remains a core activity for the Office."

Details of IFCO's classification guidelines, along with its classification decisions for all current and upcoming cinema releases can be found on www.ifco.ie. As set out in its Strategy Statement 2023-2025, IFCO will publish a draft revised set of guidelines in 2024 as part of a public consultation process.

"Public engagement and feedback is important for all our activities. I look forward to hearing stakeholder views on the proposed change to our guidelines when these are published," Dr Kissane said.

IFCO is also introducing a new complaints process, which will come into effect on 1st February next. Details are available on the IFCO website.

"Our updated complaints procedure includes a commitment to publish complaints received and our responses on a more regular basis. In 2023, we received 26 complaints and all were resolved. In the majority of cases, people disagreed with the rating awarded or believed that additional information should have been included in the consumer advice. The complaints related to 13 different films classified in 2023, which is less than 1% of the total number of films classified that year. A list of the complaints received in 2023 and the issues raised is available on the IFCO website. Public feedback is a key information source for the classification guidelines review," Dr Kissane concluded.

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Note for Editors:

- Director of Film Classification, Dr Ciarán Kissane is available for interview, on request.
- The IFCO Theatrical and Home Entertainment Statistics 2023 are available [here](#). This includes the top 25 cinema releases and the top 20 home entertainment releases for 2023.
- IFCO's new Complaints Procedure and the list of complaints received in 2023 can be found [here](#).
- IFCO's Strategy Statement 2023-2025 can be found [here](#).
- IFCO's Classification Guidelines can be found [here](#).

About IFCO:

Oifig Aicmithe Scannán na hÉireann The Irish Film Classification Office (IFCO) is a statutory body established under the aegis of the Department of Justice. It is responsible for examining and certifying all cinema films and DVDs distributed in Ireland that are not otherwise exempt from classification. IFCO also licences retail and wholesale outlets that sell DVDs. Established on a statutory basis pursuant to the Censorship of Films Act 1923, the role of the Office has been expanded by the various censorship of films acts and the Video Recordings Act, 1989. Its name was changed from Film Censor's Office to The Irish Film Classification Office in 2008 to reflect its changing role - from censorship to providing age classifications and advice. The IFCO's decisions are legally binding, and all powers of prohibition remain. The decisions of IFCO are independent and can be appealed to the Classification of Films Appeal Board.