



## **A Successful Start for the New *European Film Market***

The Berlinale's new *European Film Market* (EFM) has kicked off to a successful start. The new infrastructure and venue of this year's EFM, which is being held in 2006 for the first time in the Martin-Gropius-Bau, has been well-received by the international representatives of the industry. With over 250 participating companies and approximately 650 films, the EFM has not only grown in size and significance, but has already been a huge success on its very first weekend.

Many participants of the new *European Film Market* have expressed their appreciation for both the efficient technical and organisational structure as well as the pleasant atmosphere which is also very conducive to working. "We are delighted at the positive response of the entire film branch – it by far surpasses our expectations", stated EFM director Beki Probst.

Visitors regard the unique architecture of the Martin-Gropius-Bau with its spacious historical atrium as a special attraction. There has also been much praise of the new and modern design of the Market booths, as well as the technical and electronic equipment. EFM visitors have also experienced the proximity of the EFM to the other Festival venues as completely unproblematic: the Shuttle Bus service between the two main locations at the Potsdamer Platz is practical and convenient.

A special highlight of the Berlinale and the new *European Film Market* was its official opening on February 10 by Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Minister for Cultural Affairs Bernd Neumann. They visited a number of booths of Market participants from different countries, informed themselves about the prospects of the German film market and of German film abroad. In conclusion they took time to talk personally with the representatives of international world distributors.

At a reception at the Ritz Carlton on Sunday, the new *European Film Market* celebrated this year's event together with 700 international guests including the Minister for Cultural Affairs Bernd Neumann. "After the first four successful days of the *European Film Market*, I think we should rename the Martin-Gropius-Bau and call it the 'Market-Gropius-Bau'", Berlinale director Dieter Kosslick joked during the reception.

So now, at the beginning of the second Festival week, the new *European Film Market* is well on its way to expanding and consolidating its position in the international film world.

Press Office

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