



# UNICA

UNION INTERNATIONALE DU CINÉMA

MEMBRE DU CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DU CINÉMA, DE LA TÉLÉVISION  
ET DE LA COMMUNICATION AUDIOVISUELLE AUPRÈS DE L'UNESCO

## **UNICA mourn the loss of a long-standing member of the committee, ALOIS URBANEK**

**On the night of 16 to 17 April 2024**, Alois Urbanek passed away peacefully in Vienna, Austria, at the age of 91.

Alois was not only president of the VÖFA, the Association of Austrian Film Authors, for 18 years, he was also a founding member of the AFC, the Amateur Film and Video Club Vienna, and its long-standing club leader. He became a member of the UNICA committee, in which he tried to expand the organisation, involve new young film authors and win friends all over the world for UNICA.



UNICA2012 - Foto Angelika Allin

But let's go back to his beginnings: Alois was Managing Director at Zeiss in Moscow for many years, developing cameras for surgical microscopes and shooting medical films. Even back then, he travelled all over the former Soviet Union and to the Far East.

Like many of us, he began with children's and family films. His passion for travelling welded his family together into a 'travel film team' with precisely defined tasks. On a trip to South America, he filmed from the roof of a train carriage in the Andes, using a tripod of course. A bicycle film tour took him and his family film team to China, which was still remote at the time. The result was the films 'The Journey to Quito', 'As a Cyclist to China' and others.



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At the time of normal 8 film and the beginning of the changeover to Super 8, it was Alois who founded a film club, the AFC, in Vienna in 1962 with people interested in the same thing. The clubhouse, which he and his family built in an abandoned cellar with dedicated new club members, still exists today and is the first address for film enthusiasts in Vienna with its impeccable projection and cosy atmosphere. As the club's director, he was also known for his cooking skills and the best '3-hood roast pork'.

But above all, he was a multi-obsessed film author, actor, cameraman and sound specialist with his 'Tonangel' with microphone. It was during the emerging video era that Alois promoted community projects in the club, a platform for creative work and community spirit. Titles included 'The last day of the year', 'Sherlock Holmes' and 'The last day of the year'. But as a UNICA visitor, who doesn't like to remember the Austria teasers as the opening credits of the national programme?

There is virtually no feature film production of the club in which he has not ensured the best sound recording quality with his 'fishing tackle'. The results were films for state and national champions and internationally successful trophies. The works 'Flashback' and 'Mein Wandelweg führt über Abgründe' remain in our memories.

The big hit for Alois and VÖFA was the 'Videowelten' programme on Bayern-Alpha-TV, a co-production between ORF and BR. Films by amateurs and authors were presented there for 5 years. 10 programmes with 50 minutes each per year and 80,000 hits.

We, my wife Angelika and I, got to know Alois and his wife Ilse as promoters and advisors of our own films. National and state championships, especially in the pleasant atmosphere of his club, were highlights of our film life.

Suddenly, UNICA was also an accessible destination for us. From 1988 onwards, at Alois' suggestion, we often travelled to Zagreb, Baden-Baden, St. Gallen, Hradec Kralove, Roermond, Blankenberge, Lido degli Estensi and so on until 2022 in Locarno.

It should be noted that the Austrian delegation at the UNICAs has always been one of the largest country representations thanks to its commitment.

A few days ago, we were able to enjoy the film 'The Great Race', a tribute to old age created by Alois and his club friends, at the national championship in Vienna/Burgenland. This race is now over for Alois.

We would like to end here with the words that Dr Ilse Urbanek gave her husband in April 2024:

**His reign may be over,  
but his story will live on in our hearts.  
In the silence of the end credits, love remains forever  
on the screen of our lives.**

*Wolfgang Allin*  
*Member of the UNICA Committee*

*Original text in German*