10 Years of Cultural Work. Zero Euros in Funding.

An Open Letter from Porn Film Festival Vienna on the Withdrawal of Its Public Funding

Vienna, 26 November 2026

Dear community, dear friends, artists, filmmakers, partners, and representatives of the arts, culture, politics and civil society,

2027 was supposed to be a special year for us. A year in which we would celebrate ten years of Porn Film Festival Vienna together with you. Ten years of cinema, art, bodies, pleasure, politics and community. Ten years of challenging social taboos, making alternative perspectives visible and creating spaces for open dialogue.

Instead, we now find ourselves questioning the future of our festival.

According to the funding figures published today by the City of Vienna, Porn Film Festival Vienna (PFFV) is the only film festival within the respective funding round to have its entire municipal funding withdrawn. As a direct consequence, we are also losing our federal funding.

We are shocked, disappointed and struggling to comprehend this decision.

We are aware of the difficult financial situation facing the City of Vienna and recognise that many cultural institutions are currently dealing with substantial budget cuts. However, there is a fundamental difference between a reduction in funding and the complete withdrawal of public financial support.

Why us, of all festivals?

What Is At Stake

Since our founding in 2018, our festival has repeatedly been reduced to its name. Particularly from the political right, there have been recurring attempts to delegitimise our work, condemn pornography outright and dismiss the festival as something obscene or culturally irrelevant. Smut. Dirt.

Anyone who has genuinely engaged with our programme and our work, however, knows that Porn Film Festival Vienna stands for something fundamentally different.

We are an independent, body-positive, queer-feminist film and cultural festival and have grown into one of Austria's most widely attended queer film and cultural events.

We showcase independent, artistic, feminist and ethical forms of pornography. We present films that challenge patriarchal perspectives, stereotypical gender roles, normative body ideals and dominant representations of sexuality. We provide a platform for artists and filmmakers whose perspectives are often excluded from both commercial mainstream pornography and established cultural institutions.

We stand for responsible and ethical filmmaking that prioritises fair working conditions, informed consent, bodily autonomy and the respectful treatment of everyone involved. We explicitly oppose exploitation, particularly of women* and marginalised people, as well as discriminatory and patriarchal power structures within film production.

Our work extends far beyond the cinema screen. Through exhibitions, workshops, lectures, performances and discussions, we create spaces for cultural education, critical media literacy, empowerment and public dialogue.

For years, we have also been actively working to remove barriers, embed accessibility and inclusion within our festival structures, and enable meaningful and self-determined cultural participation for people with diverse access needs.

Yes, we show pornography. And we critically engage with it.

In a society where pornographic images are omnipresent and accessible at any time, it is essential to critically examine these images, their conditions of production, the power structures behind them and the ideas about sexuality they convey.

Turning pornography into a taboo does not make it disappear. It simply means giving up opportunities to foster a critical, informed and self-determined engagement with it.

We Need These Spaces Now More Than Ever

After almost ten years of festival work, we increasingly felt that the issues we stand for were finally becoming part of mainstream public discourse.

That we could speak openly about sexuality, desire, wishes, boundaries, queer lives and different forms of intimacy. That these conversations were no longer defined exclusively by shame, fear or moral prejudice.

We had hoped to celebrate this development alongside our tenth anniversary.

In a society that continues to face femicides, sexualised violence, rape culture, patriarchal power structures and queerphobia, a feminist and sex-positive engagement with sexuality is more important than ever.

We need spaces where we can discuss not only the problematic aspects of sexuality, but also what respectful, consensual, equitable and self-determined sexuality can look like.

We need spaces where people can explore their own desires and boundaries, question social norms and gain a better understanding of different lived experiences.

We need cultural initiatives that recognise sexual diversity not as a marginal issue, but as an integral part of our society.

The decision to withdraw public funding from a platform that has been dedicated to precisely this work for years, at this particular moment, is incomprehensible to us.

A Troubling Cultural Policy Signal That Extends Far Beyond Our Festival

For years, Porn Film Festival Vienna has been the target of repeated political attacks by the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ). As recently as June 2026, representatives of the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) publicly defended our festival's funding in the Vienna City Council.

What has changed so fundamentally within just a few months?

Has our cultural work become less relevant? Have issues of sexual self-determination, gender equality, inclusion and queer visibility become less urgent?

Given the repeated political attacks from the right over the past years, we inevitably have to ask what kind of cultural policy signal this decision sends. We cannot and do not want to believe that it is in the interest of a Social Democratic-led Vienna city government to weaken precisely those cultural spaces whose legitimacy has been repeatedly questioned by the political right.

For this very reason, we expect the Vienna city government to demonstrate a clear commitment to queer, feminist and sex-positive cultural work, artistic freedom and social diversity.

Vienna presents itself as a progressive, open-minded and diverse cultural city. We expect these values to be reflected in its actual cultural policy decisions. Queer and feminist cultural work must not be welcome only when it is politically convenient and does not challenge established social norms.

Given these circumstances, we can only assume that this decision is based on a fundamental misunderstanding. We call on the Vienna city government to engage with the actual content and social relevance of our work, reconsider its funding decision and reverse course.

We are, of course, ready to enter into constructive dialogue with the responsible political decision-makers. However, we also expect a transparent explanation and a clear cultural policy position.

Ten Years of Building Cultural Infrastructure Together

Porn Film Festival Vienna is an independent, non-profit cultural initiative sustained to a significant extent by voluntary work.

Behind the festival are countless hours of unpaid labour, personal investments, international collaborations, artistic commitment and a community that has grown over many years.

Public funding enables us to continue this work under challenging economic conditions. Ticket sales and other sources of independent income alone cannot cover the costs of an international film and cultural festival of this scale.

What is being threatened is therefore not simply a single festival edition. It is the networks, partnerships, cultural spaces, knowledge, trust and international relationships that have been built over many years. It is a cultural infrastructure that cannot simply be rebuilt overnight.

Now We Need Your Solidarity

We address this open letter not only to the Vienna city government, but to everyone committed to a diverse, inclusive and free cultural landscape. To the Austrian and international film and cultural sectors. To feminist and queer organisations. To artists, academics, cultural workers and our audiences.

We ask you to help make this situation visible, share our statement, take a public stand and activate your networks.

We welcome personal and institutional statements of solidarity, letters of support and collective initiatives. Because this is about far more than the future of a porn film festival. It is about the place of sexual self-determination, queer visibility, feminist cultural work, inclusion and artistic freedom in our society. It is about the cultural spaces we collectively want to preserve and the issues that must continue to have a place in public discourse.

For almost ten years, we have worked to challenge the stigma surrounding sexuality and bring it into the heart of public and cultural discourse.

We are not prepared to give up this work.
We want to celebrate our tenth anniversary with you in April 2027. And in the years to come, we want to continue creating the spaces that our society so urgently needs.

Thank you for standing with us.

With love and in solidarity,

Yavuz Kurtulmus & Jasmin Hagendorfer
Festival Directors
and the entire Porn Film Festival Vienna team

10 YEARS OF BODIES, PLEASURE, POLITICS, CINEMA AND COMMUNITY.

Porn Film Festival Vienna
10th Anniversary Edition | 14–20 April 2027
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