

## University Mozarteum and Freeszfe Budapest: First diplomas for Hungarian students in the cooperation program „Emergency Exit“

On October 12th, the first eight Hungarian drama students received their diplomas as part of the “Emergency Exit” cooperation program of the Mozarteum University and the Freeszfe Budapest.

*Salzburg, October 13, 2021*

In her welcoming speech, **Rector Prof. Elisabeth Gutjahr** spoke of a „historic moment“ and thanked the Hungarian colleagues and students for their courage and commitment to democracy. The **chairman of the Senate of Mozarteum University, Univ.-Prof. Christoph Lepschy** pointed out that „solidarity in this cooperation is mutual and that we urgently need such alliances in view of the endangerment of democratic values in Europe.“

„Emergency Exit“ is a cooperation between Freeszfe (former students and teachers of the Budapest University for Theater and Film Art (SZFE)) and five European universities (Mozarteum University Salzburg, Academy for Performing Arts Baden-Württemberg, Aleksander-Zelwerowicz-Theater Academy Warsaw, Accademia Teatro Dimitri and Film Academy Vienna (mdw)).

The aim of the program is to promote international cooperation among students and to enable SZFE students to graduate from other European universities after the university’s autonomy was destroyed by a so-called „model change“ and its decision-making powers were taken over by a government-related board of trustees.

The Freeszfe association then made it its task, in cooperation with other European universities that recognize the previous achievements of the students, to enable students and teachers to continue studying together after leaving the SZFE and to acquire an official European degree at the end of their studies.

The “Emergency Exit” initiative was also awarded the **European Citizens’ Prize by the European Parliament** in July. Since 2008, the award has honoured initiatives that contribute to European cooperation and the promotion of common values. The award goes to people or organizations who promote mutual understanding and closer integration between people in the EU, cross-border cooperation that creates a stronger European spirit, and initiatives that value the EU values contained in the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights.

On the following day, the cooperation between Freeszfe and the Mozarteum University will be continued in a series of workshops at the Thomas Bernhard Institute in which students from Salzburg and Budapest work together.