PRESS RELEASE

**Pohoda festival ranked among the top 10 independent festivals in Europe**

**The selection of the best independent festivals in Europe has been made by the prestigious British magazine IQ, dedicated to music professionals worldwide.**

With so much of the European festival scene now falling under the management of multinationals, it is a great rarity that despite the corporatisation some festivals manage to maintain their independence.

IQ magazine's James Hanley asked the director of Slovakia's Pohoda what are the advantages of a festival remaining independent. **“Total freedom with all decisions – starting from creating the festival and ending with budgets. I don’t want to make some big border between independent and corporate festivals – there are some great corporate festivals with great people doing them – but we can do what we want. I’m a little bit afraid that those festivals will become too similar, too uniform, and that’s why independence is very important and plays a very crucial role in the music scene. We choose our partners very carefully: we don’t work with oligarchs, we don’t work with companies that don’t have the same value as our festival. And we are doing our best to also be independent from the state, from public funds, because we want to continue to take risks, as we did when we started. I was 13, we were part of the Slovakian alternative scene, which was strongly against the communist regime, so I want to keep hold of that freedom,”** Michal Kaščák replies.

Other festivals that made the cut were Shambala from the UK, Hellfest from France, Exit from Serbia, Montreux Jazz Festival from Switzerland, Das Fest from Germany, Rock for People from the Czech Republic, Bilbao BBK Live from Spain, OPEN'ER from Poland and Ghent Jazz from Belgium.

**“I see it as very important that we are open to all ages. We have a big family park with a good quality programme for kids. When I was at Glastonbury for the first time, I saw that it was a meeting of all generations, and I took that as very symbolic as we didn’t have free festivals during the communist regime, so there was a big gap between the generations. For example, my parents’ generation was not able to go to free festivals, and we did our best to also make them feel welcome. So the majority are young people aged between 20 and 30, of course, but we also have a few thousand kids and older people every year,”** Michal Kaščák tells IQ magazine when asked what sets Pohoda apart from other festivals.

The Pohoda organisers are incredibly grateful that, despite the global corporatisation of festivals, they are still able to offer visitors an independent and free festival of world-class standard, and that thanks to this they are able to keep Slovakia on the music map, not only in Europe.

Pohoda has also recently started announcing the names for the 2024 edition. After the first Slovak name, the legendary **Le Payaco**, the first foreign name was announced last week. It was the **British band DEADLETTER**, whose mix of post-punk and saxophone works fantastically. If you like the liveliness of the Viagra Boys or the dance-punk rhythms of LCD Soundsystem, DEADLETTER will instantly get under your skin.

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**Pohoda Festival Website:**
[www.pohodafestival.sk](http://www.pohodafestival.sk)

**PressKit – Pohoda 2023:**
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10pjNr9XUxpo6CWM4t-3lygdhYJ7SrbGp>

**IQ Magazine Article:**
<https://www.iq-mag.net/2023/09/ten-of-europes-brightest-independent-festivals/>

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