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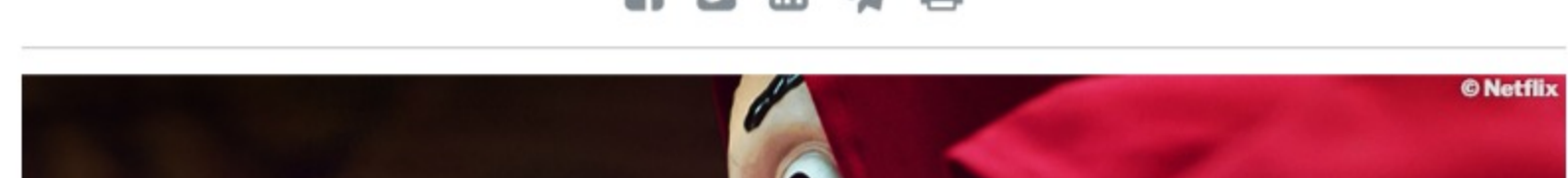
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Conecta in Toledo: TV production country Spain is on the rise




Over the past ten years, TV production in Spain and in Spanish in Latin America has experienced a real boom - not least thanks to streaming services in search of diversity. This has given rise to a new self-confidence.

by Thomas Lückerrath on 17.06.2024 - 16:02

With series such as "Narcos", "House of Money" (in the Spanish original "La casa de papel") and "Elite", Netflix in particular has played a very large part in the fact that the non-Spanish-speaking world has presumably spent more time with Spanish-language productions than ever before in recent years. So it was no surprise when Netflix established its first European production site in the greater Madrid area in 2018. It initially moved into three studios in the Ciudad de la Tele (TV City) in Tres Cantos in the north of the Spanish capital. In 2022, the streamer expanded its activities and added more studios to its production space, making it the largest European hub for the streaming service to date.

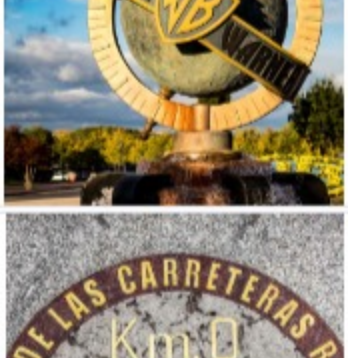


But Netflix is certainly not alone in its love for Spain, Amazon is also investing heavily. In addition to the streaming services, the European production and distribution company Beta Film has also identified Spain as a source of exciting productions in recent years, after Italy, and has distributed TV series such as "Grand Hotel" and "Velvet" internationally. "In Spain, we are currently experiencing what Scandinavia experienced a few years ago: producers who long to play internationally," explained Beta Film boss Mojto in an interview with DWDL in 2014 at the start of the boom.




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In the USA, the Spanish-language broadcaster Univision has been making headlines since 2010 with ratings that many English-language networks in the United States can only dream of. In the now fully digital and thus even more borderless globalized TV market, the world language Spanish is developing into a significant economic factor for growth.

More genres, more budget, more than telenovelas

It was different just 20 years ago: Telenovelas from South America were only seen as possible templates for adaptations in the USA or elsewhere. For example, "Yo soy Betty, la fea" from Colombia, which was adapted in Germany as "Verliebt in Berlin" and in the USA as "Ugly Betty" in a completely different way and completely adapted to local customs. That was all there was to it. In the original, these productions were only a minor success in international sales, if at all. Spanish-language productions were often only produced for local markets, not even sold to Spanish-speaking countries. In the telenovela genre in particular, the oversupply in some markets was so great that there was rarely a need to buy from linguistically related countries.

It was only with the advent of streaming services that people started thinking more about borders. Production budgets grew and genre diversity increased. This helped Spain as a production location, which - although cheap - could not keep up with the even cheaper telenovelas from Latin America. Another effect that fueled everything: the audience of global streaming services' new openness to series from non-English-speaking countries. And not only there: The great Vox success "Club der Roten Bänder", for example, was based on the Catalan series "Polsers Vermelles". In the original or as an adaptation, TV made in Spain became increasingly popular from 2014/2015.



More demand, more budget and a global language that faces Anglo-American productions with new self-confidence, although fortunately certain signatures have remained unchanged. For example, the love for a certain glossy look that is still often noticeable, as in the Netflix hit "Elite", where the telenovela heritage is still clearly noticeable in the later seasons with all sorts of twists and surprises. It would also be a shame if such individual qualities of individual markets were to completely dissolve in favor of internationalized productions.

8. Connect Fiction & Entertainment in Toledo

This week, Conecta Fiction & Entertainment is taking place in Toledo, Spain. It is no coincidence that it was held for the first time in 2017, parallel to the boom in Spanish-language productions. The focus partners this time are Brazil and Portugal, not least because the next hurdle has been overcome in the non-English-speaking production market: after the intensified cooperation between Spanish-speaking markets, the focus is now on the wider picture, to our Portuguese-speaking neighbors. DWDL.de will report from Toledo.



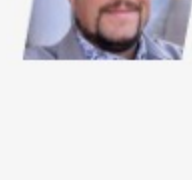
Highlights of the three-day congress program include the "Commissioners Pitching Sessions," in which buyers from Prime Video, Disney, RTI-Mediaset Group, Movistar Plus+, Rakuten TV, Max España, RTVE, Globo and ZDF talk about their programming needs and programming strategy. The Spanish public broadcaster RTVE gives an outlook on upcoming serial productions, including "Weiss & Morales," a crime co-production with ZDF that was shot in the Canary Islands. Disney is strongly represented and is celebrating the premieres of the Brazilian Disney+ series "Vidas Bandidos" and the Spanish young adult series "Ayla & the Mirrors."

It will be exciting to look at the material and genres pitched in Toledo in the coming days: What trends can be identified? What further developments, for example in highly serialized material, can be observed? After all, some streaming services are discovering the appeal of more horizontally narrated, possibly long-running series. "Maxton Hall", which is now Prime Video's most successful non-English-language original, is also following in the footsteps of "Elite"'s success and has already gone into production of the second season in no time.

Competition between European locations intensifies

But Spain also has a completely different interest in visitors from other European countries: With the expansion of production capacities in the country that has been pushed forward for years, not least through the activities of Netflix, Spain now wants to offer itself much more aggressively as a production location for European projects. The infrastructure has been upgraded, the framework conditions have been made more practical. And this at a time when competition between European locations for the next major productions is becoming fiercer. It is not without reason that the German production landscape despairs at the dormant German media policy when it comes to introducing new film funding.

In recent years, it has been the Czech Republic and its capital Prague in particular that has benefited from the inactivity and lack of direction of German funding. Other Eastern European countries have also stepped up their efforts, and since the beginning of 2023 Austria has also had a new film funding program ahead of Germany. Now Spain is also coming around the corner - and not just with better weather, but with a comprehensive catalog of support that one can only look at from Germany with a certain amount of envy. Because without a world language like Spanish, it would be all the more important to drum up support for the location.



About the author


Thomas Lückerrath is the founder and editor-in-chief of the media magazine DWDL.de. He had square eyes before binge-watching existed. He loves series, the format business and the international TV business. He spends more time on the road than at his desk.

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News ticker

- 15:33 Amazon previews Julien Bam's YouTube series
- 2:18 p.m. Johannes Hauner becomes co-head of the "Süddeutsche Zeitung"
- 12:30 pm BBC separates from horse racing tips, Sky shows John Oliver only online
- 12:29 pm "It is by no means the case that we are primarily cutting back on the programme"
- 11:18 am ZDF and RTL collect football fans in union
- 10:43 am "Kohlrabenschwarz" finds new home at MagentaTV
- 10:22 am RTLzwei brings back Petridou's "Retourenjäger" in July
- 09:19 am "In aller Freundschaft" also the first European Championship pursuer among viewer players
- 08:54 am Despite the Austrian spectacle on RTL - Football fans prefer to watch ZDF
- 08:20 am Almost a boycott: Authors' association at loggerheads with Munich Film Festival



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