

Distributors expand programme catalogues

Feel-good TV in turbulent times

Munich – The turbulences surrounding the euro- and debt-crisis have not yet arrived for German programming distributors. Business is good, and basically most of them are reckoning with a successful outcome at the Mip-Com in Cannes – if everything stays in the way it is.

"Expectations are naturally quite high and we are hoping that important countries such as Italy and Spain do not get into serious economic difficulties", says Eric Welbers, Managing Director of Beta Film. A bitter pill in the run-up to the most important TV trade-fair: "The forecast, that advertising markets could soon collapse again, hangs above us like a Damocles sword. Nevertheless, business is still going well for us, and we are not yet affected by the mood of crisis." In view of worldwide economic turmoil and uncertainties, the trend towards feel-good-TV should become even stronger in Cannes. This is expected for instance by Jens Richter, CEO of SevenOne International: "This includes

comedy in all its variations, or even content that offers a feeling of encouragement, always in connection with those strong characters involved in each story." The present situation for Richter is "magnificent": "because we are internationalising ourselves more and more." This is also demonstrated by the most important production, which will be offered by ProSiebenSat.1-global distribution in the South of France: The Red Arrow in-house production "You Deserve It" is to become a series – for ABC in the USA. This ought to further stimulate interest in the show from stations in other countries. In this show, candidates wage bets for people in need. With a strengthening of the "factual" genre, Richter intends to more intensely supply the English-language market in future. This is also the background for the new SevenOne International office in Los Angeles, which opened this year in the spring. Eighteen months ago this Munich-based firm took over the US production firm Kinetic, and with the "Louie Spence Dance Project" there is now a production of the subsidiary company under way. According to Richter, this six-part reality documentary about the choreographer and dance tutor Louie Spence is one of the most important programmes from SevenOne International at this year's trade fair. A further highlight is the drama series

"Scandinavian thrillers are alternatives to US"

Alexander Coridass
Managing Director
ZDF Enterprises

Profound emotions, made in Germany; „Rosamunde Pilcher: This September“ from Tele München International

"Lilyhammer". Starring Steven van Zandt ("Sopranos") and devised as a mixture of crime story and comedy set in Norway, Richter hopes to score several points with the buyers: "In the international market, Scandinavian drama has a very high rating. This is among other things due to the fact that the remake of 'The Killing' on ABC succeeded very well indeed and the second season has just been ordered."

Beta Film also intends to chalk up sales successes with the North-American crime series "King" in Cannes. "We have been selling this very well up to the present, and now it is going into its second season", says Welbers, who also points out that the "Borgia" series will not make any significant impact this autumn. Instead, the opportunity should be taken at the trade fair to draw attention to upcoming large projects from Beta: for instance "Generation War", "Munich 72" and "Rommel". Alexander

Coridass, CEO at ZDF Enterprises, confirms that among the fictional genres, Scandinavian crime series continue to enjoy "great popularity": "They succeed as a genuine alternative to US crime series. Their success will certainly continue with many first-class and innovative productions – for instance with

International co-production continues to be the trend

'Arne Dahl' or 'The Bridge'. Furthermore, we basically expect exciting crime-drama productions from other territories as well." And thus, along with other important productions there is "The Bridge" which ZDF Enterprises brings along to Mip. At centre stage of its ten episodes, each of 60 minutes, there is a Swedish-Danish investigator duo. With the Finnish crime series "Vares", Bavaria Media al-

so places a Scandinavian crime drama at the centre of its sales activities. Bavaria Media distributes this series worldwide except in Scandinavia. The first three "Vares" movies have already been successfully screened in cinemas in Finland. "This movie series is yet another important step in our strategy of integrating attractive, international programmes into our portfolio and of intensifying our connections to top-class production houses such as Solar Film", says Philipp Kreuzer, Vice President International & Co-Production at Bavaria Media. With "Line 32" from the Netherlands, Bavaria Media has a further international series in its sales catalogue. The theme for the production of IDTV for the public channels KRO and NCRV is: Terrorists plan an attack on an urban bus. Eight episodes are available from the series. As far as the trend towards expensive international co-productions with event-char-

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