Deal-making is still name-of-the-game in ZDFE’s landmark year

GERMANY’s ZDF is marking a wealth of achievements at this market. Like MIPTV, the public broadcaster is 50 this year. Its distribution arm, ZDF Enterprises (ZDFE), is celebrating its 20th anniversary, and ZDFE president and CEO, Alexander Coridass, has reached his own landmark of 30 years in television this year.

“At MIPTV, we close deals — both buying and selling — in the three-digit million euro range,” said Coridass, who is using MIPTV to debut ZDFE’s new genre-based company structure, which has seen it remodelled into four divisions: ZDFE.junior, ZDFE.drama, ZDFE.factual and ZDFE.entertainment.

“For us rights-dealers, MIPTV and MIPCOM are the most important international showcases for our main activities of programme acquisition, sales, co-production and merchandising,” he said.

Reflecting on this market’s focus on premium content, including high-end dramas with built-in marketing potential, Coridass said: “Premium content has always been a big theme, but in the past people simply called it programming! Jokes aside, ZDFE has always been known for its top-quality programmes in all genres.”

Drama, in particular, has long been a ZDFE forte. “It began with our global marketing of ZDF thrillers, before we discovered Scandinavian crime shows for the German, European and worldwide markets,” Coridass said. “Wherever there are new trends, you can be sure that we’re not far away. For example, we’re distributing the hacker series Cybergeddon by CSI creator Anthony E Zuiker.”

Looking to the future, Coridass said: “In 10 years, we will still be watching TV exactly as we are today, yet very differently. ‘Exactly as today’ because such a deeply ingrained custom will not be changing fast and because we will still want to be where the action is for important news coverage, big shows and sports events. And ‘very differently’ because TV-on-demand will by then be a common component of television. We will have lots more choices of programmes, which is why fewer and fewer people will be watching the same thing at the same time. They’ll be using a variety of devices too. So our consumer habits will change, but one thing will remain the same: we will need professionals to produce and sell moving images that capture our attention.”