Writers and directors of film and TV/SVOD fiction
2015-2022 figures

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Introduction and methodology
This report provides an analysis of writers and directors of European theatrical films and TV/SVOD fiction produced in Europe* between 2015-2022.

The data

The underlying data used in this report come from different sources:

- In a first step, a list of works produced between 2015 and 2022 was built using the Observatory LUMIERE database (for theatrical films) and the annual survey of the Observatory (for TV/SVOD fiction).
- In a second step, the directors and writers of each individual work were identified using the Observatory LUMIERE database (for directors of theatrical films) and IMDb (for the other positions).
- In total, close to 30,000 different creators were identified. The graph on the next page provides details on how these creators have been active in the writing and/or directing of theatrical films and/or TV/SVOD fiction.

Limits

- The identification rate of directors and writers varies; in particular, for TV/SVOD fiction, the sample is less representative with regard to daily telenovelas/soaps.
- The data relies on films and TV/SVOD fiction works which were actually released. Directing or writing assignments for the development of works which were ultimately not released are therefore not included.

The structure of the report

- The report successively reviews theatrical film and TV/SVOD fiction writers and theatrical film and TV/SVOD fiction directors.
- In each section, details are provided regarding the overlap between positions (e.g. writers also credited as directors) or between types of works (e.g. directors involved both in theatrical films and TV/SVOD fiction).

* Europe: EU27+United Kingdom, Norway and Switzerland.
Key findings
The strong growth in the production of European TV/SVOD series since 2015 logically led them overtaking theatrical films in terms of writing and directing assignments*. This trend seems to have been confirmed by the COVID-19 crisis which hit theatrical films much harder.

Against this background, writers and directors seem to be migrating from theatrical films to TV/SVOD fiction. About half of TV/SVOD directors have indeed directed a theatrical film at some point, but directors rarely return to directing theatrical film:
  o Because of the high turnover in theatrical film directing (only 1.4 films directed by director between 2015 and 2022; about 40% of theatrical films produced each year are debut films) and therefore the work opportunities are rare;
  o and because TV/SVOD series offer more recurring work (several episodes and sometimes several seasons).

The move to TV/SVOD series also offers screenwriters several advantages:
  o on the one hand TV/SVOD series provide more work (several episodes and sometimes several seasons) and there are more screenwriters per project;
  o on the other hand, while almost half of the writing assignments for theatrical film are captured by the director of the work, screenwriting is much more decoupled from directing for TV/SVOD series, with many more screenwriting-only assignments.

Overall, however, the boom in TV/SVOD series production has not led to less precariousness, as the number of active screenwriters and directors in this segment has grown faster than the number of assignments; in other words, theatrical films assignments are quite stable and TV/SVOD series assignments are competitive as film directors and screen writers move into the segment.

*For TV/SVOD series: 1 assignment = 1 season, no matter the number of episodes written or directed.
Key findings: Overview of writers’ and directors’ activities

The sample includes close to 32 000 creators active in writing and/or directing theatrical films and/or TV/SVOD fiction between 2015 and 2022. The graph illustrates the overlaps between positions and type of works: strong between writers and directors; limited between theatrical and TV/SVOD fiction.

- All creators: 31 684
  - Active only as writers: 50%
  - Active only as directors: 18%
  - Active as writers and directors: 32%

- Active writers: 25 925
- Active directors: 15 961

- Active only in film: 52%
- Active only in TV/SVOD fiction: 36%
- Active in film and TV/SVOD fiction: 11%
**Key findings: Selected key figures by category**

**FILM WRITERS**
Between 2015 and 2022:
- 16,600 active writers
- 49% wrote only films they directed
- 1.4 films (co)written
- 1.8 writers per film including writers also directors; 0.9 “stand-alone” writers

**FILM DIRECTORS**
Between 2015 and 2022:
- 13,200 active directors
- 40% director debuts each year
- 1.4 films (co)directed
- 1.2 writers per film

**TV/SVOD FICTION WRITERS**
Between 2015 and 2022:
- 11,900 active writers
- 1.7 projects (co)written, representing 14.2 episodes or TV films*
- 4 writers per project

**TV/SVOD FICTION DIRECTORS**
Between 2015 and 2022:
- 5,300 active directors
- 2.2 projects (co)directed, representing 14 episodes or TV films*
- 2.1 directors per project

*Excluding seasons with more than 52 episodes.
Writers of theatrical films and TV/SVOD fiction
Close to 26,000 writers (co)wrote at least one theatrical film or one TV/SVOD fiction between 2015 and 2022.

The COVID-19 crisis impacted significantly more film writers than TV/SVOD fiction writers.
About half of theatrical film writers active between 2015 and 2022 only (co)wrote films they also (co)directed.

Conversely, active TV/SVOD fiction writers mainly write works they do not direct.
78% of theatrical films writers active between 2015 and 2022 only wrote one film.

Active TV/SVOD fiction writers took part in close to 2 projects representing about 3 TV seasons.

Activity of theatrical film writers (2015-2022)

- On average 1.4 films (co)written between 2015 and 2022
- 80% of writers (co)wrote only one film
- 20% of writers (co)wrote on average 2.8 films

Activity of TV/SVOD fiction writers (2015-2022)

- All TV/SVOD fiction:
  - On average involved in 1.8 TV/SVOD film or series between 2015 and 2022
  - Representing 3.0 TV/SVOD films or TV seasons
  - Representing 38.1 TV/SVOD films or episodes

- Excl. seasons with more than 52 episodes:
  - On average involved in 1.7 TV/SVOD films or series between 2015 and 2022
  - Representing 3.0 TV/SVOD films or TV seasons
  - Representing 14.2 TV/SVOD films or episodes

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory
Most writers are active either only in theatrical films, or only in TV/SVOD fiction: only 10% of writers active between 2015 and 2022 worked for film and TV/SVOD fiction.
Two-thirds of writing assignments originate from TV/SVOD fiction.

The number of assignments rebounded after the COVID-19 crisis, but without reaching yet the pre-crisis levels.
About 48% of writing assignments were combined with a directing assignment for the same film.

Most of theatrical film writing assignments correspond to fiction films.

Assignment: writing credit for a theatrical film
Source: European Audiovisual Observatory
Most of TV/SVOD fiction writing assignments correspond to TV series seasons with 13 episodes or less.

TV/SVOD writers' assignments by format (2015-2022)

Assignment: writing credit for a film, a TV film or a TV season

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory
On average, there were 1.8 writers per film between 2015 and 2022.

The writing team of 81% of films included a director-writer.

The writing team of 61% of films included at least one non-directing writer.

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory
On average, there were 4 writers per TV/SVOD fiction project between 2015 and 2022.

The figure was only 1.8 for TV films, in other words, similar to theatrical films but with many fewer cases of writers also operating as director.

5.5 writers participated in the writing of a TV series.

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory
Directors of theatrical films and TV/SVOD fiction
About 17,000 directors (co)directed at least one theatrical film or a one TV/SVOD fiction between 2015 and 2022.

The number of active TV/SVOD fiction directors has caught-up with the number of active theatrical film directors.

But the total number of active TV/SVOD directors between 2015 and 2022 remains significantly lower, as TV/SVOD directors work far more often than theatrical film directors.

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**Active directors: How many active directors?**

**Active theatrical film and TV/SVOD directors (2015-2022)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Film directors</th>
<th>TV/SVOD directors</th>
<th>All directors (excl. double counts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,449</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>3,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1,617</td>
<td>2,206</td>
<td>3,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1,694</td>
<td>2,333</td>
<td>3,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1,826</td>
<td>2,438</td>
<td>4,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1,929</td>
<td>2,497</td>
<td>4,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1,687</td>
<td>2,022</td>
<td>3,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>2,065</td>
<td>2,099</td>
<td>4,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 (prov.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17,038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Active: credited for at least one work between 2015 and 2022**

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory
41% of European films produced each year are debut films for at least one of the directors.

This significant renewal partly explains the relatively low level of activity of directors.
78% of theatrical films writers active between 2015 and 2022 only wrote one film.

Active TV/SVOD fiction writers took part in close to 2 projects representing about 3 TV seasons.

**Activity of theatrical film directors (2015-2022)**

- On average 1.4 films (co)directed between 2015 and 2022
  - 77% of directors (co)directed only one film
  - 23% of directors (co)directed on average 2.5 films

**Activity of TV/SVOD fiction directors (2015-2022)**

- All TV/SVOD fiction
  - On average involved in 2.3 TV/SVOD film or series between 2015 and 2022
  - Representing 3.4 TV/SVOD films or TV seasons
  - Representing 38.7 TV/SVOD films or episodes
- Excl. seasons with more than 52 episodes
  - On average involved in 2.2 TV/SVOD films or series between 2015 and 2022
  - Representing 3.0 TV/SVOD films or TV seasons
  - Representing 14.0 TV/SVOD films or episodes

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory
Between 2015 and 2022, most directors were active either only in theatrical films, or only in TV/SVOD fiction: only 9% of directors active between 2015 and 2022 worked for film and TV/SVOD fiction.

However, most of TV/SVOD fiction directors have a background of directing theatrical films.
Since the COVID-19 crisis, the majority of directing assignments originate from TV/SVOD fiction.

**Directors' assignments (2015-2022)**

**Assignment: writing credit for a film, a TV film or a TV season**

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory
Most of theatrical film writing assignments correspond to fiction films.
Most of TV/SVOD fiction writing assignments correspond to TV series seasons with 13 episodes or less.

**Assignments: Details by genre and formats**

**Theatrical film (co)directing assignments by genre (2015-2022)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Animation</th>
<th>Documentary</th>
<th>Live-action fiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>1039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1348</td>
<td>1475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td></td>
<td>1376</td>
<td>1475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td></td>
<td>1414</td>
<td>1463</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TV/SVOD directing assignments by format (2015-2022)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV Film/Collection</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 ep. or less</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 to 52 ep.</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 52 ep.</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignment: directing credit for a theatrical film, a TV/SVOD film or season**

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory
- On average, there were 1.2 directors per film between 2015 and 2022.

- A small minority of films are co-directed.

- Animation films are more often co-directed.

On average 1.2 directors per film between 2015 and 2022

1.1 for fiction films
1.2 for documentary films
1.5 for animation films

13% of films were directed by at least 2 directors between 2015 and 2022

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory
On average, there were 2.1 writers per TV/SVOD fiction project between 2015 and 2022.

The figure was only 1.1 for TV films, in other words, similar to theatrical films.

2.8 writers participated in the directing of a TV series.

Project: a TV film or TV series

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory