

Writers and directors of film and TV/SVOD fiction 2015-2024 figures

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Introduction and methodology

Introduction and methodology

This report provides an analysis of the population of writers and directors of European theatrical films and TV/SVOD fiction produced in Europe* between 2015 and 2024.

The data

The underlying data used in this report comes from several sources:

- In a first step, the Observatory's LUMIERE database (for theatrical films) and the Observatory's annual survey (for TV/SVOD fiction) were used to compile a list of works produced between 2015 and 2024.
- In a second step, the directors and writers of each work were identified, using the Observatory's LUMIERE database (for cinema directors) and IMDb (for other positions). **In total, almost 39 000 different authors were identified.** The graph on page 12 shows how these creators were involved in writing and/or directing theatrical films and/or TV/SVOD fiction.
- Around **18 500 European theatrical films and around 12 000 European TV/SVOD films and TV/SVOD seasons** were included in our sample for 2015-2024.

Limits

- The identification rate of directors and writers varies; in particular, for TV/SVOD fiction, the sample is less representative for daily telenovelas/soaps.
- The sample is based on films and TV/SVOD fiction works actually released. It therefore does not include directing or writing jobs for the development of works that were ultimately not released.
- The sample includes all theatrical film genres (including documentary and animation), but only live-action TV fiction works, whether TV films or TV series.

Introduction and methodology

Why is the 2024 data ‘provisional’?

Even though our list of theatrical films, TV/SVOD fiction films and TV/SVOD fiction series is updated up to 2024, there is a delay until they are properly reflected in the IMDb database used to identify writers and directors. Therefore, we believe that 2024 data are still provisional, and that more attention should be paid to trends over the past few years than to short-term developments between 2023 and 2024.

Important definitions

- Throughout the report, the term ‘**professionals**’ is used when providing cumulative data for screenwriters and directors.
- A professional is considered ‘**active**’ when credited for at least one work in a given period, be it theatrical film or TV/SVOD fiction.
- Unless otherwise indicated, the term ‘**theatrical films**’ includes both fiction and documentary films. In some cases, a specific focus is made on fiction films only, or on documentary films only.
- A ‘**job**’ is a writing or directing credit for a film, a TV/SVOD film or a TV/SVOD series. Unless otherwise indicated, the term ‘**job for a TV/SVOD series**’ refers to a writing or directing credit in at least one episode of a given TV season. In other words, the number of episodes the professional has worked on in each season is not considered, only work on different seasons are counted as different jobs. In some cases, however, we refer to a TV/SVOD ‘**project**’, globally which encompasses all seasons of said TV/SVOD series.

Structure of the report

There are several ways of approaching the analysis of the population of writers and directors for theatrical films and TV/SVOD fiction. The report mainly follows a role-based approach:

- Section B covers screenwriters working in theatrical film and TV/SVOD fiction.
- Section C deals with directors working in theatrical film and TV/SVOD fiction.

However, Section A provides a different perspective, bringing an overview approach by category of work (film and TV/SVOD).



Key findings

Key findings

Nearly 39 000 professionals active between 2015 and 2024

Between 2015 and 2024, almost 39 000 professionals were active in the writing or directing of theatrical films and TV/SVOD fiction. Three main groups cumulatively accounted for around 70% of active professionals: writers who worked exclusively for either theatrical film or for TV/SVOD fiction but did not direct, and professionals who both wrote and directed exclusively for theatrical films.

Persistence of the (theatrical) 'film d'auteur' model

79% of European theatrical films involved a writer acting also as director. Between 2015 and 2024, 63% of theatrical film directors directed only films that they had also written. In addition, only 52% of theatrical film screenwriting jobs were allocated to writers who were not also directors.

Writing and directing largely separate in TV/SVOD fiction

Conversely, in TV/SVOD fiction, the roles of writer and director were almost always distinct: only 12% of all professionals active in TV/SVOD fiction between 2015 and 2024 shot at least one film or episode that they both wrote and directed.

Key findings

TV/SVOD directors were also active in theatrical films

A significant proportion (42%) of all TV/SVOD fiction directors active between 2015 and 2024 have directed at least one theatrical film at some point in their career, and 30% between 2015 and 2024.

Conversely, as there were many more directors active in theatrical films than in TV/SVOD fiction, only a small proportion (13%) of theatrical film directors active between 2015 and 2024 have also worked for TV/SVOD fiction in that period.

Impressive turnover in theatrical films

Looking back, 43% of the 2015 film writers and 41% of the 2015 films directors never worked again afterwards, either as writer or director, be it in theatrical film or in TV/SVOD fiction. The picture was very different for TV/SVOD fiction, where 85% of 2015 TV/SVOD writers and 91% of 2015 TV/SVOD directors continued to work, by far only in TV/SVOD fiction and in the same role.

More films produced, but more jobs in TV/SVOD fiction

More European theatrical films (18 500) than European TV/SVOD films and TV/SVOD seasons (12 000) were included in our sample for 2015-2024. However, TV/SVOD fiction generally provided for more jobs* than theatrical films. More writers and more directors were involved in each TV/SVOD film or season (4.1 writers and 2.1 directors, respectively) than in each theatrical film (1.8 and 1.1, respectively).

*For TV/SVOD series: 1 job = 1 season, no matter the number of episodes written or directed.

Key findings

More jobs in TV/SVOD for a smaller number of professionals

TV/SVOD jobs* were proportionally distributed between fewer active professionals than film jobs. Working in TV/SVOD fiction implied more recurrence, with certain series running for several seasons. Conversely, theatrical film seemed structurally open to newcomers: on average, between 2015 and 2024, 52% of the theatrical film directors active in a given year were directing their first theatrical film.

This translated into a very different level of activity between the two content categories: between 2015 and 2024, theatrical film writers wrote 1.5 films vs. 3.3 TV/fiction films or seasons for TV/SVOD writers; theatrical film directors directed 1.4 films vs. 3.7 TV/fiction film or seasons for TV/SVOD directors.

Made for TV/SVOD films similar to theatrical films

Within TV/SVOD projects, there were some significant differences. TV/SVOD films were closer to the theatrical film model: 1.8 writers and 1.1 directors for theatrical films, vs. 1.9 writers and 1.2 directors for TV/SVOD films. Conversely, TV/SVOD series projects counted on average 5.4 writers and 2.8 directors each.

Theatrical documentaries are a silo

Within theatrical films, fiction and documentaries were two almost independent segments: out of all theatrical film writers active between 2015 and 2024, only 3% wrote both for fiction and documentary films (4% for directors). Documentary writers were more likely than fiction writers to have both written and directed their works, and professionals who wrote or directed a documentary in 2015 were more likely to have subsequently left the sector.

*For TV/SVOD series: 1 job = 1 season, no matter the number of episodes written or directed.

Key findings: Selected key figures by role



THEATRICAL FILM WRITERS

Between 2015 and 2024:

- 20 600 active writers
- 48% wrote only films they directed
- 1.5 films (co)written
- 1.8 writers per film including writers also directors; 0.9 'stand-alone' writers
- 43% of 2015 film writers were inactive between 2016 and 2024



TV/SVOD FICTION WRITERS

Between 2015 and 2024:

- 14 200 active writers
- 2 projects (co)written, representing 14.4 episodes or TV films
- 4.1 writer per season or TV film
- 15% of 2015 TV/SVOD writers were inactive between 2016 and 2024



THEATRICAL FILM DIRECTORS

Between 2015 and 2024:

- 14 900 active directors
- 63% directed only films they wrote
- 1.4 films (co)directed
- 1.1 director per film
- 41% of 2015 film directors were inactive between 2016 and 2024



TV/SVOD FICTION DIRECTORS

Between 2015 and 2024:

- 6 600 active directors
- 2.4 projects (co)directed, representing 14.4 episodes or TV films
- 2.1 directors per season or TV film
- 42% also directed a theatrical film
- 9% of 2015 TV/SVOD directors were inactive between 2016 and 2024

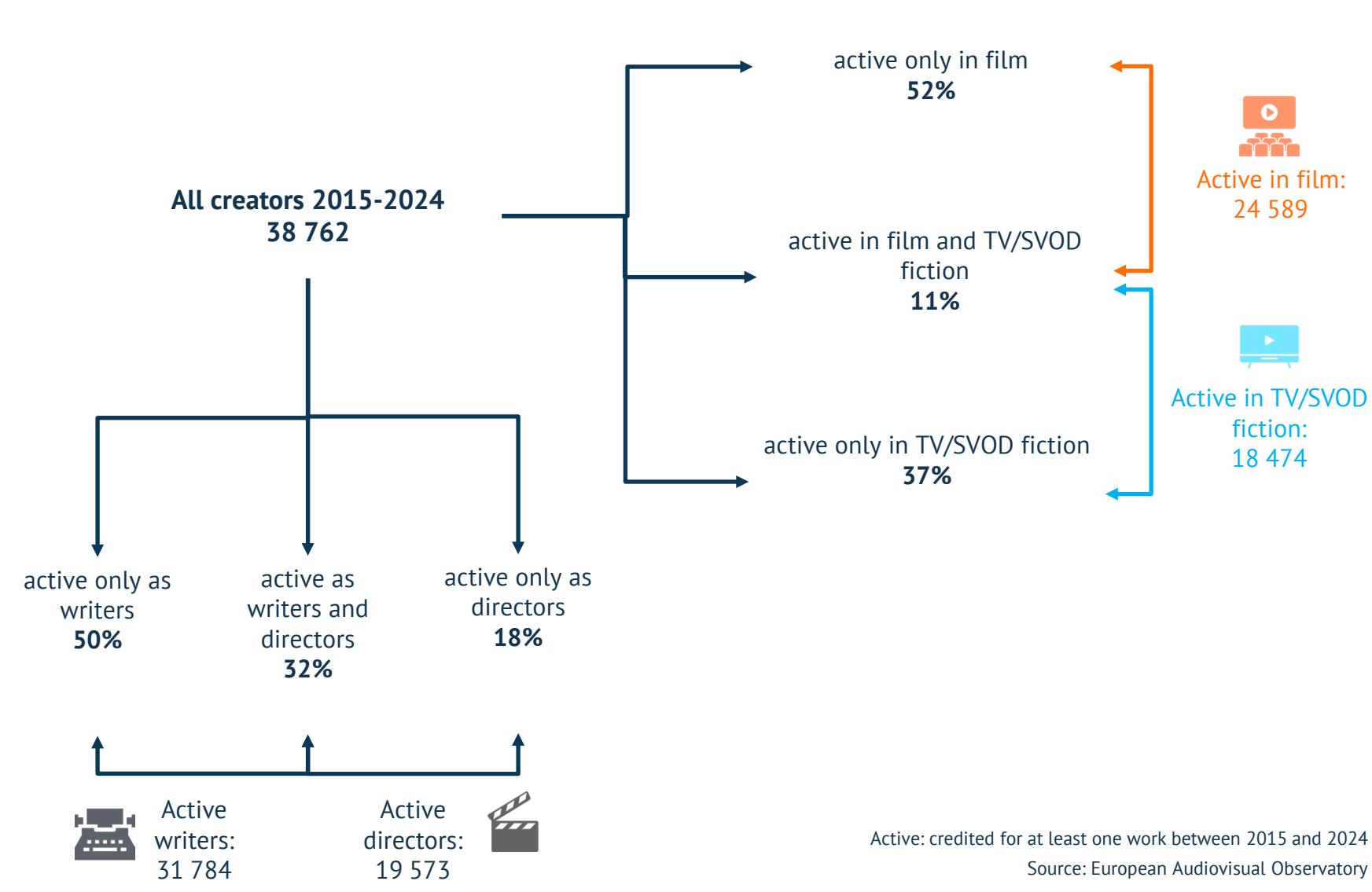


A. Overview of all active professionals

Film and TV/SVOD fiction: Close to 39 000 active professionals between 2015 and 2024

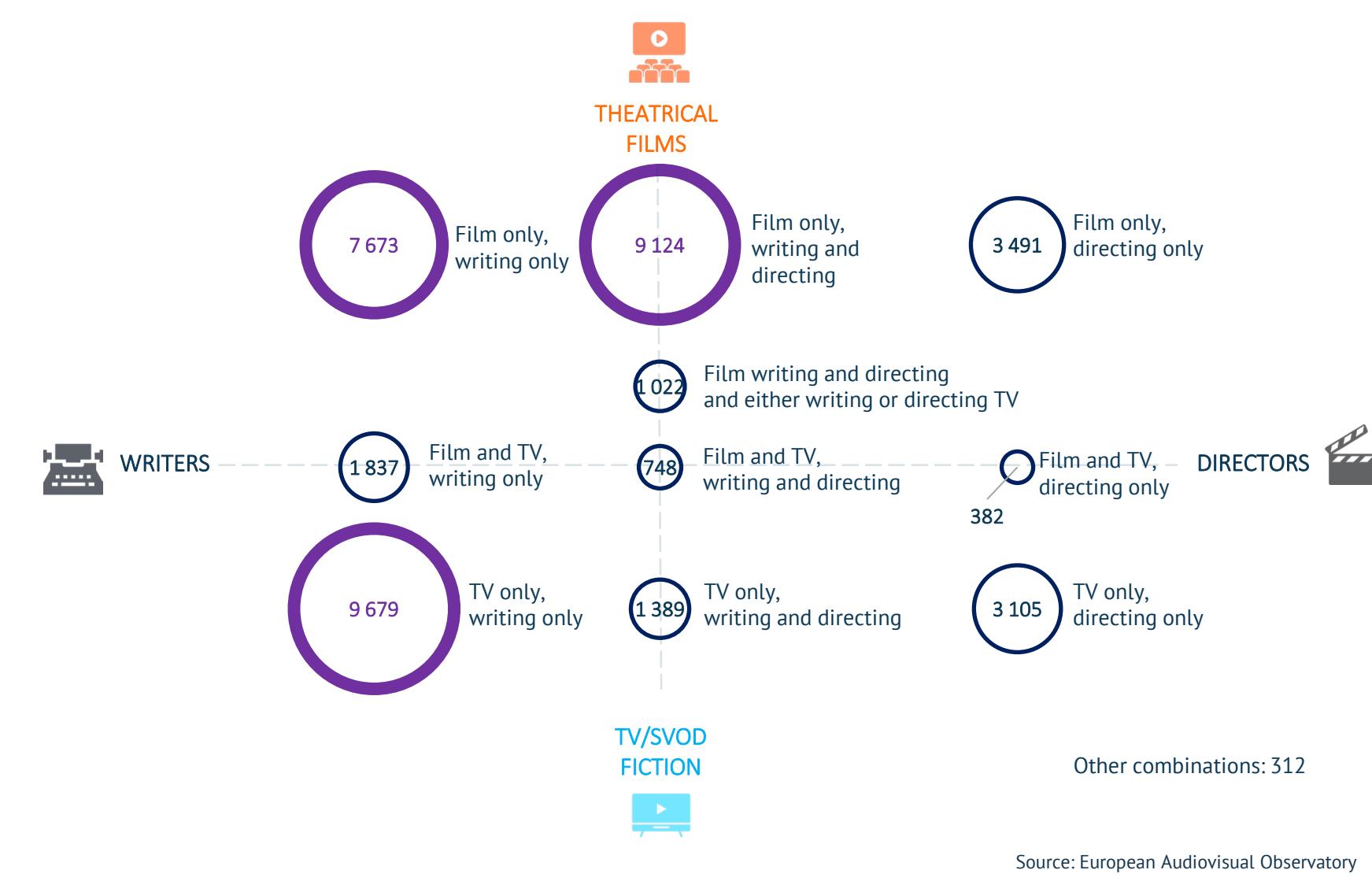
The sample includes close to 39 000 professionals active in writing and/or directing theatrical films and/or TV/SVOD fiction between 2015 and 2024.

The graph illustrates the overlaps between positions and type of works: strong between writers and directors; limited between theatrical films and TV/SVOD fiction.



Film and TV/SVOD fiction: Grouping professionals

The 3 main groups highlighted in purple comprised close to 70% of the around 39 000 professionals active in theatrical films and/or TV fiction between 2015 and 2024: they included writers working exclusively either for theatrical film or for TV/SVOD fiction, but who did not direct, and professionals both writing and directing exclusively for theatrical film.





Focus on theatrical film: Over 24 500 active professionals between 2015 and 2024

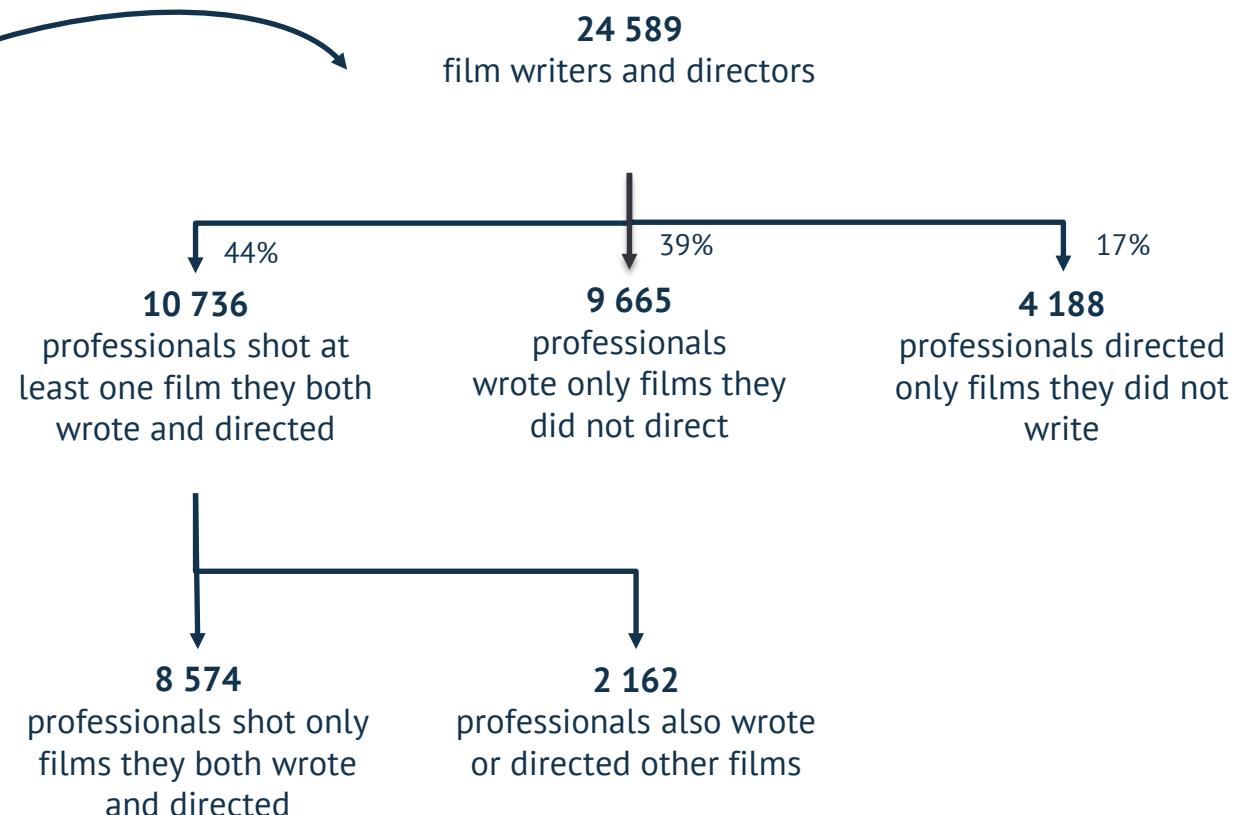
Over 24 500 professionals (co)wrote and/or (co)directed at least one theatrical film between 2015 and 2024.

44% of them shot films they both (co)wrote and (co)directed.

The data includes **all** screenwriters and directors active in **theatrical film**.



ACTIVE THEATRICAL FILM DIRECTORS AND WRITERS (2015-2024)



Active: credited for at least one work between 2015 and 2024

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

Focus on TV/SVOD fiction: Close to 18 500 active professionals between 2015 and 2024



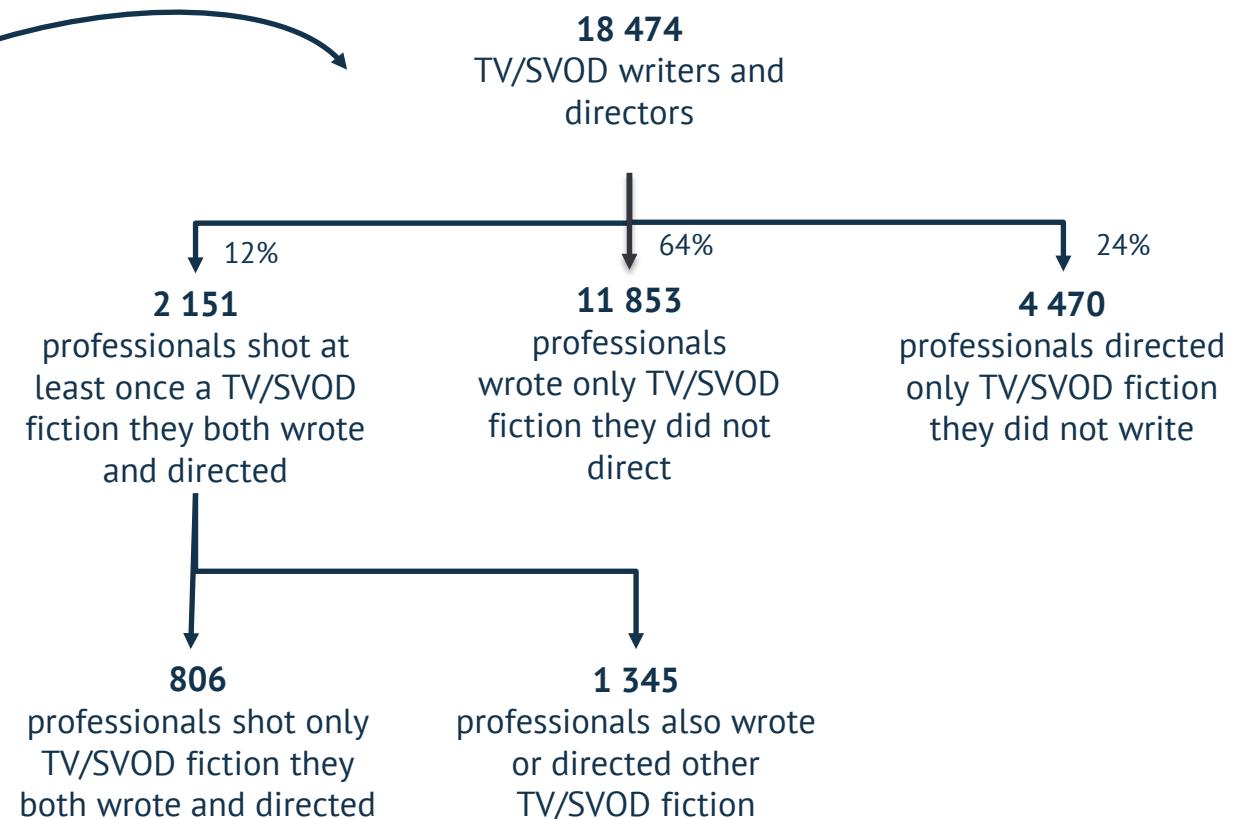
Over 18 000 professionals (co)wrote and/or (co)directed at least one TV/SVOD fiction between 2015 and 2024.

Only 12% of them shot TV/SVOD fiction they both (co)wrote and (co)directed.

The data includes **all** screenwriters and directors active in TV/SVOD fiction.



ACTIVE TV/SVOD FICTION DIRECTORS AND WRITERS (2015-2024)





B. Writers of theatrical films and
TV/SVOD fiction

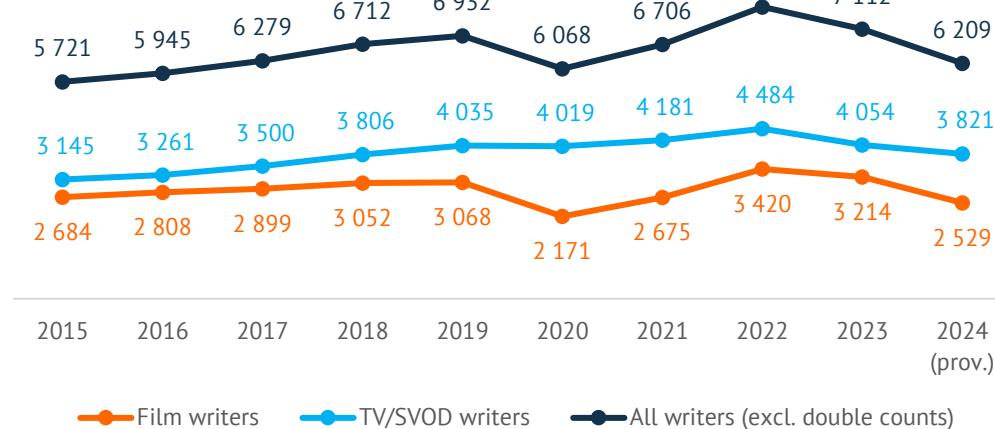


B.1. Active writers: More than 31 500 active writers between 2015 and 2024

More than 31 500 unique writers (co-)wrote at least one theatrical film or one TV/SVOD fiction between 2015 and 2024.

Although more writers were active in theatrical films than in TV/SVOD fiction each year, when looking at the total period 2015-2024, fewer different writers were involved in TV/SVOD fiction than in theatrical films, suggesting that TV/SVOD writers worked more frequently.

ACTIVE THEATRICAL FILM AND TV/SVOD WRITERS (2015-2024)



31 784 TOTAL UNIQUE WRITERS

14 240 TOTAL UNIQUE TV/SVOD WRITERS

20 559 TOTAL UNIQUE FILM WRITERS



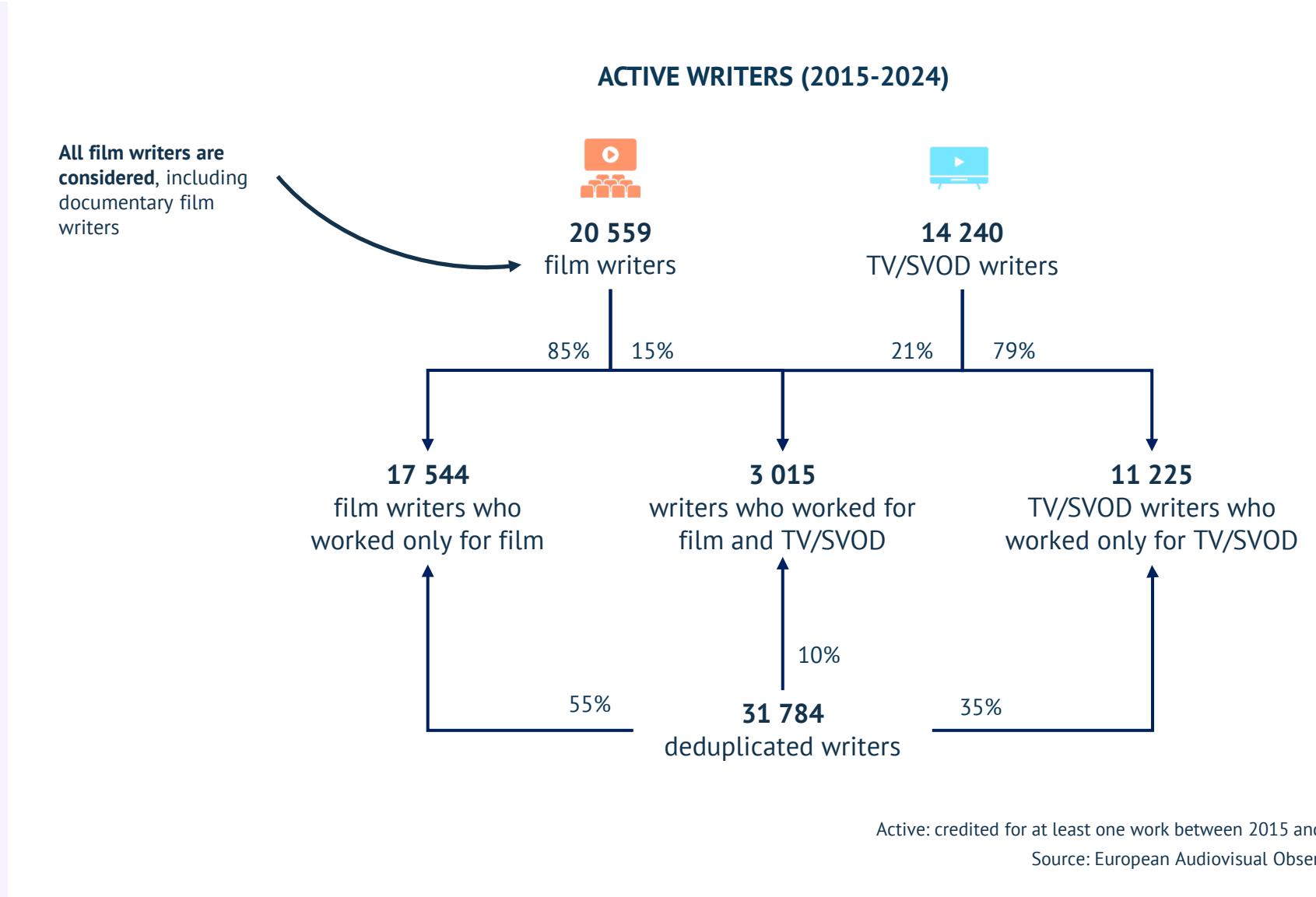
Out of 20 559 film writers:

- 25% wrote only documentaries
- 72% wrote only fiction
- 3% wrote both



B.1. Active writers: Writers were specialised either in film or in TV/SVOD fiction

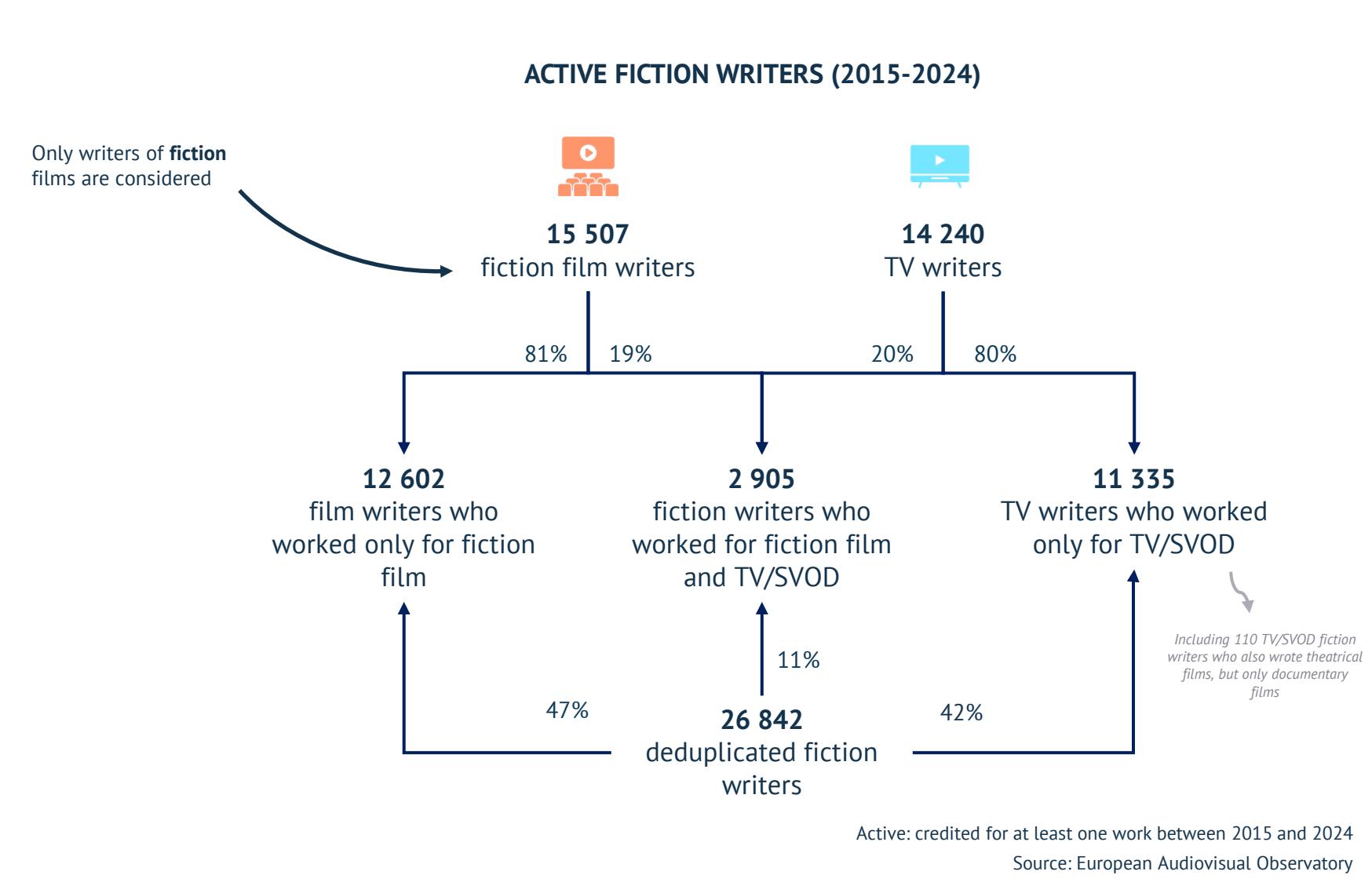
Only 10% of all active writers between 2015 and 2024 worked both for film and TV/SVOD.





B.1. Active writers: Writers were specialised either in fiction film or in TV/SVOD fiction

Looking only at active fiction writers, the results were similar: only 11% of all active fiction writers between 2015 and 2024 worked for both film and TV/SVOD.

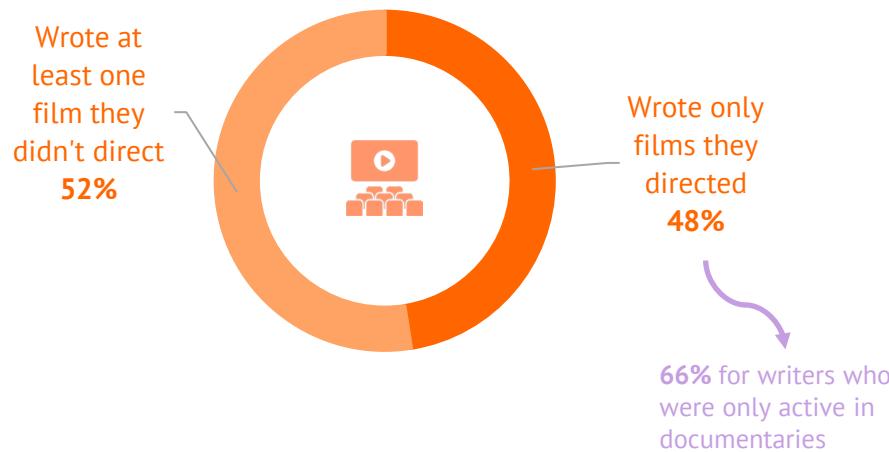


B.1. Active writers: Film writers often both wrote and directed their films, suggesting a strong 'film d'auteur' model in Europe

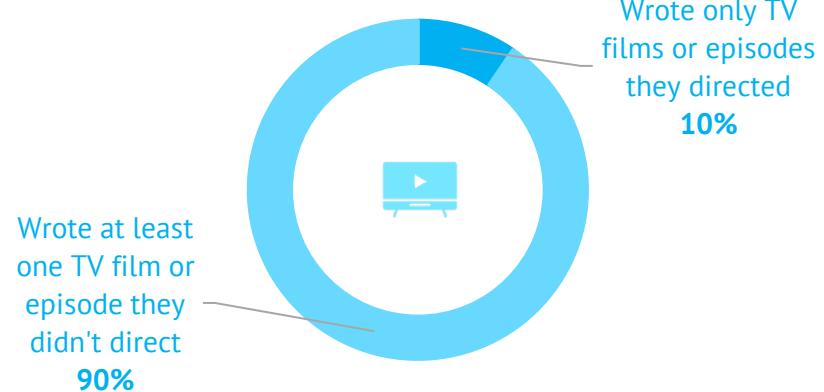
Almost half of theatrical film writers active between 2015 and 2024 only (co-)wrote films they also (co-)directed...

...conversely, active TV/SVOD fiction writers mainly wrote works they did not direct.

ACTIVE THEATRICAL FILM WRITERS (2015-2024)



ACTIVE TV/SVOD WRITERS (2015-2024)



B.1. Active writers: TV/SVOD fiction writers worked more often than theatrical film writers



76% of theatrical film writers active between 2015 and 2024 only wrote one film.

Active TV/SVOD fiction writers took part in 2.1 projects representing about 3.3 TV seasons.

ACTIVITY OF THEATRICAL FILM WRITERS (2015-2024)



Film writers (co)wrote on average **1.5** films between 2015 and 2024

1.2 for writers
who wrote only
documentaries

76% of writers (co)wrote
only one film

24% of writers (co)wrote
on average **2.9** films

87% for writers who
wrote only
documentaries

ACTIVITY OF TV/SVOD FICTION WRITERS (2015-2024)



ALL TV/SVOD FICTION

TV/SVOD writers were involved on average in **2.1** TV/SVOD films or series between 2015 and 2024



representing **3.3** TV/SVOD films or TV seasons



representing **41.7** TV/SVOD films or episodes

EXCL. SEASONS WITH MORE THAN 52 EPISODES

TV/SVOD writers were involved on average in **2.0** TV/SVOD films or series between 2015 and 2024



representing **2.9** TV/SVOD films or TV seasons

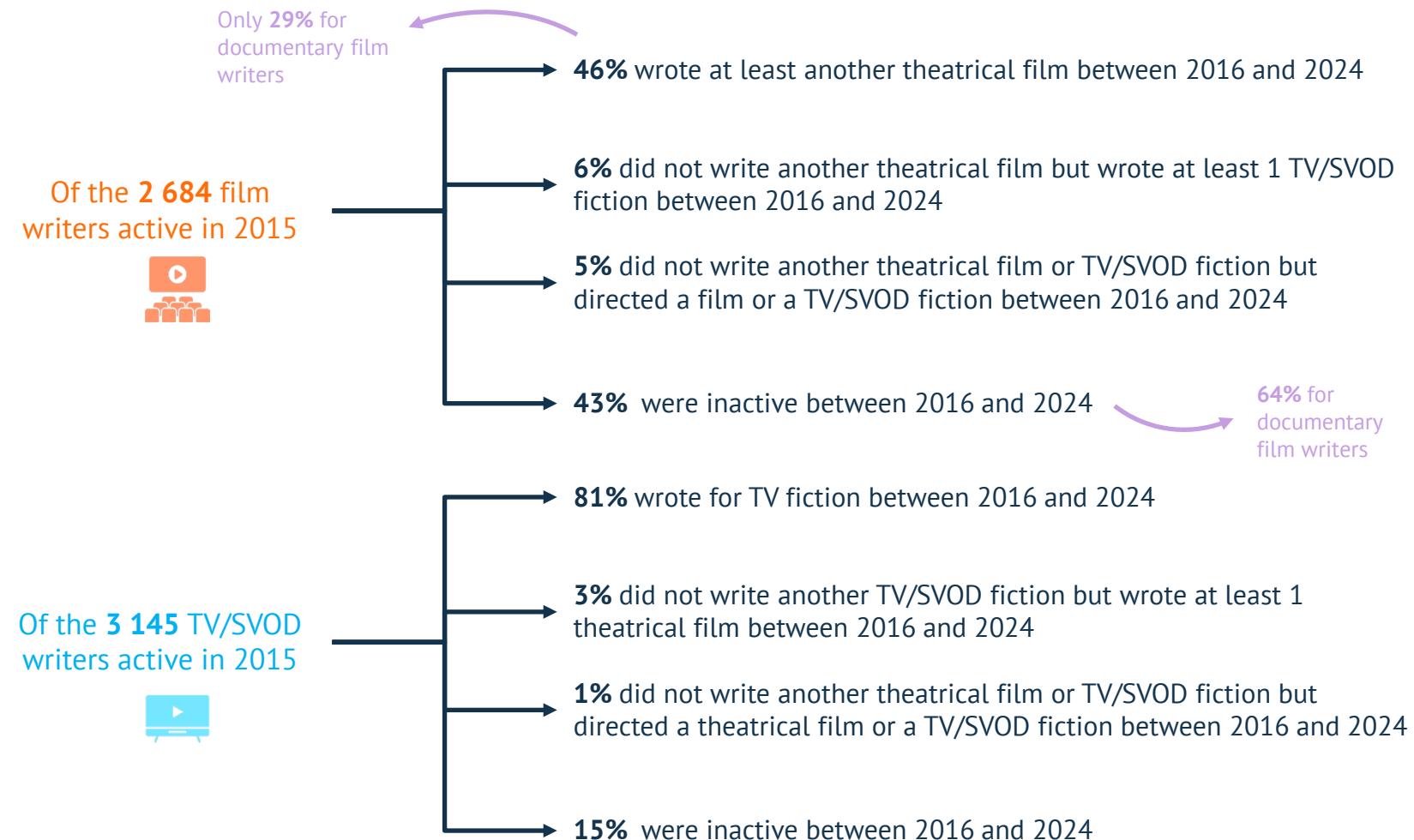


representing **14.4** TV/SVOD films or episodes



B.1. Active writers: What happened to 2015 writers?

There was a very contrasting situation between writing for film and writing for TV/SVOD fiction: only 15% of 2015 TV/SVOD fiction writers were inactive between 2016 and 2024, vs. 43% for 2015 film writers.

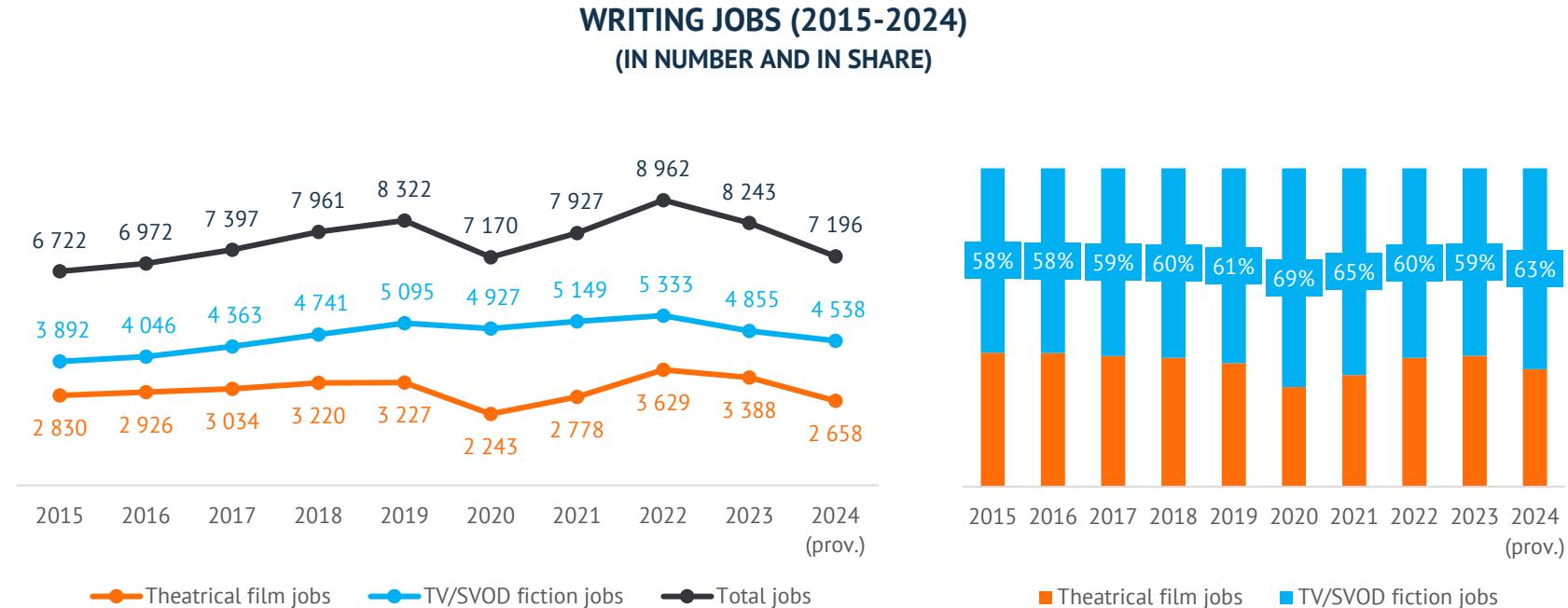




B.2. Writing jobs: Have writing jobs reached a peak?

Nearly two-thirds of writing jobs came from TV/SVOD fiction.

TV/SVOD writing jobs had shown a faster growth than theatrical film jobs since 2015, but the latest figures now seem to hint at a global downturn for writing jobs across theatrical film and TV/SVOD fiction.



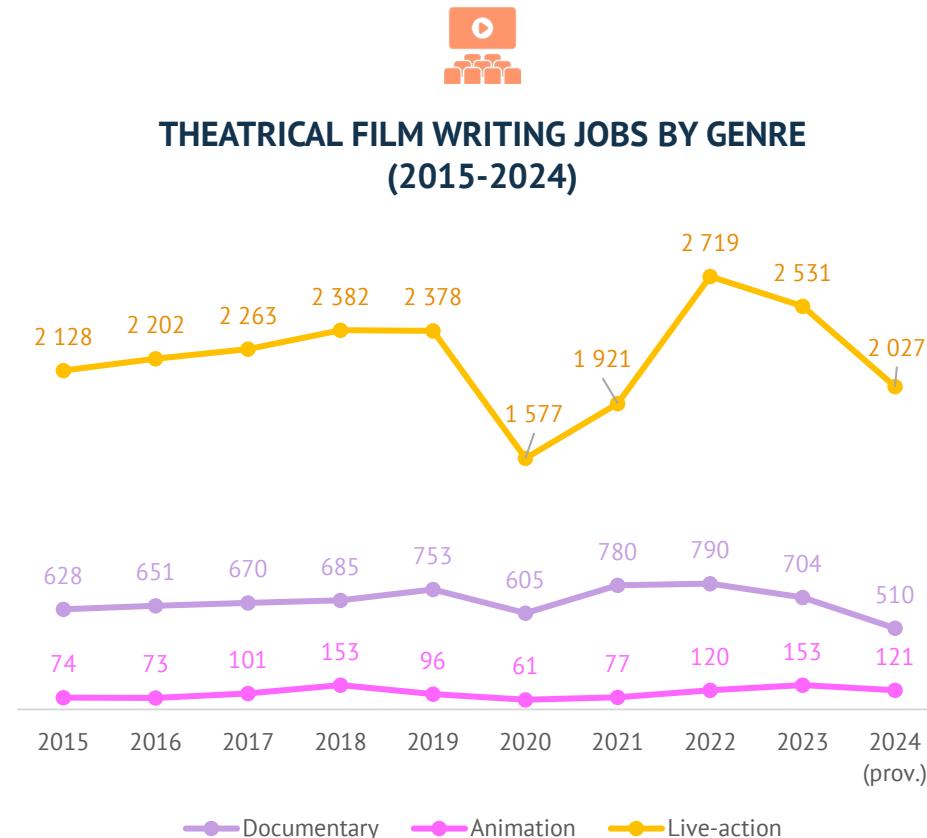
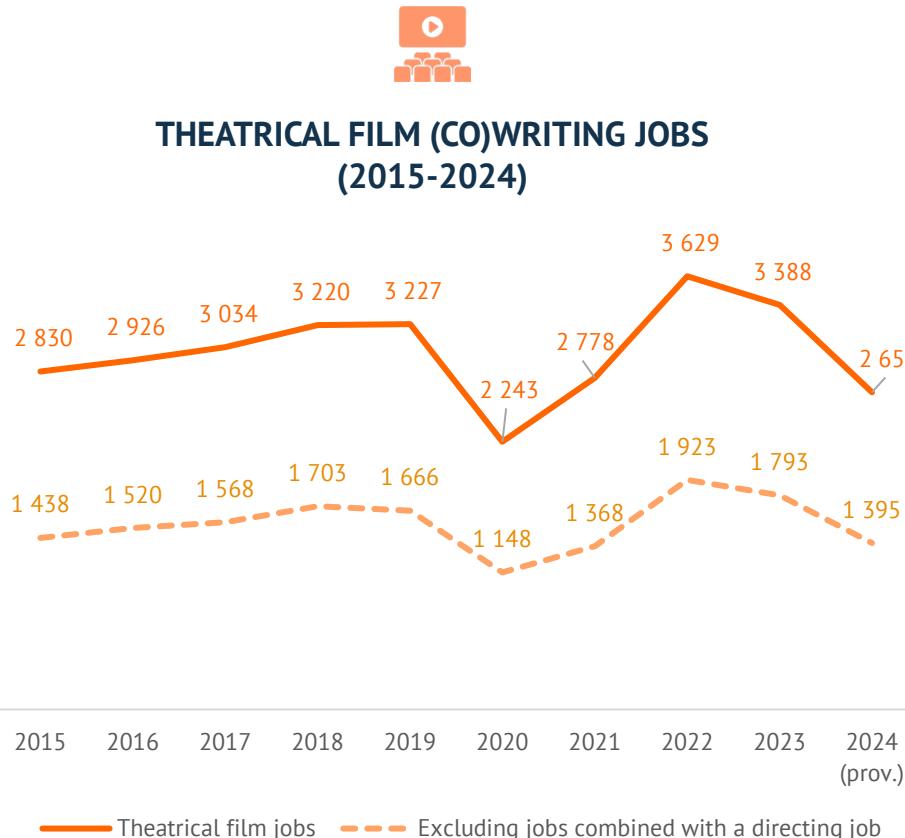
Job: writing credit for a film, a TV/SVOD film or a TV/SVOD season, no matter the number of episodes for which the writer was credited

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

B.2. Writing jobs: Details for theatrical films



About 48% of the 2024 writing jobs were combined with a directing job for the same film. Fiction films accounted for most theatrical film writing jobs, compared to animation and documentary films.



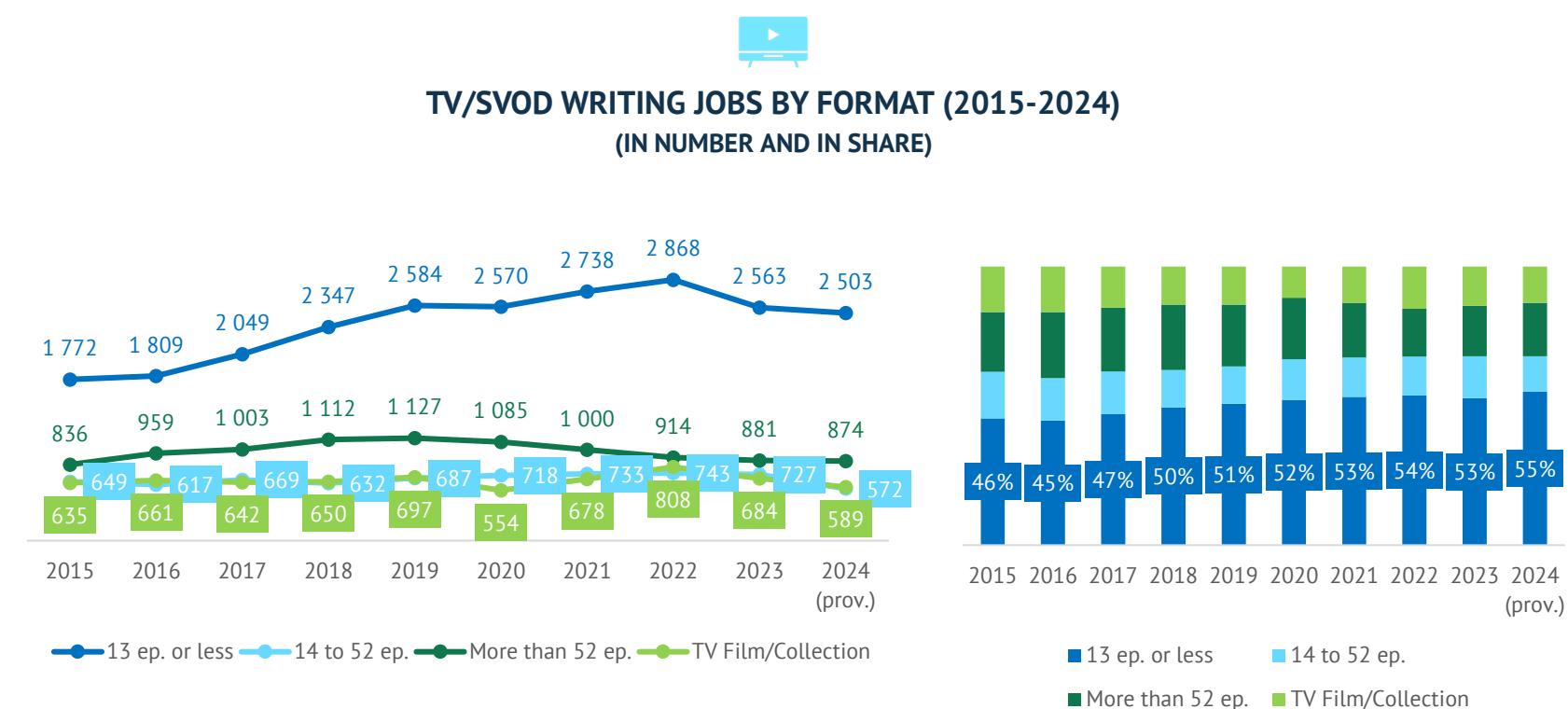
Job: writing credit for a theatrical film

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

B.2. Writing jobs: Details for TV/SVOD fiction



Most of TV/SVOD fiction writing jobs corresponded to TV series seasons with 13 episodes or less.

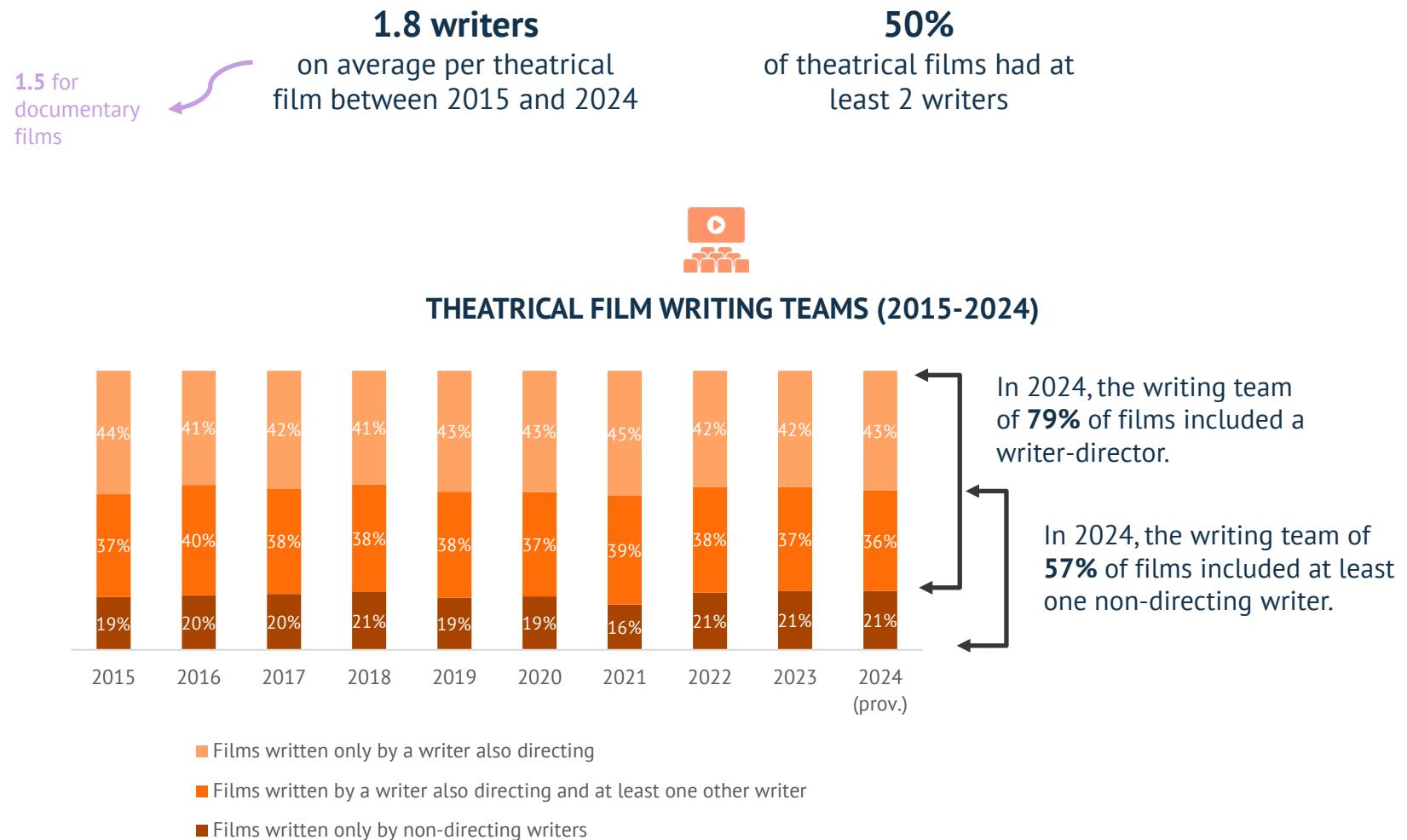


Job: writing credit for a TV/SVOD film or a TV/SVOD season, no matter the number of episodes for which the writer was credited
Source: European Audiovisual Observatory



B.3. Writing teams: 1.8 writer per theatrical film

On average, there were 1.8 writers per film between 2015 and 2024, 0.9 excluding writers also directing.





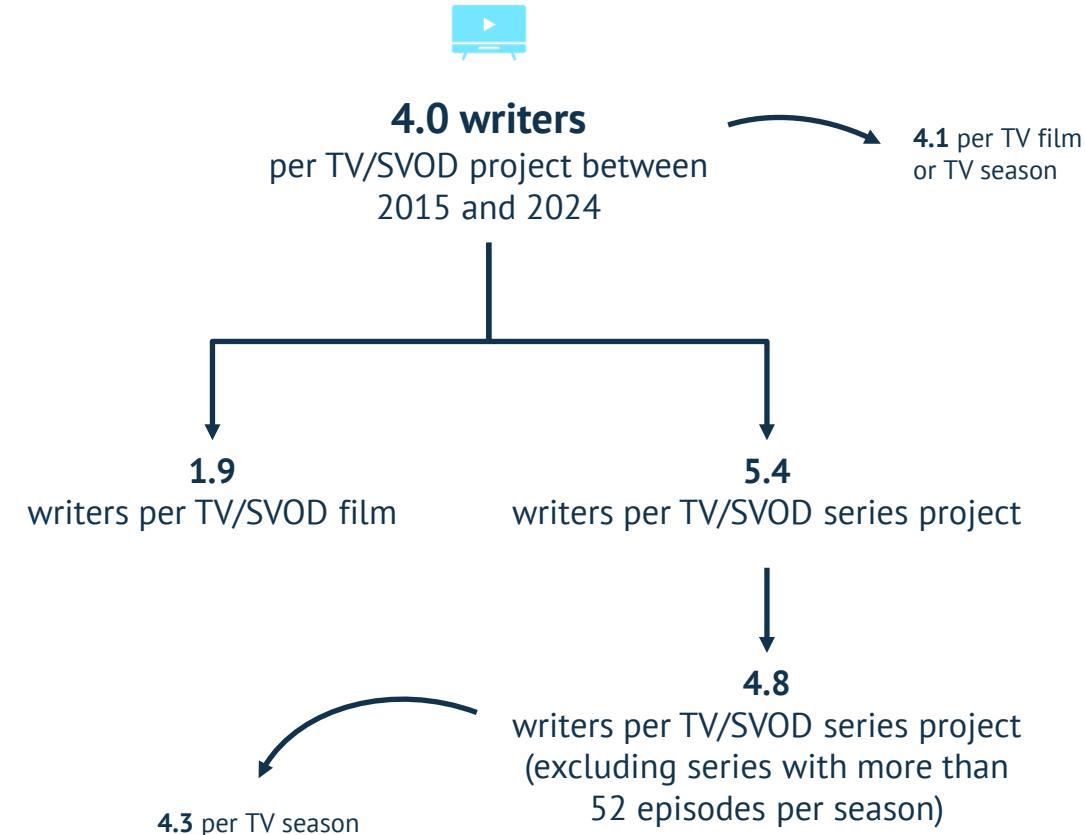
B.3. Writing teams: 4 writers per TV/SVOD fiction project

On average, there were 4 unique writers per TV/SVOD fiction project between 2015 and 2024.

There were 1.9 unique writers for TV/SVOD films, in other words, similar to theatrical films, but with fewer cases of writers also acting as director.

5.4 writers participated in the writing of a TV series.

TV/SVOD WRITING TEAMS (2015-2024)



A TV/SVOD project = a TV/SVOD film or series, no matter the number of seasons or episodes

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory



Directors of theatrical films and
TV/SVOD fiction

C.1. Active directors: More than 19 500 active directors between 2015 and 2024

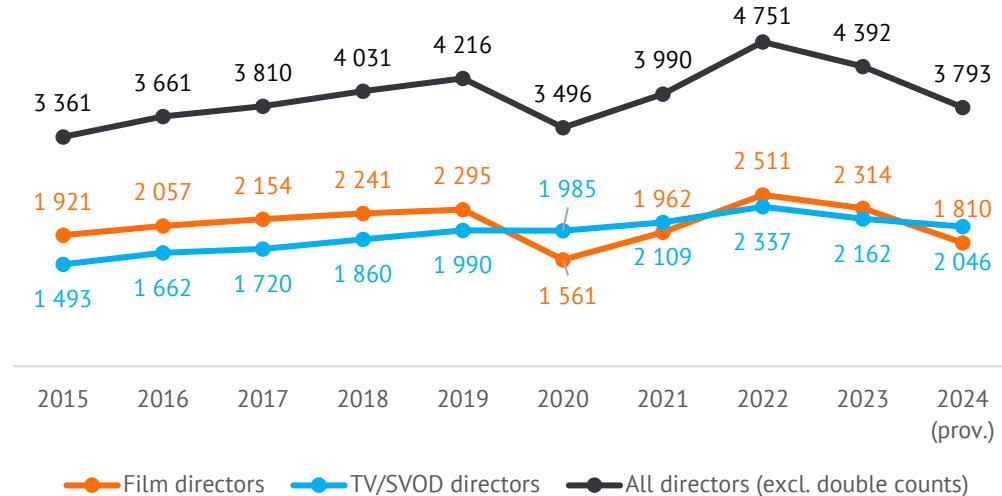


About 19 500 directors (co)directed at least one theatrical film or one TV/SVOD fiction between 2015 and 2024.

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

But the total number of active TV/SVOD directors between 2015 and 2024 remained significantly lower, as TV/SVOD directors worked far more often than theatrical film directors.

ACTIVE THEATRICAL FILM AND TV/SVOD DIRECTORS (2015-2024)



19 573 **TOTAL UNIQUE DIRECTORS**

6 621 **TOTAL UNIQUE TV/SVOD DIRECTORS**



14 924 **TOTAL UNIQUE FILM DIRECTORS**



Out of 14 924 film directors:

- 36% directed only documentaries
- 60% directed only fiction
- 4% wrote both

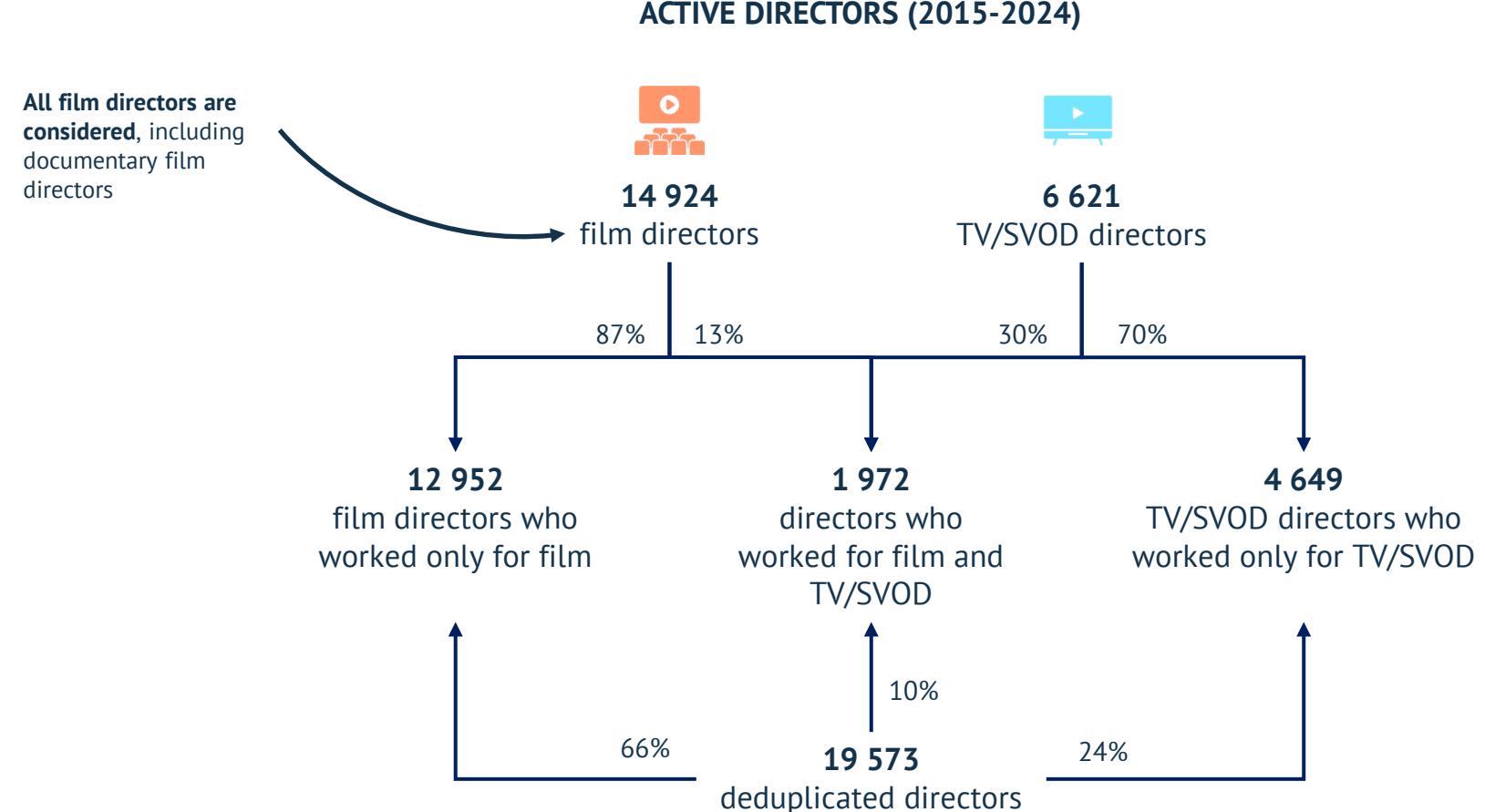
C.1. Active directors: More than 40% of TV/SVOD directors have also directed at least one theatrical film



Only 10% of all active directors between 2015 and 2024 have worked for both film and TV/SVOD.

However, as film directors outnumbered TV/SVOD directors, TV directors were much more likely to have also worked for film than film directors for TV/SVOD.

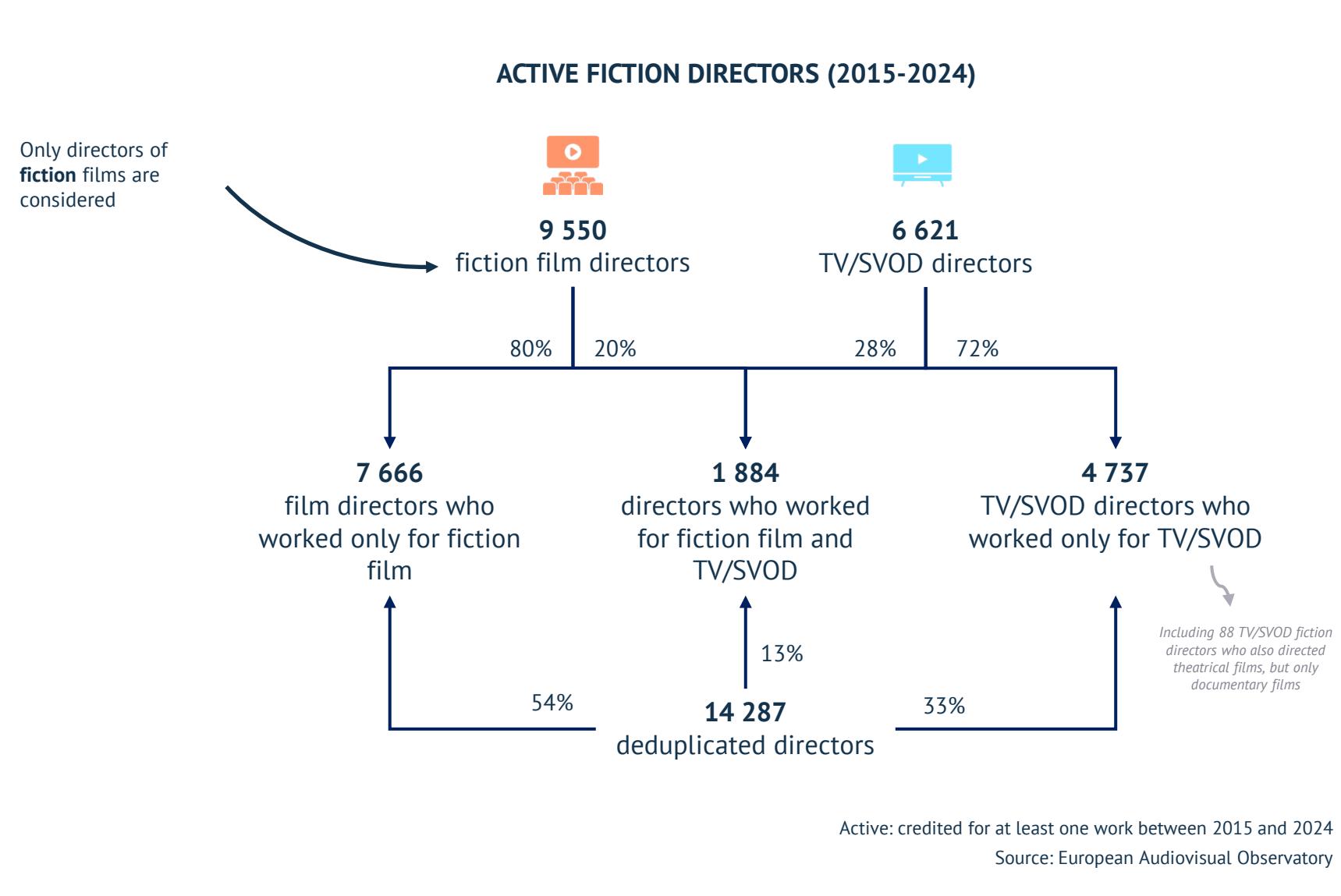
Among all TV/SVOD 2015-2024 directors, 30% directed at least one theatrical film between 2015 and 2024. 42% directed a theatrical film at some point in their career.



C.1. Active directors: Directors were specialised either in fiction film or in TV/SVOD fiction



When looking only at active fiction directors, the results were similar: only 10% of all active fiction directors between 2015 and 2024 worked for both film and TV/SVOD.



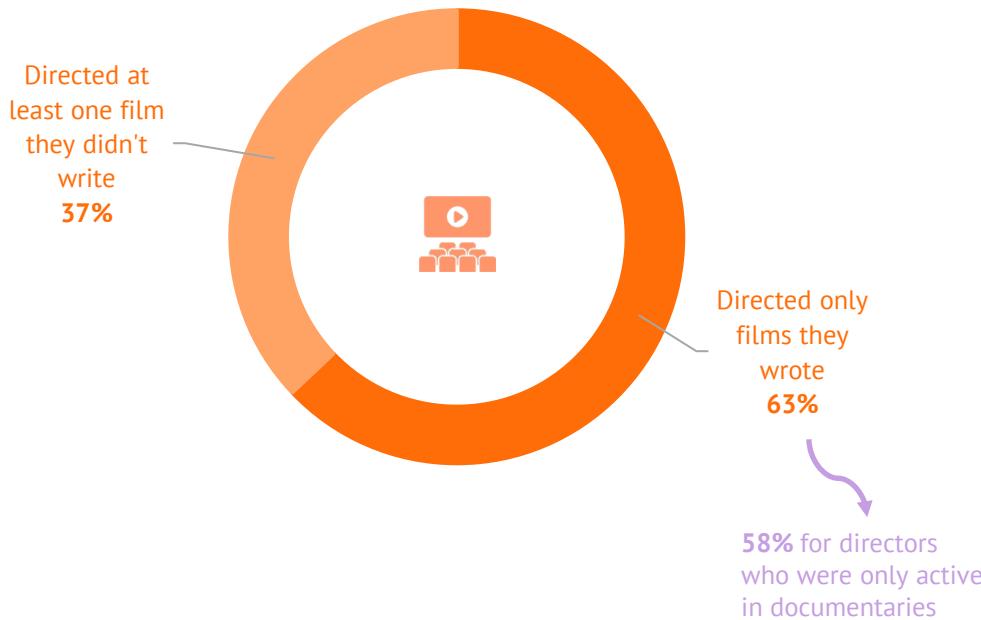
C.1. Active directors: Film directors often both directed and wrote their films, suggesting a strong 'film d'auteur' model in Europe



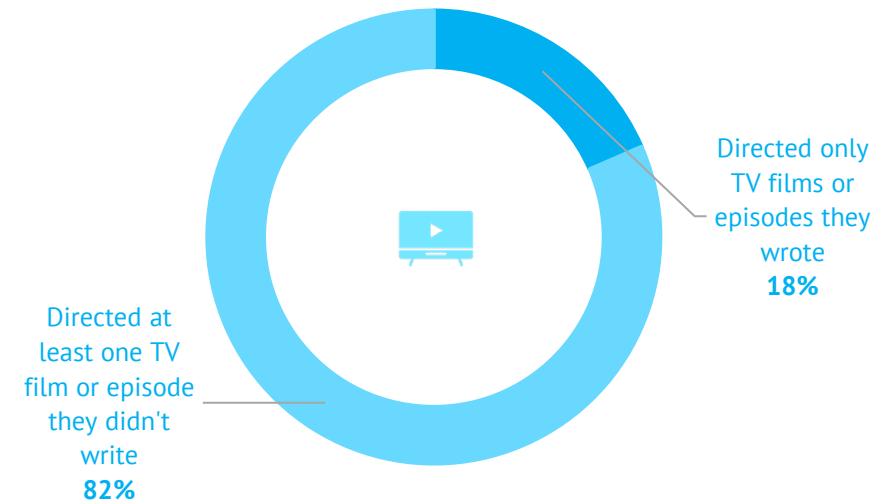
About two thirds of theatrical film directors active between 2015 and 2024 only (co)directed films they also (co)wrote...

...conversely, active TV/SVOD fiction directors mainly directed works they did not write.

ACTIVE THEATRICAL FILM DIRECTORS (2015-2024)



ACTIVE TV/SVOD DIRECTORS (2015-2024)



Active: credited for at least one work between 2015 and 2024

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

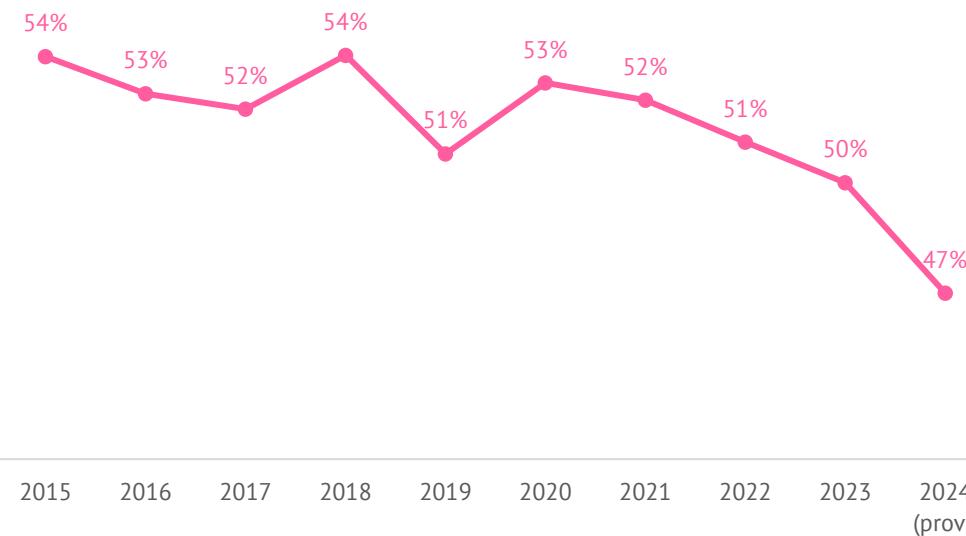
C.1. **Active directors:** Each year, around 50% of active theatrical film directors directed their debut film



THEATRICAL FILMS: SHARE OF DEBUT DIRECTORS AMONG ACTIVE DIRECTORS (2015-2024)

On average, between 2015 and 2024, 52% of the theatrical film directors active in a given year were directing their first theatrical film.

This significant renewal partly explains the relatively low level of activity of film directors.



Based only on the Observatory's LUMIERE database

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

C.1. Active directors: TV/SVOD fiction directors worked more often than theatrical film directors



74% of theatrical film directors active between 2015 and 2024 only directed one film.

Active TV/SVOD fiction directors took part in 2.4 projects representing about 3.7 TV seasons.

ACTIVITY OF THEATRICAL FILM DIRECTORS (2015-2024)



Film directors (co)directed on average **1.4** films between 2015 and 2024

1.2 for directors
who directed only
documentaries

74% of directors
(co)directed only
one film

26% of writers
(co)wrote on
average 2.7 films

84% for directors
who directed only
documentaries

ACTIVITY OF TV/SVOD FICTION DIRECTORS (2015-2024)



ALL TV/SVOD FICTION

TV/SVOD fiction directors were involved
on average in **2.4** TV/SVOD films or
series between 2015 and 2024



representing **3.7** TV/SVOD films or
TV seasons



representing **40.6** TV/SVOD films
or episodes

EXCL. SEASONS WITH MORE THAN 52 EPISODES

TV/SVOD fiction directors were involved
on average in **2.4** TV/SVOD films or
series between 2015 and 2024



representing **3.2** TV/SVOD films or
TV seasons

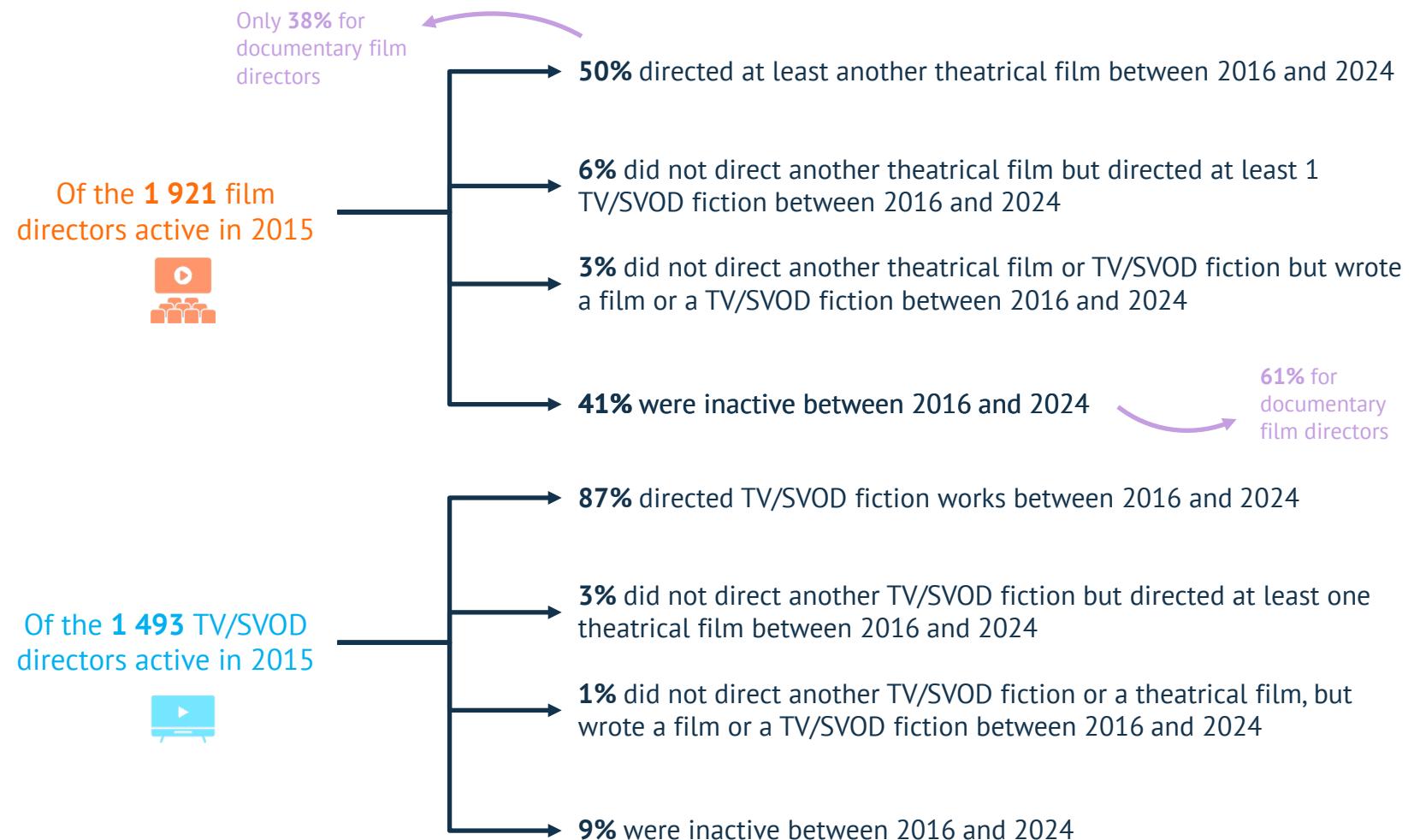


representing **14.4** TV/SVOD films
or episodes

C.1. Active directors: What happened to 2015 directors?



There was a very contrasting situation between directing for film and directing for TV/SVOD fiction: only 9% of 2015 TV/SVOD fiction directors were inactive between 2016 and 2024, vs. 41% for film directors.

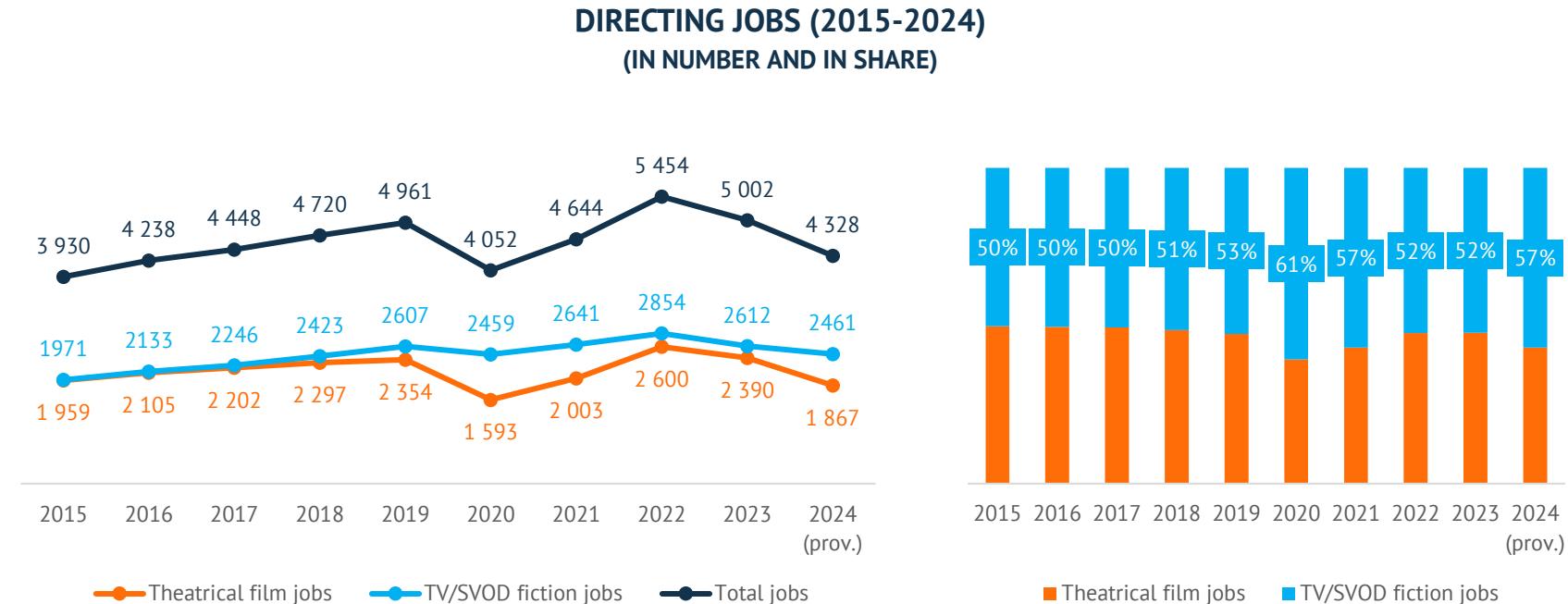


C.2. Directing jobs: Have directing jobs reached a peak?



More than 50% of directing jobs originated from TV/SVOD fiction.

TV/SVOD directing jobs had shown more growth than theatrical film jobs since 2015, but the latest figures now seemed to hint at a global downturn for directing jobs across theatrical film and TV/SVOD fiction.



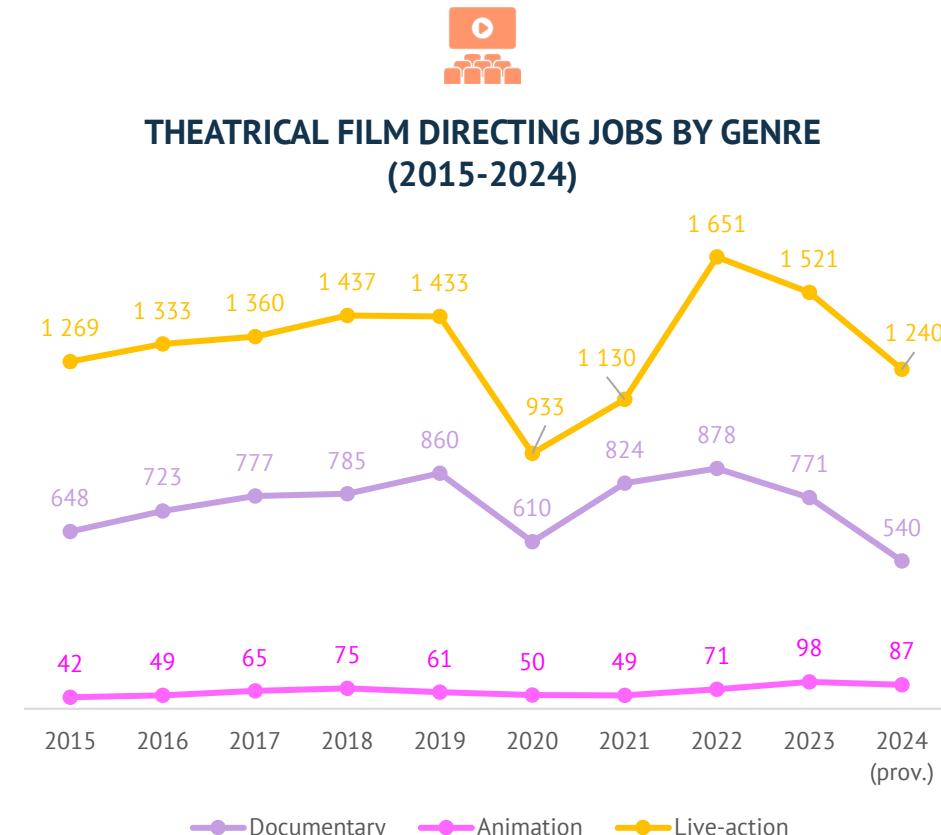
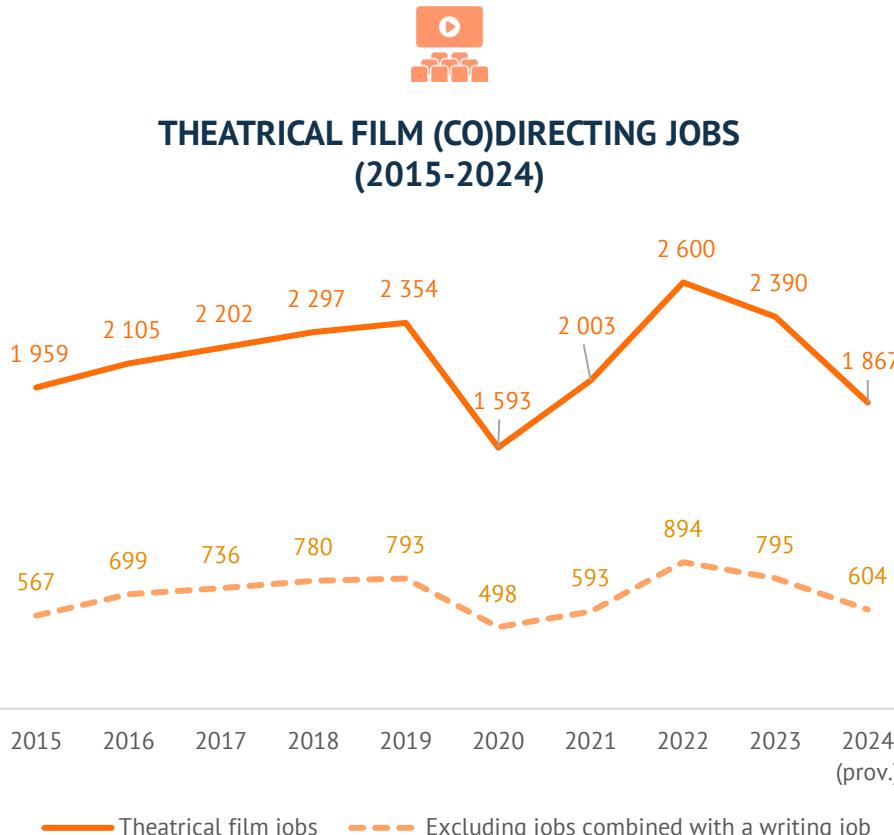
Job: directing credit for a film, a TV/SVOD film or a TV/SVOD season, no matter the number of episodes for which the director was credited

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory



C.2. Directing jobs: Details for theatrical films

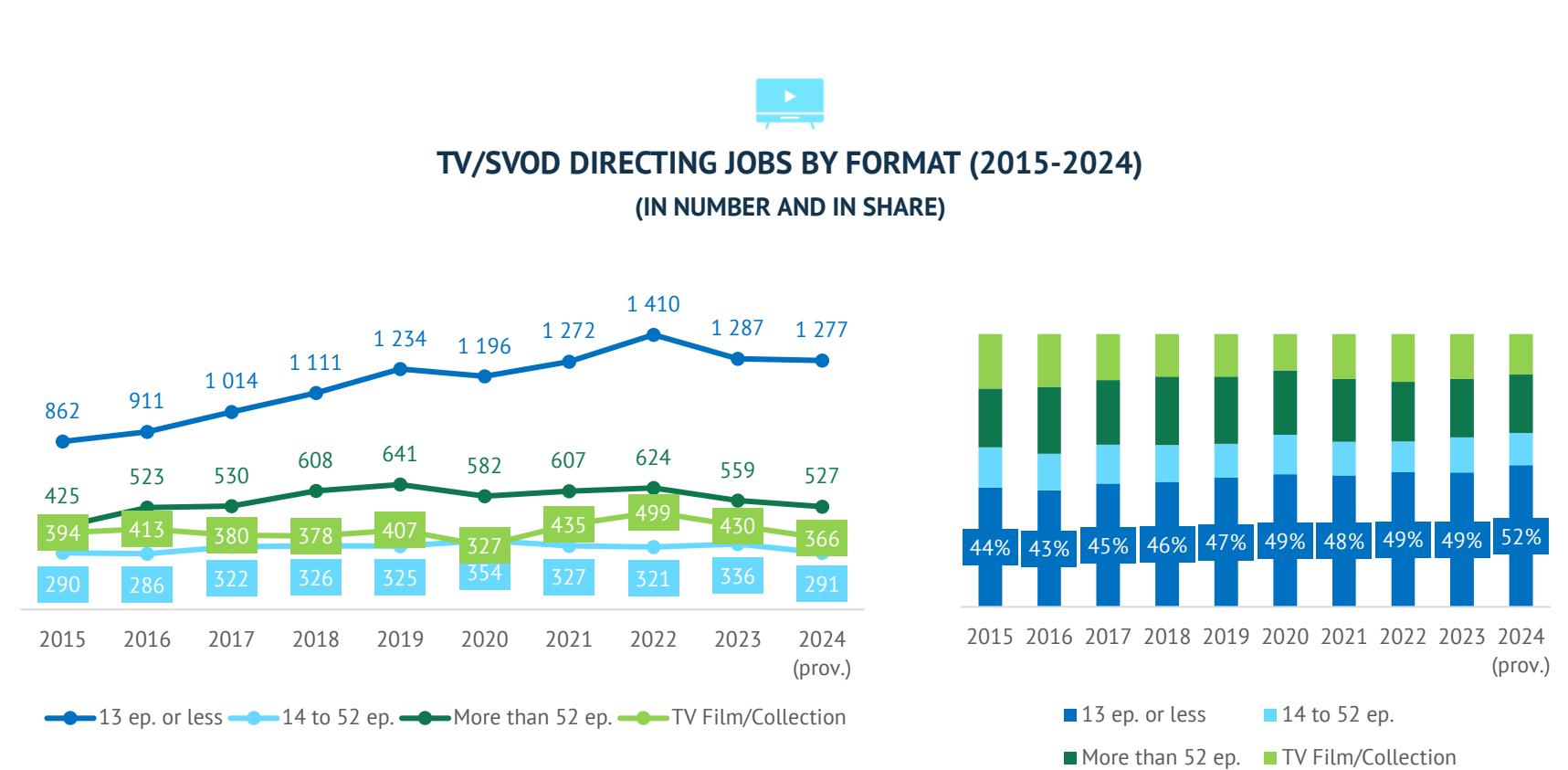
About 67% of 2024 directing jobs were combined with a writing job for the same film. Fiction films accounted for most theatrical film directing jobs, compared to animation and documentary films.



C.2. Directing jobs: Details for TV/SVOD fiction



TV series seasons with 13 episodes or less accounted for most of TV/SVOD fiction directing jobs.



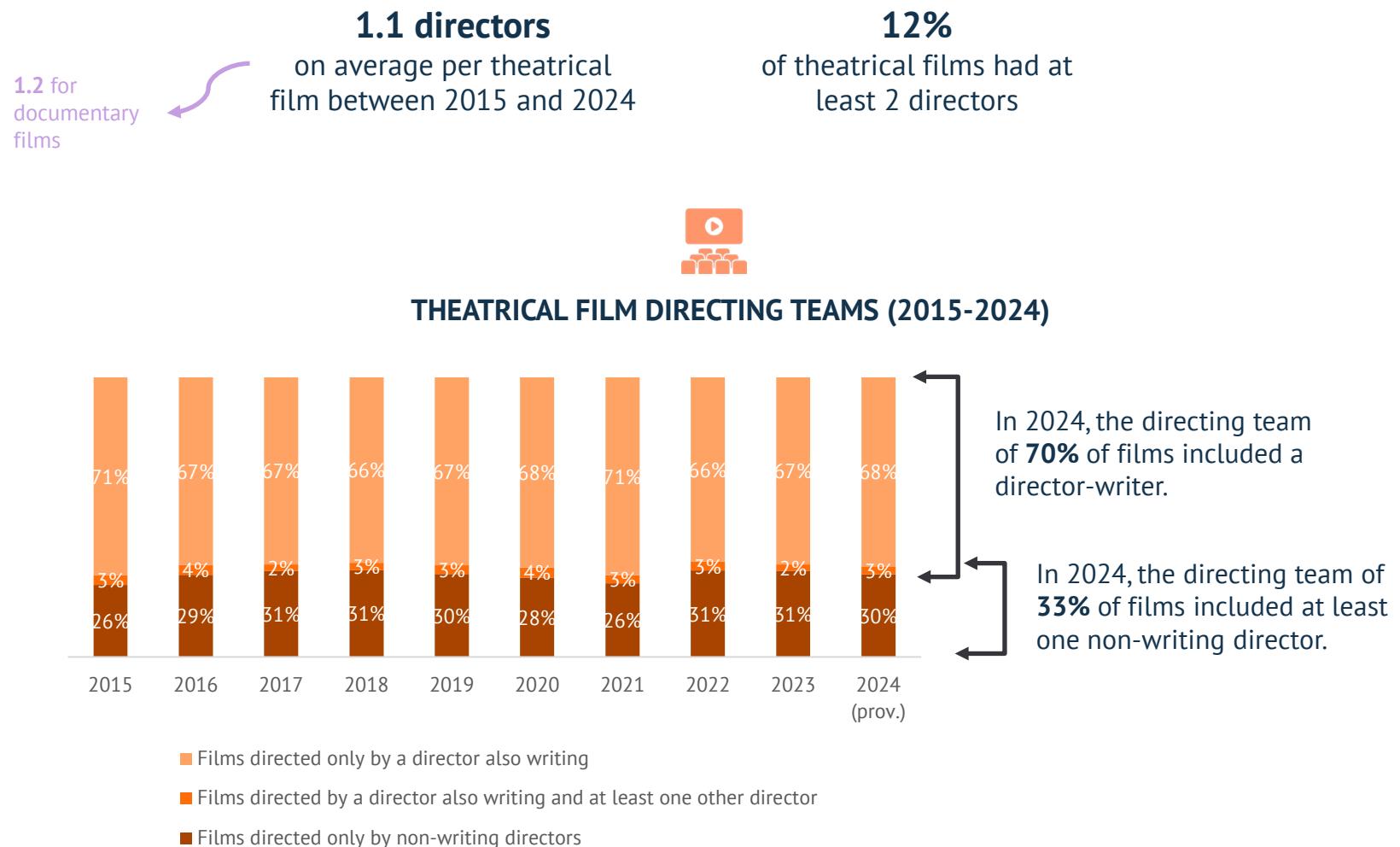
Job: directing credit for a TV/SVOD film or a TV/SVOD season, no matter the number of episodes for which the director was credited

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

C.3. Directing teams: 1.1 directors per theatrical film



On average, there were 1.1 directors per film between 2015 and 2024.



C.3. Directing teams: 2.1 directors per TV/SVOD fiction project

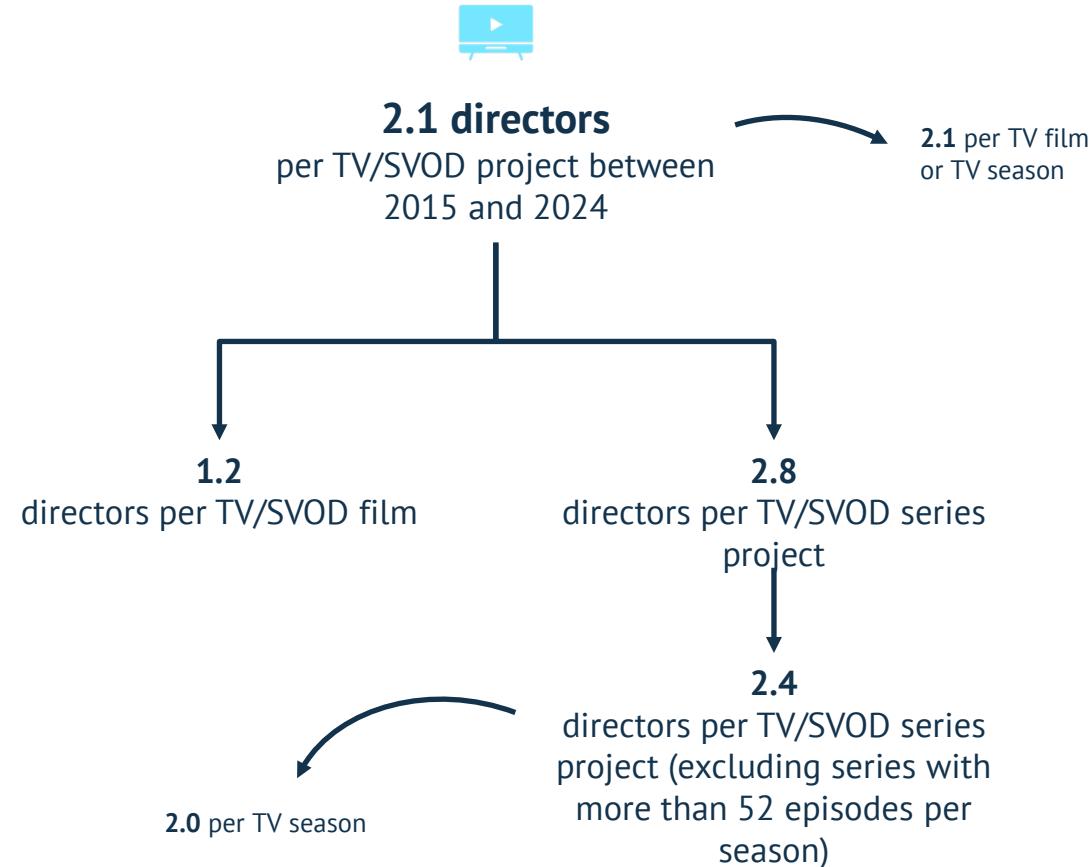


On average, there were 2.1 directors per TV/SVOD fiction project between 2015 and 2024.

The figure was only 1.2 for TV films, similar to theatrical films.

2.8 directors participated in the directing of a TV series.

TV/SVOD DIRECTING TEAMS (2015-2024)



A TV/SVOD project = a TV/SVOD film or series, no matter the number of seasons or episodes

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

Writers and directors of film and TV/SVOD fiction

2015-2024 figures

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