

Writers and directors of film and TV/SVOD fiction 2015-2021 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 2015-2021.

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 2021 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

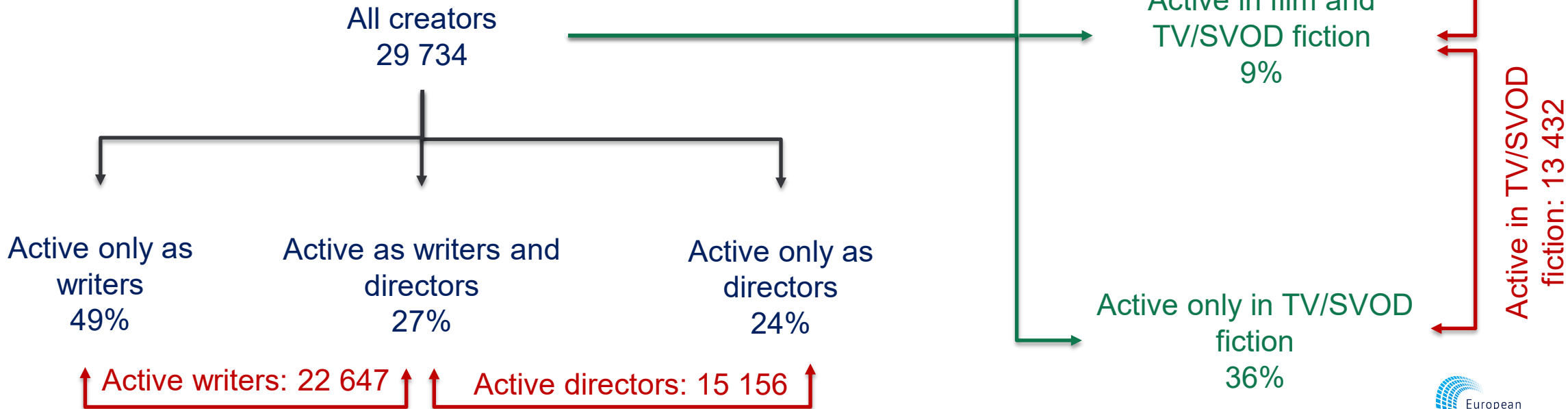
- The report successively reviews theatrical film writers, TV/SVOD fiction writers, theatrical film directors and TV/SVOD fiction directors.
- In each section, details are provided regarding the overlap between positions (e.g. writers also credited as directors) or between types of works (e.g. directors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

Key findings

Overview of the writers' and directors' activities

The sample includes close to 30 000 creators active in writing and/or directing theatrical films and/or TV/SVOD fiction between 2015 and 2021.

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



FILM WRITERS

Between 2015 and 2021:

- 14 200 active writers
- 47% wrote only films they directed
- 1.3 films (co)written
- 1.8 writers per film including directors/writers

TV/SVOD FICTION WRITERS

Between 2015 and 2021:

- 10 250 active writers
- 8% wrote only TV/SVOD fiction they directed
- 1.9 projects (co)written
- 4 writers per project

FILM DIRECTORS

Between 2015 and 2021:

- 11 700 active directors
- 40% director debuts each year
- 59% of directing credits coupled with a writing credit
- 1.3 films (co)directed

TV/SVOD FICTION DIRECTORS

Between 2015 and 2021:

- 4 600 active directors
- 2.2 projects (co)directed
- 2.1 directors per project

Directing and writing assignments before and during the COVID-19 crisis

- Until the COVID-19 crisis, the number of theatrical films and TV/SVOD fiction writing and directing assignments was growing, mainly driven by TV/SVOD 13-episode-or-less-per-season TV series.
- The COVID-19 crisis impacted much more theatrical film assignments than TV/SVOD fiction assignments.

Intense turnover

- Theatrical film writers wrote on average 1.3 films between 2015 and 2021; TV/SVOD fiction writers participated on average in 1.9 TV films or TV series.
- Theatrical film directors directed on average 1.3 films between 2015 and 2021. TV/SVOD fiction directors participated on average in 2.2 TV films or TV series.

Moving from films to TV fiction (and TV fiction to films)?

- A significant share of 2015-2021 TV/SVOD fiction writers (33%) and directors (58%) have at some point also written or directed a theatrical film.
- But, considering their limited level of activity, only a small minority (9%) of writers and directors worked on both theatrical films and TV/SVOD fiction during the 2015-2021 time period.

The 'film d'auteur' model

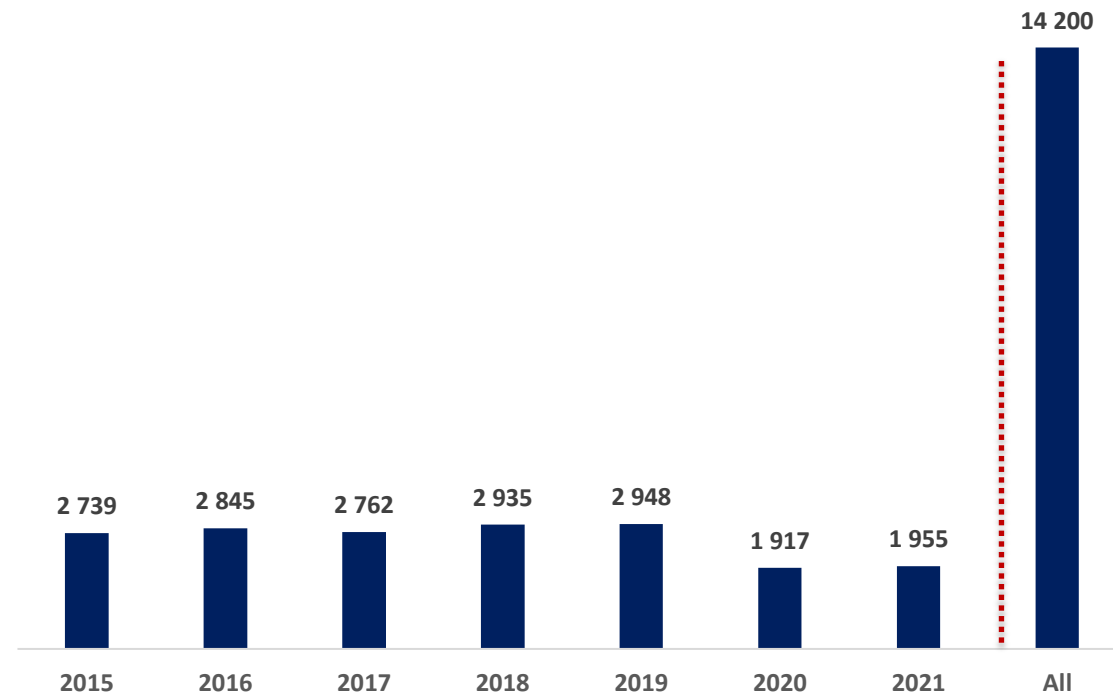
- The 'film d'auteur' model remains dominant in European film: close to half of writers active between 2015 and 2021 wrote only films they directed; close to 59% of directing credits were combined with a writer credit for the same film.
- The model is radically different for TV/SVOD fiction where most writers (92%) wrote for projects they did not direct. For TV/SVOD fiction, combined directing and writing is higher for TV films than for TV series, but still significantly lower than for theatrical films.

Writers of theatrical films

14 200 different writers (co) wrote at least one theatrical film between 2015 and 2021.

The number of active writers increased slightly between 2015 and 2019 and of course decreased during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 years.

Active theatrical film writers (2015-2021)

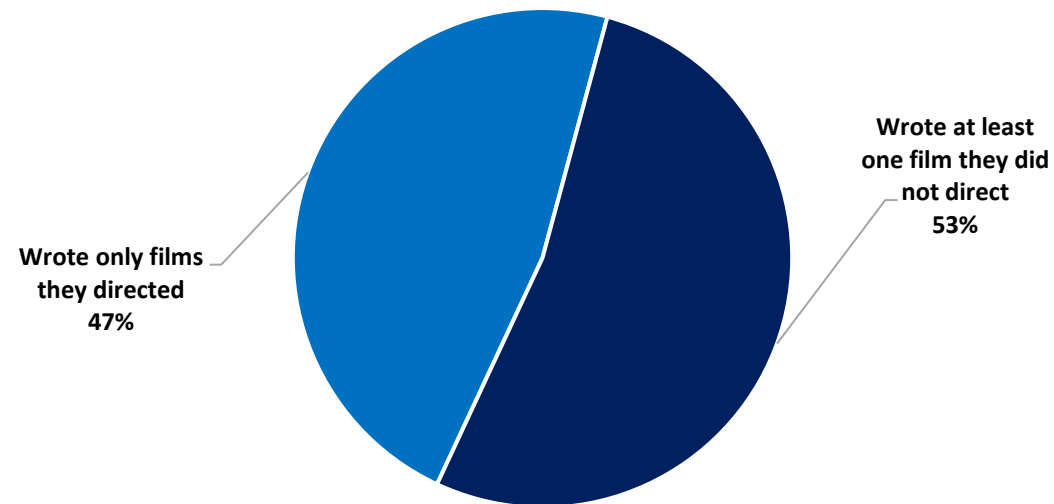


Active: credited for at least one work between 2015 and 2021

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

Out of the 14 200 different writers active between 2015 and 2021, 47% wrote only films they directed.

Active theatrical film writers (2015-2021)



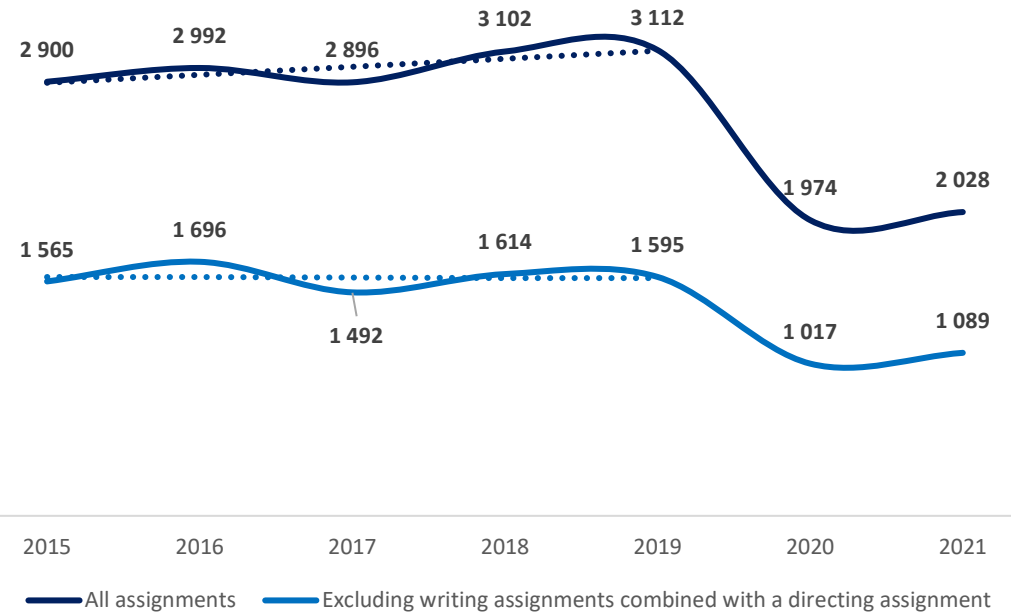
Active: credited for at least one work between 2015 and 2021

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

The 14 200 writers active between 2015 and 2021 had a role in a total of 19 000 writing or cowriting assignments.

Out of 19 000 writing assignments, 47% were combined with a directing assignment for the same film.

Theatrical film (co)writing assignments (2015-2021)

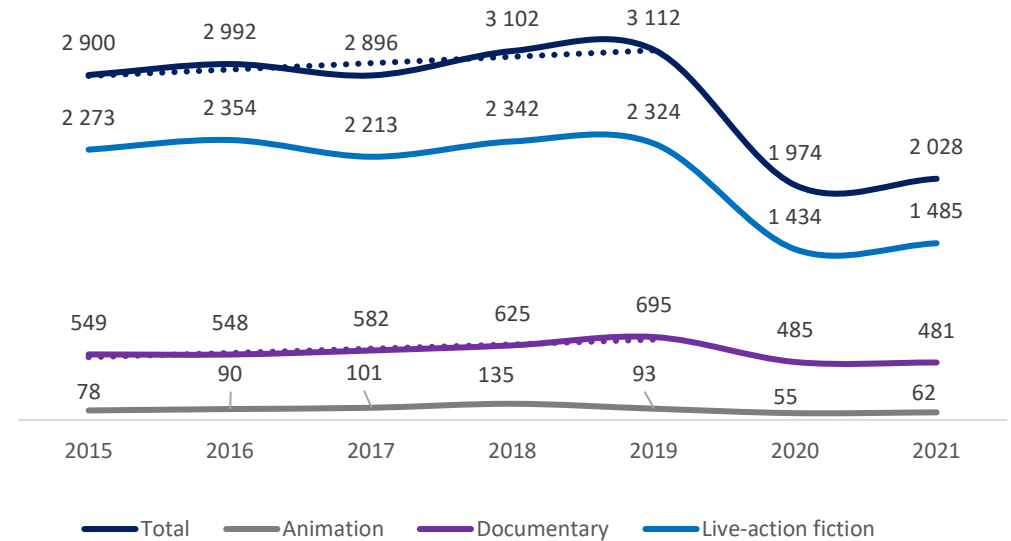


Assignment: (co) writing credit

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

The moderate growth of (co)writing assignments between 2015 and 2019 was mainly driven by documentaries – the category of theatrical films for which the greatest increase was registered during the same period.

Theatrical film (co)writing assignments (2015-2021)

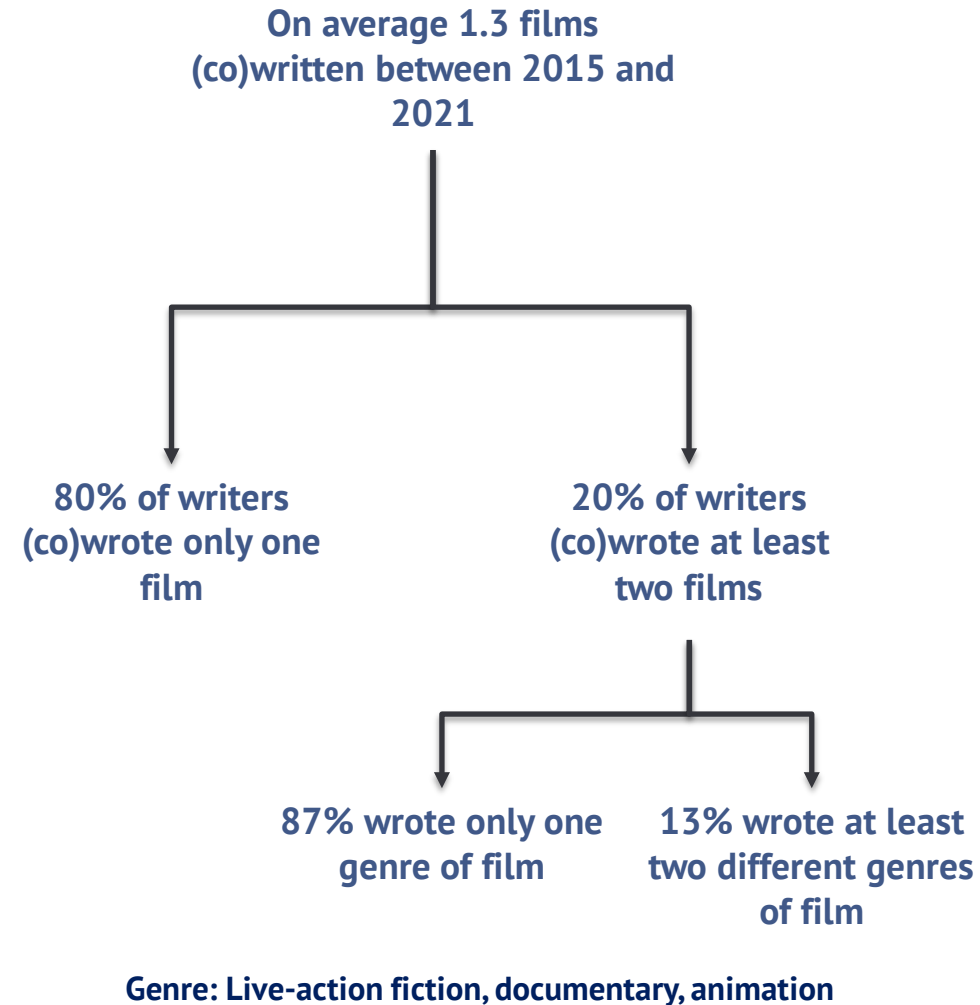


Assignment: (co) writing credit

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

The vast majority of writers (80%) (co)wrote only one film (actually released in cinemas in Europe) between 2015 and 2021.

Writers who wrote more than one film generally specialised in one genre.

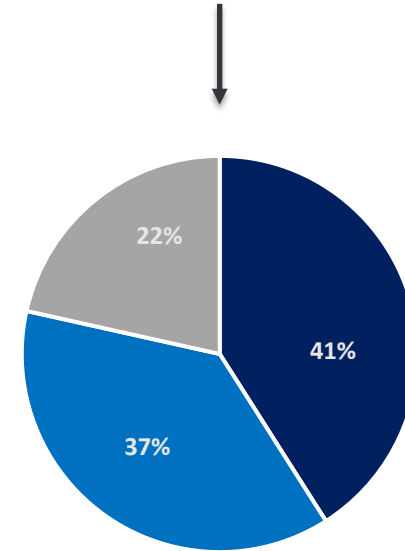


On average, there were 1.8 writers per film between 2015 and 2021.

The writing team of 78% of films included a director-writer.

The writing team of 59% of films included at least one non-directing writer.

On average 1.8 writers per film
between 2015 and 2021



- Films written only by one director/writer
- Films written by one director/writer + at least one other writer
- Films written only by non-directing writers

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

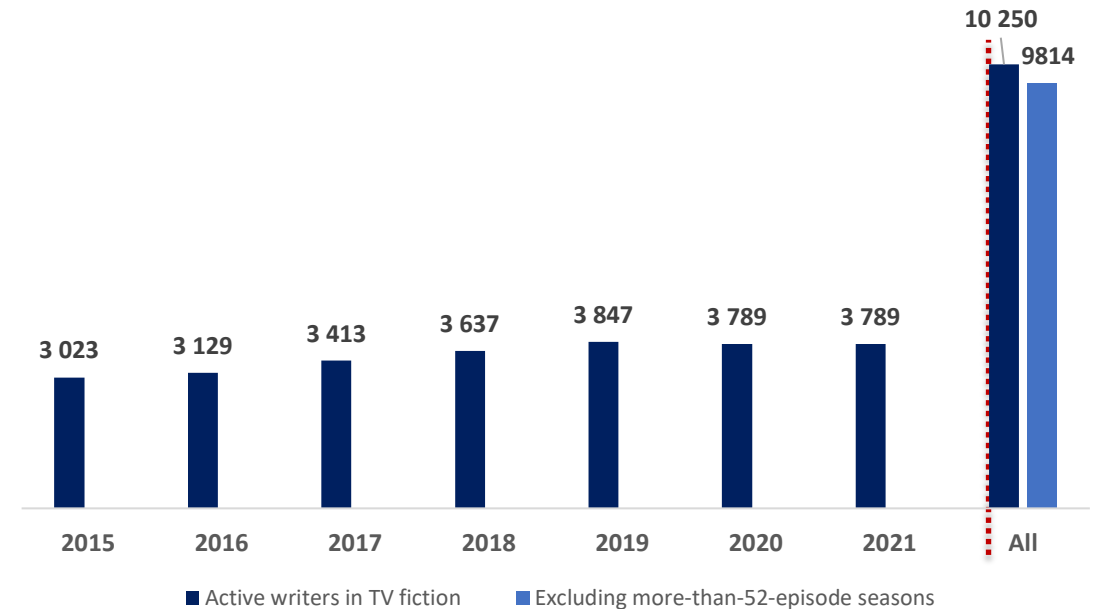
Writers of TV and SVOD fiction

10 250 different writers (co)wrote at least one TV/SVOD fiction episode between 2015 and 2021.

Excluding TV seasons of 52 episodes or more, for which the coverage is low, the total number of active writers was 9 814.

The number of active TV/SVOD fiction writers significantly increased between 2015 and 2019 and remained almost stable during the 2021-2021 COVID-19 years.

Active TV/SVOD fiction writers (2015-2021)



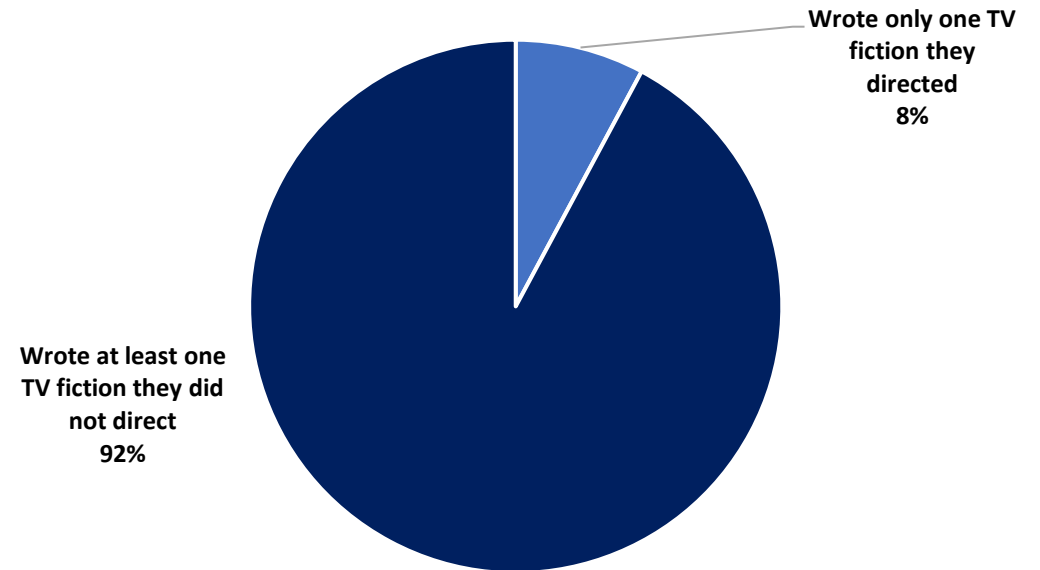
Active: credited for at least one work between 2015 and 2020

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

Unlike for theatrical films, only a small minority of TV writers (8%) wrote only TV/SVOD fictions they directed.

However, for TV films only, writers also directing accounted for 20% of writing credits. But the figure remains significantly lower than for theatrical films (46%).

Active TV/SVOD fiction writers (2015-2021)

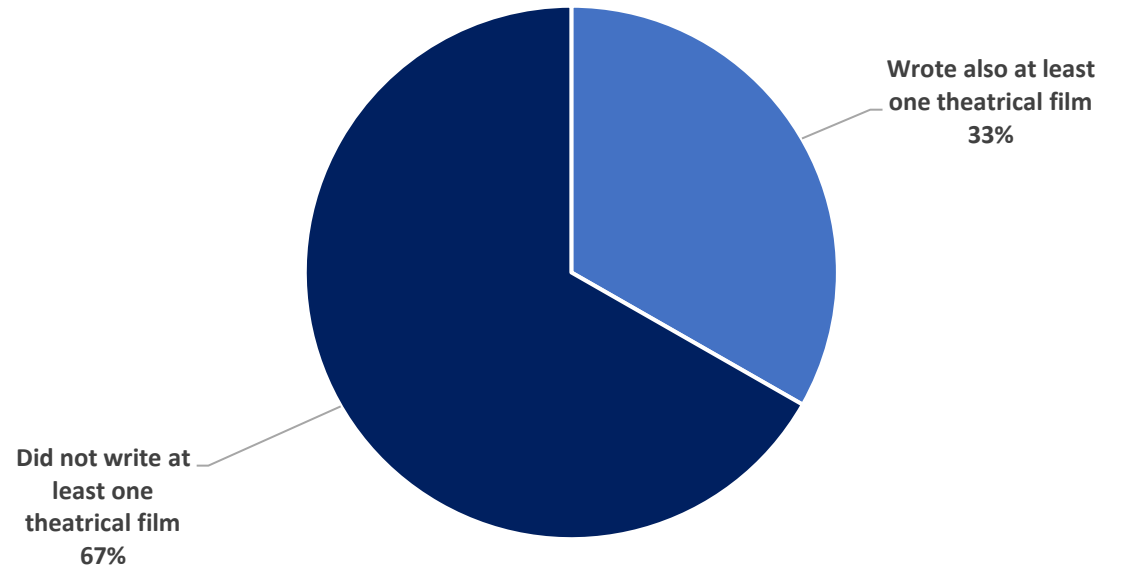


Active: credited for at least one work between 2015 and 2021

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

One third of writers active in TV/SVOD fiction between 2015 and 2021 wrote at least one theatrical film.

Share of 2015-2021 TV/SVOD fiction writers who also wrote a film



Film written in any year, even outside the 2015-2021 time period

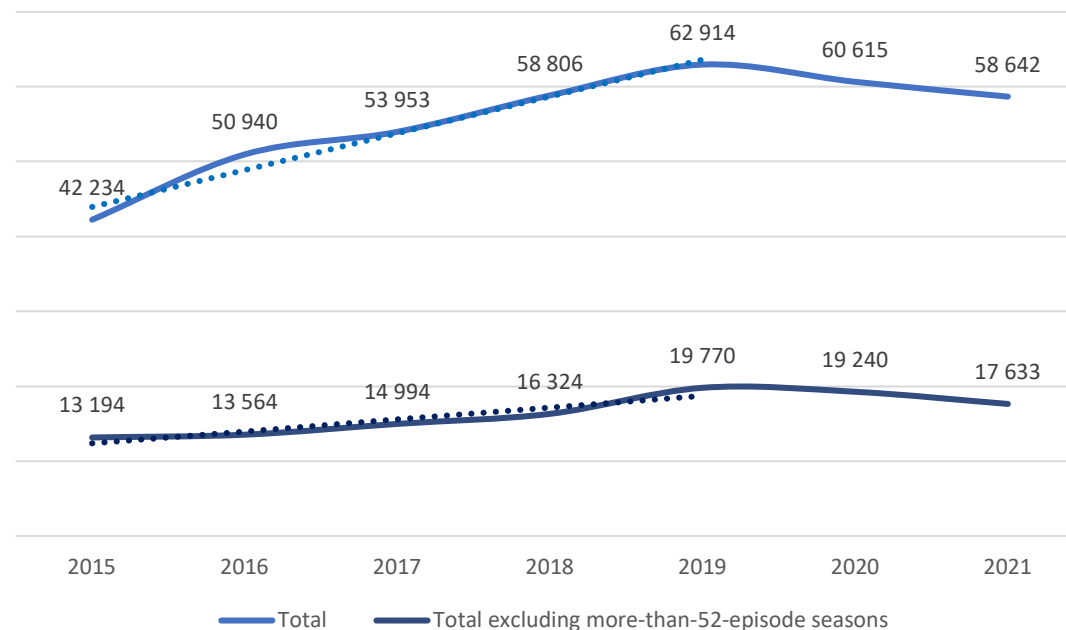
Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

The 10 250 writers active between 2015 and 2021 were involved in a total of 390 000 writing or cowriting assignments (measured in TV films or episodes).

However, over 70% of these assignments corresponded to more-than-52-episode-per-season series. The study sample representativity for this format is lower than for other formats. The total number of assignments should therefore be considered as an order of magnitude.

Still, the figure suggests that the growth in the number of (co)writing assignments has been mainly driven by more-than-52-episode-per-season series.

TV/SVOD fiction (co)writing assignments (2015-2021)

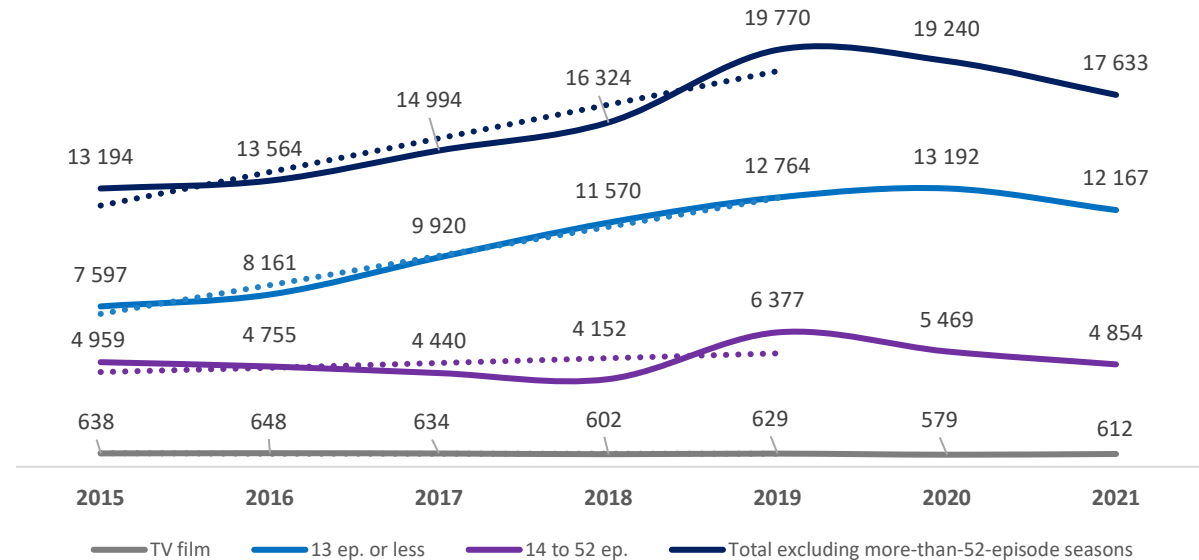


Assignment: (co) writing credit for one TV film or one TV episode

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

Excluding more-than-52-episode-per season series, the growth in writing (co)assignments was mainly driven by seasons with 13 or fewer episodes.

TV/SVOD fiction (co)writing assignments (2015-2021)

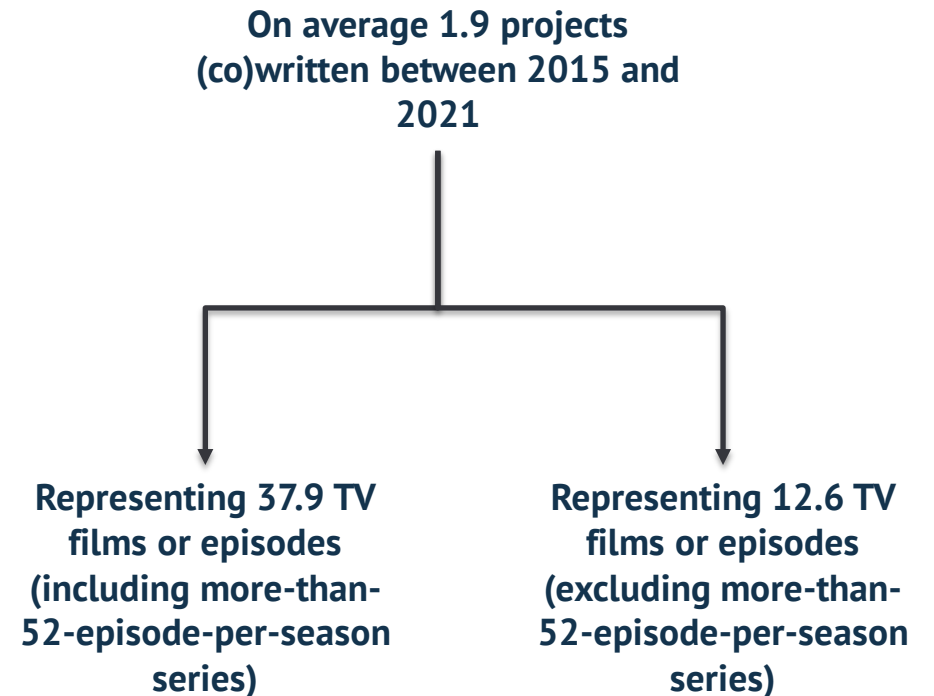


Assignment: (co) writing credit for one TV film or one TV episode

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

TV/SVOD fiction writers participated on average in 1.9 TV/SVOD fiction projects between 2015 and 2021.

These 1.9 projects translated into the (co)writing of 37.9 TV films or episodes or, excluding more-than-52-episode-per-season series, 12.6 TV films or episodes.



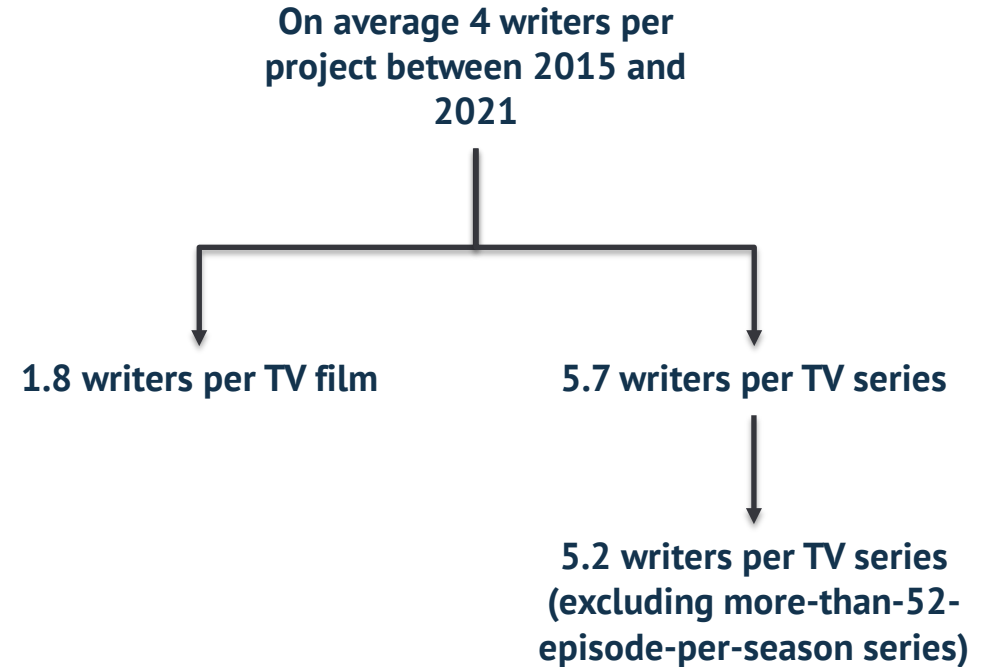
Project: a TV film or TV series

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

On average, there were 4 writers per TV/SVOD fiction project between 2015 and 2021.

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.

5.2 writers participated in the writing of a TV series.



Project: a TV film or TV series

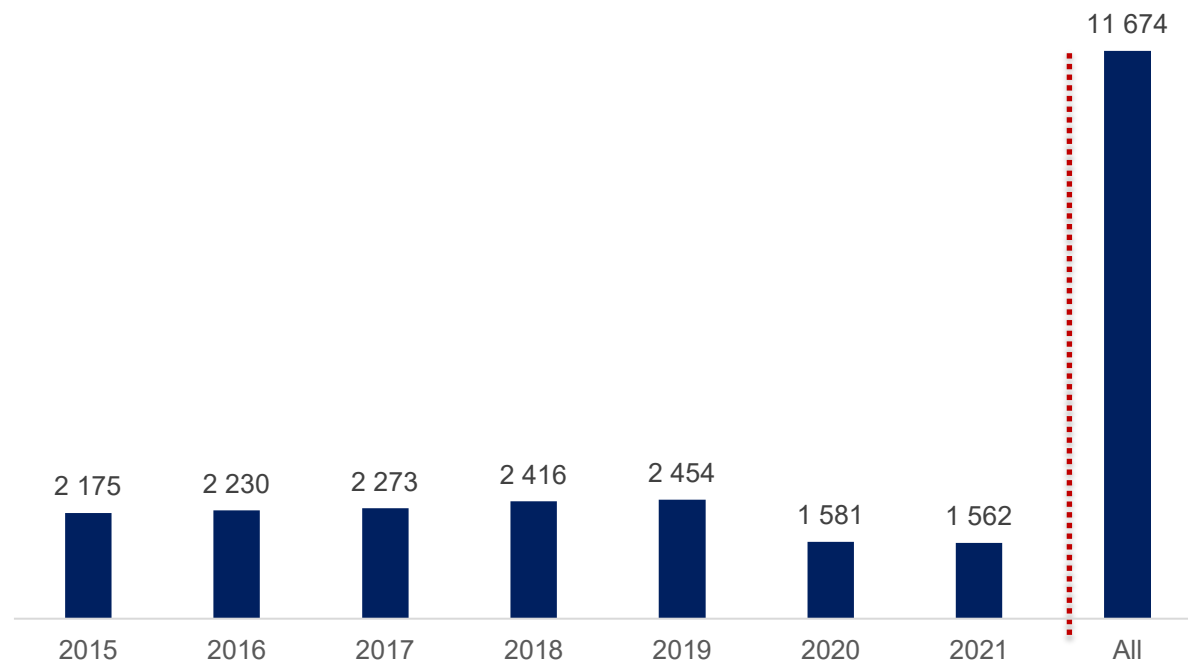
Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

Directors of theatrical films

Active theatrical film directors (2015-2021)

Over 11 600 different directors (co)directed at least one theatrical film between 2015 and 2021.

The number of active directors regularly increased between 2015 and 2019 and of course decreased during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 years.

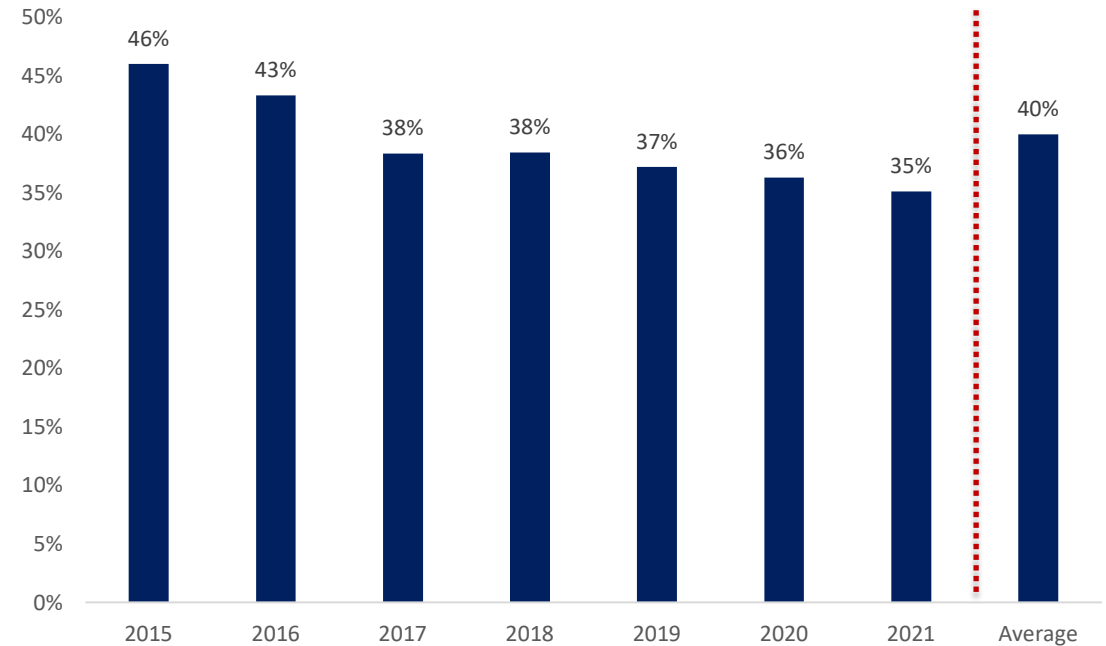


Active: credited for at least one work between 2015 and 2020

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

On average, 40% of films produced each year between 2015 and 2021 were directors' debuts.

Share of directors' debuts among all films (2015-2021)



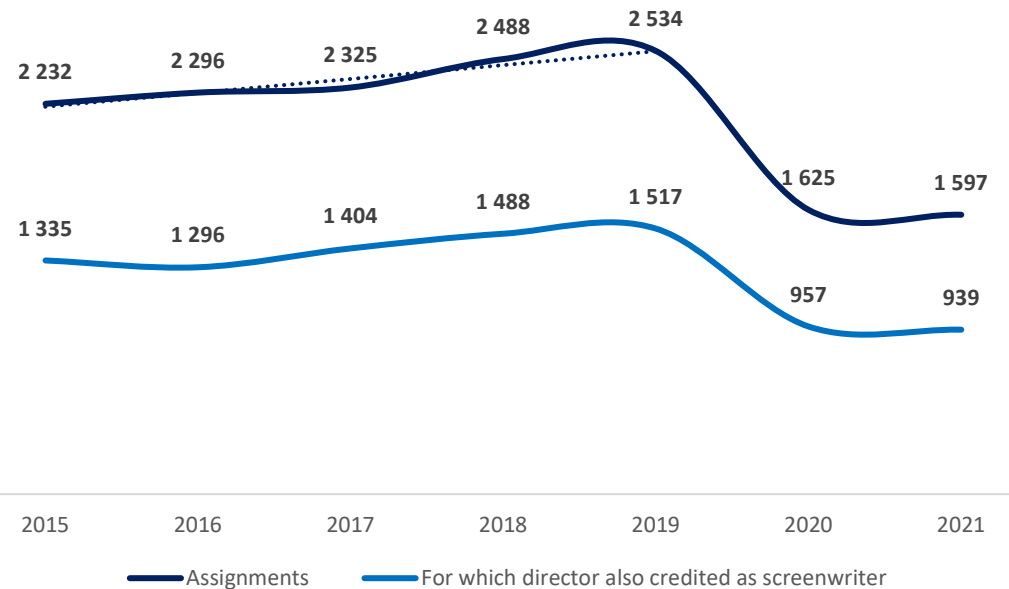
Share calculated with films with only one director

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

The 11 600 directors active between 2015 and 2021 were involved in close to 15 100 directing or codirecting assignments.

At least 59% of directing credits were combined with a screenwriter credit from the same film.

Theatrical film (co)directing assignments (2015-2021)



Assignment: (co)directing credit

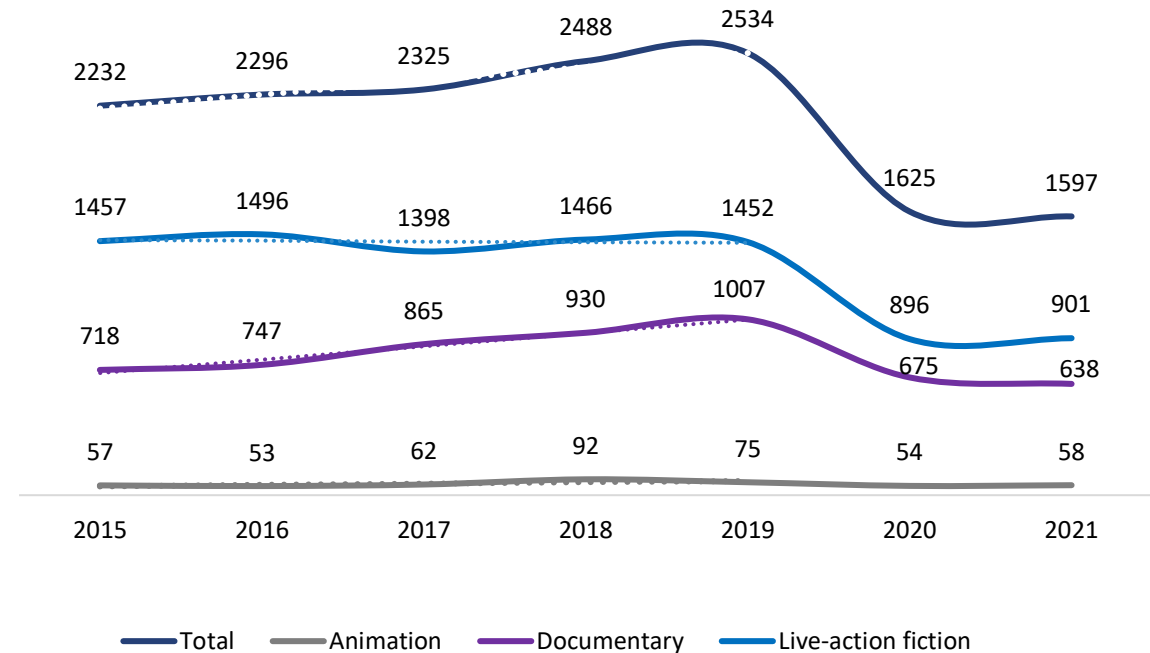
Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

The number of assignments grew moderately between 2015 and 2019 and of course decreased during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 crisis.

The 2015-2019 growth was mainly driven by documentaries.

Live-action fiction films accounted for 60% of directing credits.

Theatrical film (co)directing assignments (2015-2021)

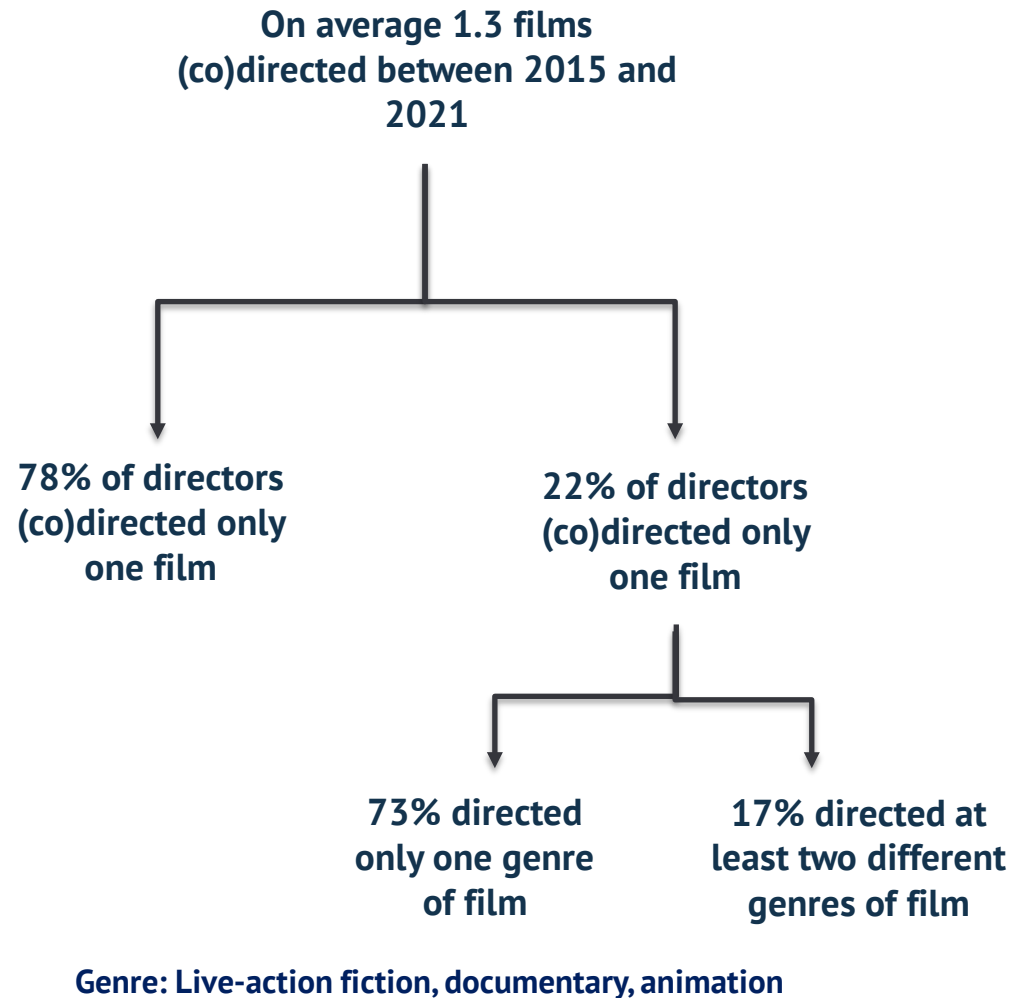


Assignment: (co)directing credit

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

The vast majority of directors (78%) (co)directed only one film (actually released in cinemas in Europe) between 2015 and 2021.

Directors who directed more than one film generally specialised in one genre.



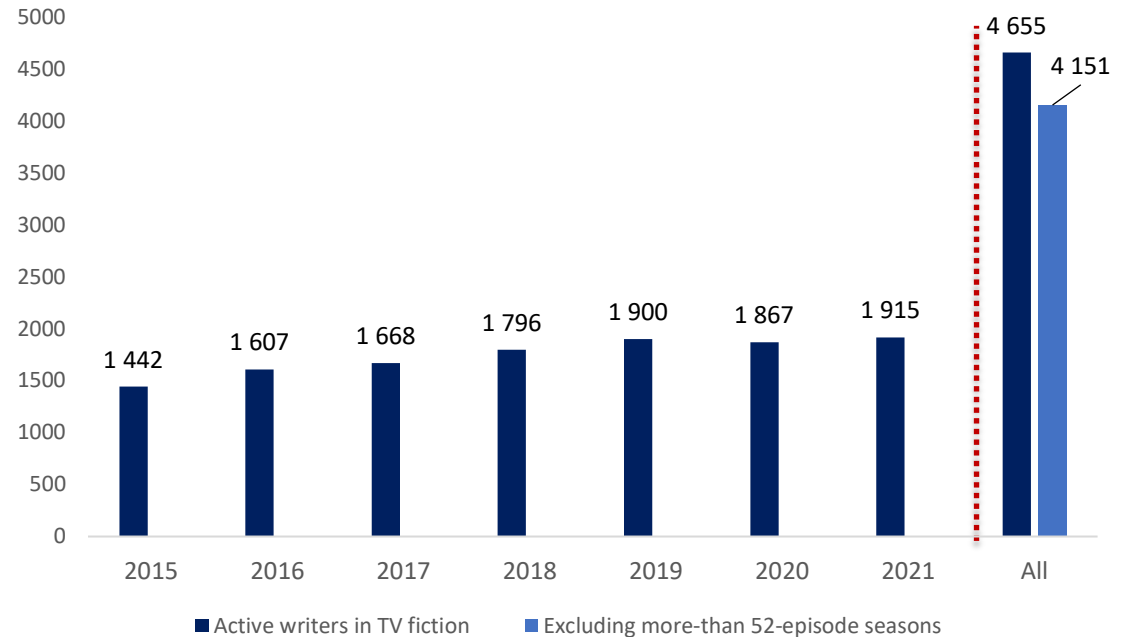
Directors of TV and SVOD fiction

4 625 different directors (co)directed at least one TV/SVOD fiction episode or TV film between 2015 and 2021.

Excluding TV seasons of 52 episodes or more, for which the coverage is low, the total number of active writers was 4 151.

The number of active TV/SVOD fiction directors significantly increased between 2015 and 2019 and remained almost stable during the 2021-2021 COVID-19 years.

Active TV/SVOD fiction directors (2015-2021)

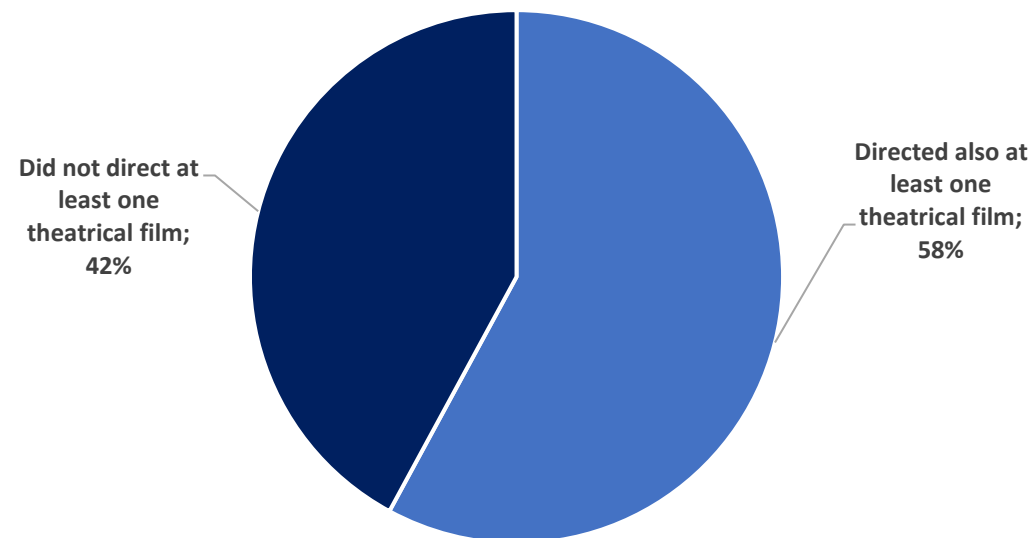


“Active”: credited for at least one work between 2015 and 2020

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

58% of directors active in TV/SVOD fiction between 2015 and 2021 directed at least one theatrical film.

Share of 2015-2021 TV/SVOD fiction directors who also directed a film



Film directed in any year, even outside the 2015-2021 time period

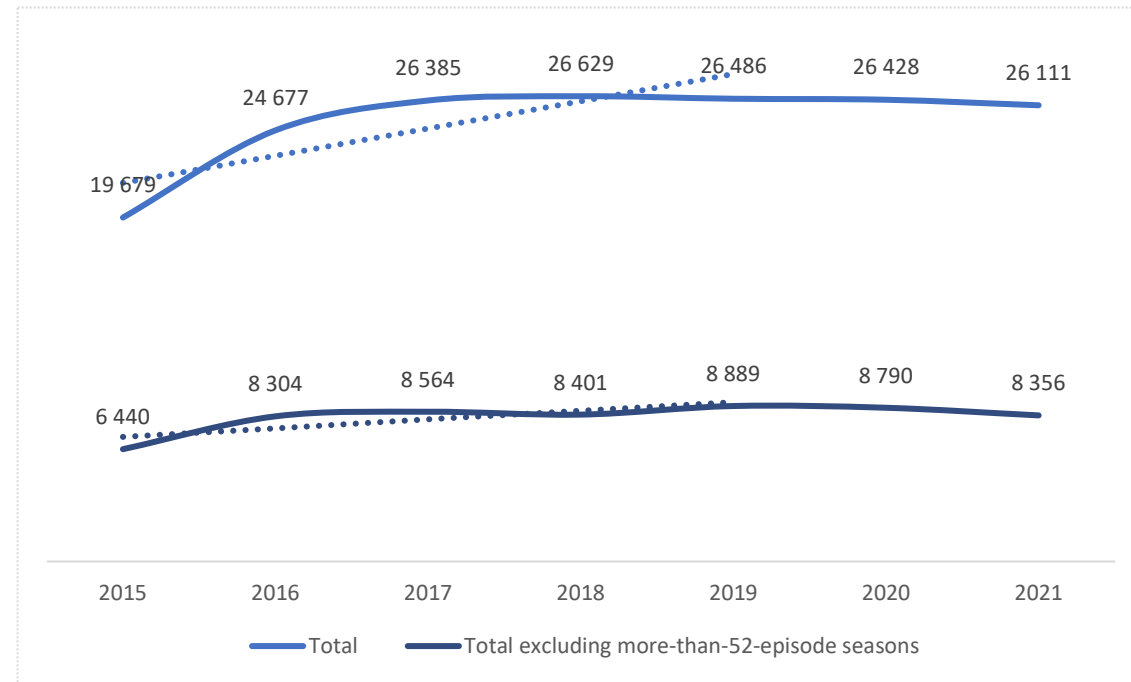
Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

The 4 625 directors active between 2015 and 2021 were involved in a total of 176 000 directing or cowriting assignments (measured in number of TV films or episodes).

However, 67% of these assignments corresponded to more-than-52-episode-per-season series. The study sample representativity for this format is lower than for other formats. The total number of assignments should therefore be considered as an order of magnitude.

Still, the figure suggests that the growth in the number of (co)directing assignments has been mainly driven by more-than-52-episode-per-season series.

TV/SVOD fiction (co)directing assignments (2015-2021)

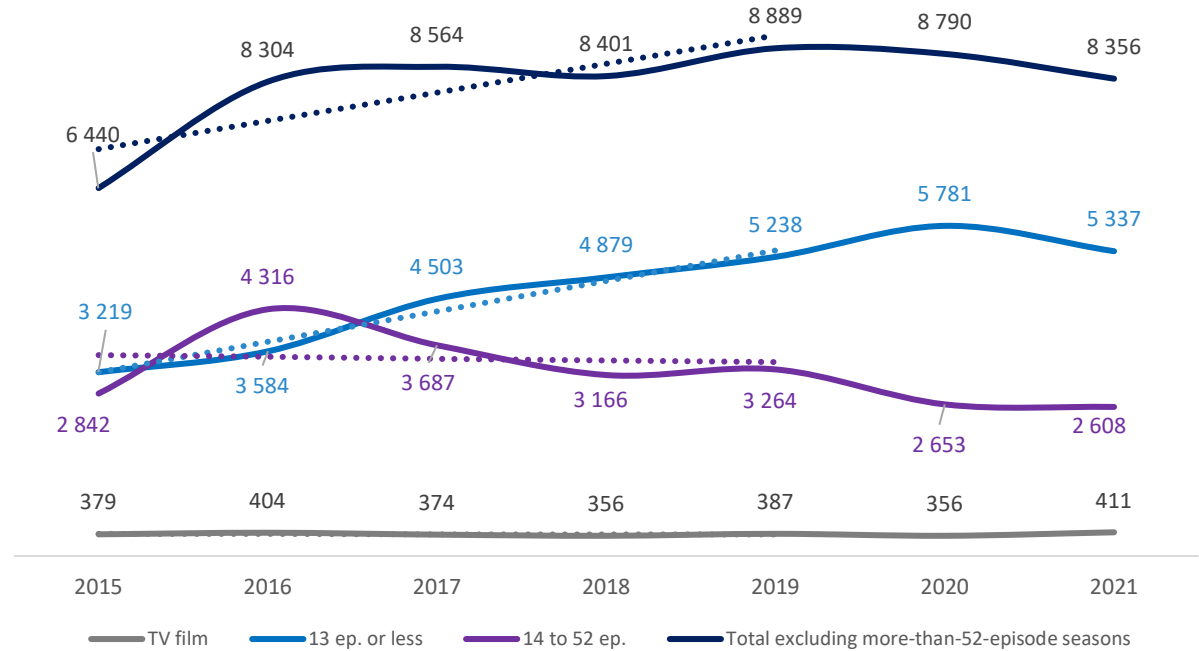


Assignment: (co) writing credit for one TV film or one TV episode

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

Excluding more-than-52-episode-per season series, the growth in writing (co)assignments was mainly driven by seasons with 13 or fewer episodes.

TV/SVOD fiction (co)directing assignments (2015-2021)

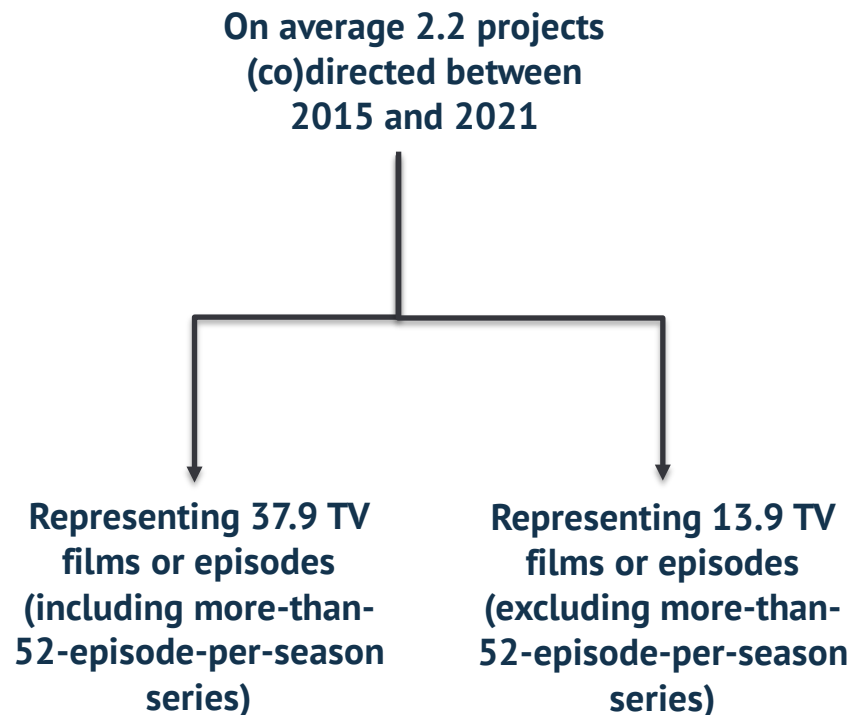


Assignment: (co)directing credit for one TV film or one TV episode

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

TV/SVOD fiction directors participated on average in 1.9 TV fiction projects between 2015 and 2021.

These 1.9 projects translated into the (co)direction of 37.9 TV films or episodes or, excluding more-than-52-episode-per-season series, 13.9 TV films or episodes.

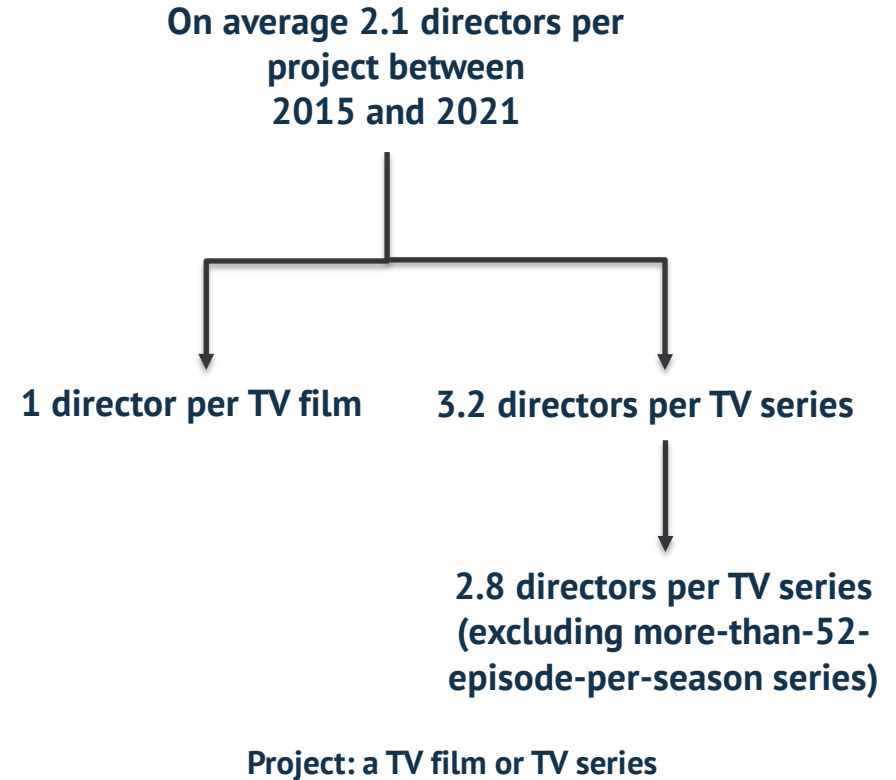


Project: a TV film or TV series

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

On average, there were 2.1 directors per TV/SVOD fiction project between 2015 and 2021.

The figure was only 1 for TV films, and 3.2 for TV series.



Source: European Audiovisual Observatory

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