

Morrison and Foerster: “International TV Series: Small Screens – Big Business”

Remarks by Sen. Chris Dodd

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As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Michelle, for that wonderful introduction.

I want to also thank Morrison and Foerster, and particularly Christiane, who chairs the firm’s film practice, for working with Christian and the MPA in putting together today’s panel.

Two years ago, I had the privilege of speaking at a similar event during my first trip to the Berlin Film Festival. I must have said something worthwhile to be invited back.

I appreciate having another opportunity to address such a distinguished audience– a veritable “who’s-who” of the German and international creative community.

Today we are going to be discussing television and serial content – a growing and increasingly important part of the audiovisual sector.

It is fitting that we are having this discussion here in Berlin today. Right now, here in Berlin, people from all across the world are gathering at the 66th Berlinale. They are coming, mainly, to celebrate the art of cinema and its continuing growth throughout the world.

But festival-goers will also notice the strong presence of television as well this year. Thanks to the leadership of Dieter Kosslick, serial programming has become a growing part of the Berlinale in recent years. The festival now hosts premiere screenings of international TV series. Both the European Film and Co-Production Markets now include television among their offerings.

And with exclusive screenings of shows like “Better Call Saul” from the United States and “The Writer” from Israel, and the Drama Series Days initiative at

the European Film Market, television is an even bigger focus of this year's festival.

I would be remiss if I failed to also mention a major milestone that was just reached. Earlier this week, Amazon announced that it is now producing, alongside Pantaleon Entertainment, Warner Brothers Entertainment and Warner Brothers International Television Germany, the company's first-ever German language original television series.

This new show, called "Wanted", is expected to premiere sometime next year. It is a very exciting development for all of us in the entertainment industry.

That's because television is an increasingly important and international medium today. Data we have seen suggests that in both Europe and the U.S., online television viewing is up roughly 150%.

One that is experience a revolutionary transformation in the way it's created, as well as the ways in which audiences experience it.

No matter where they live, audiences love good stories that are well told. They also love choices. They are getting both with today's television landscape.

As the world grows ever-more interconnected, industries like film and television are becoming increasingly globalized. And the nature of their content is changing to meet the demands of international audiences.

In the 19980s, the global reach of "Dallas" set records. It was translated and dubbed into 67 languages and shown in more than 90 countries. But today's TV shows are available in almost every country and language.

Episodes of "Grey's Anatomy" and "The Walking Dead" compete regularly with "Downton Abbey", "Sherlock", and "Tatort" on television networks across Europe and throughout the world.

And last summer Germany jumped into the mix when "Deutschland 83" became the first German language series to air on an American television network. By the way, before it premiered, we hosted a special reception and screening of the show at the MPAA's offices in Washington, DC. There was not

an empty seat in the theater. Not only were people were incredibly excited to see the show, they could not stop talking about it afterwards.

Global audiences can thank the ever growing number of online and next generation viewing options for the embarrassment of storytelling riches available today.

Creative industries like film and television have always embraced the latest technological innovations. And because they do, over 3,000 licensed audiovisual services are now available to consumers according to the European Audiovisual Observatory.

In the coming years that number will only continue to grow.

New services for watching great content are emerging every day as innovators work tirelessly to create the next “big thing”.

It could be Virtual Reality or some other piece of technology that we haven’t thought of yet.

But this industry’s innovations go beyond technology. Just as transformative is the increasingly international nature of our stories and our productions. More and more of today’s television series are made up of international casts and crew. They’re filming in international locations and telling global stories. Some are co-productions, while others remain the creations of one nation’s networks. All, however, are important economic contributors and job creators.

Take “Game of Thrones”, one of the world’s most popular TV series, for example. An American studio created it based on books written by an American author. Yet its cast and crew is a diverse and international one.

And for six seasons, it has filmed in locations all across Europe: Northern Ireland, Croatia, Spain, and Iceland to name a few. But no matter where production goes, it creates jobs and puts money into local economies.

In Northern Ireland alone the show is said to have created roughly 900 full-time jobs and nearly another 6,000 part-time jobs. All together the series has

contributed around \$170 million to that country's economy. And in Spain, Andalusia tourism has jumped 30% since it became a key filming location a few years ago.

And then there's the hit spy series "Homeland". It made history last year as the first American television show to film an entire season in Berlin. While filming its 12 episodes, the production had a [reported](#) budget of \$45 million and shot in over 200 locations around the city. Local Germans were hired as part of the 700 person cast and crew. And the production contributed to countless local business over the course of filming. Restaurants, hotels, caterers, dry cleaners, lumber yards – the list goes on and on.

This past summer, Minister Monika Grütters spoke at the Producers Alliance's "Produzentenfest". In her remarks, the Minister stated that "every Euro spent for film production is a well spent Euro."

She is absolutely right. These creations are critically important engines of economic growth. And if we want them to continue thriving we need to support them.

I know that the people of Germany recognize this. The German Motion Picture Fund is the country's first production incentive program at federal level that focuses on high end international television. This country faces strong competition in the race to attract high profile, large volume productions.

France, Italy, the UK, and Hungary have all revamped their incentive programs. But this new initiative helps keep Germany competitive.

But attractive incentive programs and a viable production landscape are not only important for TV production, they are also essential for creating feature films. That is why the German Film Fund (DFFF) continues striving to attract international productions. And because of their continued efforts, thirty-six international co-productions and 71 domestic films were shot in Germany last year.

They included projects from well-known filmmakers like Gore Verbinski and Luc Besson, and Disney and Marvel's upcoming blockbuster, "Captain

America: Civil War". In the nine years since it was created, 975 films have benefitted from the German Federal Film Fund.

The German film and television industry stands as one of the strongest and most creative in Europe, in part, because of these incentives.

This is all a long way of saying that we are living in a Golden Age of global television. One filled with incredibly unique and diverse stories told by artists and creators from all across the world.

It's an exciting time for creators and consumers alike, with seemingly endless storytelling possibilities and viewing opportunities.

So I thank you all for coming out today to be a part of the discussion about the future of this great medium. And I want to thank, once again, everyone at Morrison and Foerster for organizing today's panel and for inviting me to be a small part of it.