



## EUROPEAN UPDATE

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### FEDERAL FILM BOARD

**HITS 40** On Sept. 17, the German Federal Film Board (FFA) celebrated 40 years of doing good for the film business in Germany. More than 450 guests were invited to the Clubrestaurant on the River Spree in Berlin, where state minister for media and culture Bernd Neumann lauded the principle of “solidarity” that has run through the funding body over the year. Whoever uses film has to contribute to its making. Since being written into law on Dec. 22, 1967, and opening its doors on April 1 the following year, FFA has received some €1.13 billion (US\$1.65 bil.) in levies, of which more than half, €628 million to be exact, went to support the production of some 1,100 films; another €90 mil. was allotted to distribution aid and €95 mil. to the video industry. No less than €162 mil. went to movie theatres as interest-free loans.

**BOXING DAY AND DATE** After having being coined “*Heathrow Chainsaw Massacre*” for its obvious similarities to another psychotic family, on Dec. 26 Steven Sheil’s *Mum & Dad* will be the first U.K. film release to appear in cinemas at the same time it’s available on DVD, through Video on Demand, electronic sell-through and rental. Responsible for “offering consumers the ultimate choice to watch the film in the way they choose” is independent film distributor Revolver Entertainment. According to the media release, Revolver is also taking aim at a similar plan for the U.S. around Mother’s Day (May 10, 2009).

### RUSSIA ENTERS

**DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP** Paramount Pictures International (PPI) announced a strategic alliance with Central Partnership, Russia’s leading independent distributor and one of the country’s top film and television producers. Effective Jan. 1, the deal not only covers theatrical distribution of Paramount Pictures, but also includes participation in Central Partnership’s local production activities with the option of PPI distributing such titles internationally.

Reuben Dishdshyan, president and CEO of Central Partnership, called his agreement “with the leading Hollywood studio... a key milestone in the history of our company. This agreement will let us substantially expand our portfolio due to the high quantity of motion pictures supplied by Paramount Pictures and boost our mutual positions in the Russian and CIS film distribution market.”

With the very same goal, no doubt, Univer-

sal Pictures International (UPI) promoted Vadim Ivanov, the commercial director of its Russian operations, to managing director after Eugene Beginin left to pursue other interests in the Russian film industry. With a background at theatrical sales director for 20th Century Fox in the former CIS states and Gemini Film International, Ivanov now reports to London-based Duncan Clark, executive VP of international distribution, and Niels Swinkels, VP of sales and distribution for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

### CO-PRODUCTIONS

**SCORE HIGHER** The European Audiovisual Observatory issued a statistical proof, tallied from more than 5,000 films across 20 European countries from 2001 to 2007, showing that admissions for European co-productions are nearly three times higher than those for national productions. They are also twice as likely to be released in foreign markets and significantly outperform national productions outside their home markets.

One of the more obvious reasons is that co-productions usually have a higher budget and better production values. They also have the backing of larger companies and are smart enough to mix international talent with local stars.

With 36 member states and represented by the European Commission, the Observatory is a European public-service body tasked with gathering and circulating information on the audiovisual industry. A free copy of the report is available at [www.obs.coe.int/online\\_publication/expert/krakow\\_report.html](http://www.obs.coe.int/online_publication/expert/krakow_report.html).

### MORE2SCREEN

**WITH XDC** XDC, the self-proclaimed “leading digital-cinema service company in Europe,” signed a cooperation agreement with More2-Screen to provide digital mastering. The U.K.-based digital entertainment company ([more2screen.com](http://more2screen.com)) offers alternative content to cinemas, such as performances from the Glyndebourne Festival, Teatro La Scala, the Bolshoi Ballet and the Salzburg Festival. A Led Zepelin theatrical event, and the first-ever live high-definition broadcast of a music concert in Europe, “Robbie Williams Live in Berlin,” delivered the two highest-selling music DVDs in the U.K. ever in 2004 and 2005, the company stated. Once again proving the power of the movie theatre.

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**HANCOCK CONQUERS ARCADIA IN 4K** Sony Pictures’ superhero-hit *Hancock* was shown at multiplex Arcadia in Bellinzago Lombardo, near Milano, “in *Esclusiva Europea in Digitale Sony 4K*.” ¶ Sept. 19 marked the debut of the Sony CineAlta SRX-R220 in Italy, Arcadia’s Laura Fumagalli reported. ¶ Having been the first to project “*Cinema Digitale 2K*” in the country and pioneering “*le proiezioni in Digitale 3D*,” Arcadia presents its guests the “best way to see their favorite films.” [www.multiplexarcadia.com](http://www.multiplexarcadia.com)

### HERZSPRUNG HOPS

**TO THE HAMPTONS** The Hamptons International Film Festival (HIFF) continued its popular “Rising Stars” showcase. In addition to three North American actors—Jake Abel (*Flash of Genius*), Kate Mara (*Stone of Destiny*) and Taylor Kitsch (*Gospel Hill*) under the tutelage of Frances McDormand—for the first time this year, European Film Promotion (EFP) sent over a trio of continental “Shooting Stars.” The actors are selected by a jury of industry professionals, and represent the best up-and-coming talent from the 28 member countries of EFP.

Germany’s Hannah Herzsprung (attending with TV drama *Werther*) is no stranger to HIFF, having made her debut there in the Audience Award winner *Four Minutes (Vier Minuten)*. Coming from Romania, Anamaria Marinca (*Boogie*) appeared in Cristian Mungiu’s *Palme d’Or* and multi-award winning drama *4 Months, 3 Weeks And 2 Days*. Maryam Hassouni starred in the original series “Dunya & Desie” and reprises her role in the film version, which is this year’s Foreign-Language Film submission from The Netherlands.

Through this initiative, says EFP managing director Renate Rose, “we have seen many talented young actors emerge and move into very successful careers in film. Our aim in this new venture is to actively include the actors in the marketing of their films, and at the same time, to help them make the jump from national to international recognition.”

### CINAMON ADDS SPICE

**TO CINEMA TICKETS** With state-of-the-art multiplexes in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, Cinamon Cinemas is one of Eastern Europe’s fastest-growing exhibitors. Together with Mobaqa and Vista Entertainment Solutions, the respective world leaders in mobile cinema ticketing and entertainment software solutions, Cinamon launched the first mobile cinema ticketing services in those countries. After ordering and opting in online, Cinamon’s mobi-ticket is delivered straight to the customer’s mobile phone with a barcode and all other relevant information. The system works with concession coupons as well.

“Our concept is to always offer the best,” stated Arpad Abonyi, chairman of the management board of the Cinamon Group, “which is why our new cinema centers are the most modern in the whole of the Baltic region.” Cinamon just opened a new location in Tartu, Estonia, and is building in Tallinn and Riga.