



Une liaison pornographique

Una relazione privata

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(BE 1999)



EUROPEAN FILMS ON EUROPEAN TELEVISION

When the screen becomes small

André Lange •

WHAT IS THE POSITION and the audience of European films in European television channels scheduling and what are the possibility of access for those films in primetime slots? This is a recurrent question that the European Audiovisual Observatory has attempted to answer, in collaboration with Médiamétrie's Eurodata-TV department and Essential Television Statistics (ETS) by publishing in February 2000 a report *European films on European television*¹. We have deliberately restricted the survey to unencrypted channels within the European Union.

Number of films scheduled

Although there are a number of methodological difficulties to compare the supply of films by the various televisions channels in Europe, it is still possible to compare the situation in seven countries. The number of national channels covered by our survey varies from 2 in Austria to 10 in Germany. The total number of film broadcasts is not, on the other hand, directly related to the number of channels. In France, the effect of legal limitations to the number of films that one channel can broadcast is highly perceptible: the total number of unencrypted film broadcasts is half that of the Netherlands, a country that is ranked last but one in the classification. The relatively low number of films broadcast in the United Kingdom can probably be put down to the fact that scheduling in this country is dominated by other forms of fiction (films made-for-TV, series,

etc.). Conversely, films take up a large slice of the schedule in Germany and Italy and have also been one of the main arms wielded by the Austrian ORF channels to ward off competition from German private channels. The inclusion of statistics from regional channels (ARD III channels, the channels of the autonomous Communities) has boosted the number of broadcasts of films in Germany and Spain.

Unsurprisingly, analysis of the films points to the dominant position of American films in scheduling. American films' share varies from between 23.9% in France and 74.1% in the Netherlands (TV-films included in this country). The share of national films is obviously lower in the smaller countries with a limited production capacity (Netherlands, Austria). National films get a larger slice of the cake in Italy (34.5%) and France (39.6%). It is interesting to see that the effect of including regional channels is different in Germany and Spain. While the scheduling of the various ARD stations has a markedly more national and less American slant than the national channels, in Spain it is the opposite, with regional channels broadcasting mostly American films, leaving national films at under 10% of the total. The share of non-national European films varies between 8.7% in the United Kingdom (this figure also includes films from the rest of the world) and 29.7% for all the German channels put together. While broadcasting volumes are at about the same level, the German channels actually broadcast twice as many non-national European films as the Spanish channels. Seen in absolute terms, intensive broadcasting of film results in more European films being shown. Even in Spain, with its extremely high proportion of American films, 1567 non-national European films were broadcast, to compare with the total number of 1 273 broadcasts of films of all origins broadcast in France.





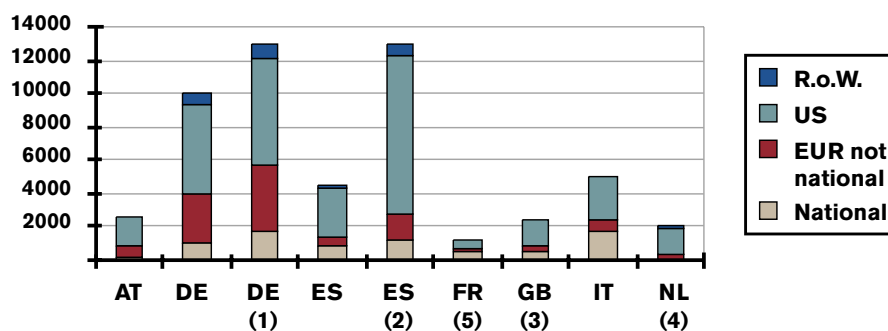
Number and origin of broadcasts of feature films by unencrypted TV channels (1998)

	AT	DE	DE ¹	ES	ES ²	FR ⁵	GB ³	IT	NL ⁴
NUMBER OF CHANNELS	2	13	21	4	14	5	5	7	8
NAT.	155	1111	1808	934	1238	484	584	1733	34
EUR NOT NATIONAL	766	2904	3835	529	1567	292	214	730	340
US	1670	5379	6542	2815	9455	382	1658	2474	1500
R.o.W.	68	630	738	200	645	64	—	85	149
	2659	10024	12923	4478	12905	1222	2456	5022	2023

	AT	DE	DE (*)	ES	ES (*)	FR	GB (**)	IT	NL
NAT.	5,8 %	11,1 %	14,0 %	20,9 %	9,6 %	39,6 %	23,8 %	34,5 %	1,7 %
EUR NOT NATIONAL	28,8 %	29,0 %	29,7 %	11,8 %	12,1 %	23,9 %	8,7 %	14,5 %	16,8 %
US	62,8 %	53,7 %	50,6 %	62,9 %	73,3 %	31,3 %	67,5 %	49,3 %	74,1 %
R.o.W.	2,6 %	6,3 %	5,7 %	4,5 %	5,0 %	5,2 %	—	1,7 %	7,4 %

SOURCE : OBS

- 1. including ARD regional stations. 2. including channels of the Autonomic Communities. 3. data for 1999 - R.o.W. included in EUR /
- 4. including TV-films 5. 51 films on La Cinquième not included



A sample list of recent European films

We thought it worthwhile analysing the broadcasting and audience figures for recent European films. The European Audiovisual Observatory asked Eurodata-TV and ETS to identify the broadcasting and audience figures for 1996 to 1999 for the list of 300 leading European box-office films in the European Union in 1996, 1997 and 1998². The analysis examined 72 channels in 15 markets. 20 of these channels turned out not to have broadcast any recent European films. 75 films were found to have been shown in all, with a total of 257 broadcasts, 65% of which were on public-service channels. Over half (51.6%) of the broadcasts of European films by private channels turned out to be of national films. 54.6% of non-national European film broadcasts were in prime-time slots, but this figure is tempered by the fact that virtually 60% of prime-time, non-national European film broadcasts were found in Belgian channels alone.

Audiences

For the five larger countries, tables are given for comparing the position occupied by films in channels' overall programming and the actual audiences commanded by films. It can be seen that there is considerable diversity. In Germany and Spain, for example, two countries with a high proportion of films in the overall programme schedules, audience figures are significantly lower in proportion to their share of the schedules. In the United Kingdom, film viewing figures on the four traditional channels are roughly on par with the proportion of films shown, while the newcomer, Channel 5, has seen its viewing figures boosted by film broadcasts. In Italy, the leading channels (RAIUno, Canale 5, RAIDue) have benefited from broadcasting films, which is not the case for the other channels.



Carne tremula
Pedro
Almodovar
(ES 1997)



Broadcasting windows longer than those defined in theory

Two thirds of the broadcasts identified concerned films theatrically released in 1996. The main explanation is obviously to be found in broadcasting "windows", the rights window between a film's release date and the date it is broadcast on television, a period that is variable according to the countries. While the results were predictable for films that came out in 1998, the rather small number of broadcasts of films released in 1996 and 1997 indicates that the theoretical period of two years for a window turns out to be longer in practice. Analysis of how old the films broadcast by the ORF in 1998 were, shows that the commonest age for European films is 6 years (77 films produced in 1992) against only 4 years for American films (164 films produced in 1994). It would be interesting to find out if this difference exists in the other countries.

Differences between box-office and broadcasting audiences

Box-office and broadcasting figures do not seem to be directly related for European films, although *Trainspotting*, the box-office hit of 1996, was also, along with *Il Postino*, the most widely broadcast film in the European countries under review. The film boosted the market share of the channels showing it, with Portugal's RTP2, the Flemish TV2 public-service channel, Italy's Italia 1, Kanal 5 in Sweden and Britain's Channel 4 all showing market shares above their annual averages. However, the relation between box-office and broadcasting figures is highly tenuous: in Belgium and in the United Kingdom, the audience tripled, in Portugal and Spain it doubled, while in Sweden and Germany it was more or less the same and in Ireland it was under the admissions level, even though *Trainspotting* was broadcast in a prime-time slot.

Television broadcasts confirm the low attraction in Europe for national comedies outside their own market. *Werner, Das muss kesseln!*, the film with the second-highest box-office figures in 1996, was broadcast on German television only. *Les 3 frères*, the film that came out third in the European box-office rankings in 1996, was only successful on French

television and in the French-speaking Community of Belgium. When broadcast on lunchtime television in Germany, its market share came out well under the channel's normal audience figures. Films such as *La vérité si je mens*, *Les randonneurs*, *Tout doit disparaître*, *Un air de famille*, *Il Cyclone*, *Così è la vita* had no more success in getting broadcast outside their national market as they did in getting shown in foreign cinemas.

Inconsistent! results of non-national European films

Non-national European films are rarely given prime-time slots (except on Belgian and French channels) and usually find themselves at the tail-end of viewing time slots. This is why non-national productions suffer erratic results (except for French films shown in the French-speaking Community of Belgium, British films in Ireland and a couple of European films on French channels) and often attract audiences under the channel's normal average, except in the case of American co-productions (*The English Patient*, *Bean*, *Tomorrow Never Dies*) or those the public sees as American (*Le cinquième élément*, *Two Much*) as internationally-known actors are used. European films that had critical acclaim (*Secrets and Lies*, *Breaking the Waves*, *Il postino*,...) and which achieved excellent box-office results across the European market, are usually broadcast on public-service channels where they attract audiences that are under the average for the channels in question. However, it should also be noted that films that have had a successful European release often gain a larger market share with young adults than for the rest of the population.

- 1 See *European Audiovisual Observatory* (obs@ocs.coe.int).
2 This list has been established on the basis of the systematic collection of data on admissions of films realised in Europe, as undertaken by the European Audiovisual Observatory. This data base will be available at the following address from the 13th November 2000: <http://lumiere.obs.coe.int>



European films on european television

	Total	Channels	National films	Not-national European films		Total
				Prime-time	Outside prime-time	
AT	2	ORF 1/2	0	0	2	2
BE (CFR)	31	RTBF1	0	19	2	21
		RTL TVI	0	9	1	10
BE (VLG)	34	TV1	0	19	3	22
		TV2	0	7	3	10
		VT4	0	2	0	2
DE	33	PRO 7	6	0	2	8
		ARD	2	1	4	7
		RTL2	0	2	2	4
		ZDF	0	0	4	4
		SAT1	4	0	0	4
		ARTE	2	1	0	3
DK	6	VOX	0	2	1	3
		DR2	0	3	1	4
ES	11	TV2	0	1	1	2
		La2	3	0	1	4
		TVE1	4	0	0	4
		Antena 3	0	0	2	2
FI	8	Tele 5	1	0	0	1
		YLE1	0	2	1	3
		Nelonen	0	1	1	2
FR	36	YLE2	0	0	2	2
		MTV3	0	1	0	1
		TF1	20	1	0	21
		FT2	5	4	0	9
GB	17	ARTE	0	1	2	3
		FT3	2	0	0	2
		M6	0	1	0	1
		C4	9	0	2	11
		BBC1	3	0	0	3
GR	6	BBC2	2	0	0	2
		ITV	1	0	0	1
		ET1	0	0	3	3
IE	4	ET2	0	1	2	3
		RTE1	0	3	0	3
IT	30	Network 2	0	1	0	1
		Canale5	7	1	0	8
		RAI1	1	5	1	7
		Rete4	4	1	1	6
		TMC	4	0	0	4
		RAI3	1	2	0	3
NL	14	Italia 1	1	0	1	2
		Ned 3	1	1	6	8
PT	20	Ned 1	0	0	6	6
		RTP2	0	0	11	11
		RTP1	0	0	4	4
		TVI	0	0	3	3
SE	5	SIC	0	0	2	2
		TV5/Femman	0	1	1	2
		Kanal 1	0	0	1	1
		TV2	0	1	0	1
EUR15	257	TV4	0	0	1	1
		Total	83	94	80	257

Number of broadcasts of recent European films by unencrypted TV channels (1996-1999)

