

## **Outlook on Swiss distribution**

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*By Monika Weibel, Frenetic Films*

Monika Weibel reminds the specific situation of Switzerland: 65% of the territory is German-speaking, 25% French-speaking and 10% Italian-speaking – which can lead up to 3 different dates of release with three different promotional campaigns for the same film. For example, it is very important for the French part to stick to the French release, in order to keep up with the constant output of new films, and of course we can mutually benefit from the promotional campaigns in France and Switzerland.

Besides, Switzerland is surrounded by three of the biggest European countries (Germany, France, Italy), which is a problem concerning the buying of TV and DVD rights – the biggest countries trying to keep those rights for Switzerland too.

446 films were released in 2005, 378 by independents: 268 were European, 114 American. Despite the clear majority of European films, the American movies have a significant higher market share than the European ones. European films have 35% of the market share, against 59% for the American films. Monika Weibel points out that it should be a goal to eliminate this imbalance.

Concerning concentration, what is clear is that more and more power goes to less and less people. This is true regarding theatrical exploitation as well as in terms of acquisitions by TV channels and DVD distributors.

Monika Weibel underlines the problem of the acquisition of films for the Swiss and the European in general: often, the sales agents sell the rights to the distributors that offer the biggest amount of money, on explicit request of the producers.

If independent distributors release a great number of movies, it is also and above all to survive: a failure for one film can be overcome thanks to the success of another one.

It should be born in mind that the Minimum Guarantee payments of the distributors directly contribute to the financing of a film. This is a circumstance which is frequently overlooked by producers and sales agents and which should generally be taken more into consideration.