

FNE Market Analysis 2018: MACEDONIA

Macedonia saw a quieter year in 2018, but it was still a good year with international success of both feature films and documentaries, a film agency effectively supporting the development and production of numerous quality films, a growing number of coproductions and increased box office results.

PRODUCTION

Three domestic feature films were shot in Macedonia in 2018 with the support of the [Macedonian Film Agency](#). Teona Strugar Mitevska shot her fifth feature [God Exists, Her Name is Petrunija / Gospod postoji, nejinoto ime e Petrunija](#), produced by [Sisters and Brother Mitevski Production](#) in coproduction with Belgium's Entre Chien et Loup, Slovenia's [Vertigo](#), Croatia's [Spiritus Movens](#) and France's Deuxième Ligne Films, Milcho Manchevski shot his sixth feature film [Willow / Vrba](#), produced by [Banana Film](#) and coproduced by the Tirana Film Institute (Albania), Saga Film (Belgium) and Pioneer Films (Hungary)), and Igor Aleksov shot his debut feature [Lena and Vladimir](#) (produced by Macedonia's Mind Production).

One more independent low-budget feature was shot and already premiered in 2018 – [Ema](#), a debut feature by 16-year old director Martin Chikovski, which was produced by [Marvie Productions](#).

The Slovenian/Macedonian/Serbian/Croatian coproduction [Half-Sister / Polsestra](#) by Damjan Kozole began production in 2018. It is produced by [Vertigo](#) in coproduction with [RTV Slovenia](#), Macedonian [Sisters and Brother Mitevski](#), Serbian [Baš Čelik](#) and Croatian [Propeler film](#).

The Croatian/Macedonian/Serbian coproduction [God in a Shoe / Glas](#) by Ognjen Svilicic also went into production in 2018. The film is produced by Croatian [Maxima Film](#) in coproduction with Macedonian [Skopje Film Studio](#) and Serbian [Biberche productions](#).

Slovenian director Andrej Košak started shooting his fourth feature film [All against All / Vsi proti vsem](#), a Macedonian minority coproduction produced by [Blade Production](#) in coproduction with Macedonia's MIND Production and Slovenian [Igralsko društvo Daiga](#). The [Slovenian Film Centre](#) is supporting, while [Viba Film](#) provided technical support.

Gjegj Xhuvani also completed the filming of Albanian/Kosovan/Italian/Croatian/Macedonian coproduction [My Lake](#), produced by Albanian outfit On Film Production and coproduced by Macedonia [Focus Pocus](#), Croatian [Corvus Film](#) and Italian Hermes Film S.r.l.. The project is supported by the National Cinematography Center of Albania and Kosovo, the [Croatian Audiovisual Center](#) (HAVC), Cineteca di Bologna, [Macedonia Film Agency](#), [Eurimages](#) and the [SEE Cinema Network](#).

Scenes from the Swiss/Belgian/French coproduction [Beyond the Horizon / Le Milieu de l'horizon](#), directed by Delphine Lehericéy and starring Laetitia Casta, Jalil Lespert and Clémence Poésy, were shot in Macedonia. The film is a coproduction between Box Productions from Switzerland, Entre chien et loup from Belgium and Elzévir Films from France, with [Kino Oko](#) servicing in Macedonia. The film is benefiting from the film incentives programme available as a 20% cash rebate on qualifying Macedonian spend.

DISTRIBUTION

MCF MK, Konstantin film MKD, Kt Film & Media, Cutaway and Uzengija remain the main distributors in Macedonia.

In 2018 Macedonian distributors applied for distribution support from the Creative Europe MEDIA Programme for the second time, with MCF MK and Kt Film & Media supported in the call for selective distribution, and MCF MK and Uzengija in the call for automatic distribution.

The Macedonian distribution company Cutaway introduced the first ever multiplatform day-and-date release in three Balkan countries (Croatia, Albania and Macedonia) on 3 May 2018. The dubbed version of the Danish film for children *The Incredible Story of the Giant Pear* was available for the first time in cinemas and on two Video on Demand platforms at once, Cinesquare.net and Pantaflix. This release pattern and multi-territory releases are being handled by the project *CutAway online and offline - New digital forms of distribution of the film in the Balkans - Volume 2*, coordinated by Cutaway in partnership with Croatia's Radar and Albania's Tirana Film Institute, supported by the MEDIA Programme.

The interest in domestic achievements and regional films increased with Macedonian/Greek coproduction *The Secret Ingredient / Iscelitel* by Gjorche Stavrevski screening in 27 Macedonian cities and becoming the most watched domestic film with 23,902 admissions by the end of December 2018, based on the statistics by the production company Fragment Film. Almost 8,000 people saw the film at the free open cinema screenings in the City Park in Skopje, organised by Cinema Milenium. *The Secret Ingredient* became the first Macedonian film that premiered in 14 European countries in prime time on HBO's Cinemax 2 channel. The film is also available on HBO GO. The Pay TV, VOD and SVOD rights were also sold to CinemaWorld Asia until 2020.

The Macedonian/Croatian/Finnish/British coproduction *The Liberation of Skopje / Osloboduvanje na Skopje* by Rade and Danilo Šerbedžija was sold to China. The film was produced by Macedonia's Partysans in coproduction with Croatia's Lijeni Film and MP Film Production, Finland's Art Films and UK's F&ME. The Macedonian Film Agency, the Croatian Audiovisual Centre, the Finnish Film Fund, YLE and Eurimages supported the project.

The Serbian feature film *South Wind / Južni vetar* directed by Miloš Avramović, produced by Režim, Art Vista and Archangel Studios, is among the 10 most watched films in 2018 and ranks among the most watched regional films in recent years. It was released by Konstantin Film MKD.

More Macedonian titles were released in 2018, especially low-budget indie films. Of seven feature films released in 2018, four were indie low-budget films.

The domestic world premieres included the Macedonian/Serbian/Slovenian/Kosovan coproduction *Year of the Monkey / Godina na majmunot* by Vladimir Blazevski, produced by Pank Film Production and coproduced by Kiselo Dete, Strup Produkcija, at the opening of the 21st edition of the Skopje Film Festival; Jani Bojadzi's debut feature *Mocking of Christ / Rujanje so Hristos*, produced by Orion production and coproduced with Macedonian Candela and Slovenian STVA, at the Kinenova Film Festival; the Macedonian/Kosovan coproduction *The Return / Vrakjanje* by Kastriot Abdyli, produced by Dardania Film Production from Skopje and Skupi Film Production from Kosovo, in Cineplexx cinemas; the independent indie production *Digging / Kopanje* by Martin Ivanov and Ivica Dimitrijevic, produced by MI Film, in Cinema Frosina; the independent erotic comedy *Making Off* by Kuzman Kuzmanovski,

produced by [Auripigment Production](#), in [Cineplexx](#); the independent low-budget feature *Hey / Ej* by Vasil Hristov, produced by Diabolik Production, which premiered at the [CINEDAYS Festival of European Film](#), and the teenage feature film *Em* by Martin Chikovski, produced by [Marvie Productions](#), in [Cineplexx](#).

Two Macedonian minority coproductions premiered in cinemas in 2018 - The Serbian/Macedonian children film *Hunters / Zloginje* by Raško Miljković, produced by Akcija Production in coproduction with Macedonia's [Dream Factory](#), and Victor Bojinov's debut feature, the historical drama *Heights*, produced by Bulgaria's Bulfilm and Serpentine, [Nu Boyana](#), the [Bulgarian National Television](#) and Macedonia's [Dream Factory](#) as coproducers.

Macedonian documentaries also premiered in cinemas, including Igor Ivanov's *Cobra*, produced by [Black Cat Production](#), [Skopje Film Studio](#), Ajdin Islami's *Local Heroes – World Talents*, produced by Super Production, and Senad Abdulic's *Why Me?*, produced by Arnel Production.

Macedonia had one film selected for 2018 Cannes Film Festival, the minority coproduction *The Wild Pear Tree* directed by Nuri Bilge Ceylan, produced by Turkey's Zeyno Film, France's Memento Films Productions, Germany's Detailfilm, Bulgaria's RFF International, Macedonia's [Sisters and Brother Mitevski](#), Bosnia and Herzegovina's 2006 Produkcija Sarajevo and Sweden's Film I Väst and Chimney Pot, in coproduction with ARTE France Cinéma, Imaj, Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu (TRT), the Doha Film Institute, Nu-Look Yapım and Kale Grubu.

Among the accolades received by Macedonian films in 2018 are: Best International Feature Film for *Would You Look At Her / Vidi ja ti nea* by Goran Stolevski in the short film programme of the 34th Sundance Film Festival, as well as the selection of the Macedonian documentary *Honeyland / Medena Zemja* by Ljubomir Stefanov and Tamara Kotevska, produced by Trice Films in coproduction with Apolo Media, for the World Cinema Documentary Competition and of the Macedonian minority coproduction *The Witch Hunters / Zloginje* by Rasko Miljkovic (coproduction with Macedonia's [Dream Factory](#)) for the KIDS section at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival.

The [International Cinematographers' Film Festival Manaki Brothers](#) celebrated its 39th edition in 2018 and honoured the British cinematographer Roger Deakins with the Golden Camera 300 Lifetime Achievement Award and the Italian actress Claudia Cardinale with the Special Golden Camera 300 Award for Outstanding Contribution to World Cinema Art.

In 2018 the [CINEDAYS Festival of European Film](#) was recognised as a "Competitive film festival specialised in European first and second feature films" by the General Assembly of FIAPF.

Macedonian actor Blagoj Veselinov was selected for 2019 Shooting Stars within the 69th Berlin International Film Festival. Blagoj Veselinov starred in the Macedonian/Greek coproduction *The Secret Ingredient / Iscelitel*, the debut feature by Gjorce Stavreski, which was selected as Macedonia's official entry for the US Academy Awards in the Foreign Language Film category.

Shorts TV bought the television rights for the Macedonian short film *Fighting for Death / Borba za smrt* directed by Eleonora Veninova. The film became available in Europe, Asia and North America.

EXHIBITION AND BOX OFFICE

Three commercial cinemas (one multiplex **Cineplexx** with nine cinema halls, Cinema **Milenium** and **3D Cinema Bitola**) and two art house cinemas (Cinema Frosina and **Macedonian Cinemateque**) with a regular repertoire operate in Macedonia, while 18 cultural centres equipped by the Macedonian Film Agency with digital cinema projectors occasionally screen films. In 2018 not more than 10 cultural centres screened films, but the Macedonian Film Agency is still collecting the admissions data.

The **Macedonian Cinemateque** (Kinoteka na Makedonija) became a member of **Europa Cinemas** in 2018 and joined the three other cinemas in Macedonia that are members of this network: Cinema **Milenium**, Cinema Frosina and **3D Cinema Bitola**.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia appointed the **Cinematheque of Macedonia** in 2011 as the institution responsible for the digitalisation of the Macedonian film heritage. In 2018, the digitalised film opera and a DVD of the doyen of the Macedonian cinematography, Branko Gapo, were promoted, and also the digital restoration of the feature films of Kiril Cenevski was announced.

The list of the ten films with most admissions in 2018 are: *Johnny English Strikes Again* (distribution Premium Film), *Fifty Shades Freed* (distribution Premium Film), *Deadpool 2* (distribution by **MCF MK**), *Bohemian Rhapsody* (distribution by **MCF MK**), *Avengers: Infinity War* (distribution by **2i Film**), *South Wind / Južni vetar* (distribution by Konstantin film MKD), *The Nun* (distribution by **Blitz Film and Video Distribution**), *Ocean's Eight* (distribution by **Blitz Film and Video Distribution**), *Black Panther* (distribution by **2i Film**), *Venom* (distribution by **Continental Film Doo**), *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* (distribution by Continental Film Doo), according to the first multiplex in the country, **Cineplexx**.

GRANTS AND NEW LEGISLATION

Reforms had been foreseen for the film industry, as well as re-examination of the legal decision for financing of the Film Agency, but they were still pending by the end of 2018.

There is one call in January every year (with deadlines in March and August) for production support for feature films, documentaries, short films and animated films. The results are announced in April and October.

There is a separate call for support for Film Industry Projects of National Interest, which includes domestic festivals and other film events of international character, funding expert and professional education of individuals in film industry professions, supporting educational programmes which promote film culture, the membership of the Republic of Macedonia in international film organisations and associations, and publications related to film industry.

The Macedonian film budget saw cuts of almost 13% in 2018, compared to 2017, with a total of 5.2 m EUR for the film industry and the **Macedonian Film Agency**, but the Agency maintained its regular schedule of financial support calls.

The Macedonian Film Agency launched two grants contests in 2018, supporting a total of 35 films – 13 feature films (five with Macedonian majority contribution and eight minority coproductions); four long documentaries (three with Macedonian majority contribution and one minority coproduction); 15 short fiction films (14 with Macedonian majority contribution and one minority coproduction) and three short animated films with Macedonian majority contribution. The total support was 4,124,389 EUR / 253,650,000 MKD for the production of feature, short,

animation and documentary films and TV series. Some of the supported films will start principal photography in 2019 and 2020 .

The [Macedonian Film Agency](#) announced grants for 21 films in May 2018 in the first round of production grants for feature films, short films, animated films and documentaries. The two majority feature films include Igor Ivanov's third feature film *Homo* produced by [Skopje Film Studio](#) and the debut *The Hidden One* by Arsim Fazlija, produced by Sejvi Production.

The six minority feature films include *From Heaven / Nebesa* by Srdjan Dragojevic, produced by Delirium and coproduced by Maja.de.Fiction GmbH, [Sektor Film Doel](#), [Studio Dim](#), Forum Ljubljana, Montenegro Max Film; *Half Sister* by Damjan Kozole, produced by [Vertigo](#) in coproduction with [RTV Slovenia](#), Macedonian [Sisters and Brother Mitevski](#), Serbian [Baš Čelik](#) and Croatian [Propeler film](#); *Hana* by Ujkan Hysaj, produced by AJO Pictures from Kosovo and coproduced by Bunker Film+ from Albania and Multimedia Center Domino Production from Macedonia; *God in a Shoe* by Ognjen Svilicic, produced by Croatian [Maxima Film](#) in coproduction with Macedonian [Skopje Film Studio](#) and Serbian [Biberche Productions](#); *Everyone Against Everyone* by Andrej Košak, produced by [Blade Production](#) in coproduction with Macedonia's MIND Production and Slovenian [Igralsko društvo Daiga](#); and *My Lake / Liqeni* im by Gjergj Xhuvani, produced by On Film Production, Hermes Film from Italy and [Focus Pocus](#) from Macedonia. The total support for the films is 1,904,878 EUR / 117,150,000 MKD.

In December 2018 the [Macedonian Film Agency](#) announced grants for 14 films in the second round of production grants for feature films, short films, animated films and documentaries, distributing 1,694,308 EUR / 104,200,000 MKD to five films, including two feature films, one debut feature and two minority feature films. Director Darijan Pejovski's feature film *Mimi* produced by [Skopje Film Studio](#) and Izer Aliu's feature film *Heritage* produced by [KT Film & Media](#) received 569,105 EUR / 35 m MKD each. Director Eleonora Veninova received a grant of 292,682 EUR / 18 m MKD to shoot her first feature *Overexposed*, produced by [DNF Films](#). The two minority coproductions receiving funding are Kaltrina Krasniqi's *Vera Dreams of the Sea*, coproduced by [Dream Factory](#), and Goran Paskaljević's *My Name is Mohammed*, coproduced by [Sektor Film](#).

The [Macedonian Film Agency](#) also announced the first public Call for support for international promotion and for promotion and distribution of domestic films and minority coproductions, given for participation in festivals and events and promotion and distribution of films in the Republic of Macedonia and abroad.

On 16 March 2018 the [Macedonian Film Agency](#) announced its decision to boost 16 festivals according to the announced Call for financing projects of national interest in the film industry, for organising domestic festivals and other film manifestations of international character in 2018. Established festivals such as the [International Cinematographer's Film Festival Manaki Brothers](#), [Cinedays Festival of European Film](#), [MakeDox International Creative Documentary Film Festival](#), [Skopje Film Festival](#) and [Tetova International Film Festival ODA](#) received the highest grants.

In 2018 the Macedonian applicants received a total support of 220,200 EUR in several different calls of the [MEDIA Programme](#). [MakeDox Creative Documentary Film Festival](#) received support for the third year and the online platform [Cinesquare](#), which is available in 13 countries in the region, got support in the call for online distribution.

In 2018 the coming-of-age fantasy-drama *M* directed by Vardan Tozija received the Co-Production Award from Greek postproduction company 2|35 at the 14th Crossroads Co-Production Forum in Thessaloniki. It is produced by Darko Popov ([Focus Pocus](#)), who also received a free accreditation for the Producers Network session at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival.

Also, the feature film *Mimi* by Darijan Pejovski, produced by Skopje Film Studio and coproduced with [Art&Popcorn](#) (RS) and Horne Pictures (GR), got support of 8,000 EUR from the [SEE Cinema Network](#).

Starting from 2014 the [Macedonian Film Agency](#) has been encouraging the investment of funds in film or television projects through the right to investment return in the amount of 20% of the gross costs incurred in the country for the realisation of a film or television project, which is not less than 100,000 EUR. The Film Incentives programme was introduced as part of the new Film Law in 2014.

Macedonia started using the cash rebate scheme for film and TV projects in 2015. The first films that got investment return in the amount of 20% of the gross costs were the French road comedy *A Fond* by Nicolas Benamou, produced by French La Petite Reine and Chic Films and servicing provided by [Macedonian Manufaktura Production](#), which spent about 2 m EUR in Macedonia, and *Year of the Monkey / Godina na majmunot* by Vladimir Blazevski, produced by [Pank Film Production](#), in coproduction with Serbia's Kiselo Dete, Kosovo's Ikone Studio and Slovenia's [Strup Produkcija](#).

In 2018 the Swiss/Belgian/French coproduction *Beyond the Horizon / Le Milieu de l'horizon*, directed by Delphine Lehericéy and starring Laetitia Casta, Jalil Lespert and Clémence Poésy, benefited from this scheme.

According to the film law, several sources add to the budget, such as levies from the TV (0.9% of the annual turnover), cable operators, internet providers and telecoms (1%), distributors (3%) and exhibitors (5%).

In 2018 the [Macedonian Film Agency](#) promoted a new strategy with an emphasis on developing and improving the promotion of Macedonia as a destination for filming, and the importance of coproductions with the countries of the region and wider, the attention to female filmmakers, as well as support for young authors.

The Agency also signed several regional and European co-operation agreements, with Bulgaria and Kosovo, as well as with the [Macedonian Film Workers' Association](#), to strengthen joint efforts to improve Macedonian film production.

The [Macedonian Film Agency](#) also signed a one-year partnership with the training programme [Less Is More](#), based on which it will organise a Pre-Writing Workshop for the local film professionals in 2019. It is the first workshop of this kind that will be organised in Macedonia.

At the end of 2018, Macedonia signed the revised [Council of Europe](#) Convention on Cinematographic Coproduction, updated for the digital age and welcoming non-European countries, which was adopted in 2017.

On 2 June 2018, Asaf Ademi was named the new Minister of Culture, following Robert Alagjovovski, who had been appointed Minister of Culture in June 2017.

TV

TV production decreased in Macedonia in 2018, with only one TV series produced, compared to 10 series produced in 2017. Only the third season of the Macedonian TV Series *Prespav* went into production. The series is produced by [OXO](#) and it was aired on the [Macedonian Radio Television](#) in December 2018.

In April 2018, the Macedonian Film Agency announced the winners of its annual funding competition for TV series. A total of 525,203 EUR / 32.3 M MKD was split between one fiction and two documentary TV series. [Kino Oko Production](#) was granted 308,943 EUR for the TV adaptation of the popular children's novel *Zoki Poki*, directed by Aleksandar Popovski. The two documentary TV series are *European Stories*, directed by Marko Gjokovikj and produced by DFP Euro Vision, and *The Dynamics of the Macedonian Democracy 2006-2016*, directed by multiple directors and produced by [OXO](#).

Director Slobodan Unkovski and distinguished playwright and screenwriter Goran Stefanovski announced that they were working on the second part of the cult TV series *Bushava Azbuka* (which was originally produced 33 years ago), produced by the [Macedonian Radio Television](#) and 2BA Production from Skopje, with production beginning in 2019. Sadly, Goran Stefanovski passed away after a short illness on 27 November 2018 and screenwriter Marjan Alčevski continued to work on the screenplay for the series named *Bushav Bukvar*.

The filming of the TV series *Success / Uspjeh* also began in 2018. *Success* is a six-part series written by the Macedonian screenwriter Marjan Alčevski (one of the winners of the [HBO Adria](#) First Draft contest) and directed by Oscar winner Danis Tanović. [HBO Europe](#) and [HBO Adria](#) are producing.

The second season of the Serbian historical thriller TV series *Black Sun aka Shadow over the Balkans* started production in 2018 with Macedonian actors Toni Mihajlovski and Petar Arsovski again in the lead. The series is produced by [Cobra Film Production](#) in coproduction with [United Media Group](#) and Slovenian [Perfo Production](#).

In 2018, the [Macedonian Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services](#) published the analysis of the market of audio and audiovisual media services for 2017. According to the report, in 2017 television generated the lowest revenues in the last five years. Since 2013, the growth rate of total industry incomes has been negative each year, but the revenues dropped most in 2017, by 10.35%.

During 2017, the total number of broadcasters decreased by six, from 134 programme broadcasters (63 televisions and 71 radio stations) to 128 (58 televisions and 70 radio stations). The total revenue generated in 2017 by all broadcasters ([Macedonian Radio Television](#), 54 commercial television stations and 70 radio stations) was 42.4 m EUR / 2,608,840,000 MKD.

More than a half of this amount (54.48%) is the total income of the commercial TV stations. Revenues of [MRT](#) in the amount of 16.8 m EUR / 1,037,490,000 MKD represent 39.77%, while the total revenues of the radio stations, amounting to 2.4 m EUR / 150,030,000 MKD, represent 5.75% of the total revenues of all broadcasters.

Of the five televisions broadcasting at the state level through digital terrestrial multiplex, the most watched was **TV Sitel**, whose daily average reach was 38.24%. **TV Kanal 5**, as in 2016, was the second most watched television, with an average daily reach of 33.37% and an average weekly reach of 46.43%.

These TV channels remain highest on the list of the most watched televisions in 2018 as well, according to the **Macedonian Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services**' report on daily and weekly references. Almost all TVs recorded a decline in viewing, and growth was registered only by **TV21** and the 1st Channel of **MRT**. The 1st Channel of **MRT** registered the highest growth in recent years.

The most watched foreign television channels in Macedonia are Fox, Discovery, National Geographic and Sport Club. According to the report, the viewers watched mostly the news on all televisions, followed by informative programmes, educational and cultural programmes, sports in the fourth place and TV series in the fifth. Most television connections are available through cable television – 48.5% and IPTV – with 27.6%.

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