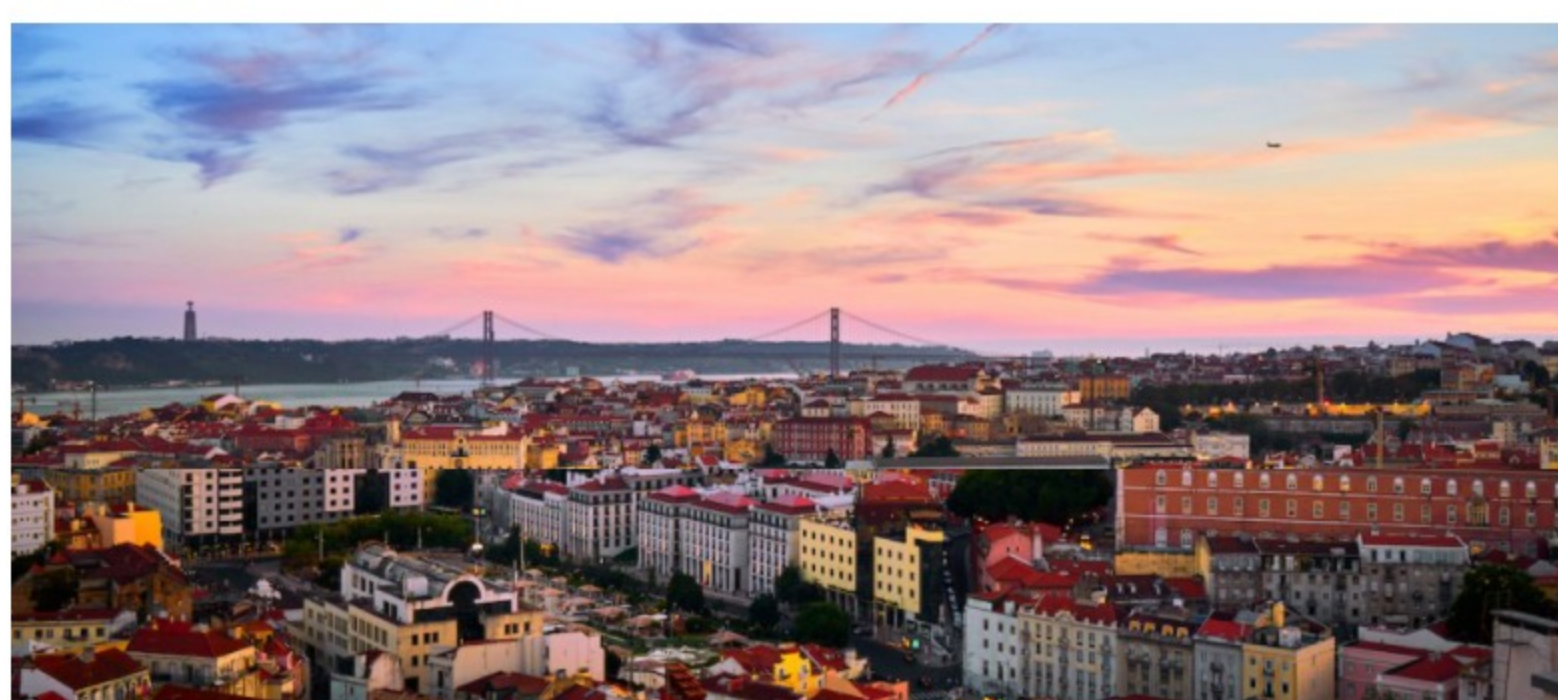




TBI Weekly: Exploring a new dawn for Portugal's drama industry

By Nick Edwards | 1 hour ago

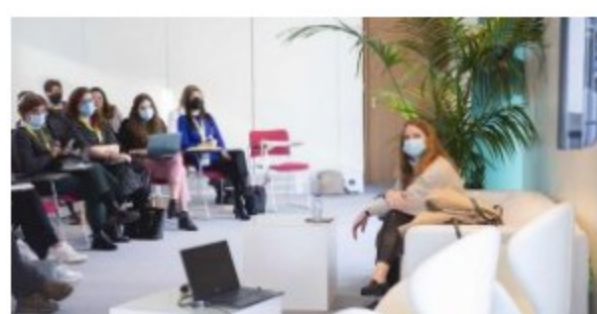


Lisbon (CC: Deensel)

From tax breaks to co-pros and burgeoning Atlantic alliances, Portugal's drama business is attracting increasing amounts of global attention. Nick Edwards reports from Lisbon's inaugural TV festival to provide his five key takeaways on this emerging market.

OnSeries Lisboa intends to put the Portuguese scripted industry into a similar league to the one occupied by its more established and globally recognised European neighbours.

Execs from all over the world descended on the country last week to network, collaborate and build relationships. For new players in the region, it was an opportunity "to get our name out into the world," says Peter Ogunsalu, executive for new business at Algarve-based production outfit Spy Manor.



Meghan Lyvers

But for globally recognised brands, it was equally important to attend. "It is critical we spend time nurturing and supporting emerging content markets such as in Portugal," says Meghan Lyvers, SVP of international co-productions & development at ViacomCBS's CBS Studios.

"Storytelling is at the heart of our business and it is invaluable to hear directly from these creative communities; what projects they aspire to make and to find ways in which we as an industry can foster opportunities for them to do so," Lyvers adds. Here are five other takeaways from the event.

Booster-ism

Portugal's scripted output is largely built on well made telenovelas but the momentum accelerated when, in 2015, public service broadcaster RTP started investing in series. Production in Portugal from 2022 will be incentivised with a 30% cash rebate and the industry will also benefit from an upcoming tax of 1% on profits made by streaming services (to be paid back into the Film and Audiovisual institute). Next year will also see legislation to ensure that streamers have to invest 4% into productions made in Portugal. The next step is "for the audiovisual sector to be marketed to the rest of the world" said culture secretary Nuno Artur Silva.

Calling all co-pros

In some senses, the major barriers for Portugal are only notional; almost all premium shows from larger European countries are already the result of co-productions, co-financing and/or sophisticated international distribution deals. Seeing this opportunity, innovative local prodco

SPI is currently making *Cold Haven* with RTP and Iceland's RUV, as well upcoming *Gama*, a co-pro with Brazil's Boutique films. With RTP on board as a minority partner, SPI is also behind Gloria Portugal's first Netflix original (that dropped in November) – a rite of passage for any country stepping into the major league.

Atlantic alliances

Portuguese being the spoken language of both Portugal and Brazil is another strategic advantage for the industry. Brazil is not only a country of over 200 million people but it is also Netflix's second largest territory (outside of the US). Though the two countries do not speak identical versions of the language, they are close enough that "good Brazilian Netflix shows normally go to number one in Portugal," says Tiago Mello, a producer and partner at Boutique Filmes, which made Netflix's first Brazilian series, *3%*.



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Marcela Parise

Stepping stone for Globo expansion

Globo has been available in Portugal for over 40 years, a go-to destination for that Lat Am staple; the telenovela. Since October, its streaming platform Globoplay has been available in Portugal (as well as 20 other European countries). The company now wants to capitalise on Portugal's geographical and cultural relationships with Brazil. "Portugal is midway between Europe and the Americas, our stories and families bring us together," says Ricardo Pereira, director of Globo Portugal. The media giant intends to make content for local Portuguese audiences to test the water before experimenting elsewhere, with shows

then available to be shown back at home. Korea's *Squid Games* has further underlined how subtitles are no longer a barrier, something noted by Marcela Parise, Globo's head of international marketing.

A 'silver' moment

History has repeatedly proven that smaller countries (Portugal's population is 10 million) can become globally recognised players. The impact of Israel (*Fauda*, *Be Tipul*) and Denmark (*The Killing*, *Borgen*) cannot be overstated. In a much heralded 'golden age' for drama, the conditions of the local and global TV landscape mean Portugal is experiencing what one speaker aptly described its 'silver' moment.

