

Lo Que Se De Lola: French-Spanish film is one of the highest profile to come out of the CRC regions



CAPITAL REGIONS FOR CINEMA

INVESTMENT CAPITALS

Set up in 2005, the Capital Regions for Cinema network aims to boost co-productions between European producers and bring together the creative potential of Europe's capitals

Set up in 2004, the regional Ile de France Film Commission now not only handles film and television shoots in the French capital and its environs, but has also formed partnerships with its European neighbours to facilitate more co-productions.

Some of the commission's main functions include facilitating access to Parisian monuments and locations, providing an online database connecting industry professionals, and the international promotion of the Ile de France region as a shooting destination.

To help facilitate the last of these roles, the region set up an annual fund of \$17.6m (€14m) in 2001 to assist shoots. An especially attractive component of the fund is its lack of nationality restrictions. The only requirement is that the foreign producer shoots or posts a certain number of weeks in the area.

In 2005, 100 feature films shot in the Ile de France region, including Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette*, Ron Howard's *The Da Vinci Code*, Steven Spielberg's *Munich* and

David Frankel's *The Devil Wears Prada* as well as myriad French productions and co-productions.

In an effort to boost co-operation between European countries, the Ile de France Film Commission was instrumental in creating the Capital Regions for Cinema network (CRC) in 2005, consisting of bilateral agreements with similar commissions in Madrid, Rome and Berlin (see sidebar).

The four entities meet four times a year, in Cannes, Berlin, Rome and San Sebastian, in order to cross-promote their territories and entertain film-makers who present projects for consideration via co-production platforms. An ongoing spirit of collaboration exists as each commission helps facilitate access for film-makers to its partners.

Kirsten Niehuus, of Germany's Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, explains its motives behind helping create the CRC: "Berlin is one of the creative capitals of the world with a huge amount of talent, so we felt it was about time to channel international co-operation with other partners. It was obvious

Capital Regions for Cinema



A European Network

CRC region co-productions

COMPLETED

Lo Que Se De Lola

Dir: Javier Rebollo

Spanish, with funding from Ile de France

Producers: Malvarrosa Media (Sp), Lolita Films

(Sp), Lazennec (Fr)

Spanish distributor: Wanda Vision

Int'l Sales: Films Distribution, (33) 1 53 10 33 99

UPCOMING

Magique

Dir: Philippe Muyl

French-Spanish co-production

Producers: Pan Europeenne (Fr), Kanzaman (Sp)

Les Murs Porteurs

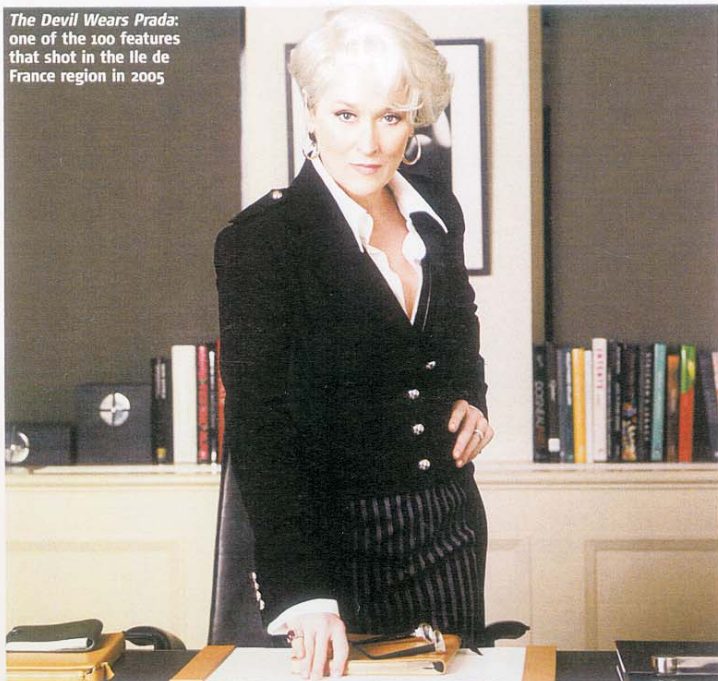
Dir: Cyril Gelblat

France-Germany co-production with funding

from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and Ile

de France

The Devil Wears Prada: one of the 100 features that shot in the Ile de France region in 2005



Marie Antoinette: Sofia Coppola's film shot in the Ile de France region



between Paris and Berlin but we also realised that most European capitals have creative talent and that it would be interesting to synchronise film activities."

Olivier-Rene Veillon, head of the Ile de France Film Commission, says there has already been a high level of interest among other European capitals, including Lisbon, Vienna and Brussels, looking to join the CRC. "Regions that are the most engaged in production are the ones that would benefit most from participating."

But for now he insists the "priority is to work concretely as a group of four."

As for technical exchanges between the countries, Niehuus says this would probably only happen in "terms of a co-production where a French director in Babelsberg might bring some of his own staff or if a young German director of photography had a chance to work with a famous French director".

For the moment, apart from the bilateral accords, there is no economic relationship between the four partners. However, at a meeting in Rome on October 18 an announcement could be made regarding a co-production fund for the network. The subject was first broached in Cannes this year when it was announced that such a fund was being considered.

Manuel Soria of the Madrid Film Commission says: "The idea is that each partner brings \$1.3m (€1m) to consider and support projects." He adds that the fund would likely involve three contests per year to choose projects although the minimum or maximum investment is hard to estimate.

Francis Parmy, vice-president of the Ile de France region in charge of culture, explains: "The idea is to have a committee in each

region that will choose a few projects that can be helped and then a discussion among members to decide which films could benefit. On an ensemble of films, the accords should be mutually advantageous."

Giulia Rodano of the Lazio Film Commission says: "Movies themselves should benefit

from the network as well as the European movie business as a whole. Through the network, the film commissions should be able to increase their own propulsive strength."

She adds that the films which will be selected "should be international co-productions between at least two co-producers from the CRC regions. The projects must be of high quality and have commercial potential".

Niehuus continues: "What we want to achieve is to have competing regions pool their strengths so that we form a unique partnership to foster co-operation between talents and set up co-productions where they make sense and not just for the funding."

Because each of the regions has a different sort of bureaucracy regarding investment, it may be necessary to do some "financial acrobatics," says Niehuus. Brussels still needs to sign this off, with the hope that a fund will be put in place for 2007.

At present, there are film projects in the pipeline but Niehuus says it is too early to give away the titles, noting however that they are

mostly French-German projects with a few German-Italian ones as well.

A new French-Spanish co-production, *Magique*, from French director Philippe Muyl is also getting underway. ■



Olivier-Rene Veillon



Kirsten Niehuus



Francis Parmy

CRC MEMBERS



ILE DE FRANCE FILM COMMISSION

This commission acts as a welcoming and liaison committee which helps to facilitate shoots in Paris and the surrounding area while also promoting the region as a shooting location. Vice-president of the region, Francis Parmy, says one of the strong suits of the film commission has been its ability to work on an upward curve, with "screenwriters being able to see there are advantages in telling stories set here." One of the most prolific countries in terms of production, France has a complex system of aid which can often seem protectionist. However, via a \$17.6m (€14m) fund at the regional level, foreign films are encouraged and aided when shooting and/or posting in the area.



LAZIO FILM COMMISSION

Under the aegis of Filas, which helps promote business development in Rome and its environs, the Lazio commission announced its intentions for a \$12.6m (€10m) fund this year in Cannes. The fund is earmarked for international co-producers who shoot in the region and covers up to 50% of a film's budget, while an extra \$3.2m (€2.5m) allows producers to obtain advance VAT reimbursements.

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MEDIENBOARD BERLIN-BRANDENBURG

The Medienboard supports film projects from script level through to production, distribution and sales. Kirsten Niehuus, managing director of film funding, says the regional budget for film aid is \$26.5m (€21m). Funding generally does not exceed \$1.3m (€1m) per film and 100% of the funding must be spent in the region. Foreign films can also be supported, though Niehuus says it is preferable for a film to have a German co-producer. "I think there will be more co-productions of a substantial nature. The more we know about each other, the more we can improve our co-operation."

MADRID FILM COMMISSION

Madrid was the first commission to sign a bilateral accord with Ile de France in January of 2005. Its annual budget is \$441,000 (€350,000), which goes towards promoting the region, aiding to process permits, providing assistance for location scouting as well as information about local professionals, production companies and services. It is also linked to other national and international film commissions. One of the highest-profile films to come out of the CRC regions so far is the French-Spanish film *Lo Que Se De Lola* from director Javier Rebollo, which screened in competition at San Sebastian.