

European
Showrunner
Programme



SHOWRUNNING IN EUROPE

SKILLS, TASKS,
RESPONSIBILITIES

Introducing the First Survey on
Showrunning in Europe



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OVERVIEW

1.1 What's All the Fuss About?

Lately, “showrunners” have been popping up like mushrooms across the European industry. With no formal training required and no clear job description, it’s a bit like real estate – anyone can call themselves a showrunner, and many do. The term sounds exciting, and during the series boom of the late 2010s and early 2020s, it was used by pretty much anyone who felt in charge of a series project. Among them were plenty of genuine showrunners – writer-producers who actually carried creative and organizational responsibility – but also quite a few black sheep who gave the role a questionable reputation. That has made some broadcasters and production companies hesitant to embrace what is, at its core, a highly promising and innovative work structure and a profitable business model.

1.2 Seriously: Why Would We Want This?

Because it works. Showrunning encourages creative ownership, speeds up decision making, and connects the dots between vision and execution – something traditional European production setups often struggle with. Writers, directors, and producers tend to work in separate lanes, which can lead to fragmented storytelling. The showrunner model helps unify the process, resulting in stronger narratives, more coherent series, and a clearer voice in international co-productions.

Showrunning also helps reduce costs – by minimizing miscommunication, avoiding redundant revisions, and ensuring smoother workflows from development through post-production.

It’s not about copying Hollywood – it’s about making a proven system work for Europe’s collaborative and culturally diverse industry.

“Surely, showrunning can be applied wrongly, but the solution is not to avoid it, but to study how to do it right.”

Jeppe Gjervig Gram, writer »Borgen«, showrunner »Follow the Money«, Denmark; Head of Programme European Showrunner Programme

“My job, as a showrunner, is to fight for the content, help everyone to do their best, and make every euro count. The truth? An experienced showrunner gives always back more value than they cost.”

Miikko Oikonen, writer, showrunner, and director »Estonia«, »Bordertown«, Finland

SHOWRUNNING ALSO HELPS REDUCE COSTS BY MINIMIZING MISCOMMUNICATION AND AVOIDING REDUNDANT REVISIONS

1.3 One Size Doesn't Fit All!

European storytelling thrives on diversity, and – as countless examples show – showrunning is not the only path to success. Yet, embracing the showrunner model as a powerful, complementary tool can unlock greater efficiency, creativity, and impact. By doing so, Europe can deliver world-class series that captivate audiences and secure a stronger competitive edge globally.

1.4 Where Do We Stand, Where Do We Go?

Europe is at a crossroads. Some countries and companies have started experimenting with showrunner-like roles, but there's still a lack of formal recognition, training, and support structures. To move forward, we need to invest in education, encourage collaboration across disciplines, and build systems that allow showrunners to do their job well. That means rethinking how projects are funded, how roles are defined, and how broadcasters and platforms support creator-led production. The future of European storytelling could depend on how boldly we take this step.

This paper brings together insights from the first four years of the European Showrunner Programme and combines them with research, offering a snapshot of where things stand and exploring strategies for developing sustainable, truly European versions of the showrunner model.

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QUICK FACTS ABOUT SHOWRUNNING

2.1 Origin and Evolution

The role of the showrunner originated in the US television industry. In the 1950s, the position of the “writer-producer” emerged, gradually evolving over the following decades into what is now known as the showrunner. Initially, this hybrid role caused confusion, as it challenged traditional boundaries between departments in the television production landscape.¹

The continued development and establishment of the showrunner role is closely tied to key innovations in the US series industry. These include production advancements, the rise of cable networks like HBO and AMC in the 1980s and 1990s, and technological shifts such as digital distribution, which paved the way for streaming platforms in the 2000s. During these transformative periods, numerous influential and successful series were created in the showrunner model, further highlighting the importance of the showrunner and shaping the industry as a whole.

2.2 Definition (US Context)

In the US television industry, a showrunner is the creative lead of a scripted TV series. They are responsible for both the artistic vision and the commercial success of a show throughout its entire lifecycle – from concept development and pre-production to filming, post-production, and marketing. Showrunners must build, lead, inspire, and continuously motivate a highly professional creative team while collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders.²

Typically, the showrunner serves as both head writer and executive producer and often is also the creator of the series. Occasionally, there are non-writing showrunners, such as directing producers or creative producers who originated the idea and developed it in partnership with a writer. However, the vast majority of US showrunners are seasoned writers who have risen through the ranks of the Writers’ Room hierarchy.³

¹ Banks (2020).

² Higueras-Ruiz, Gómez-Pérez, Alberich-Pascual (2021).
³ cf. Landau (2014); Wirth and Melvoine (2004).

2.3 Term vs. Credit (US Context)

The term “showrunner” emerged in the 1990s to describe the dual role of writer and producer in American television. First mentioned in *Variety* magazine in 1990, the term officially entered the Oxford English Dictionary in 1995.⁴

Despite its widespread use in the industry, “showrunner” does not appear as a formal credit in a series’ opening or closing titles, nor is it listed on professional platforms such as IMDb. In the US, showrunners are usually credited as both writers and executive producers. However, not all executive producers serve as showrunners. Only those who hold overall creative and managerial responsibility for the series do so.⁵



2.4 Advantages

Series production is highly complex, often involving multiple intensive processes running in parallel – for example, while season one is in post-production, season two may be filming and season three in development⁶. Even with a single season, producing a series requires complex coordination in order “to create a consistent, unified, and higher-quality audiovisual product”⁷.

Producing series in the showrunner model has the following key advantages:

- higher quality – through a strong and consistent creative vision, especially, but not only, when the episodes of a season are directed by multiple directors
- better cost-efficiency
- better time-efficiency – in particular, but not only, when multiple seasons are being produced in a relatively short time period

All of the above will increase the competitiveness of a series in the international market.

4 cf. Perren and Schatz (2015); Blakey (2017).

5 Banks (2020).

6 Mittell (2015).

7 Higueras-Ruiz, Gómez-Pérez, Alberich-Pascual (2018): 102.

3

SURVEY: SHOWRUNNING IN EUROPE – TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Introduction

The “Golden Age of Television”, marked by globally acclaimed high-quality series and the showrunner as a central figure, began to extend beyond the borders of the United States in the 2000s. In Europe, however, this concept encountered a fundamentally different production system: screenwriters typically worked alone rather than in Writers’ Rooms, and their involvement often ended with the completion of the script. The creative vision for a series was traditionally the domain of the director.⁸

The United Kingdom and Denmark emerged as pioneers in adopting the showrunner model in Europe. As early as the 2000s, both countries began experimenting with this role and adapting their production processes accordingly.

- In Europe, the term showrunner was first associated with British writer Russell T. Davies, who served as head writer and executive producer for the revival of the classic series »Doctor Who« (BBC, 2005)⁹.
- In Denmark, the public broadcaster DR developed a new approach to series production that incorporated key elements of the US model while aligning them with public service values. Central to the so-called Dogma principles, published in 2003, was the concept of “One Vision”. This approach led to the creation of shows such as »Borgen« (DR, 2010–2013), which achieved both



“The showrunner system is a proven system. The fundamental trust in the creative voice was THE central component in the meteoric success of the DR series in the heyday of »The Killing«, »Borgen«, etc.”

Jeppe Gjervig Gram, writer »Borgen«, showrunner »Follow the Money«, Denmark; Head of Programme European Showrunner Programme

national and international success. A defining feature of the “One Vision” model is the close collaboration between writer and producer, with the head writer being involved in all major decisions and recognised as the creator of the series.¹⁰

⁸ Redvall (2013).

⁹ Cascajosa-Virino (2018); Cornea (2009).

¹⁰ Redvall (2013).

With the arrival of streaming platforms in the European market, the production volume of so-called high-end drama series in Europe increased by 60 % between 2015 and 2020¹¹. This growth was accompanied by a broader adoption of the showrunner model across many European countries.

Nevertheless, showrunning is still not firmly established in Europe. There remains considerable uncertainty and a lack of understanding within the industry regarding the responsibilities and authority of a showrunner.

That's why we are presenting the first comparative overview of how the showrunner role is approached across different European contexts.

Introducing the First Survey on Showrunning in Europe

3.2 Aim and Methodology

The survey aims to explore the job profile and responsibilities of showrunners of European series productions and to find out which similarities and differences exist within Europe.

This examination was conducted in three steps:

- A qualitative survey in the form of extensive expert interviews was conducted with selected experts who have worked in showrunner positions on series productions from six European countries.
- The results were converted into a questionnaire and tested in closed think tank sessions with invited European showrunners.
- An online questionnaire was sent to selected professionals from all over Europe working in the showrunner position.

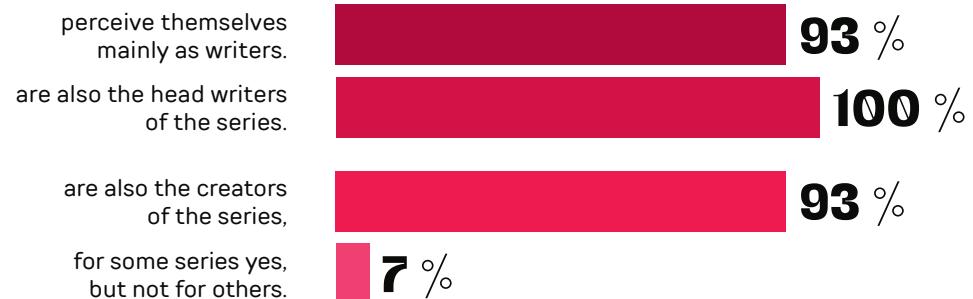
The final analysis incorporates the anonymised results of all three surveys, based on responses from a total of 27 respondents.

¹¹ Fontaine (2022).

3.3 Detailed Results

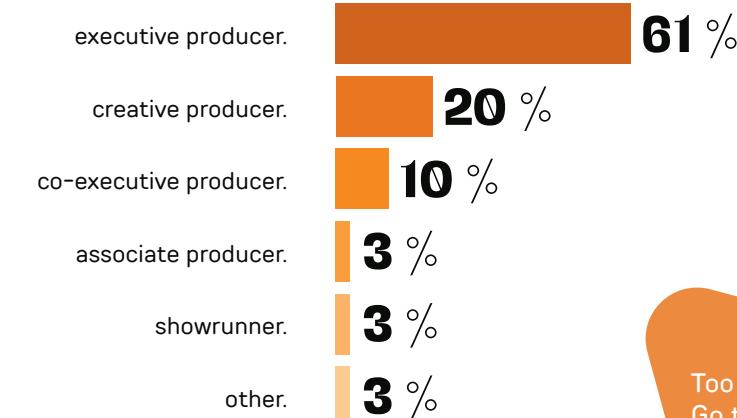
GENERAL CONDITIONS

Showrunners ...



Credits

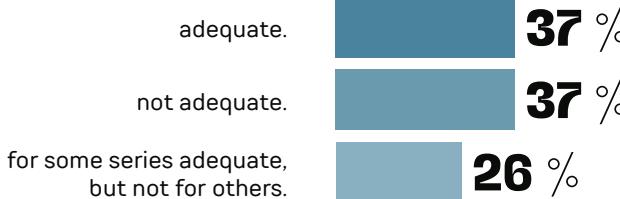
When working in the showrunner position, they were credited as ...



Too many details?
Go to page 16
for the key findings!

Remuneration

The remuneration for taking on the showrunner position was considered as ...



CORE TASKS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND AUTHORITY

Creative Vision

Showrunners consider the core task of a showrunner to create, communicate, and preserve the creative vision throughout the entire process of a series production.



Logistical and Financial Management

Showrunners work in a close creative partnership ...



... with a creative producer



... or a line producer who is mainly responsible for the logistical and financial management.



Authority

Showrunners have a say in financial decisions that affect the series' creative integrity.

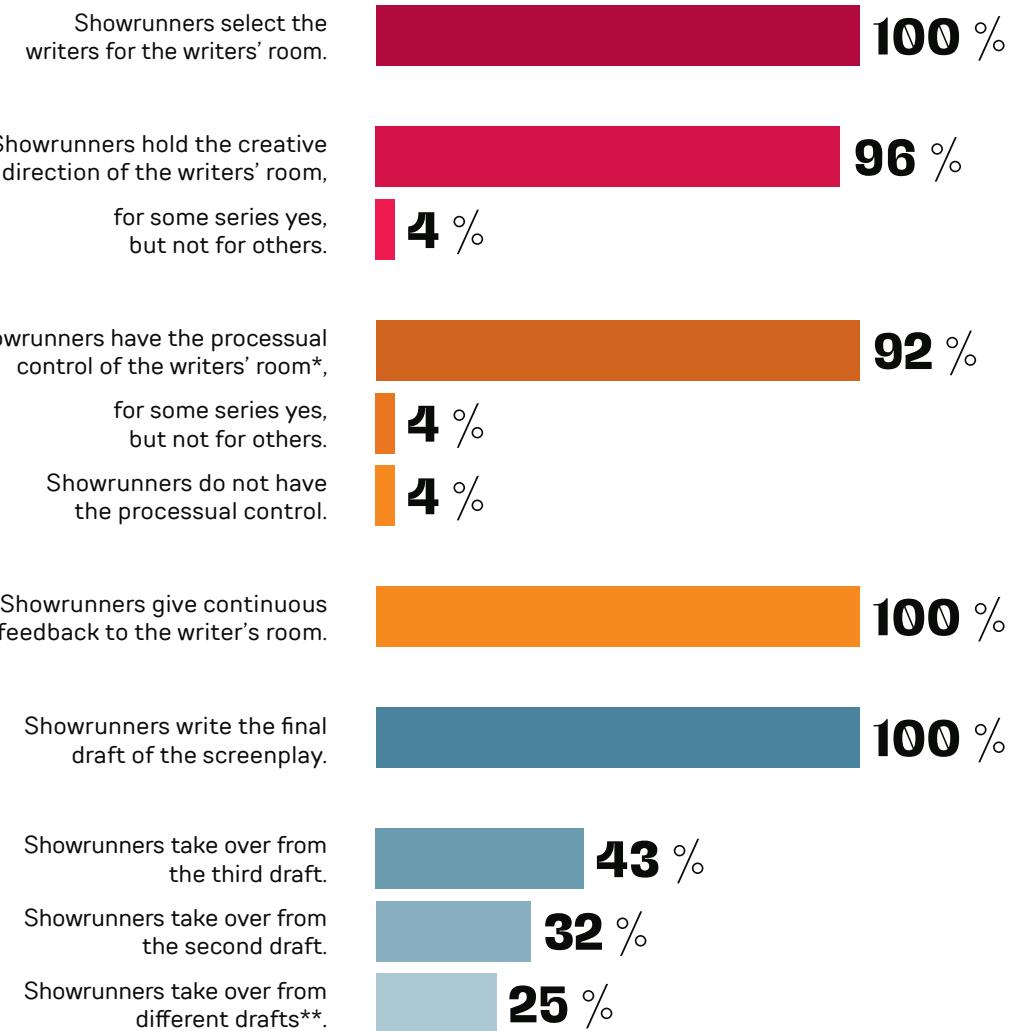


Showrunners have the right of veto and / or final decision on all creative aspects.



RESPONSIBILITIES DURING PRODUCTION

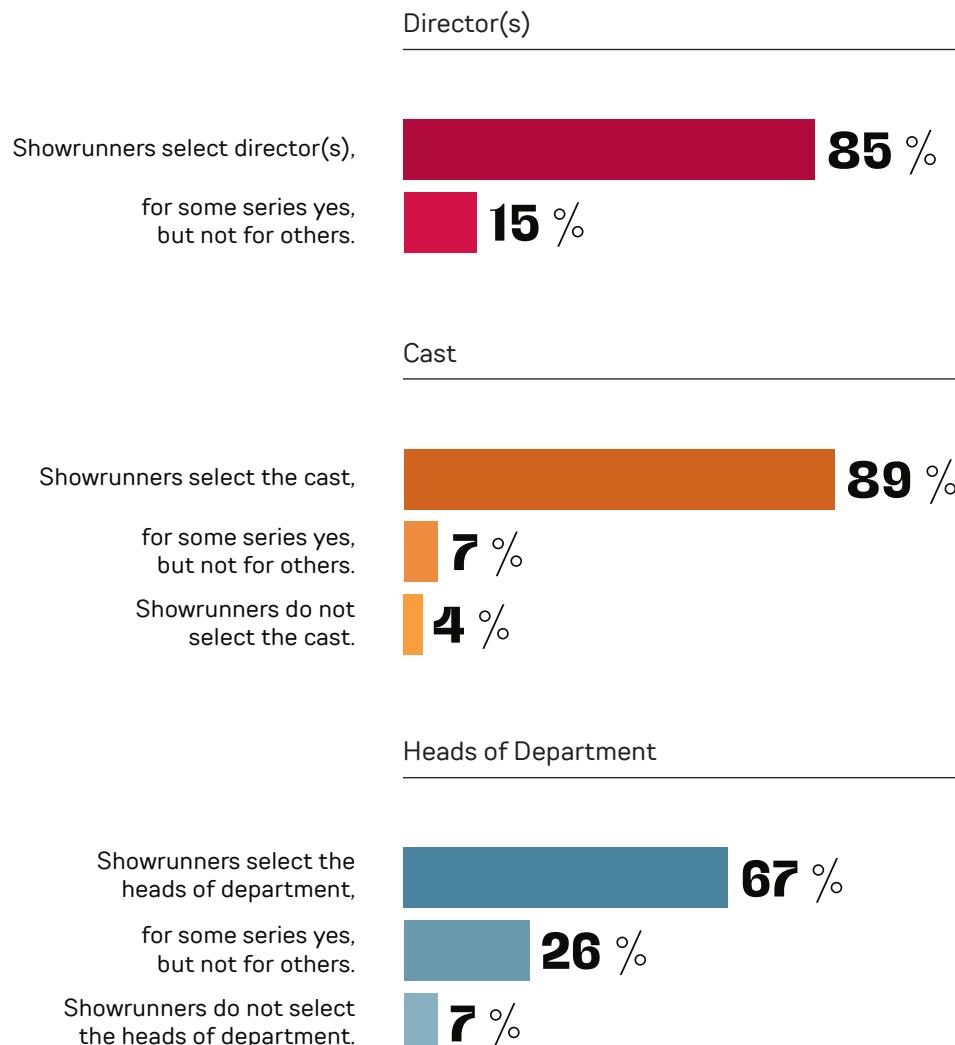
Script/Writers' Room



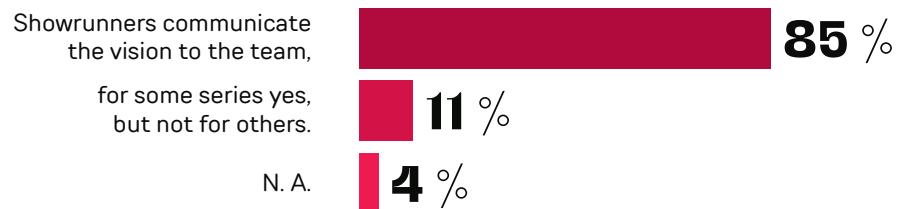
* determination of work processes, procedures, duration and frequency of meetings, etc.

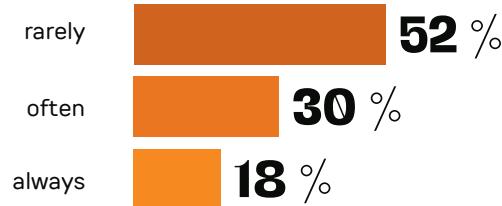
** completion of outline, draft 1, draft 4, or just before shooting

Pre-Production: Involvement in Selection of Key Creatives

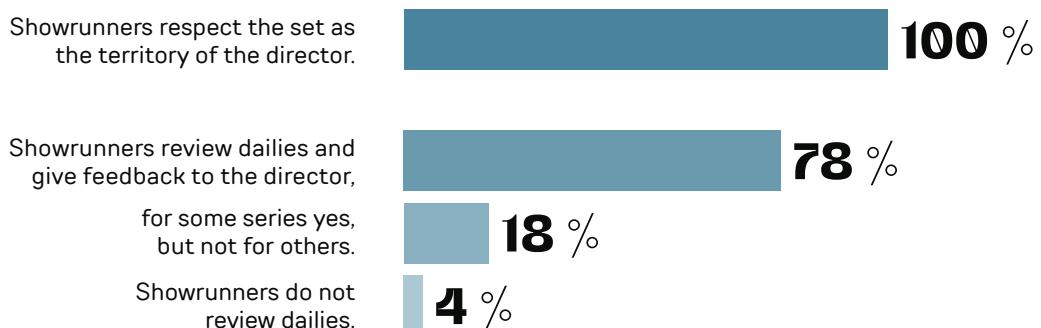


Pre-Production: Communication of the Vision to the Team



Shooting: Presence on Set**Shooting: Responsibilities on Set**

- Communicating and protecting the vision
- Special scenes
- Director change
- Social reasons and representative duties

Shooting: Collaboration With Directors on Set

Post-Production

Showrunners supervise the editing process,
for some series yes, but not for others.

 81 %

Showrunners do not supervise it.

 15 %

Showrunners are involved in final cut*,
for some series yes, but not for others.

 52 %

Showrunners are not involved in final cut.

 26 % 22 %

Showrunners supervise other aspects of post-production**.

 89 %

Showrunners do not supervise it.

 7 %

N. A.

 4 %

* barring objections from the broadcaster,
who has the ultimate final say

** VFX, grading, sound, music

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Showrunners participate in the creation of marketing materials and concepts,

 67 %

for some series yes, but not for others.

 29 %

Showrunners do not supervise it.

 4 %

Showrunners participate in promotional activities around the series launch*,

 85 %

for some series yes, but not for others.

 7 %

Showrunners do not participate.

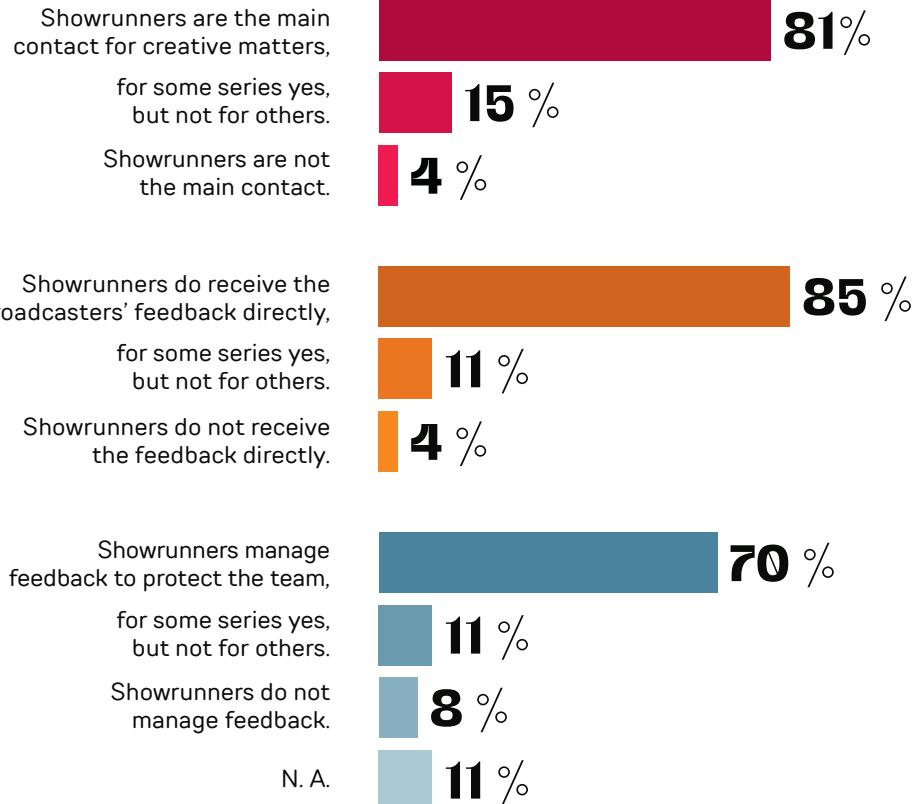
 4 %

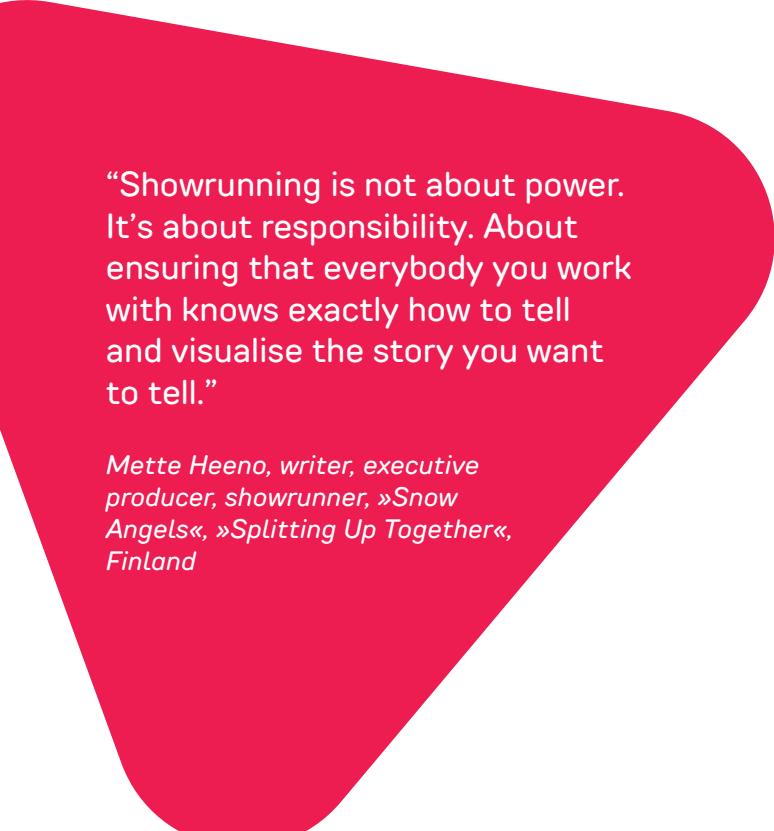
N. A.

 4 %

* press conferences, interviews, festivals etc.

COMMUNICATION WITH BROADCASTERS (PUBLIC, PRIVATE, STREAMING)





“Showrunning is not about power. It’s about responsibility. About ensuring that everybody you work with knows exactly how to tell and visualise the story you want to tell.”

Mette Heeno, writer, executive producer, showrunner, »Snow Angels«, »Splitting Up Together«, Finland

3.4 Key Findings

The following key findings are based on insights gathered from the surveys mentioned above and from four years of experience running the European Showrunner Programme.

Europe’s Opportunity: Building a Clearer Route for Showrunning

The continued absence of a clear definition and industry-wide standards for the showrunner role in Europe creates structural uncertainty, leaving many showrunners to act as *de facto* pioneers who must repeatedly negotiate their authority, responsibilities, recognition, and compensation. By promoting on-the-job-training that prepares writers for producing responsibilities and by clarifying expectations around these roles, Europe can boost efficiency, foster stronger creative leadership, and enhance the international competitiveness of its series production.

A European Showrunner Model Does Exist

While no European showrunner operates in exactly the same way as their counterparts in the US, the findings indicate that a clearly identifiable showrunner model has nonetheless emerged in Europe. While individual approaches to showrunning may vary slightly – as in the US – the core tasks, responsibilities, and authority are largely consistent. Overall, the shared features clearly outweigh the differences.

Showrunning Is Not the TV Version of the Auteur Model

Showrunning is not simply the European auteur model applied to TV, as it is deeply rooted in collaboration rather than solitary authorship. In Europe, the showrunner works in close creative partnership with the producer, while also working closely with the writers’ room, the directors, and the heads of departments, ensuring that all elements contribute to a coherent and sustainable series.

European Showrunner = Writer and Creator

As in the US, showrunners in Europe are usually the writers and creators of the respective series.

Key Difference to the US Model: Close Creative Collaboration with the Producer

Most European showrunners work very closely with a producer, who is not only responsible for the logistical and financial management: They discuss creative and financial matters on eye level, and both accompany the creation process from script to screen. This trust-based creative collaboration between showrunner and producer is the defining distinction from the US model.

Respecting the Director's Territory

Most showrunners are rarely on set and when they are, it tends to be for social, diplomatic, or representational reasons as well as for special scenes or when the directors change. They see the shooting phase as the territory of the director(s), whom they want to give creative freedom within the framework of the discussed vision. During that phase, showrunners usually review the rushes daily, give feedback, and prepare the next steps.

THIS TRUST-BASED CREATIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN SHOWRUNNER AND PRODUCER IS THE DEFINING DISTINCTION FROM THE US MODEL

Credit Practices Vary Across Europe

There are notable differences across Europe in how showrunner work is credited. While various titles are used, the most common is Executive Producer, which accounts for 61% of the credits given to those taking on the showrunner role.



3.5 Concept of a European Showrunner Model

Categories	Tasks, Responsibilities, and Authorities of Showrunners in Europe
GENERAL CONDITIONS	
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head writer and in most cases also creator of the series Self-conception as writer
Credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer and executive producer
Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate payment for taking over the showrunner position Appropriate participation in exploitation revenues
CORE TASKS AND AUTHORITIES	
Core Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation, communication, and preservation of the creative/artistic vision throughout the process of series production Close creative collaboration with a producer, who is responsible for logistical and financial management
Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right of veto and/or final decision on all creative decisions and in financial decisions that affect the creative integrity of the series (in cooperation with the producer)
RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE PRODUCTION PROCESS	
Script/Writers' Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection of writers for the Writers' Room Creative and artistic direction of the Writers' Room (steering the discussion of content with a view to the vision, incorporating the ideas of all writers as best as possible) Processual management of the Writers' Room (formulation of objectives and timetable, design of concrete work processes) Continuous feedback to writers and preparation of revisions Writing the final version of the script Creating a productive and fair working atmosphere Mentor for up-and-coming writers

Categories	Tasks, Responsibilities, and Authorities of Showrunners in Europe
Pre-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (Co-)selection of the director(s) (in collaboration with the producer) ● (Co-)selection of all Heads of Department (in collaboration with producer and director) ● (Co-)selection of cast (in collaboration with producer and director) ● Communication of the vision to director(s) and heads of department ● If necessary, script revisions regarding financial feasibility
Shooting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presence on set (frequency and duration is highly individual, but tends to be low, usually only in case of director change, special scenes and otherwise more for social, diplomatic, or representative reasons) ● Recognition of the director's territory ● Review of the rushes/dailies and feedback to the director and producer ● Preparation of the next steps
Post-Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Close supervision of the editing process, usually including final say in the edit in collaboration with the producer, while the commissioning broadcaster/streaming platform usually has the final cut. ● Supervision of all aspects of post-production, such as music, visual effects, colour grading, sound mixing
MARKETING AND PROMOTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication of the vision to the marketing department ● Participation in the creation of marketing materials and concepts ● Participation in promotional activities around the series launch (premieres, festival screenings, press conferences, interviews)
COMMUNICATION WITH CLIENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Main contact person for creative matters ● Receiving feedback ● Managing feedback (if necessary, protecting the team by deciding which feedback is to be passed on to relevant people and in what form)

4

THE SHOWRUNNER'S SKILLSET

The position of a showrunner combines various fields of activity and requirement profiles: showrunners are writers and producers. They are creative individuals who are responsible for the vision and creative integrity of the series, while also managing a complex production with personnel and budget responsibilities.

At its core, showrunning is a dynamic interplay of creative vision, strategic management, and inspiring leadership.

4.1 Creative Vision

Showrunners are the architects of engaging narratives, crafting compelling characters and visually captivating series. Their primary role is to define and guard the project's unique vision and ensure it resonates deeply with the target audience.

4.2 Strategic and Financial Management

Balancing artistic ambitions with practical constraints is paramount. Showrunners expertly manage budgets, timelines and resources (in close collaboration with producers/line producers), ensuring smooth production workflows while staying true to the creative goals.

“As a showrunner, I am executing on the promise of a series I conceived and wrote, from soup to nuts. This means from the initial idea, through the rewrites in the writers’ room, budget negotiations, daily production, post-production and the promotion of the series as it goes out into the world.”

*Anna Winger, writer, showrunner, executive producer,
»Transatlantic«, »Unorthodox«, Germany/USA*

SHOWRUNNERS NEED TO HAVE STRONG INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS – AND THE ABILITY TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT

4.3 Knowledge Across All Stages of the Value Chain

Showrunners do not need expert knowledge in all the various departments. However, a basic understanding of all stages of the value chain is crucial, including budgeting, producing, directing, casting, cinematography, production design, costume design, sound design, VFX, editing, working with actors, marketing, distribution, and audience relations.

4.4 Leadership

The epic scale of a series production demands exceptional leadership to navigate the marathon of motivating cast and crew. Showrunners answer this challenge by being able to delegate and to trust by building collaborative environments where every voice is heard and every team member is empowered to contribute, forging a shared purpose that carries the project from script to screen. Showrunners need to have strong interpersonal and communication skills – and the ability to deal with conflict.



Showrunner Sanne Nuyens (right) on set with 1st AD Leontien Huijken

5

THE PRODUCERS' VIEW – THINK TANK RESULTS

CLOSE COLLABORATION BETWEEN PRODUCER AND WRITER/CREATOR IS ESSENTIAL

To better understand how the showrunner role is perceived within the European television industry, a closed-door Think Tank session was held with leading series producers from four European countries.

The discussion focused on the applicability of the showrunner model in Europe, particularly the dynamics of collaboration between showrunners and producers.

While participants acknowledged significant structural and cultural challenges, they agreed that the showrunner model can succeed in a European setting – provided it is thoughtfully adapted and built on a strong partnership with the right producer.

The following sections summarise the key insights from this exchange.

5.1 Writers as Creative Leaders

The attending producers strongly believe in the fundamental importance for series writers to be a strong creative voice and to become more deeply involved in the overall production process. A close collaboration between producer and writer/creator is essential, with both parties sharing responsibility in the production process and contributing creatively to development.

“If the showrunner is the editorial creative, the curator, then I think, that the producing partner, the non-writing executive producer, is the other half of the equation – just as important.”

Chris Chibnall, writer, executive producer, showrunner, »Broadchurch«, »Doctor Who«, UK

5.2 Why the Fully Integrated Showrunner Model Is Rare in Europe

In the US, the showrunner traditionally wields both creative authority and budgetary control, acting as the single point of accountability for a series. By contrast, most European productions separate these responsibilities. While European showrunners are routinely consulted on pivotal creative choices – casting, script revisions, editing, and tone – they seldom carry the final financial sign-off.

The producers attending the Think Tank noted that some writers are eager to deepen their creative influence but hesitate to assume the full spectrum of production duties. This reluctance often appears to be rooted in practical considerations. Not every writer possesses the skill set required to lead and motivate large teams, to manage schedules, negotiate with vendors, or oversee cost-control measures.

5.3 The Showrunner-Producer Partnership

The most viable approach for Europe is a collaborative partnership where showrunners and producers function as complementary forces. In this model, producers act as sparring partners, offering support and constructively challenging the showrunner's decisions. This division of responsibilities enables creators to concentrate on storytelling while leveraging the producer's production expertise.

Effective collaboration necessitates that creators take on essential production responsibilities, while producers engage actively in the creative process. By fostering this cooperative dynamic, both parties can enhance the overall quality of the production, combining creative vision with practical execution.

5.4 Terminology and Credit Preferences

The term “showrunner” is viewed by many producers as culturally misaligned with European industry norms. Alternative credits such as “Creative Producer” or “Artistic Producer” are preferred, as they appear to better reflect the collaborative nature of European productions and avoid implying unilateral authority.

5.5 Industry Norms Shaping Creative Leadership

The producers observe industry conventions that often hinder the experimentation with and adaptation of showrunning models in Europe. A key factor is the widespread view among European broadcasters that directors are the primary creative force behind scripted series. This perception strongly influences how creative leadership is structured and distributed. The role of a showrunner is typically considered viable only when the project originates with them, is supported by a writers' room, and is conceived as a multi-season series. These prevailing norms tend to constrain the writer's influence, limiting their ability to shape a unified creative vision and reducing opportunities for streamlined production.

5.6 Structural Barriers to Showrunning

The attending producers identified several systemic obstacles to the emergence of full-scale showrunning in Europe, including limited financial frameworks, lack of training opportunities, and unclear career pathways.

They stressed that successful production leadership requires specific skills – such as team management, organizational skills, and resilience – that many writers have yet to develop. Common challenges include delayed scripts and creative blockages.

THE PRODUCERS OBSERVE INDUSTRY CONVENTIONS THAT OFTEN HINDER THE EXPERIMENTATION WITH AND ADAPTATION OF SHOWRUNNING MODELS IN EUROPE

5.7 The Ideal Showrunner: A Producer's Perspective

The attending producers envision the ideal showrunner as someone who balances creative vision with financial and organizational responsibility. This includes:

- Safeguarding the creative vision,
- Motivating the team,
- Managing budgets and timelines,
- Acting as the central point of contact throughout production,
- Bringing valuable professional networks to the project.

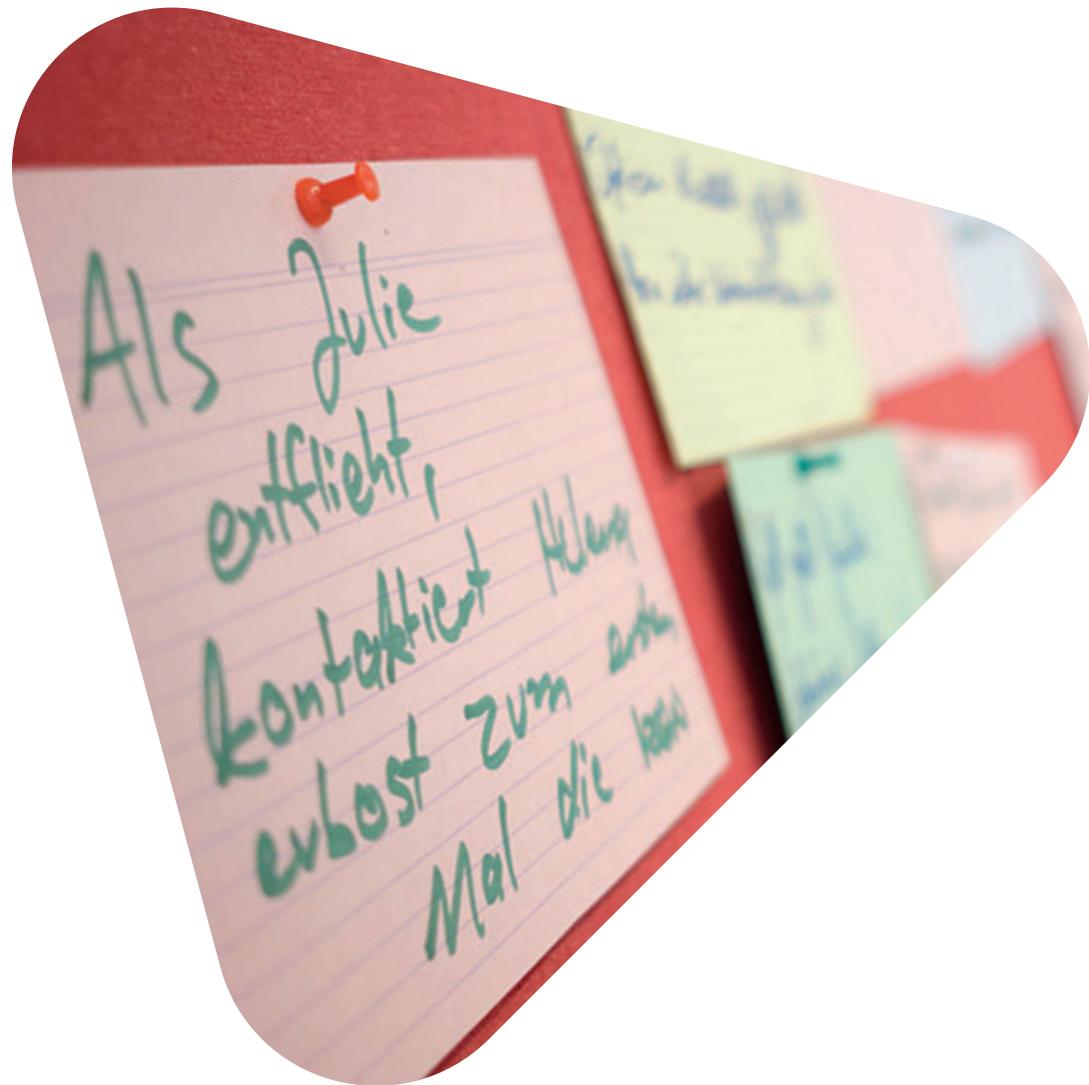
They regard collaboration with a showrunner as highly valuable – provided the writer possesses the required skills and mindset, engages on eye-level with producers and directors, and not only assumes a portion of their authority but also substantially reduces their workload and responsibilities.



Showrunner Jeppe Gjervig Gram teaching in the European Showrunner Programme

6

SHOWRUNNING IN EUROPE – CHALLENGES AND MEASURES



“The transition from writer to showrunner is never easy. It requires training in leadership, training in business, and, most of all, a mindset shift: you are no longer just telling a story, you are managing a company that exists to tell that story.”

Pedro Lopes, writer, producer, executive producer, showrunner »Codex 632«, »Glória«, Portugal

6.1 Lack of Definition and Industry Standards

While the showrunner position is gaining more ground in Europe, it is not yet established and there is a lot of uncertainty in the industry. As a result, many European showrunners have found themselves in pioneering positions – often required to repeatedly explain their responsibilities and authority, advocate for recognition, and push for appropriate credit and compensation.

THE EUROPEAN SHOWRUNNER PROGRAMME IS DEDICATED TO GRADUALLY REMOVING THE CHALLENGES

6.2 Wannabe Showrunners Undermine Reputation

The lack of definition and standards also leads to people calling themselves showrunners without covering all the areas of responsibility of a showrunner, which fuels reservations among producers, broadcasters, and other stakeholders.

6.3 Adherence to the European Tradition of Auteur Cinema

Unlike in the US, European writers are less frequently employed as showrunners because – even in TV – the European tradition of auteur cinema remains strong, placing the director at the creative centre.

6.4 Lack of Training Opportunities and Professional Pathways

Professional training for showrunners is still a rarity in Europe – particularly for talented writers aiming to become showrunners, but also for producers aiming to work with showrunners. There is also a lack of opportunities to gain on-the-job experience and to move up the ranks.

With this paper and its training offerings and activities, the European Showrunner Programme is dedicated to gradually removing the above-mentioned challenges and obstacles in order for the European series industry to fully reach its full potential.

SHOWRUNNERS ON SHOWRUNNING IN EUROPE

The following statements, as well as all other quotes in this report, are quotes from lecturers and alumni of the European Showrunner Programme.

“As a showrunner, I see my role as a conductor, who guides all musicians and soloists to ensure that everyone is playing the same piece in the same rhythm with the same emotion.”

Teodora Markova, »Soviet Jeans«, Bulgaria

“Showrunning turns European storytelling into a global product by ensuring both creative and cultural coherence, allowing the local voice not to be “lost” when crossing markets but to stand out as a distinctive advantage.”

Ramón Campos, »Gran Hotel«, »Cable Girls«, Spain

“As a producer working in Europe, I am personally invested in the adaptation of the showrunner model to achieve creative and commercial success in series entertainment. There is simply no other way to bring forward the character development and story complexity that audiences demand to make the time to engage with a show. The showrunner system provides the best material for directors, writers, and actors so they can excel to their fullest.”

John Altschuler, »Silicon Valley«, USA

“Every productional choice is, ultimately, also an artistic one. By involving the showrunner in both artistic and logistical aspects, the series achieves a unity of form and content that strengthens its identity and international appeal.”

Sanne Nuyens, »Hotel Beau Séjour«, »The Twelve«, Belgium

“In contrast to the auteur model, showrunning is cross-functional, less solitary and more cooperative.”

Marianne Wendt, »Wer Wir Sind«, »Neumatt/New Heights«, Germany

“As a showrunner, it is my job to be the one with the answers for all the demanding questions, and if I don't have them, I will work with all hands on deck to figure them out. All series benefit from having a competent showrunner.”

Sigurjón Kjartansson, »Katla«, »Trapped«, Iceland

“If you want story to drive the show, you need a storyteller at the helm — a showrunner bridges the gap between creative ambition and production reality. It's about quality and accountability, not ego.”

Trygve Allister Diesen, »Wisting«, Norway

“Having a showrunner ensures that someone knows the project inside out, is responsible for it until the end, and owns their mistakes if it doesn't work out instead of blaming someone else.”

Camille Couasse, »Carême«, »Vortex«, France

“Showrunning is the fine art of turning a personal vision into a shared one by inspiring every department to chase the same dream, juggling a hundred opinions. Somewhere in that chaos you'll create a shared creative pulse that will resonate with audiences everywhere. The model of showrunning is a magical dynamic that has profoundly influenced and matured contemporary European drama.”

Malin-Sarah Gozin, »Dead End«, »Clan«/»Bad Sisters«, »Tabula Rasa«, Belgium

8

VIDEO RECORDINGS

More video recordings at www.showrunners.eu

8.1 Spotlight on ...

In these video recordings of the *European Showrunner Think Tank*, acclaimed European writer-producers talk about their work as showrunners offering inspiring insights.



Spotlight on Fanny Herrero

with **Fanny Herrero**
(»*Call my Agent!*«, »*Standing Up*«)
France



Spotlight on Chris Chibnall

with **Chris Chibnall**
(»*Broadchurch*«, »*Doctor Who*«)
UK



Spotlight on the HaRiBos

with **Hanno Hackfort and Bob Konrad**
(»*Kleo*«, »*4 Blocks*«)
Germany

8.2 Panel Talks

In these video recordings of *European Showrunner Think Tank* discussions, renowned TV professionals from Europe and the US share their experiences on various aspects of showrunning in Europe.

Showrunning: A European Approach

with **Jeppe Gjervig Gram** (»*Borgen*«, »*Follow the Money*«), **Annette Hess** (»*We Children from Bahnhof Zoo*«, »*Ku'damm 56/59/63*«, »*German House*«, »*The Interpreter of Silence*«), and **Frank Spotnitz** (»*Leonardo*«, »*Medici*«, »*The X-Files*«, »*The Man in the High Castle*«)



Comparing Markets

with **Marie Roussin** (»*Mixte*«, »*Lupin*«), **Teodora Markova** (»*Soviet Jeans*«), and **Teresa Fernández-Valdés** (»*Cable Girls*«, »*Gran Hotel*«)

The Broadcaster's Perspective

with **Marianne Furevold** (NRK), **Bettina Alber** (SRF), and **Christian Wikander** (then HBO Max Nordic)



Embracing Diversity & Social Responsibility

with **Nataly Kudiabor** (UFA) and **Lauren Schmidt Hissrich** (»*The Witcher*«)

9

ABOUT US

9.1 The ifs

Founded in 2000, the ifs Internationale Filmschule Köln is one of the leading schools for film and moving images in Germany today. As an internationally focused institution for education and professional training, it provides film and media professionals with a high-quality, future-oriented education in a close combination of theory and practice. The fact that it is located in Cologne – a film, media, and TV hub – is particularly characteristic of its close proximity to the industry.

The ifs is an initiative of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and the Film- und Medienstiftung NRW. It is a non-profit organisation and its sole principal partner is the Film- und Medienstiftung NRW.

Since 2013, the ifs has been offering the MA Serial Storytelling, the first international Master's programme in Europe with a focus on collaborative writing for series. The intensive study programme focuses on both German language and international series markets, combining screenwriting craft with techniques of cooperative story development (»Writers' Room«) and applied artistic research.

www.filmschule.de





9.2 The European Showrunner Programme

The European Showrunner Programme is a unique ifs initiative aiming to support the discussion and implementation of a truly European showrunner model.

The aim is twofold: to continue the focused conversation amongst European series professionals about this position and to provide experienced series writers with the leadership- and production-related skills and insights needed to successfully take on this demanding position.

Head of Programme is the Danish writer and showrunner Jeppe Gjervig Gram (»Borgen«, »Follow the Money«).

The programme consists of three parts:

- **The European Showrunner Training**
A top-level advanced training and mentoring programme for experienced series writers.
- **The European Showrunner Think Tank**
A series of industry events focusing on analysing, discussing, and eventually implementing a truly European showrunner model.
- **The European Showrunner Network**
A series of networking events for established and emerging showrunners, scheduled at key industry events.

The programme was launched in 2022 and is funded by the Creative Europe MEDIA Programme of the European Union and has been supported by varying industry partners.

www.showrunners.eu

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