

Mediapro Names Laura Fernandez Espeso Director of International Content

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COURTESY OF IMAGINA INTL. SALES

Ex-Globomedia exec joins fast-building international TV drive

MADRID — Spain's Mediapro Group, a producer of Jude Law starrer "The Young Pope," has named Laura Fernandez Espeso as director of international content. She will report to Javier Mendez, Mediapro contents director.

The move comes as Mediapro, one of Spain's biggest media congloms, continues to fire up plans for high-end TV production as a "key area in company growth," it said in a statement. Both Mendez (*pictured, right*) and Fernandez Espeso (*left*) will attend Cannes' Mipcom trade fair later this month.

Fernandez Espeso's appointment has been announced just two months after Mediapro and Daniel Burman's Buenos Aires Oficina Burmann, which is set to produce Netflix's first original series in Argentina, struck a strategic co-development deal for high-end fiction TV series and formats aimed squarely at international markets.

In May, Ran Telem, a Primetime Emmy Award-winning producer on "Homeland" and longtime V.P. of programming and content at Israel's Keshet Broadcasting, was appointed to the newly-created post of Mediapro head of international content development.

The Mediapro Group's content division will shortly announce more new appointments, Mendez said.

Fernandez Espeso will be responsible for Mediapro Group's international strategy, a broad brief. "Under Laura's oversight, we will power up the search for and creation of new creative ideas and co-production projects," said Mendez.

He added that another of Fernandez Espeso's goals will be "the consolidation of Imagina Intl. Sales as a key player in international fiction and non-fiction distribution."

Fernandez Espeso joins the Mediapro Group from Globomedia, once Mediapro's equal partner in joint venture Imagina Group and for two decades Spain's leading producer of primetime fiction.

In a Spanish TV sector focused heavily in live action scripted and unscripted on domestic production for its dominant free-to-air broadcasters, where Spanish shows knocked foreign rivals out of the water, Fernandez Espeso has been one of Spain's relatively select number of executives in Spain with substantial international experience, serving from 2012 as Globomedia's director of international development and of its film division.

"We will take advantage of Laura's experience moving Globomedia properties in the international market," said Mendez.

Partnered by Mexico's Televisa, ad media giant WPP and investor Torreal, Mediapro owns a 7% stake in Spanish broadcast giant Atresmedia Group. Their joint conglomerate, in which Mediapro holds a controlling 48% participation, has offices in 33 cities in Europe, the U.S., Latin America and Asia, and posted revenues of €1.509 billion (\$1.7 billion) in 2015, per company sources.

Mediapro is teaming with the Qatar-based beIN Media Group on sports rights broking operations across the world. Now owners of Globomedia ("Aguila Roja," "Locked Up"), when focused on film, Mediapro never lacked for international ambition, co-producing three Woody Allen titles, including "Vicky, Cristina Barcelona" as well as Spanish auteurs with international reach such as Isabel Coixet ("Nobody Wants the Night") and Fernando Leon ("A Perfect Day").

Though made for Spain, flagship Globomedia drama series such as “The Boat,” “The Boarding School,” “Aida” and “Los Serrano,” or “Red Eagle” have sold or been remade in over 100 overseas territories – from Russia to France, Finland and Italy – thanks to their “unique, highly defined character,” Fernandez Espeso said.

She went on: “With a physical presence in 30 countries, apart from creating, producing and distributing content, Mediapro’s innovative technology is top-of-the-class in European terms. This great value chain undoubtedly offers competitive advantages for international expansion.

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