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## Rodnyansky takes majority stake in A Company

### East European distrib looks to expand operations

By ED MEZA

BERLIN -- Alexander Rodnyansky's Russian film group AR Films has acquired 51% of Berlin-based A Company Consulting and Licensing, one of the biggest film licensing and distribution outfits in Central and Eastern Europe.

Commenting on Rodnyansky's acquisition, A Company topper Alexander van Duermen said, "Our company gains not only a trusted partner, talented producer and businessman, but also a man whose vast experience in the film industry, creative expertise and established relations with major film companies around the world will help us take A Company to the next level."

Added Rodnyansky: "The acquisition of A Company is a major step for AR Films. Our strategic goal is for the company to become one of the strongest international players, fully integrated into the American and European production and distribution pipelines.

"This deal will have a positive synergistic effect on both parties. We will greatly increase our production capabilities, expand our library and will use our joined resources to further develop the distribution network in Central and Eastern Europe."

With the influx of new capital, A Company has an ambitious program for further growth, including possible investments in new operations and acquiring stakes in leading distribution companies in Russia, Poland and the Czech Republic.

It's also looking to expand its presence in the area of digital distribution through its Hungarian VOD platform Filmklik, jointly owned with Port.hu.

The group is also eager to beef up its production activities. A Company Film Production is currently in pre-production on Pepe Danquart's latest film, "Run, Boy, Run," a co-production with the Berlin-based shingle Bittersuess Pictures.

Following the acquisition, which includes shares from some of A Company's founding and current shareholders, Rodnyansky becomes the company's chairman as well as chairman of the supervisory board with Alexander Freys, until now supervisory board chair, assuming the position of deputy.

Van Duermen has also increased his share in the company to more than 25%.

Tomasz Karczewski, managing director and majority owner of Kino Swiat, the largest independent film distribution company in Poland, and U.S. specialized fund Expansion Media Partners/Aramid remain A Company shareholders.

Russian film and TV producer and media entrepreneur, Rodnyansky founded leading Ukrainian broadcaster 1Plus1.

From 2002 to 2008 Rodnyansky also served as CEO of Russian company CTC Media, transforming the group into one of the countries biggest independent publicly traded media congloms.

In 2009, Rodnyansky established AR Films, which now controls Non-Stop Production, one of the biggest Russian production companies, as well as Russian indie distrib Cinema Without Borders,

and also runs the annual Russian open film festival Kinotavr.

Most recently, Rodnyansky produced Alexander Mindadze's "Innocent Saturday," about the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Founded by van Duermen in 2002, A Company is active in film licensing, distribution and production through wholly owned subsidiaries and partner companies that make up a distribution network across more than 20 countries in the region.

Among its subsidiaries are Berlin-based Eastern European Acquisition Pool, Budapest Film in Hungary and Gala Media in Russia.

With a library of more than 350 films, A Company also distributes New Regency and Morgan Creek titles throughout the CIS region.

A Company recently achieved a milestone with its most recent release, "The King's Speech," which grossed more than \$10 million in cinemas alone.

Contact Ed Meza at [staff@variety.com](mailto:staff@variety.com)

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