

## Streaming giant Netflix shines spotlight on Valais and the Valais Film Commission!

Sion, 23 February 2024. **The Valais Film Commission (VFC) has been the driving force behind the development of the audiovisual industry in Valais for almost three years now. Far more than a simple support scheme for film productions, the VFC passionately embodies the very essence of the seventh art, providing facilitation services for the filming of *Winter Palace*, the new Netflix production.**

### **A facilitation service.**

Lights. Camera. Action!

These words have been echoing around the canton for several weeks now with the arrival of the new Netflix series, co-produced by Point Prod SA and RTS. Since the end of January, the spotlights have been shining on Valais thanks to the streaming giant, and the Valais Film Commission has been fulfilling its role as facilitator. With this service and Netflix's reputation, Valais is set to attract an increasing number of international productions.

The Valais Film Commission's facilitation service covers several aspects, ranging from contacting local authorities and local people for permits to providing services, mediation, communication and even location scouting. All this work is carried out "behind the scenes", before and during shooting. Economic and cultural knowledge is essential to the success of these operations. Logistical support – mainly provided by Patric Zenklusen, VFC's head of operations, for the *Winter Palace* project – is vital to the smooth running of a film shoot. "Although funding is important for productions, the facilitation service makes life a lot easier. We provide support to speed up processes or find solutions to the kinds of issues that arise when filming. It is a substantial aid and should be considered beyond the financial aspect," points out Tristan Albrecht, Valais Film Commissioner.

For the series *Winter Palace*, co-produced by Point Prod SA, RTS and Netflix, it was a monumental task. Sourcing props, costumes, sets and specialists, as well as contacting local authorities and organising coordination sessions have kept the Valais Film Commission busy for several months. "When productions are shot in Valais, it boosts the region's image," explains Patric Zenklusen. Though he also sees another benefit: "Thanks to the work involved in shooting productions, around 100 people live and work in the region for two months. That generates around 2,500 nights of accommodation."

### **Keeping the population of Valais informed.**

Productions shot in Valais draw attention to its exceptional natural assets, picturesque villages and historic heritage, as well as its quirky urban design. This helps to promote local tourism and stimulate the region's economy while developing its cultural offering and local expertise. Working closely with film crews is essential to the success of a production. Local authorities, companies and residents must work together to facilitate the shooting process by offering logistical, financial and human support. This collaboration strengthens links between the local community and the audiovisual industry, creating development and growth opportunities for all those involved. To ensure that the needs and benefits of shooting a production in the region are clearly understood, the Valais Film Commission has introduced information sessions for the local population. For *Winter Palace*, for example, the Valais Film Commission visited the Binntal region to raise awareness and answer questions. "Our aim is to bring together all those involved or affected by a production coming to our region. A strong collaboration between a region and a production is vital for the smooth running of any shoot. We will continue to expand this outreach initiative to ensure that all parties get the most out of their collaboration," adds Tristan Albrecht.

By informing the people of Valais about the importance of film shoots and by encouraging a close collaboration with production crews, the VFC can showcase Valais as a shooting location and promote the canton's culture, economy and image while maintaining healthy growth for the regions involved.



***Winter Palace***

*The year is 1899. Winters are harsh and life in the mountains is challenging due to the extreme weather conditions. However, at the end of the summer of that same year, hotelier André Morel takes the risk of opening a five-star palace for the entire winter season, marking the beginnings of luxury tourism in the Alps. A story that promises to be rich in twists and turns and sure to captivate its audience.*

*Written by Lindsay Shapero, the series is directed by Fribourg's Pierre Monnard and produced by RTS, Point Prod and Oble Studios.*

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