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Panov's *War Is Over* is first production out of Europe's Babylon

Martin Blaney in Locarno

Macedonian-born Mitko Panov's *The War Is Over* has become the first project to go into production after being developed at the Babylon programme promoting cultural diversity in Europe.

Speaking exclusively to ScreenDaily.com at this week's Locarno International Film Festival, Panov explained that the co-production between Switzerland's Kamera 300 and Macedonia's Pirej Film had initially been presented as a project at the Netherlands Production Platform in Utrecht in 2005, followed by the CineLink in Sarajevo in 2006 and Belgrade's B2B co-production market and the Babylon workshop in 2007.

Funding had been provided by Macedonia's Ministry of Culture, the Macedonian Film Fund, Switzerland's Federal Office of Culture (BAK), Zurich Film Foundation and the EU's MEDIA Programme for shooting in and around Skopje and at the Swiss Canton of Neuchatel this summer.

Post-production is now underway in Switzerland for delivery by the end of the year.

According to Panov, *The War Is Over* is the first Balkan film to be shot using the new RED HD camera and the first official Macedonian-Swiss co-production as well as being the first Macedonian state-funded film to be shot in the Albanian language.

Shot with a Macedonian, Kosovar and Albanian cast, "*The War is Over* is a fully fictionalised account of immigrant experience, concocted from a number of personal histories which I have observed, heard and dealt with over the past two decades," says Panov who won the Palme d'Or for best short film in Cannes for *With Raised Hands* in 1991.

Launched in 2006 with the Locarno International Film Festival as one of its foundation partners, Babylon's programme of screenwriting and production workshops has a number of other selected projects also now in preproduction.

They include Ayse Polat's *Luk's Happiness*, which has been awarded funding from FilmFörderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein and the German Federal Film Board (FFA) as a co-production between punktpunkt Filmproduktion and Intervista Digitalmedia; and Sülbiye Günar's *Burnout* which will be produced for broadcaster ZDF with backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and *Head-On's* Sibel Kekilli attached to star.