



**The company's Italian pay TV arm Sky Italia will invest heavily in two new television series, both with ties to Oscar winners.**

ROME – 21st Century Fox co-COO **James Murdoch** met with Italian Prime Minister **Matteo Renzi** Monday to outline a \$55 million (€40 million) plan to develop two new high-profile Italian TV series and increase the use of Rome's historic Cinecitta Studios.

The plan dovetails into Renzi's efforts to increase investment in Italy to spark faster economic growth and into plans at Fox's Italian pay TV unit Sky Italia to build on the success of the new series *Gomorra*.

Murdoch, whose various titles include that of president of Sky Italia, was accompanied by Sky Italia's managing director, **Andrea Zappia**, during Monday's meeting.

According to a statement from the company, Murdoch told Renzi that Italy's television industry has "big unexpressed potential." A statement from Renzi's office called the meeting "productive."

The series that Sky Italia will invest in include *Diabolik*, an adaptation of a identity changing Italian thief who robs from other criminals and confounds law enforcement officials. The 10-episode series will be made at Cinecitta Studios with sets designed by Oscar winner **Dante Feretti**. The production team has yet to announce a director for the series.

Meanwhile, *The Young Pope*, a series from Oscar-winning director **Paolo Sorrentino**, will tell the fictional tale of the first-ever Italian American pope. The series, which will also be shot in part at Cinecitta, will be produced by **John Lyons** and co-written by Sorrentino, **Umberto Contarello**, and **Stefano Rulli**, who last teamed up on this year's Oscar winner, *The Great Beauty (La grande bellezza)*.

Sky Italia invested heavily [2] in the first season of mob drama *Gomorra*, based on the **Roberto Saviano** novel and **Matteo Garrone's** Cannes *Grand Prix* winning film of the same name. The investment has paid off

In addition to the impacts for Sky-Italia and the larger Italian economy, the development is also good news for Cinecitta, Italy's famed 77-year-old film studios [3] that have been the site of classic films including **Federico Fellini's** *La Dolce Vita*, **William Wyler's** *Ben-Hur*, and *Romeo and Juliet* from **Franco Zeffirelli**, but which have suffered in recent years.

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