



Belgique/Belgium: Association des Scénaristes de l'Audiovisuel and Scenaristengilde vzw **Bulgaria:** Bulgarian Association of Film, TV and Radio Scriptwriters – BAFTRS **Danmark:** Danske Dramatikeres Forbund...
Deutschland: Verband Deutscher Drehbuchautoren e.V. **Ελλάδα:** Ένωση Σεναριογράφων Ελλάδος **España:** Federación de Asociaciones de Guionistas del Audio-visual (FAGA), includes: Asociación Galega de Guionistas; Autores Literarios de Medios Audiovisuales; Escritors Valencians de l'Audiovisual; Euskal Herriko Gidoigile Profesionalen Elkarte; Guionistes Associats de Catalunya **Finland:** Suomen Näytelmäkirjailijaliitto - Finlands Dramatikerförbund ry **France:** Union-Gilde des Scénaristes **Island:** Félag leikskálda og handritshöfundu **Ireland:** Irish Playwrights and Screenwriters Guild **Nederland:** Netwerk Scenarioschrijvers **Norge:** Norske Dramatikeres Forbund **Portugal:** Associação Portuguesa de Argumentistas e Dramaturgos **Sweden:** Sveriges Dramatikerförbund **Serbia & Montenegro:** Nezavisnost **Suisse:** Scénario **Turkey:** SEN-DER, The Scriptwriters Association of Turkey **United Kingdom:** Writers' Guild of Great Britain

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1. introduction

The FSE board met in Berlin and reviewed the progress that has taken place since the General Assembly in November. Several important policy decisions were taken, one of these was that the FSE Newsletter should become a two-monthly rather than a quarterly bulletin of information. The most decisions related to getting involved in the discussions on the review of the EU Copyright Directive. A busy spring is foreseen with major policy documents being prepared by the Commission relating to Content (film) Online; consultation on the Recommendation on the management of music rights and the review of state aid procedure for film in June 2007 all coincide with the review. The board also expressed interest on how FSE can even at this late stage influence the text of the Audio-visual Media Services Directive.

Important decisions were also taken regarding the internal communications within the FSE and to further develop the FSE's effectiveness in meeting its strategic objectives of promoting the rights of authors, enhancing the status of the screenwriter and improving the working environment and opportunities for screenwriters. This involved working on the LIRA Policy paper and getting the Screenwriters Manifesto translated and disseminated in as many languages and to as many audio-visual and media organisations and professional as possible.

2. The LIRA Policy Paper

The LIRA Policy paper is starting to take shape. This document when completed will be used by FSE to approach funders like the collecting societies with meaningful reasons as to why we should be working together, serving each others interests and, from an FSE point of view, why the collecting societies should consider supporting FSE financially. The paper should be completed in June and presented to LIRA and later to other societies.

The board has examined all the various issues that FSE needs to address in the short and in the long terms including: authorship and related rights, collective agreements and contracts, funding of writers and FSE, technological changes, festival and writing awards, and European copyright and audio-visual policies. The board aims to meet in London in April to further work on the paper.

The board also wants to take much greater advantage of any European funding opportunities. In May 2007, the Culture Programme of the European Commission will launch a fresh call for proposals and FSE aims to submit a proposal.

3. The Screenwriters Manifesto and FSE Communication Policy

Linked to the policy paper is how to use the Screenwriters Manifesto to best effect. So far the manifesto has got a lot of media coverage, especially in the United States of America. The irony is that in Europe the coverage and the impact is less. To rectify this situation the communication policy of the FSE has to improve. This is an issue that is

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being tackled in the policy paper, but to seize the opportunities presented by the manifesto the board took the decision to develop a comprehensive mailing list of media and audio-visual organisations that can be contacted and would be interested in supporting the aims and objectives of the manifesto. All guilds have been sent lists of contacts and have been encouraged to check and extend these mailing lists and send them back to FSE. In this way FSE and all its members will have a comprehensive Europe-wide communication policy with lists of media and audio-visual organisations. Regarding the manifesto itself, since the end of January, it has been translated into ten languages – German, French, English, Spanish, Italian, Norwegian, Icelandic, Dutch, Bulgarian and Greek. The FSE is planning to put all this information on its new re-furbished website, which is being developed thanks to the hard and dedicated work of the Irish Playwrights and Screenwriters Guild.

4. Copyright and the European Union

The European Commission is planning to review the Copyright Directive. The review will actually concern evaluating the entire corpus of European laws relating to authors' rights/copyright. According to the Copyright Unit of the Commission, at the end of March 2007 it will publish a report which evaluates the responses made to the Commission 2004 consultation on the Copyright. FSE plans to have meetings with the Commission after this report has been published. FSE foresees a very complicated and difficult review process. The Commission will hope that the report it will publish will be a good document to stimulate discussion. However, in the spring of 2007 debates on important policy areas that have an IPR dimension will also be discussed and will impact on the review. These policy areas include consultations on state funding of films, the development of content (film) online and the on the management of Music rights.

On the management of music rights, the European Parliament in March issued a powerful statement in the Katalin Levai Report demanding that the Commission scrap the recommendation that it issued in 2005. MEPs criticised the Commission's decision to put forward a non-binding recommendation and call instead for a framework directive to be proposed under the co-decision procedure. This would allow Parliament fully to participate to the legislative process. The MEPs see that a new Directive "...should guarantee the protection of EU cultural diversity and safeguard small artists and local repertoires." This very powerful parliamentary report issued so recently will have a huge impact on the forthcoming debates.

5. Latest on the AMS - Audio-visual Media Services Directive (formerly the TV without Frontiers Directive)

To find out how to influence a more favourable outcome regarding the final text of the AMS directive, FSE had a meeting with MEP Helga Trüpel, the vice-president of the Culture Committee of the European Parliament. She informed us that she is planning to get her group (the Greens) to re-submit some of their original amendments that were rejected in the voting in December 13, 2006. For example amendment 141 which calls for retaining the current stronger rules on advertising and which was voted against by one vote. She can only submit amendments that were submitted for the vote in December and that were voted down. Only these amendments can be re-submitted for discussion in the second reading. The second reading will take place at the earliest in May 2007, but more likely in the autumn.

She wants FSE to lobby the MEPs in the same way as we lobbied back in December 13, 2006. Each guild identifying the relevant amendment and writing to the MEPS on how to vote.

So be prepared for another round of lobbying !

Conclusion

The difficult and long saga of the Audio-visual Media Services Directive is coming to an end. The more complex and perhaps even more dangerous saga on the review of the copyright directive will begin and will begin within framework of discussions the funding of film and on developing content online. FSE will be engaged in all the debates and discussions. The drafting of the Policy paper and the Screenwriters manifesto have come at an opportune moment and strength the ability of FSE to influence events.

FSE board and manager
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