



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. **Ελλάς:** 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

FSE newsletter no.15

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1. American Screenwriters strike

On the Thursday of 1 November 2007, 3000 screenwriters packed into the Los Angeles Convention Centre to listen to the negotiating committee representing the Writers' Guild of America East (WGAE) and the Writers' Guild of America West (WGAW) tell them that the US Film studios and TV networks, represented by the Association of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) had rejected all talk of further negotiations leaving the two unions no other option but to recommend to their members to strike. The TV networks and film studios refused to consider any revision on the existing DVD deal, which pays the writer the peanuts sum of 4 cents on each \$15 DVD, and would extend the same minimal terms to internet downloads and mobile phone viewing.

Members of the two guilds have already authorised the Guilds to strike if they cannot succeed to negotiate a new agreement with the producers.

FSE is in complete support of the American writers and will do what ever it can to assist them to win the strike. The FSE calls on all its members to send messages of support to the American guilds and to ensure that none of their members undermines the strike by sending in scripts or carrying out any kind of strikebreaking activity.

For more information on the strike check the websites of the WGAW and WGAE:

<http://www.wgaeast.org/>
<http://www.wga.org/>

2. Next FSE General Assembly and new members

At the next General Assembly the members will hopefully welcome two new recently formed guilds that are seriously considering joining the FSE. The new guilds are:

Drehbuchverband Austria
Att. Fritz Ludl
Stiftgasse 9
A-1070 Wien
office@drehbuchverband.at
www.drehbuchverband.at

Fédération des Scénaristes d'Europe • Federation of Scriptwriters in Europe
c/o UNI-Europa Box 9 • 31 rue de l'Hôpital • B-1000 Bruxelles • Belgique
tel +32.2.234 5654 • fax +32.2.235 0861
www.scenaristes.org • pyrrhus.mercouris@chello.be

Christina Kallas (President), Sveinbjörn Baldvinsson (Vice President), Bernard Besserglik (Treasurer), David Kavanagh, Willemiek Seligmann Pyrrhus Mercouris (Manager)

Tel: + 43 699 111 66 844

Hungarian Screenwriters Guild

Att. Gabor Krigler

www.fadein.eu

Tel: + 36-30-3969-486

3. FSE policy paper

In August the FSE board focused all its attention on the policy paper which is intended to act as an agenda and work plan to begin to campaign for the goals established in the Screenwriters Manifesto . This has been a one-year effort to produce a detailed policy paper that will outline the strategies of the FSE for the coming years as well as clearly indicating the goals and objectives of the organisations and specific actions as to how these goals and objectives are to be met. The paper identifies up to twenty-one specific inter-related actions indicated within four broad headings.

- Creative rights: this deals with issues like authorship, moral rights, possessory credits and involvement in production process.
- Promotion of the status of the screenwriters: which includes issues like promoting the screenwriters manifesto, festivals and screenings to acknowledge writing, promoting the position of the screenwriters in the production process, writers awards, payment, collective negotiation, more funding for script development and finally direct funding to writers.
- Technology & Legislation evolution issues: which concerns private copying, collective management of copyright, review of the Copyright Directive 2001/29/EC, review of State aid, communication on Film Online, Audio-visual Media Services Directive 89/552/EC, Media Programme, Culture Programme, E-Content Plus Programme.
- Individual Guilds: which concerns recruitment drive and an information strategy (action 21).

The policy paper will be presented to the members for approval at the next General Assembly.

4. FSE developing alliances

Experience has shown that when acting collectively with like-minded organisations, results tend to be much more positive. This was the case with lobbying on the Audio-visual Media Services Directive and on protecting private copying. In the last three months FSE has combined with a number of organisations to lobby for the interest of screenwriters and creators in general on a number of issues. These include:

- 1) Creators' call for the inclusion of authors' and performers' rights in the European cultural agenda
- 2) Draft Report on Cultural industries in the context of the Lisbon strategy
- 3) Communication of the European Commission on a European agenda for culture in a globalising world

FSE combined with organisations representing collecting societies, directors (FERA), actors (FIA), technicians unions (UNI-MEI), journalists (EFJ), writers of books (EWC), musicians (FIM), and visual artists (EVA). New joint responses are being planned for the forthcoming European Commission on the downloading of Online Content.

5. FSE and the European Union

Two developments are taking place that are of primary concern: "Flexicurity" and "state aid to filmmaking". Other issues like the review of the Copyright Directive seem to have disappeared. Next year it is expected that the downloading of online content will also be a major issue.

- **European Employment law - Flexicurity**

A new concept has been invented: "flexicurity".

Flexicurity is combining 'flexibility' of the workforce by giving it 'security'. The Social Affairs services of the European Commission says that it wants to free up the labour market but at the same time ensure that workers retain their security and social rights. The issues at stake are vast and a great deal of concern has been raised by

unions representing workers on fixed contracts. However, for the FSE, the debates on flexicurity have allowed us to argue for the right of freelancers to organise into guilds and to negotiate collective agreements. It seems that in the European Parliament where the Commission's proposals are being debated the FSE's wishes seem to be on-board. There is certainly room for optimism that the wishes of the FSE will come true and in the near future we may get European labour law that guarantees freelancers the right to form guilds and to collectively bargain.

- **State aid to filmmaking**

As indicated in the previous newsletter, the Competition services of the European Commission are questioning the funding schemes operated by European governments. It is doing this by commissioning a study to investigate these funding schemes and in particular examining if they infringe competition rules. At a public hearing held in July 2007 in Brussels the researchers presented their initial findings which show that there appears to be no breach of competition. The final report will be published in February 2008. In spite of these favourable initial findings, the entire audio-visual sector which wants to keep the state aids is very suspicious of the intentions of the Competition services which seem to be trying to find some-way to outlaw these schemes.

6. FSE and the member guilds

Member guilds have been much more active in keeping the FSE office informed of events taking place in their countries. From our Swedish member, Sveriges Dramatikerförbund, we have learnt that some Nordic Film Directors signed quite a provocative declaration which text implies that the film director is the sole author of a film. It seems that they are willing to amend this text, however after the Nordic Dramatists' Union, an umbrella organization of the Nordic Guilds, voiced its concerns, pointing to the fact that indeed, by law in the Nordic countries, writers and composers are considered authors of an audio visual work, as well as directors. From our members in Bulgaria, Catalonia and the Basque we are kept informed about the events that they are planning including efforts to better publicise the Screenwriters Manifesto.

Conclusion

The last 12 months have been quite 'good'. Meaning that FSE has stabilised financially, we are expanding as an organisation and we are increasingly more effecting in influencing events in Brussels. This can be measured by the impact that we are having in helping to determine laws and regulations on authors rights and on the audio-visual sector. The big issues for 2008 will relate specifically to Flexicurity, state aid to filmmaking and to the downloading of content online.

FSE Board and manager
(8 November 2007)