

# SUNKLO - FINNISH PLAYWRIGHTS AND SCREENWRITERS GUILD



*Finnish Playwrights and Screenwriters Guild report  
to the 2017 Annual General Assembly of the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe*

## **About**

Originally founded by a group of writers, the Finnish Playwrights and Screenwriters Guild (SUNKLO) has been in active operation since 1921. Today the Guild comprises some 480 members who work as professional scriptwriters for stage, film, television, radio and new media.

SUNKLO protects the professional, copyright and financial interests of its individual members. In addition to negotiating and issuing contracts, SUNKLO develops codes of practice in co-operation with theatres, television channels and producers. It also works closely with various artistic, copyright and public affairs organisations in order to further the aims of professional writers.

SUNKLO maintains a library of plays by Finnish authors. It disseminates plays and handles performance contracts directly and in partnership with other players in the field.

Over the years, and alongside the evolution of new forms of media, the main purpose of SUNKLO has remained largely unchanged: its goal is still to serve the needs of Finnish authors and to promote Finnish drama.

SUNKLO's subdivision, Screenwriters Guild is a community of ca. 200 screenwriters writing for audiovisual field. Screenwriters Guild is funded by SUNKLO and works in close co-operation with it. Screenwriters Guild organises seminars, workshops and discussion panels about writing for film and TV.

## **News**

### **Film Promotion Act**

The Film Promotion Act has been reformed in 2017 and the new law comes into force in the beginning of 2018. However, there will be no major changes to the Act. The Ministry of Education continues to allocate funds to the Finnish Film Foundation in support of the production and distribution of films or other audiovisual programmes, as well as for other promotion of film culture. Therefore, the main part of the film funding will continue to come from the Ministry's budget.

The need to change the law has originated from the disqualification issues caused by the organisational form of the Foundation. Fortunately, after a long struggle, the script grants were retained unaltered and they continue to be endowed by the Finnish Film Foundation.

### **Production Incentive Finland**

In addition to the transfers granted by the Finnish Film Foundation, Production Incentive Finland for audiovisual productions started in the beginning of 2017. The purpose of the system is to promote the placement of foreign and domestic audiovisual productions in Finland and to serve as a tool for the development of business activities, internationalisation, and audiovisual culture. Production incentive is 25 % cash rebate for production costs in Finland, and the yearly total sum to be funded is 10 ME. Incentive will be coordinated by [Tekes](#) – the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation.

### **Negotiations with Yle (Yleisradio, Finnish Broadcasting Company)**

During the year 2017, a service negotiated previous year was launched, where Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle's long-standing drama material was released on [Yle's internet service](#) for a considerable amount of compensation.

The previous fundamental agreement between SUNKLO and the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle was more than fifteen years old. SUNKLO established new arrangements for how writers are compensated for their works when television plays and other scripts are put forth in YLE Archives and on the Internet. So far YLE has only had the rights to show extracts of written dramas taken from the archives. From this point forward the right to broadcast drama will cover whole series as well as television dramas in their original lengths. The previous collective remuneration will be replaced with individual compensation for the rights.

Sadly, negotiations on the scriptwriters' contract have not progressed as desired in the course of the year. The new agreement stipulates the rights and remunerations required by renewed working and broadcasting practices. As the whole concept of writing for television has changed, the old contract needs to be revised, as it does not recognize all of the stages in writing long running television serials. Alongside with the new agreement, the compensation for the rights will be negotiated to a more substantial level.

### **Negotiations with producers**

There has been some progress in the negotiations with film production companies over the course of the year. After intense negotiations, a consensus is being reached between right holder's organisations and the association representing the interests of Finnish film producers ([TUOTOS](#)). The unanimity concerns secondary rights in retransmissions of tv-series and film.

Next, the negotiations will proceed to the compensation for the transfer of VOD rights. This agreement has even not yet been preliminary negotiated, since it was first necessary to have an Network Access Storage contract settled.

Negotiations with producers to reach a convention for screenwriters are still pending. The companies prefer to bargain with individual screenwriters and evade all attempts to have a basic contract covering most aspects of film rights. In most cases, the sell-out of all rights (or the acquisition of all rights) is proposed and subsequently denied by the writers.

## Gender Equality in Film Production

The Center for Cultural Policy Research ([Cupore](#)) conducted a research project looking into gender equality in Finnish film production. First a statistical analysis was made on how financing for film production is distributed between the genders in Finland. The analysis included public support for film production (from the Finnish Film Foundation and the Arts Promotion Centre Finland), support granted by the Promotion Centre for Audiovisual Culture AVEK and film purchases of the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE.

In the research, addition to the statistical analysis, interviews were conducted to assess the mechanisms behind financial negotiations for film production. The number of female feature film directors is still small in Finland and it has been suggested that it is more difficult for female directors to obtain funding. Furthermore, the research project presented comparative information on how gender equality is promoted in other countries.

Also SUNKLO conducted a survey of it's own during 2017 regarding discrimination in the field of screenwriting. The survey covered - in addition to gender - financial, racial, and other inequality issues. The findings in the survey were that the discrimination experiences on the gender issues were considerable and parallel to the findings in Cupore research.

## SUNKLO - FINNISH PLAYWRIGHTS AND SCREENWRITERS GUILD

### *General Assembly delegates*

Sami Keski-Vähälä, *president, SUNKLO*, [samikeskivahala@gmail.com](mailto:samikeskivahala@gmail.com)

Kirsi Reinola, *member of board, Screenwriters Guild*, [kirsi.reinola@gmail.com](mailto:kirsi.reinola@gmail.com)

### *Executive Director*

Jukka Asikainen, [jukka.asikainen@sunklo.fi](mailto:jukka.asikainen@sunklo.fi)