

(To be approved by the General Assembly 2011 and signed by the Board)

Documents

The present minutes refer to the following documents that you have already received. Should you need one or several of these documents please contact Amélie Clément at info@scenaristes.org.

- Doc 1 — Agenda of the General Assembly of the FSE, Berlin, 13-14 Feb. 2010
- Doc 2 — Minutes of the General Assembly of the FSE, Brussels, 28 March 2009
- Doc 3 — FSE Activity Report 2009
- Doc 4 — FSE Financial Report 2009
- Doc 5 — Members' reports
- Doc 6 — FSE/IAWG Joint Actions
- Doc 7 — Working groups

Participants

Were present

Ahlgren Camilla	Sveriges Dramatikerförbund	Sweden	CA
Baldvinsson Sveinbjörn	Félag leikskálda og handritshöfunda	Iceland	SB
Bergholdt Knudsen Christina	Danske Dramatikere	Denmark	CBK
Blaauboer Wim	Netwerk Scenarioschrijvers	Netherlands	WB
Castadot Frédéric	ASA	Belgium	FC
Clément Amélie	FSE Brussels		AC
De Graeve Pieter	Scenaristengilde vzw	Belgium	PDG
Denis Laurent	ASA	Belgium	DL
Dowjat Jan	Koło Scenarzystów	Poland	JD
Giørtz Pål	Norske Dramatikeres Forbund	Norway	PG
Hess Thomas	SCENARIO	Switzerland	TH
Ildahl Eirik	Norske Dramatikeres Forbund	Norway	EI
Kakavas Alexander	Scriptwriters' guild of Greece	Greece	AK
Kallas Christina	VDD	Germany	CK
Kavanagh David	Irish Playwrights' and Screenwriters' Guild	Ireland	DK
Kujawska Oriana	Koło Scenarzystów	Poland	OK
Lindblom Susin	Sveriges Dramatikerförbund	Sweden	SL
Moscardo Rius Juanjo	FAGA	Spain	JMR
Neubacher Christian	Drehbuchverband Austria	Austria	CN
O'Reilly Audrey	Irish Playwrights' and Screenwriters' Guild	Ireland	AOR
Raventos Marta	FAGA	Spain	MR
Schweiger Ulrike	Drehbuchverband Austria	Austria	US
Semerdjiev Stanislav	BAFTRS	Bulgaria	SS
Talvio Raija	Finlands Dramatikerförbund ry	Finland	RaT
Taylor Robert	WGGB	UK	RoT
Uppenbrick Katharina	VDD	Germany	KU
Ventriglia Luigi	SACT	Italy	LV

Proxy

UGS, France > to WGGB

APAD, Portugal > to FAGA

Absent

ALMA, Spain / Fadein, Hungary /

SENDER, Turkey

1) Introduction

Christina Kallas, President of the FSE, welcomed the members' representatives who were for the first time present at a FSE meeting, then thanked the VDD - the German member of the FSE (its manager Katharina Uppenbrink helped the FSE organise the general assembly in Berlin).

Round-table introduction: FSE Board members and representatives.

2) The agenda > ref. to Doc 1

The Board proposed to move Point 8 of the agenda (discussion and approval of the activity and financial reports of the FSE) right after Point 6.

The General Assembly unanimously approved the agenda, taking into account the proposed change.

3 & 4) The Minutes of the General Assembly of the FSE, Brussels, 28 March 2009 > ref. to Doc 2

SS and RoT reported a remark coming from the UGS (France) on page 5 points 4) and 5) of the referred document: the UGS was not sure whether the votes reported were correctly calculated. During the last general assembly, there was a long voting procedure on proposed amendments to the statutes of the FSE and a mistake was noticed in the manager's notes relating to the votes cast for and against the proposal on length of term for members of the Board of FSE. The results of the votes recorded in the draft minutes were corrected to "16 votes against the proposal : 2 votes for the proposal".

SB reported a mistake on page 7 paragraph 6 / Election of the Board: CA was involved in the committee of 3 volunteers and not SB.

The General Assembly unanimously approved the minutes of the General Assembly of 28 March 2009, taking into account the proposed changes.

5) FSE Activity Report 2009 > ref. to Doc 3

CK summarized the activity report. SB updated the assembly on one common action of the FSE and the IAWG, initiated by Guy Hibbert: send a letter to the major film festivals around the world and publish an annual list of the festivals according to the way they treat screenwriters. The letter is ready; Amélie and Sarah are now listing the festivals and will work closely with the Boards of the FSE and the IAWG on this common action.

The General Assembly unanimously approved the activity report.

6) Financial report > ref. to Doc 4

Treasurer SS commented on the financial report. The FSE is a stable organisation, has no debts, but the budget is extremely small. It is urgent for the FSE to have full time staff and resources to be able to function properly. The WCOS was made possible thanks to the strong personal engagement of CK and the eventual support of the Greek Ministry of Tourism, but we need more funds, both to be able to make such unifying projects possible as well as to engage in our most important activity, which is lobbying for our interests. SS presented some other solutions discussed by the Board (script registration scheme, publishing activity,

mentoring programme), but all these solutions need money for implementation before they even generate incomes. The FSE must take radical steps in that direction.

RoT reported a question from Bernard Besserglik, UGS: the IAWG made a donation to the FSE in 2006. Has this money been used? SS reported that 10.000 euros were remaining at the end of Bernard Besserglik's mandate as a treasurer.

The General Assembly unanimously approved the financial report.

7) Reports from the members > ref. to Doc 5 (attached)

In order not to repeat the contents of the member guilds reports, only additional points discussed during the meeting are reported in these minutes. Please carefully read the reports for details.

On writers' income

A general comment: the budgets in the industry are going down everywhere. Screenwriters get less work and are paid less and less. See detailed figures in some of the members' reports.

The trend among film funds is to support directors who write the films they direct themselves. It is also not possible in most countries for screenwriters to apply for development funding without a producer on board.

Another issue: more and more screenwriters work for reality shows but seldom join unions in fear of losing their jobs. In UK the WGGB is hoping for a mandate to protect these authors. The FSE should tackle this issue.

On Internet and Net Neutrality

Every cultural product that goes on the internet becomes very cheap for the consumer. In Germany, public broadcasters are trying to renegotiate the whole structure of payment, asking authors to surrender their rights for free, due to the fact that TV has to utilize the internet and that broadcasters make no money from it. But what about the income coming from internet-advertisement?

Nobody seems to have a clue of how internet will develop in terms of rights, including the collecting societies. The Swedish guild wants public service broadcasters to be strong on the internet in order to compete with the commercial channels. This issue must be tackled at European level. How can the FSE tackle that issue in the midst of the confusion, except in general terms?

Net Neutrality was discussed during a conference call with Lowell Peterson, WGA East, NY. Net neutrality is a new issue in Europe, brought up during the European Parliament hearing of new commissioner Neelie Kroes (in charge of the Digital Agenda), by MEPs Marita Ulvskog (S&D, SE), Lena Ek (ALDE, SE) and Philippe Lamberts (Greens/EFA, BE). Read http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/008-67217-013-01-03-901-20100113IPR67216-13-01-2010-2010-false/default_en.htm

Net Neutrality means that bandwidth providers (gate keepers) should not privilege some content providers even if they pay more, otherwise the biggest companies will have preferential access to the net. The principle of net neutrality is to prevent monopolies. On the other side, big companies argue that net neutrality goes against the principles of free market and prevent fighting piracy.

This is a very important point for us creators because internet is a huge opportunity to communicate directly with our audiences. Lots of productions are posted or streamed on the net, and some productions are produced exclusively for the net. This development is particularly strong in the US, where the issue of net neutrality has been discussed, though it is completely new to Europe.

The issue is also related to freedom of speech and human rights versus commercial profits.

The WGA is involved in defending net neutrality in the US, but it should be an international approach. The FSE and the IAWG should try to collaborate on that.

On Rights and credits

Some guilds give legal advice to their members and sometimes advise them to go to court and aid them in the legal process. It was proposed that the FSE should publish relevant court decisions on its website.

FSE should address a letter to all film schools, universities and study departments to draw the attention of students and teachers to the writers. An example: who knows the name of the writer who wrote the script of *E.T.*?

8) Plan for the coming year

The participants of the General Assembly discussed the following matters:

A/ Securing the financial resources of the FSE

The main concern of the FSE is how to secure basic funds (staff, lobbying, office). The FSE cannot rely only on membership fees but should seek solutions like European funds and project-based funding. SS reminded the assembly of 3 ideas that could generate some profit for the FSE and which have been discussed by the board: Script registration service, publishing of conference material and a mentoring scheme.

Script registration scheme

EI asked if anybody had some info on the progress of the "scriptbase.eu" and whether the FSE should contribute to it? <http://www.scriptbase.eu/>

DK reported on discussions with the IAWG. The IAWG registers 10.000 scripts a year, one thousand two hundred coming from Europe and from members of the FSE. The IAWG has offered the FSE to deal with the European scripts received on its registration scheme. If the number of European scripts could be doubled this might generate about 30.000 euros gross per year. Beforehand the FSE must invest at least 6.000 euros to create the registration scheme on internet and to update it. Such systems require big administration. The FSE cannot launch this scheme if it does not have the administrative support to run it.

In the meantime Amélie Clément has basic knowledge to improve and update the current website. Let's also mention Maura McHugh's wonderful commitment to the blog of the conference.

It was suggested that we should examine whether to host advertisements on the website.

Publishing activity

The FSE plans to publish the minutes of the two conferences in the form of books and sell them to make some benefit. The revised text and layout of the minutes of the Conference of Thessaloniki in 2006 is almost ready. The records of the conference of Athens in 2009 are being transcribed. SS found a cheap way to have them printed in Bulgaria. The books could be for sale through internet and in bookshops, though there is still a need to calculate the potential profit.

We can also consider publishing the leaflets written by the FSE in the form of booklets.

Wim Blaawboer himself wrote a book addressed to screenwriters who are new to the job. He proposes to translate it into English (he might find some money to pay for the translation). Each guild could add its chapter and adapt it to its national audience.

Distribution (film schools, bookshops, collecting societies...): it is a lot of work, FSE cannot handle the task for the moment. Will guilds help distribute the books in their own countries? Will their audience buy books written in English?

Print on demand would be a more reasonable solution. The Swedish guild has had good experience with print on demand: they distribute 3.000 books a year. But the FSE should not overestimate the potential financial profit.

Mentoring Scheme

In order to enhance the activities of the FSE, the Board has planned to organise a European Screenwriters Mentor Programme, in which important/experienced writers, cross-culturally, will help emerging writers. It could be a yearly programme, presented as a cultural/teaching project to EU funding. Some companies might also be willing to invest some money in it.

The Norwegian guild has just started a mentoring programme and is ready to share its experience with the FSE, as will the Spanish and Austrian guilds, who also have experience in this area.

EU funds

The FSE applied to the Cultural funding programme of the European Commission two years ago. The FSE was considered "eligible" by the Commission, but its activities were later deemed to be too trade union-orientated. The FSE will apply again in 2010 as a network with a cultural profile.

Collecting societies and national funds

LIRA (Collecting society / Netherlands) once funded the FSE project of creating a Policy Paper. VG-Wort in Germany contributed to the funding of the WCOS. The FSE can probably in the future get funding for specific projects (several projects are ready to be launched but are on hold due to lack of money and sufficient staff to coordinate them).

Other ideas for funding:

- Identify top European screenwriters who can contribute with a substantial grant.
- Work with an expert in funding. The FSE has already made quite a serious effort to make this happen, without success.

B/ Lobbying

European institutions

The activities of the European Commission were quiet in 2009. The new Commission has a complex and interesting agenda and it is time for the FSE to reinforce its lobbying activities, especially in Brussels, for example on Copyright issues.

The Board is actively seeking solutions to employ a lobbyist and has solicited the support of the IAWG.

FAGA proposed to help the FSE contact Ignasi Guardans, Director of the Spanish Film Institute (ICAA) and ex-MEP very active in the fields of culture, audiovisual, internet, etc. (The FSE invited him as a speaker to the WCOS 09 – unfortunately he could not come).

Several members mentioned the importance of working together with other creators' groups, especially to face the complexity of the matters of interest to the FSE. The FSE is involved in the Creators' Group, an informal gathering of various groups of authors present in Brussels. Together, they co-sign letters addressed to EU representatives (common answer to the "2009 EU Consultation on Creative Content in a European Digital Single Market", Joint statement on collective representation of freelancers in Europe in February 2010).

Play the cultural card!

It appeared through the members' reports that every member guild has two sides of activities: cultural and legal/unionist. Drehbuch Verband Austria organises a range of cultural actions; ASA Belgium is investing more money in script analyses and workshops, the Norwegian guild has tackled the issue of gender in screenwriting, most of the guilds organise workshops and screenwriting awards. Compiling the cultural initiatives and projects of the members would help the FSE develop arguments to enlighten its cultural dimension in its applications to EU funding. It is also, according to DL, a potential tremendous lobbying access, as all guilds have political contacts through culture.

"Who Wrote it" Campaign

See above 5) FSE Activity Report 2009.

Script development

Denis Laurent, ASA Belgium, insisted on the need to improve the quality of the scripts in Europe to compete with US product - where scripts are usually of high quality - invading the market. Europe in general does not invest enough in script development. FSE should fight for that. DL proposed that the FSE write a letter to the ministries of culture in Europe (relayed by the national guilds), to the media programmes, etc. referring to the arguments contained in the Policy Paper and in the State Aid Leaflet. DK mentioned the fact that in some countries, on the contrary, writers are happy with their development programmes (ex. Ireland). One aspect of these programmes can be considered as negative in one country, and positive in another one.

WGGB published a good practice guide on writing for film :

http://www.writersguild.org.uk/userimages/File/Guidelines/WG_film_Oct09_LR.pdf.

Several guilds asked the permission to translate it and adapt it to the national context (Poland, Italy, Germany).

It is also necessary to have better experts in the selection committees of the development programmes.

On a more general note, it is very important that writers are on the boards of bodies like film institutes and film funds, in order to affect policies and make those more advantageous to writers.

C/ Dealing with Collecting Societies

Though creators were sometimes opposed in the past (division between screenwriters/directors, musicians/interpreters), the tension is now more visible between creators and collecting societies. Collecting societies now have a European network (SAA, Cécile Despringre, <http://www.saa-authors.eu/>). What is the future of national collecting societies when the European Commission is interested in creating a European market and therefore a European copyright?

Facing Collecting Societies

The authors must take control of the collecting societies because what the collecting societies deal with are the authors' rights. They have the money and the executive power, however there's a huge gap between authors and agencies. And creators' groups like the FSE should be funded by the collecting societies. The national collecting societies are for the moment in a very difficult position according to EU law. The FSE should take advantage of this situation. The FSE should lobby in order to eliminate this conflict by law: collecting societies are the executive power, they should depend on the authors' authority.

In Italy, in order to negotiate the new contracts in their own terms, the collecting societies refused to include representatives of the authors in their boards. In Nordic countries, creators' organisations have a

very close relationship with collecting societies but they fear that if the collecting societies join the European network, they will become more reluctant to cooperate. In Spain, some 10 years ago, ALMA tried to control the collecting societies, without great success, so it decided to create DAMA, another collecting society of only authors - no musician nor music editors. In Poland this conflict between authors and collecting societies seems absurd; the Polish association of screenwriters is funded by the Polish collecting society. The Flemish Screenwriters Guild is trying to keep a good relationship with the two Belgian collecting societies, mainly to cooperate on legal topics, though at the same time it defends the rights of screenwriters within Sabam, one of the two collecting societies (one member of the Flemish Screenwriters Guild now sits on one of Sabam's supervisory boards).

A legal decision made by music collecting societies implies that any European citizen should be able to join any national collecting society. A Swedish writer should have the legal right to join a Spanish collecting society. But instead of making the situation more simple, it has become more complex.

Shall the FSE create a collecting society?

Let's start by gaining better knowledge of our collecting societies and the relationship between authors and agencies in the European countries (it could be a questionnaire of 10 questions). The review of the answers might help the FSE draw guidelines and advise the collecting societies on best practices and new behaviours. Shall the FSE consider working with Cécile Despringre, SAA?

Towards a European Collecting Society?

DL said that, as an author, he is in favour of a European collecting society. It would be more useful to negotiate with European broadcasters. On the other hand, said PDG, there are two collecting societies in Belgium, which is good in order to put them in competition. The Swedish guild is not totally in favour: collecting societies have their own roles in their countries and national cultural policies. How will a European collecting society work in terms of national policies?

It seems that the European Commission is tempted to harmonize the sector of authors' rights mainly because of its frustration with the complexity of the sector.

D/ Developing projects

Writing / Publishing Leaflets

The FSE has started to write leaflets on various issues. The Leaflet on Effective State Aid for Screenwriting and Development is available on the website of the FSE. SB and DK have worked on a questionnaire to prepare the upcoming leaflet on remuneration. A few members will be asked to proofread it. Collecting societies might be open to finance the publication of leaflets.

Organising the next World Conference of Screenwriters

The Board received lots of positive feedback. There was an immediate response for the organisation of the 2nd conference from Finland but the funding did not work out. The Nordic Affiliation of Writers Guilds is now looking for possibilities to organize a mid-Summer night event and host the second World conference.

JD and OK presented Scriptforum, an annual event that the Polish guild organizes every July in Warsaw. This event could transform itself into a European screenwriters congress/festival (though not a world-wide one) with a European award (films of the laureates of the national awards to be screened, laureate scripts to be published) and an AGM of the FSE. The Polish Filmmakers Association is interested in co-funding the event and help apply for EU funding. SB suggested that Poland sends a proposal of the event to the Board of the FSE.

LD suggested that the FSE creates an event such as a screenwriting festival with awards, where the FSE would invite producers, directors, etc. CK commented that most of these people cannot really add more festivals to their agendas. AOR wondered whether a European award is necessary since the Screenwriters' Festival in Cheltenham already exists and is a very well attended event, though its scope is rather UK and US markets oriented. In any case, it seems

necessary to multiply scriptwriters awards in Europe, given by scriptwriters. An award is also an opportunity to receive scripts, make surveys and publish them.

CK referred to the European Writers Congress (<http://www.europeanwriters.eu/>), which got funding from the EU (budget: 160.000 euros) to organise a yearly event, combining an AGM and an award. The FSE should take example of it.

Cooperating with the IAWG > ref. Doc 6

The two organisations have started to collaborate quite closely. An example is the letter to film festivals already mentioned. Besides, the first joint communiqué will very soon be sent to the members of both organizations.

The annual meeting of the IAWG will be held in Dublin in September 2010. The FSE will organise a Board meeting at the same time and a joint meeting with the IAWG will be held.

The IAWG already has a glossary of basic terms (on treatment, synopsis, credits, etc.) so this part of the proposed joint action (from the WCOS) is reasonably achievable.

The FSE will ask the IAWG to start and lead the campaign on collective bargaining.

Both organizations will work together towards a global organization. A first step will be to have all the guilds in the world at the next world conference (FEDALA in Argentina, Japan, etc.)

The General Assembly unanimously approved the action plan of the FSE and the collaboration with the IAWG.

CONCLUSION: WORKING GROUPS

The FSE obviously needs financial resources for the infrastructure that then again will look for financial resources. In order to get out of this vicious circle and move on, CK proposed to split the tasks (ref. Policy Paper) into identified projects, handled by working groups composed of members. The working groups will also be in charge of finding money to implement these projects, with the support of the board where needed. This way some of the projects can proceed, while the board takes care of general policy and lobbying.

The following groups were formed during the General Assembly:

Collecting societies

- Spain, FAGA (ref. Marta Raventos)
- Poland (ref. Jan Dowjat)
- UK (ref. Robert Taylor)

Lobbyist

- UK (ref. Robert Taylor)
- Ireland (ref. David Kavanagh)

Book publishing

- Sweden (ref. Susin Lindbom) with the support of Amélie Clément

Leaflets

- Germany (ref. Katharina Uppenbrick, esp. proofreading questionnaire on remuneration)
- Ireland (ref. David Kavanagh)
- Netherlands (ref. Wim Blaauboer)
- Iceland (Sven Baldvinsson)

World Conference of Screenwriters

- Nordic Guild (Norway, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden)

Script registration Scheme (“false door”)

- Ireland (ref. David Kavanagh)

“Who wrote it” campaign

- Iceland (Sven Baldvinsson) with the support of Amélie Clément FSE and Sarah Dearing IAWG

Mentoring programme

- Bulgaria (ref. Stanislav Semerdjiev)
- Spain, Faga (ref. Marta Raventos and Juan Moscardo Ruis)
- Austria (ref. Christian Neubacher and Ulrike Schweiger)
- Norway (ref. Pål Giørtz)

