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Drehbuchverband Austria

DREHBUCH VERBAND AUSTRIA

The Drehbuchverband Austria was founded in 1989. The number of members of our association is steadily increasing, we currently have 65 members and 19 rookies. The Drehbuchverband is open to screenwriters who have written at least one produced full length feature script, whereas rookies need to have experience and/or training in the field only.

The Drehbuchverband Austria represents the interests of Austrian Screenwriters and is committed to improving the conditions of our members and (Austrian) screenwriters in general. Apart from sharing our expertise and know-how with our members, keeping our members (and non members) updated by regular newsletters, we also offer several other important services to our members, such as an online data-base with information on all of our members, legal advice including financial support, networking with fellow members, as well the use of our office as an information center for all sorts of interests of screen-writing.

Furthermore one of our main goals is to expand the cooperation internationally. We take the view that major changes and improved conditions for screen-writers can be better achieved on a European level in cooperation with other guilds, than by each individual country alone. By sharing everyone's know-how and setting common standards together we can succeed in increasing awareness of how valuable our work is and protecting European screenwriters from exploitation.

In 2008 and the beginning of 2009 our association focused on building up a relationship with television. On the one hand, Drehbuchforum Wien – our platform that serves screenwriters, organised an event called TV-motion, on the other hand we had personal talks with the ORF, Austria's public service broadcaster. TV-motion

was a week-end seminar exclusively dedicated to television writing. As speakers, we invited television players from the ORF, as well as representatives from both public and private German television stations. The program turned out to be a huge success.

Our personal talks with the ORF and our attempts to make the ORF change their exploitative conditions for writers, however, have unfortunately remained unsuccessful.

So apart from working out a guideline and checklist for contracts, as well as publishing a booklet, that features all of our members, in order to enhance the appreciation of our work, our goal for 2009 is to achieve better working conditions for writers. Writers need to be paid for what they write. In Austria, many writers get paid, only when the film is made. So actually, they function as co-producers, but aren't treated as such, nor are they given credit for it. Writers need to be paid properly for the risk they are sharing with the producer. Therefore, in cooperation with other European guilds, we would like to work out a model-scheme, for a fair writer-producer partnership, that could set a new European standard. Our goal is to establish a common minimum writer's fee as well as a minimum profit share according to the risk taken, and limit the number of re-writes in contracts. One very first step towards that goal would be to start with comparing working conditions and writer's (minimum/maximum) fees internationally. The Drehbuchverband intends to call attention to the fact, that this is a very important way to ensure improvement over the long term in each individual European country.