



Polish Filmmakers Association – Union of Polish Screenwriters

Polish Filmmakers Association is the largest audiovisual organization of film professionals in Poland. It exists since 1966 and has 1700 members, among them directors, screenwriters, cinematographers, sound engineers, film editors, animators, costume and set-designers, producers, production managers, critics, even stuntmen. Members of the Association are grouped into smaller entities according to their profession – Union of Polish Screenwriters is one of those entities.

The Association promotes Polish film in Poland and abroad, supports talented young filmmakers, produces first films. Since 1995 the Polish Filmmakers Association includes the Union of Audiovisual Authors and Producers - ZAPA, established as a collective copyrights and neighbouring rights management organization. As an organization of collective copyrights management it cooperates with multiple institutions around the world.

The Union of Polish Screenwriters was recently reestablished after years of practical non-existence and complete lack of activity.

Currently we have 56 members, but every month new members apply so by next year we could associate around 100 people. In the past year the Polish Screenwriter Forum was organized - it was open for all screenwriters - 200 writers attended. During the Forum we asked the screenwriters to state their postulates and we gathered more than 200 propositions for improvement of the profession's condition. The postulate most agreed upon was the need of an organization and hence the reinstatement of the Union. We are now aware of how much is to be done and how important and needed our union is. We continue this year with Script Forum. It's a 4 day long professional conference for screenwriters, full of meetings, workshops, new initiatives for screenwriters and masterclasses – all culminating in a forum open for every scriptwriter.

The Executive Board of the Union of Polish Screenwriters consist of four persons: President of the Union of Polish Screenwriters Joanna Kos-Krauze and 3 members of the Executive Board: Maciej Karpiński, Grzegorz Łoszewski and Oriana Kujawska.

We are working now on launching a website dedicated to screenwriters and screenwriting issues. The website would stimulate the market of projects and will be the platform of contacts between screenwriters themselves and also other film professionals such as producers or directors. This website is also meant to help screenwriters if they have any legal problems or doubts because we will hire a lawyer specialized in authorship rights protection who can help to explain general issues concerning signing contracts as well as provide support in particular cases. The website will also serve as a place to find new professional assignments or contracts and to be up to date with any suitable information concerning scriptwriting.

In 2005 the new film bill was voted by the Polish parliament and the Polish Film Institute was established according to this new law. It is set up similarly to the mechanisms of film industry support existing in many countries of Europe. The Institute's principal task is to provide the Polish film industry with the modern mechanism of support - from the development of projects, production, promotion, distribution and circulation of Polish and European films. It supports films from concept to screen, with particular emphasis on international coproductions. There are several modes of support, among them a special program for screenwriters who can individually apply for grants. After an application is selected a writer can get a grant of 6.500 euro for the completion of the full script of a feature film, usually during a yearlong period. The total funds allocated for 2009 for those grants is 330.000 euro. The Union of Polish Screenwriters tries to lobby the Polish Film Institute to recognize the place of a writer in the film production and to encourage financing of grants for young screenwriters. We try to influence the system of those grants by having a say on the choice of the experts on the selection committees in the Institute or by suggesting changes in the regulations of the support programs.

We would be very happy to be a member of the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe and we hope we can share our experiences. We would especially like to learn from the most established and influential guilds on how to implement high authors' rights protection standards and on the good functioning in terms of the organization as well.