

Presentation 2011: 'Flemish Screenwriters Guild, Belgium'



General info

The Flemish Screenwriters Guild (*'Vlaamse Scenaristengilde vzw'*) was founded in 2004, 7 years ago. At this moment, we have 139 members, which covers about 90 % of all Flemish speaking professional fiction Screenwriters in Belgium. (Members with a track record in screenwriting pay 100 € / year but Junior members pay 50 € / year.)

Our board of directors (11 persons) assembles once a month, and every individual member on the board has more or less his or her portfolio. The entire board consists of professional screenwriters with different backgrounds in film and/or t.v. and are all (unpaid) volunteers.

We have representatives to create and maintain a friendly dialogue in different organisations including 2 Collecting Societies (SABAM and SACD); the Flemish Film Fund, the coordinating Flemish Authors Society, our Belgian Film Festivals (Ghent, Brussels, Ostend and the Short Film Festival in Leuven) and of course the F.S.E.

We are very active in the field of author rights. It is in our own interest to keep a good relationship with both Collecting Societies. We do not only indicate the differences between them to our members and compare their rates, but also cooperate on legal topics (such as private copy, new media, pay-per-view,...).

We try to set up minimum rates and advise our members to take notice.

We arrange meetings with colleagues, and bring together screenwriters with producers and directors. We invite international guest speakers and organize Master Classes in cooperation with the Flemish Film Fund. We also organize public interviews with screenwriters of new Flemish feature films or television series. We put these as podcasts on our website.

Every year we award a Best Screenplay for a Flemish Film Award, voted for by our membership. This year the ceremony will take place on the 18th of March.

Our website www.scenaristengilde.be is kept up to date religiously and we distribute a newsletter to our members and to a ever growing database of industry professionals.

Some highlights of 2010

Film Story Competition at the European Film Festival, BXL.

For the second time the Brussels Film Festival and the Flemish Writers Guild have organized a FILM STORY COMPETITION. This year in cooperation with l'ASA (the Walloon Writers Guild).

The purpose of this competition is not only to promote excellent story ideas on Belgian level but to also encourage authors and assist them in the professional development of their scripts.

From the participants we expect an extensive synopsis of a feature film idea. 3 pages maximum, written in French or Dutch.

The competition received a total of 33 synopsises.

Selected by a jury of professional screenplay writers, this years 2 winners received a free-of-charge place on a Raindance course of their choice in London together with a refund of their expenses.

This years winners were:

- 'Breendonk' Nicolas Voet
- 'Malgré soi' Dominique Reding and Martin Campens

A new call for entry will be distributed spring 2011.

Agreement with Public Broadcaster VRT on distribution of Royalties

As of last year employees of the Flemish Public Broadcaster VRT are allowed to collect royalties for their contribution to an audiovisual work. This threatened to lead to excesses in which VRT collaborators, who were not scriptwriters, but editors, producers, researchers or journalists, were claiming author's rights usually held by scriptwriters.

In order to ensure a correct distribution of these rights, the Flemish Screenwriter's Guild negotiated an agreement with the VRT and various Belgian collecting agencies in which they defined who exactly is to be considered an author or co-author of an audiovisual work and, therefore, who is entitled to a share of the royalties.

This text now serves as a guide for scriptwriters in their contract negotiations with the VRT and any other broadcasting or film production company.

Extra info:

VAT in Europe/ Belgium

What follows is a summary of VAT practices in the Flemish Audiovisual Industry:

If a screenwriter does not give up any of his rights, the invoice will always specify a 21% VAT rate.

If a screenwriter decides to give up rights:

- he will enter a contract specifying said rights
- he will enter a contract of employment with the production company employing his services
- In said contract the 70/30 rule will be respected (70% of the fee will be paid in wages, 30% will be paid for giving up rights)
- Invoices will specify a 6% VAT rate and will include the phrase 'with renunciation of rights'
- Rights will be paid into a private account and date of payment will be different from date of payment on invoice
- At the end of each year a fiscal slip 281.45 will be received from the production company specifying the amount of rights paid (fiscal slips 281.10 and 281.50 must not be used as substitutes!). Said amount is taxed at a favourable tax rate.