

**Activity report 2010**

**1. REFORM OF THE EVALUATION SYSTEM WITHIN THE POLISH FILM INSTITUTE**

The reform of the Polish Film Institute (that co-finances practically all of the film production in Poland) continues. Actually it entered a crucial phase. The focus of the reform is the current and malfunctioning evaluation system. Needless to say – projects are evaluated based on written documents. The script as well other elements of the application are the hard work of screenwriters. No other film profession is hit harder by the incompetence of the evaluation process than screenwriters, who simultaneously themselves often have the best possible or at least genuine qualifications to evaluate screenplays. The PFI opened this reform up for open consultations with the filmmaking industry, community. Union of Polish Screenwriters is one of the voices during these open consultations: we prepared a letter with a list of our postulates. Our goals are to convince the PFI to draw as many of the experts in the new system from among competent screenwriters, to prioritize this professional group right under directors, but above any other potential pools of potential experts. In order to increase the presence and the importance of the screenwriters' position we proposed a list of names - screenwriters who should be present among the experts of the PFI.

Although the reform is focused on the evaluation and expert system its proposed for consultation initial shape revealed the 'goals and values' of the PFI. The PFI is tending to become almost entirely focused on production funding. The development process and funding not to mention the individual screenplay grants are marginalized. The logical proportion of the number of projects granted development funding being greater than the number of projects given production funding – this logical proportion is reversed or attempts are made to reverse it. The arguments are tough to battle – almost total and undeniable inefficiency of the former development funding schemes and of the individual screenplay grant schemes. Our Union is contesting this illogical approach and proportions applied towards the screenplay process. Another noticeable tendency of the PFI is: in order to raise the efficiency of these unpredictable writing processes and schemes the PFI is trying to let's say close its development schemes against newcomming young talent or at least to

channel debutant writers into separate scheme categories and special procedures. – PLEASE EQUIP US WITH ARGUMENTATION AND SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS FROM EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE AND CONTEXT.

2. PFI SHOULD SEPARATE SCREENPLAY DEVELOPMENT FROM PROJECT/PRODUCTION DEVELOPMENT (AKA PACKAGING) – TWO PARALLEL PROCESSES BUT NOT THE SAME SCHEME.

The specific solution we are bringing as our postulate to the reform of the evaluation system is the need to found a separate scheme for screenplay development solely. We are simultaneously pressuring the PFI so that a more significant part of the films' budgets will be allocated to the script development – PFI could try to impose such an industry standard and has the power to execute it. WE NEED INPUT FROM OUR EUROPEAN COLLEGUES ON HOW THE FUNDING BODIES IN THEIR COUNTRIES EFFICIENTLY STRUCTURE AND MONITOR THE SCREENPLAY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS. WE HAVE TO PROPOSE SOMETHING THAT WILL BE GENUINELY EFFICIENT IN ORDER TO SUCCEED AGAINST THE CONVICTION OF THE PFI THAT FORMER SCHEMES OF FUNDING WRITING DIDN'T BRING ANY RESULTS. THIS IS WHAT WE REALLY WANT TO DISCUSS AT THE FSE ASSEMBLY.

3. SCRIPT FORUM –PROFESSIONAL POLISH SCREENWRITERS' CONFERENCE

Our annual 5 days conference Script Forum took place in July. The 2010 edition was dedicated mainly to development, cross media writing and the process of project and script evaluation in preparation for the long planned reform. The main lecturing star was Linda Seger who gave two lectures and a private script consultation. David Kavanagh provided once again quintessential perspective of the FSE and of the Irish Guild. The pitch session and the script market organized for the first time with international elements were also a big success – they represent our attempts to open rather than close the market in the making that we have in Poland. Several writers found producers and are working now on the film realization. The script market and pitching forum are our effort to provide the industry with market-stimulating circulation of information and ideas. ScriptForum will most likely evolve towards this market and development forum formula rather than being a conference focused on professional education. We set the collaboration with the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Union of Audiovisual Authors and Producers (ZAPA)- THE MODEL ROYALTY COLLECTING AGENCY. We were very proud to have the collaboration of these

partners. We are working on the next, even better edition of Script Forum. We see potential in collaboration with our royalty collecting agency.

#### 4. SCRIPT FORUM 2009 LECTURES ON DVD

This free of charge publication helped raised script awareness in the industry and the awareness of the industry issued important for screenwriters. We consider this publication a big achievement.

#### 5. FROM GUILD TO AGENCY, FROM AGENCY TO GUILD WORK

We also are working on the first script agency in Poland related to the Script Forum and closely collaborating with the Polish Film Institute. We would like to learn about our colleagues experiences in that field and would be happy to share their ideas. Every suggestion is more than welcome. Should we become a proper, professional guild first or maybe we should start by launching an agency?

#### 6. THE FSE RENUMERATION QUESTIONNAIRE

By taking up the effort to complete the questionnaire in a sufficient way and especially by miserably failing to achieve this UPScreenwrites learned how horrible practices rule the remuneration of Polish writers and we realized how little are we aware of the conditions on our local market. These experiences and conclusions related to the questionnaire are a major impulse and tool for action. Possibly they will give the motivation to the foundation of the Unions script agency.

#### 7. LITERATURE AND SCREENPLAYS – STIMULATION OF ADAPATIONS

a. The new programme was launched by the Polish Audiovisual Producers Chamber of Commerce (KIPA) together with our Polish Filmmakers' Association and the National Book Institute. It was aimed to promote the marriage of the literature and film, to encourage directors and producers to realize adaptations, to work with writers on films which are based on the new Polish literature. Several Polish books written during last 10 years accompanied by a special questionnaire were sent to readers/reviewers (among them screenwriters from our Union) – recommended by our chair Joanna Kos Krauze. The filled questionnaires that not only

tells the action of the novels but also answers very technical filmmaking questions. These reviews are available on KIPA's website.

#### b. FILMMAKERS AND YOUNG LITERATURE- ROUND TABLE

The chair of UPScreenwriters Joanna Kos Krauze was one of the initiators and programmers of a weekend long meeting of filmmakers and young authors of novels and their publishers – October 2010. The event was so successful in striking creative collaborations that probably it will be repeated every year.

#### 8. OUR WEBSITE HAS POTENTIAL

Our website [www.scenarzysci.org.pl](http://www.scenarzysci.org.pl) is growing. We put there short audiovisual materials, such as our guests' statements edited from their lectures at Script Forum. We have blogs and news concerning scripts and screenwriters, still this website is managed by the volunteer editor. So in order to professionalize it we are planning the new version of the website with the help of the Polish Filmmakers Association, not only new layout but also new in terms of the content management. The site will be incorporated into the national site devoted to film – major vortal – operated by the Polish Filmmakers Association and PFI. We see this as a major opportunity to launch a script and screenwriter base online and initiate a trustworthy script registration system. We will be moderating and monitoring projects in development thanks to the site.

#### 9. YEAR LONG ACTIVITY

Union of Polish Screenwriters ought to be professionalized, more active throughout the year and not only during its flagship event – ScriptForum in Warsaw.

\*The Union of Polish Screenwriters is a part of The Polish Filmmakers' Association, which is the largest audiovisual organization of film professionals in Poland. It exists since 1966 and has 1786 members, among them directors, screenwriters, cinematographers, sound engineers, film editors, animators, costume and set-designers, producers, production managers, critics, even stuntmen. Screenwriters participate in and benefit from the lobbying activity of the Association. The Union of Polish Screenwriters – revived in 2008 - counts currently 68 members but by being a part of such a big organization we feel stronger than this number could suggest.

