

## **SCENARIO – Switzerland**

### **Report for the FSE Annual General Assembly, March 18-20 in Brussels**

Since January 2010, SCENARIO is now a group (Groupe d'intérêts/Interessengruppen) within ARF/FDS Switzerland, the directors' guild. We took this step in order to increase our political weight by joining with this more powerful organization. Two members of SCENARIO are part of the committee of the ARF/FDS. SCENARIO stays independent in its decision-making and continues its lobbying for screenwriters without the members of SCENARIO having to join ARF/FDS.

In 2010, SCENARIO had two priorities in its political work: to fight for more money for screenwriting from the funding institutions and to set guidelines for our contracts.

#### **More money for script development**

In 2011, the funding institutions are remodeling their help. So in 2010 we wrote a paper for the funding institutions, where we asked for:

- Massively augmenting the funds in script development (double what we have now)
- Reinforcing the funding for treatments (including documentary) to improve the quality and the number of projects and to give a chance for continuity.
- Encouraging producers to give at least 35% of the automatic funding to script development.
- Removing the rules concerning the 50% funding by the National Office of Culture since the other 50% is difficult to find anywhere else.
- Increasing the amount of the funding for script development when more than one author is involved.

We are backed in these demands by the director's guild and also two producer's associations (out of three).

#### **Guidelines to screenwriters' contract**

In 2010, SCENARIO had written a paper about better working conditions for scriptwriters. At the moment, this paper is being discussed with the various funding institutions. This spring, it will go to the producers' associations and in June, we will have a debate with the whole industry about these guidelines. These guidelines are:

- Since only a scriptwriter who can live from his work and concentrate on his writing can produce good scripts, and so better movies, we request: CHF 70'000 (Euros 53'000) for a long feature film. The fees shouldn't be less than 3% of the budget of the movie. We also set a fee for each step of the writing and rewriting (synopsis, treatment, script). We must add that in Switzerland scriptwriters are independent. They themselves have to pay the social charges and can't get any unemployment money.
- The payment of the fee has to be paid 50% at the order of the writing and 50% by delivery. We refuse payment on acceptance of the work.
- It happens more and more that the producer changes scriptwriter during the writing process of a feature film. Therefore, if per contract, the producer has the right to change authors, he has to pay an indemnity to the scriptwriter for the lost fees.
- For years scriptwriters have been asked to participate in the financial risks. As the scriptwriter, by contract, is giving to the producer the right of cinematographic adaptation, we want to be paid for every step of the writing and we refuse any amount to be paid only on the first day of shooting.
- Author's rights are inalienable. A producer can't secure author's rights by contract. If there is a problem these rights are negotiated between writers with the help of the rights collecting agencies.

- The writing of the shooting script is part of the director's mandate, so he or she can't have any author's rights.
- For prices and automatic funding, only authors that have a scriptwriting contract can be taken into account.
- In order to better the working conditions of the scriptwriter, his work has to be taken seriously, so a correct mention in the credits is very important. Only the scriptwriters that have a signed contract can be mentioned in the credits. The producer and the screenwriter must agree on the proper credit. In the beginning credits, we don't agree with the possessive credit "A film by". We want "Directed by and Written by".

### **Screenwriters and the press**

Finally, in the past, when Cine-bulletin (the magazine of the Swiss film industry) published information about the status of a production, the producer, the director, and the actors were all named, but not the screenwriter. So we wrote to the magazine and also to the producers to rectify this mistake. And since then, the name of the screenwriter of the project also appears in the publication. That is a good beginning. Now, like the Germans, we want to start contacting the press every time they write about one of our movies without mentioning the scriptwriters to point out the error of their ways.

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