



To : Federation of Screenwriters in Europe (FSE)

**ADMISSION OF
LA GUILDE FRANCAISE DES SCENARISTES
(FRENCH SCREENWRITERS GUILD)**

Dear colleagues, members of the FSE,

Please find herewith a variety of documents which we provide in support of the application of our guild, the *Guilde française des scénaristes*, to become a member of the FSE with all membership and voting rights.

We consider it vital that we form part of an international platform such as the FSE both to further the cause of screenwriters in actions at the European level and to join in valuable exchanges of information regarding the experiences of other guilds in interprofessional negotiations and other areas of activity. The *Guilde* wishes therefore to assume the role played by the *Union-Guilde des scénaristes (UGS)* prior to its formation in 2010.

Via the *Guilde*, French screenwriters are leading the way to the formation of an industry that will produce quality content, investing in projects that are both money-making and risk-taking, creating works fit for export and a credit to the skills of our programme-makers. The *Guild* intends to restore the screenwriter to his rightful place at the heart of the creative process, where his point of view and his artistic and industrial skills are taken fully into account. We would like to know more about the successes of other guilds in this area as we search for the key to success à la française.

The *Guilde* represents the screenwriting profession in all interprofessional negotiations in which writers' interests are involved (with producers, broadcasters and other institutions). Its role is also to create spaces in which writers can gather to share information.

To this end it provides a range of individual services that offset the inadequacies of an environment inimical to the creation of well thought-out works of quality (the lack of legal provisions, exploitative contractual

arrangements, delays in payment, etc., including a legal advice service, promotion of the writer's name when his or her work is broadcast, advice on training programmes, a members' yearbook in which writers can present their CVs, monthly members' dinners, accreditation for festivals, and so on.

The full scope of the Guilde's activities can be assessed from the annual report provided with this dossier. You will also find a detailed report on the overall situation in the field of film and television screenwriting as seen from the writer's point of view, and copies of the three agreements signed by the Guilde since its creation two years ago.

Here are a few information about us:

1/ The Guilde is currently the only professional trade union in France devoted to the defence of the artistic, contractual and financial interests of French screenwriters. It represents some 300 professional screenwriters (out of an estimated 500) active in cinema, television drama, animation, documentary and transmedia.

2/ Since it was created in 2010, the Guilde has signed or is on the verge of signing three important interprofessional agreements:

- December 2010: an **agreement with cinema producers** concerning transparency in the accounts for the exploitation of successful movies (theatre, video, VOD, etc); this agreement commits writers, agents, producers and the state (in the form of the CNC, the official regulatory body) to establishing a fair share of the profits by means of an audit procedure guaranteed by the CNC;
- October 2012: an **agreement on television drama** between the Guilde and the agents' guild designed to ensure - by means of a publishable memo - respect of five fundamental contractual clauses in individual negotiations;
- November 2012 (being finalised): under aegis of the Culture Ministry, an **agreement with the producers' unions** designed to formalise contractual practices, this being the first stage in the setting up of a French-style MBA; this agreement, which would provide greater security to writers on a number of points with regard to their working conditions and do much to increase our industrial capacity, is to be passed into law in the form of a decree and will thus apply to all screenwriters and producers without exception. A second round of negotiations will begin in January 2013 to deal with the creators of series, short formats and scripted reality.

3/ Membership of the Guilde is subject to professional criteria designed to ensure its representivity and legitimacy in its discussions with private or institutional interlocutors and maintain its image within the profession. These criteria are determined according to three categories:

- “traditional” screenwriters are required to have written at least 90 minutes (accumulated) of screen drama, either for television or cinema, or of documentary or animation;
- short film writers are required to have had two films selected by juries in first-category festivals;
- graduate students of film schools recognised by the *Guilde* (the *Conservatoire Européen* and *Fémis*) are granted provisional membership for three years, leading to full membership if during that time they have met the first category criteria.

The subscription fee for membership of the *Guilde* is set at 1% of the writer's net annual income, with a minimum of 200€ and an upper limit of 1 500€. Probationary members pay a reduced fee of 50€ for each of their three years of provisional membership.

4/ The *Guilde* is represented by a Council of 20 screenwriters elected by its members which meet once a month and in turn elects, from among the councillors, a Board comprising a President and a Treasurer. New council elections are held each year. The *Guilde* also employs an Executive director and an assistant general secretary.

The *Guilde's* representatives, democratically elected by its members, set out the broad lines of union policy. Major decisions are presented in advance to the general membership via the online mailing list for their advice and consent.

5/ The *Guilde* is a professional trade union as defined by the law of 1884 and is therefore a non profit-making institution. Its accounts are certified at the end of each year by an official auditor prior to being submitted for approval to the membership at the annual general meeting. The *Guilde's* actions are determined in accordance with its statutes and a set of operational regulations that cannot be amended except by agreement of its members at their annual general meeting.

The *Guilde* has a bank account that cannot be allowed to show a deficit. Its financial resources are obtained from subscriptions (one quarter) and an annual grant from the authors' collecting society, the *SACD* (three quarters).

6/ The *Guilde* is mandated to join any platform whose objectives overlap with its own if it considers that this will be beneficial to its members and in the interests of the screenwriting profession in France.

In consequence of the above, we formally request membership of the *FSE*.

Yours very sincerely,

Jean-André YERLES
Président de la Guilde française des scénaristes