

Dear colleagues,

Unfortunately, in this General Assembly of the FSE, one of its founding members, the Scriptwriters' Guild of Greece, is absent against its will. We believe you should be informed about the reasons why.

In Greece, the profession of the scriptwriter has mostly been connected with national TV production. In contrast to Greek cinematography (meager in terms of production, mainly government-funded and, to a great extent, a victim of a poorly assimilated model of the "auteur theory"), television has indeed offered scriptwriters the opportunity to work and reach wide audiences, until recently. The advent of private television since the late '80s had multiplied the need for TV series and shows leading to a boom in national production. Thus the majority of the members of our Guild had been scriptwriters who worked and made a living by writing for Greek television.

Over the last few years however, due to the well-known economic crisis, the conditions in TV production have changed rapidly. The sudden fall of TV advertising (about a 65% drop so far) has led private TV channels to a dramatic shrinkage of their programmes, sacrificing primarily the relatively "expensive" form of the TV series and telemovies (with "costly" scripts, actors, sets, rehearsals, etc). As a result, a variety of low budget talk shows, gameshows, reruns and foreign series (mostly turkish soaps and american series), all considered cheaper or less risky investments, have taken over. Public television on the other hand, although it's the only broadcaster with a surplus, didn't fund any new TV series last year, while things don't look any better this year either.

Under the present economic crisis in Greece, the profession of the scriptwriter is threatened to become extinct. Our fellow colleagues in the guild, jobless or underpaid, can't even afford to pay their membership fees (though we have lowered them to 36€ per year), there are hardly any new members signing up anymore, and the Ministry of Culture has cut back any economic support to the guilds. Television therefore remains essentially without any contemporary domestic fictional content, while film production, scruggly and usually poorly paid, is not sufficient to maintain our colleagues in the field.

We honestly hope and pursue that this crisis in our profession will be over soon and that national production of script-based content will come back to life. In the meanwhile, we would like to send our greetings to all the FSE fellow members and to wish that they continue their significant struggle for the protection of our rights and the reinforcement of our presence on a global scale.

Best regards,

Scriptwriters' Guild of Greece
Yannis Maroudas (representative)