

The activity of SACT during the last year focused on four main topics:

1. Under the name “TURNING POINT” writers began a fight against improper contract clauses. For the first time we decided to refuse any contract which included the so called “approval clause”. That clause was repeatedly used by networks and producers to extend, virtually without any limit, the work of screenwriters. Under that regimen the screenwriter was obliged to keep on writing until the network/producer was satisfied of the work and an approval was finally given. The same clause was often used as an excuse not to pay the writers because the approval was never given, meaning the work was never completed.
2. The second phase of the TURNING POINT is not yet done. A very long and complex work on the road of self-determination has been prepared in the last 10 months. In this second step screenwriters will decide to refuse any contract violating of 10 basic principles. Those principles extend from the conditions of work, to a timeline for payment. In particular is required that every contract must contain an explicit clause stating that if even only 1 payment is delayed every right goes back to the writer. In order to enforce this strong self determination act we agreed that the writer alone has not the power to confront directly the producer and force him to accept those 10 principles. Therefore we agreed that the screenwriter should be supported by a professional association, namely a new GUILD, with the power to defend his rights. In particular we agreed that:
  - This GUILD has to be present during the discussion and at the signature of the contract, in order to verify that the 10 principles requirements are met.
  - This GUILD requires a participation of at least 90% of active screenwriters.
  - This GUILD needs a clear deontological code that every member should follow

We deeply discussed the way to give the new guild the power to deal directly with producers and finally concluded that, given the very peculiar Italian situation, the solution lies in the use of rights. The writers will sell or licence or give in profit sharing (we are not yet sure which tool should be used here) some of their rights directly to the guild. If the producers wants those rights they will not speak to the writer but to the guild and the guild will release those rights only in front of a contract meeting the 10 points requirements.

3. The third front we are facing is a battle for the renewal of the “equo compenso” (proper compensation). The Italian law states that for every TV use of an audiovisual product the network has to pay a “proper compensation” to the authors (writer and director). This compensation is established by a 2 years contract. The last contract is long gone (it ended in 2008) and a new one was never signed. In this situation the payment were never fully completed and a large part of the current TV scenario (namely digital TV) is completely left without regulation (and payment).
4. The “created by“. Is a cultural battle. We believe that the screenwriter can also be a showrunner. In order to support this vision we promoted a series of encounters with screenwriters and showrunners from other countries.