

## Flemish Screenwriters Guild, Belgium 2013



### General info

The Flemish Screenwriters Guild ('Vlaamse Scenaristengilde vzw') was founded in 2003, 10 years ago. At this moment we have 135 paying members, which covers about 90 % of all Flemish speaking professional fiction Screenwriters in Belgium.

Members with a track record in screenwriting pay 100 € / year, Junior members pay 50 € / year.

Our board of directors (10 persons) meets once a month. The entire board consists of professional screenwriters with different backgrounds in film and/or t.v. and are all volunteers.

Last month we hired someone, who's going to manage our guild and be the spokesperson and central contact.

We have representatives to open up and maintain a friendly dialogue in different organisations including 2 Collecting Societies (SABAM and DeAuteurs/SACD); the Flemish Film Fund, the coordinating Flemish Authors Society, our Belgian Film Festivals (Ghent, Brussels, Ostend and the Short Film Festival in Leuven) and of course the F.S.E.

We are very active in the field of author rights. It is in our own interest to keep a good relationship with all of the Collecting Societies.

We set up meetings with colleagues, producers and directors. We invite international guest speakers and organize Master Classes in cooperation with the Flemish Film Fund. Our Writers Guild also organize public interviews with screenwriters of new Flemish feature films or television series. We always podcast these interviews and put them on our website.

Every year we present a Best Flemish Screenplay Award, voted for by our members.

Our website [www.scenaristengilde.be](http://www.scenaristengilde.be) is kept up to date religiously and on regular

basis we distribute a newsletter to our members and to an ever growing database of industry professionals.

### **Some highlights of 2012-2013**

This year, we're celebrating our 10th anniversary. And although we've accomplished a lot, there's much work that needs to be done. Only problem: we're overworked and understaffed. Luckily, we've set an example with our guild:

#### **Acteursgilde / unie der regisseurs**

The actors, as well as the directors, unionized. First attempt for the actors, and they already have 500 members. I lost count of the number of times the Directors tried to unionize, but now they seem to have taken of. Both came to us for advise.

Only problem with de Directors: their first action was to hire someone, and now they don't have the funding to keep her on.

We have worked together on some issues, and are on the same page, 95% of the time.

We decided that we needed someone on staff as well, if we wanted to continue our path.

#### **Hiring of someone**

Ruth Renders was hired beginning of october. She'll be our spokesperson and representative. And will run the Guild on a daily bases. We're able to pay her for a year.

#### **Looking for funding**

Some years ago, the head of het Flemish audiovisual fund was weary of funding professional organizations, but because of the work we did as a guild, he's slowly changed his mind and now is actively trying to work out a funding system. There are still some obstacles to be taken, but we're hopeful.

#### **Political support and advise**

We noticed that the producers had more lobbying power, and wanted to increase that of our own. And we where in luck: het creative industry is trending in Flanders, and on of our top politicians had taken interest in screenwriters (She's actually married to one). We contacted her for advise, and she stepped in for help. So now we get help and advise from members of her staff to professionalize and find different ways of funding our guild.

#### **Blocked higher taxation of Residuals**

End of 2012, government raised taxes on some financial products. And for some reason, the tax-break that was installed for remuneration was raised from 7,5 - 15% to 25%. Together with other guilds and Collecting societies, we mobilized the field and succeeded in reversing the decision.