

## Report from Norway to the General Assembly of the FSE 2013

Writers' Guild of Norway was founded in December 1938, and is an independent writers' organization whose purpose is to protect the artistic and financial interests of writers for film, television, radio and theatre. Our frame agreements with the producers are to be found also in English versions on our web site [www.dramatiker.no](http://www.dramatiker.no).

To be eligible for membership, an author must have written and had staged a public performance of at least one full-length or several shorter original works of drama for the theatre, film, television or radio. To qualify for membership, the performance must be professional and the work must be of professional quality. The applicant must have written the work in the Norwegian or Sami language him- or herself.

For the time being, the guild currently organizes 319 writers, and 27 candidate members, who is anyone who has completed publicly approved higher education as a playwright or screenwriter. There is a steady rise in the number of members.

The organization is funded as a part of the collective remuneration writers receive from public libraries. (In this respect, we are in fact a collecting society.)

Membership fee is currently around € 190, just increased due to expanded challenges, especially on the juridical area and decreased other incomes, especially from the broadcasting area.

### **Some important issues:**

#### *Copyright law*

Both in TV- and feature film productions, there is a heavy pressure on waiving rights regarding digital distribution. This is a central theme in the ongoing negotiations of a new relating to the assignment of film, production and viewing. We experience that the current framework agreements between the guild and the Norwegian Film and TV Producers' Association, which secure the writers' rights are set aside in almost every new contract.

The area of clearing rights for simultaneous and unchanged retransmission (distribution) of radio and television channels on ordinary cable TV networks, IP networks and wireless networks, taking place outside of the "private sphere", are not regulated in a proper way in Norway, which has resulted in stop of payments and legal lawsuits.

The challenges in digital distribution are a concern for all copy rights holders and are now pushing a joint proposition for revising the copy right law to be a better tool for securing the right holders, which is also on the programme of our new Government.



#### *Revising of collecting bargaining agreements*

The new distribution platforms are not covered in our agreements properly, so all of these need revising. However, it seems like our counterparts do have some problems to show up at the negotiations table, which makes the pressure of waiving rights more difficult to handle on all levels, and the revising of the copyright law more urgent.

Further, especially in TV-production, the working processes now often are carried out in another way than our agreements describe where the content and role of other positions might make the rights situation unclear, also regarding credits. There is therefore a need for a further glossary to clarify this area.

#### *Strengthen the guild's judicial expertise*

The partly deregulation of the contract area regarding film- and TV-productions has made it necessary to strengthen the guild's capacity in the judicial area. This demand was also voiced by our members in our member survey earlier this year. 1 October, a new lawyer stated her work at our office.

#### *Publicity-work toward the guilds 75 years anniversary 2013/2014*

The guild has launched a set of activities profile the writers and their work from our founding date 19 December, and these efforts will continue through 2014. The guild has facilitated with two grants for theatre playwrights that will be on stage next year and will publish two books: The history of Norwegian drama after Ibsen, and a myth calendar of drama. We continue the publicity campaign where we present the writer in connection with their premiers in the main film and theatre periodicals.