

LA GUILDE française **des scénaristes**

REPORT

Federation of Screenwriters in Europe (FSE)

Warsaw, September-October 2014

Here is a summary of the major issues, discussions and decisions the Guild has recently dealt or is dealing with.

First, a few numbers:

- 350 currently active members (about 10% recently graduated)
- an average subscription of 400 € (min. 200 €, max. 1,500 €)
- 5,900 followers on social networks (Facebook and Twitter)

I. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

a- The reform of COSIP

Following a proposition made by the Guild and the writers' collecting society (the SACD), sustained by the ministry of Culture, the national institution which handles financial supports to the contents industry (the CNC) has reformed the automatic public funds for TV production (named COSIP) so that producers would be forced to steer a part (10%) of their public subsidies towards writing. It can be used either for prospective writing (new projects development) or after, when the project has already been bought by a broadcaster, so they can pay the episodes writers, the showrunner or even a writing room. Besides, for the first time, the CNC's annual reports will mention the investments in writing, whereas it was so far included in "Diverse expenses" (with production mishaps!).

b- The TV fiction agreement, part 2

New issues should be soon addressed to the producers' unions, like: the financing of collective writing, the remodeling and rehabilitation of the function of "chief writer", the fixing of minimal fees for writing (and eventually for the presence in writing rooms as soon as we'll have agreed upon a legal solution), which have become a necessity.

c- Animation: keeping our rights

The bargaining with producers should start in October. First issue: the loss of good chief writers. It is obvious that the position has become too fragile, underpaid and unconsidered, and that episode writing is financially a far better option. Producers need to make it attractive again.

Another agreement should be made soon with publishers, who take advantage of the high demand of adaptations (like comic books or youth albums, at the expense of original creation) to extort the writers' residuals through a deal with the producer—even though the latter is not allowed to interfere with the repartition of rights between authors or beneficiaries.

d- How cinema was finally held accountable

The regulation of the film industry should change the soon, so that we can limit abuses and budget overspending. Negotiations are still on, where the Guild supports one simple claim: that writers should also be paid

proportionally to the budget (our 2013 report stated that, all budgets included, the average writer's fee is less than 1% of the film cost).

II. RELATIONS W/ THE SACD

Our relations with the SACD are still very good, and the numerous cases we work on together prove it. This successful cooperation depends mostly on the writers who have been elected at the SACD's board. Every year, there are some positions available (these are three-year terms) for which the Guild sets up a large campaign. This year again, several candidates from the Guild were elected. The continuity between the Guild's board and the SACD's allows us to work in the same direction.

In 2014, a crucial reform was voted after we discussed it together. It aims at adapting to new broadcasting habits (most of TV fiction and animation programs are broadcasted a huge number of times) and to the appearance of high volume new formats (like daily, day-time non-fiction programs).

III. SOCIAL ISSUES

Among this year's big discussions, let's mention:

a- Social security

In France, authors pay their social contributions to two funds: the AGESEA (for writers and others) and the MDA (mostly for photographers and graphic designers). We are discussing a possible merger.

b- Lifelong learning

Fallacious political maneuvers have jeopardized the 2-year ago agreement on lifelong learning between 17 associations. It has no real impact on the writers' possibility to take training seminars, but we would rather avoid being placed under the government's administrative supervision and stick to collegial management.

c- Pension fund

The ministry of Social Affairs has unilaterally decided that authors should contribute more to their public pension fund. The rate has become as high as for traditional company workers, even though authors don't benefit the same protection.

d- The place of women in French cinema

Following the signature of a charter with a feminist association called "Le Deuxième Regard", we committed to publish demographic reports about the place of women in our content industry. It will be discussed during the gender panel at the WCoS #3.

e- Interventions in writing schools

Each year, representatives of the Guild go to meet soon-to-be-graduated writing students, in order to make them aware of the political and industrial environment they will work in.

IV. SERVICES FOR OUR MEMBERS

a- A guide for becoming a writer-producer

In France, TV writers usually associate with independent producers, so they rarely control all artistic decisions on a show. These guidelines are supposed to accustom them with all tax, administrative and creative implications of such a double status, along with interviews with writers who have tried it.

b- A stronger legal advice

From this autumn on, legal advice will be taken care of by a lawyer practice, specialized in intellectual property. Every last Friday of the month, they will meet our members in need for three hours.

c- How to deal with paperwork

Since most writers have difficulties to deal with paperwork (taxes, social contributions, etc.), we made very educational index cards to help them be done with it. We also set up numerous workshops during the year, so that they can ask whatever they need to the right people.

d- Dinners, aperitifs and screenings

The Guild is also a great place for writers to meet people and discuss about their work, their joys as much as their disappointments. We throw a lot of social events (dinners with broadcasters or producers, monthly aperitifs, presence in all major festivals, Jacques Prévert Award for best screenplay of the passed year, screenings and masterclasses). We also take in charge a part of their accreditation for the festivals, so it's easier for them to go there.

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