

Report from Norway to the General Assembly of the FSE 2014

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.

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 325 writers, and 26 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 still a heavy pressure on waiving rights regarding digital distribution, and the biggest broadcasters don't want this to be solved through collective bargaining or through extended collective licensing, that has been proposed as an amendment to our copyright law.

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 several law suit and stop of payments and legal lawsuits.

Revising of collecting bargaining agreements

There is a need for revising the collective bargaining agreements, both to cover up for changed working processes and digital distribution. The public broadcaster NRK wants internet publication for six month periods for a much lower payment than the current replay



fees. In that case, we are working for a balancing of this reduced payment by an increase of the initial fee.

The private producers and broadcasters seems to prefer to clear the rights individually, which makes the pressure of waiving rights more difficult to handle on all levels, and the revising of the copyright law more urgent.

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. We have now a full time lawyer at our office, and this makes us more capable to go further into individual contracts.

Politics

The present government of Norway, has been in office for almost a year, and will on the 8th October present their first budget proposal. There are no reasons to be too optimistic on behalf of the cultural sector, but we are working toward both the parties in the government, and towards their supporting parties in the parliament.

Instead of political initiatives, the present government has used the time to ask the field though at number of public hearing, in topics such as, among others:

- Guidelines for the public broadcaster NRK
- Incentives for film productions in Norway
- The financial flow in film production in Norway
- Economic opportunities for artists in Norway
- Reorganization of the Arts Council

