

## **Report of the Bulgarian Association of the Film, Television and Radio Scriptwriters**

**17<sup>th</sup> Sept 2015**

*BAFTRS has actively executed concrete measures in protecting, promoting and nurturing the development of its members and the scriptwriting profession in general over the past year.*

### **1. Membership**

In 2015 BAFTRS has accepted 5 new membership applications resulting in total of 43 registered professional scriptwriters.

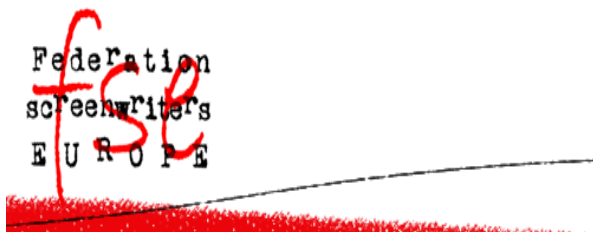
### **2. Activities in 2015**

On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015 an Annual General Assembly of BAFTRS was held on which important matters concerning the improvement of the strategy for financing of the National Film Fund were discussed and brought to the attention of the National Film Council. The General Assembly of BAFTRS proposed updated and edited evaluation criteria for experts in evaluating applications for national funding with the National Film Fund. This step is crucial to the fair and realistic evaluation of each project application when applying for state funding with the National Film Fund due to the lack of expertise in the field of scriptwriting to most of the expert evaluators.

On the General Assembly on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015 concrete actions for protecting authorship rights of BAFTRS members were discussed. The General Assembly recognized the necessity of providing expert legal advice and consultation in a future contract situation with a producer. In a survey initiated by the Legal Adviser of BAFTRS members shared the negative experience of contracting their rights with producers regarding their work. All scriptwriters recognized contract infringement by a producer concerning their absolute authorship rights and right of fair remuneration. The General Assembly adopted a decision to provide the members of BAFTRS the services of a legal adviser specialized in authorship rights for counseling and consultation in the process of signing a contract with a producer. More active steps must be taken by the Executive Council of BAFTRS in exchanging and contracting better practices with the Producers' CMOs in Bulgaria.

The General Assembly of 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015 recognized the need of improving the communication and exchange of opinions, good practices and opportunities for scriptwriters to develop and nurture their professional experience. A Facebook profile of BAFTRS was created [www.facebook.com/baftrs/](http://www.facebook.com/baftrs/) which is administered by the secretary of BAFTRS and provides weekly information to all its members concerning important deadlines, opportunities for financing, educational seminars, etc.

### **3. Upcoming Events**



The General Assembly of 2015 discussed the necessity of creating events for developing the professional skills of BAFTRS members. A suggestion of organizing a seminar on the theme 'The art of adaptation for the screen' was discussed following the general observation that many new Bulgarian movies are adaptations of contemporary Bulgarian novels. The seminar is expected to take place in the end of 2015.

#### 4. Awards of BAFTRS members in 2015

In 2015 BAFTRS members prove to rank in first place in prestigious contests. Yoana Mircheva won first prize in the National Contests 'Southern Summer' for her debut short stories *Blind dates*. Another BAFTRS member – Stanimir Velikov won first place in the same contest for his movie script *Dogs*.

Two internationally acclaimed BAFTRS members, Marin Damianov and Emil Spahiiski, wrote the script for the movie *The Judgment* - this year's Bulgarian Academy Awards Nomination in Best Foreign Language Film.

#### 5. BETTER CONTRACTS FOR EUROPEAN SCREENWRITERS AND DIRECTORS

##### 1. Proportional Remuneration

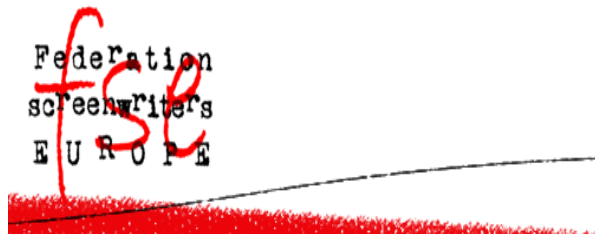
Writer and Directors should be paid proportionate to the work they have done and the income their work generates. Writers and Directors should be paid for each form of exploitation of their work. In the survey conducted amongst BAFTRS members all participants agreed with the necessity of proportional and fair remuneration in regards to each use of their work regardless of the media and channel of exploitation of their work.

##### 2. Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining agreements should provide the basic minimum standards on which contracts should be based. BAFTRS members expressed their position on the need of creating minimum contractual standards protecting authors from disputable contract clauses. This applies to the suggestion of creating a list of the standard remuneration for each type of project approved by the guild members.

##### 3. Principles in respect to payment

The 'best seller' clause in a contract when the exploitation of the work of the writer/director is significantly greater than anticipated should be the basic principal for the authors to receive their fair share which would stimulate the quality of productions. The writers and directors should have the capacity to utilize the services of CMO's to manage rights and receive fair remuneration for their work, yet in Bulgaria writers are concerned that the CMO's lack the capacity and competence to manage and account the remuneration for each type of utilization of their work, especially when it comes to the digital media.



The transfer of rights should be for a limited period specified in the contract not exceeding in our belief **two years** in case the producer has not actively taken any steps in the production of the work in all cases the rights transferred should revert to the author.

Looking forward to the Annual General Assembly in Brussels on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2015 to discuss the common European contract clauses protecting writers and directors in their work.

Best regards,

BAFTRS