



Flemish Screenwriters Guild - Activities Report 2015 – 2016

1) General info

The Flemish Screenwriters Guild ('Vlaamse Scenaristengilde vzw') was founded in 2003. We have 170 paying members, roughly 90% of all Flemish speaking professional fiction screenwriters in Belgium.

Members with a track record in screenwriting pay € 125/year, Junior members pay € 60/year.

Our board of directors (16 persons) meets once a month. The board consists of voluntary professional screenwriters with different backgrounds in film and/or TV. Since 2013 this board is supported by a part-time staff-member responsible for daily management and representation, and who is the central contact of our Guild.

We have representatives to maintain a friendly dialogue with different organizations including 2 Collecting Societies (SABAM and DeAuteurs/SACD), the Flemish Film Fund, the coordinating Flemish Authors Society, our Belgian Film Festivals (Ghent, Brussels, Ostend, the Short Film Festival in Leuven), politicians, educational partners 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 have an active members policy, and members can contact us directly for advice. Besides several interesting advantages and reductions, our members receive invitations for public events we organize on a regular basis. We invite international guest speakers and organize Master Classes in cooperation with the Flemish Film Fund. Our Writers Guild also organizes 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 for film and since last year for television as well, voted for by our members. We also cooperate with the Dutch Screenwriters Guild to organize a yearly award for Dutch speaking screenwriters, called the Visser-Neerlandia award. Our aim is to cooperate with our Dutch and Walloon colleagues in order to exchange experiences, to extend the network for our members, and to create new opportunities.

Our website www.scenaristengilde.be is kept up to date on a regular basis and we regularly distribute a newsletter to our members and to an ever growing database of industry professionals.



2) Some highlights of 2015-2016

The past year has been an intense year for our guild. We have been lobbying for a “Best Practices” agreement with producers, directors and actors, and have been involved in many political debates, ranging from anti-piracy measures, to mediafunding, online author rights and tax exemptions for screenwriters. In parallel, the audiovisual field in Flanders seems to be more and more aware of the importance of the work we do, and institutions such as the European Mediadesk, Mediarte, Filmfestivals, the Brussels Filmmuseum and others have invited us over the past year as a partners in public projects promoting screenwriting within the audiovisual field.

Structural meetings with guilds

The funding of guilds and the advice we received from our Advisory Board in 2014 have resulted in a more organized industry in Flanders and an increase of our influence and presence. For two years now we have had collective meetings with producers, directors and actors, about 3 times a year. During these meetings we discuss our differences or issues to be solved, and if necessary we approach politicians collectively. As mentioned above, the negotiations on “Best Practices”, which aims to increase the transparency during contract negotiations and which we have started last year, have continued over the past year and will soon result in first agreements with the other guilds, and a “memodeal” to seal audiovisual cooperation early in the creative process.

Filmfestivals

Over the past years the Flemish Screenwriters Guild has developed good contacts with the major Film Festivals In Flanders. Like last year, we have improved our contacts with these festivals even more. Our annual cooperation with the festivals of Ghent, Ostend an Leuven continues. Furthermore we have been contacted by two new festivals, the Brussels Filmfestival and the Childrens Film Festival of Brussels. We are also involved as partners in “Are You Series?”, a new initiative of the Brussels Filmmuseum and Bozar which focusses on academic study and creative aspects of screenwriting for television series.

Arbitration

In 2015 we have been approached by the Collecting Societies to start up a procedure of arbitration. The main cause was a disagreement between a scriptwriter and director concerning screen credits. We have develop a procedure to be able to offer an objective ruling in such cases.

Content - website

Besides supporting screenwriters in Flanders, one of the aims of the Screenwriters Guild is to inform our members. Over the years we have published a large amount of articles and information on our website, shared screenplays of Flemish movies and sent out many newsletters. At this very moment we are working on a new website, and an update of our “knowledge centre” which is part of our website. In parallel we are working on a communication strategy which will even improve our external communication. Besides our own activities, we often communicate workshops, masterclasses and other interesting events with our members and newsletter readers as well, often



offering reductions for our members.

Organization Chart

The new internal structure which we setup in September 2015 has been working very well for us over the past year. Within our board we have some managers responsible for communications, political and juridical deliberation, organization of events, projects, and content. Within these fields of activities several project groups work on parallel cases and projects. The director and the staff-member take care of the coordination of the board members' activities and project groups.