

FSE

Report

The Finnish Playwrights and Screenwriters Guild

TV -rights

At the moment the fundamental agreement between us (SUNKLO) and the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) is more than fifteen years old. The new agreement is currently in a state of preparation, and should be completed in spring at the latest. As the whole concept of writing for television has changed, the old contract needed to be revised, as it did not recognise all of the stages in writing long running television serials. Alongside with the new agreement, the compensation for the rights will be negotiated to a more substantial level.

Later this year SUNKLO will also have established new arrangements for how writers are compensated for their works when television plays and other scripts are put forth in YLE Archives and on the Internet. So far YLE has only had the rights to show extracts of written dramas taken in their archives. From this point forward the right to broadcast drama will cover whole series as well as television dramas in their original lengths. The previous collective remuneration will be replaced with individual compensation for the rights.

Film rights

There has been no significant progress in the negotiations with film companies. The companies prefer to bargain with individual screenwriters and evade all attempts to have a basic contract covering most aspects of film rights. In most cases, the sell-out of all rights (or "the acquisition of all rights") is proposed and subsequently denied by the writers. Nonetheless, for the seventh consecutive year, there has been a steady growth in box office for Finnish films. In 2015, 28% of all sold tickets were for Finnish films. In many cases that has meant better compensations for writers as well.

The problem with all the rights that concern the audio-visual field is that the numerous new ways the audio-visual works are utilized tend not to be covered by present contracts or by present practices. SUNKLO has been actively working with other organisations to create a new system of licensing for rights, such as PVR services or the use of copyrighted material in public contexts.

Membership in SUNKLO

Traditionally the members of our guild have all been either playwrights or screenwriters. These last few years there has been a growing interest among reality-TV-writers and writers working in different positions in Writers Room to be members of the guild as well. Although there is no ethical or professional reason not to have them as members, the proposal has necessitated lengthy discussions among the guild on topics of how to best accommodate them and to serve the needs of these new groups of writers. Essentially the Reality Writers and writers working in groups operate under collective labour agreements, which lie in contrast to the agreements other writers have in regards to selling of IP rights. To be useful for these new members, the guild would need more knowledge of the nature of their work arrangements, and would need to gain additional proficiency in matters related to legal help and advice for the growing multitude of writers.