



Report to the Annual General Meeting
of the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe
from the Writers Guild of Ireland
October 2018 Berlin

Background

A new Government plan in Ireland aims to double the number of people employed in the film and television industry to 24,000 fulltime equivalents within five years.

The volume of feature films produced in Ireland is unlikely to increase significantly (twenty five films written by Irish writers in 2017), nor the volume of feature film projects being put into paid development (approx. 80 per annum). Growth in the volume of TV drama is constrained by a number of factors.

So the quickest route to an increase in employment in the film and television industries in Ireland is to attract international TV series to shoot in Ireland. The opening of new studios is evidence that this is increasingly central. These productions tend to be written elsewhere so the benefits to Irish writers are limited.

Addressing this complex set of issues will be a key focus over the next years.

Also important for our agenda is our continuing work on gender parity and the new European Union Copyright Directive.

The Guild

The guild currently has 459 members (323 Full Members and 136 Associates), employs two part time people, and has improved its financial situation somewhat as Ireland's economy recovers from the recession.

Our activities

Our annual ZeBBies awards continue; negotiations with the Producers organisations about a writers share in a corridor of (re)payments; negotiations completed on a payment for sales of broadcasters production of 7% of the net price; agreed a set of fees for four online uses with rising payments over five years then renegotiated; resolved a disagreement with our national film funding agency about definitions of experienced writers; undertaken a research project comparing levels of TV drama production in smaller EU member states; published a modest agreement on credits with the producers organisation; planned an initiative on freedom of artistic expression; as well as the usual information activities, meetings and events which kept us busy during the year. We would be happy to elaborate on any of these issues if anyone wants us to.

Gender parity issues and activities

This has been a priority issue for the Guild for a number of years. Our funding agency has committed to achieving funding parity for producers, writers and directors by the end of this year. Although real progress has been made They will not succeed with this and have now extended their deadline to 50/50 by 2020.

Our focus has been on trying to ensure that the issue remains a priority focus for the state funding agency and that the principles are extended to the regulatory body and the national broadcaster, and also to do all that we can to encourage and facilitate women writers to apply for funding to the various sources.



Neasa Hardiman talks to participants at the BAI funded pitching training event.

We have proposed an international conference on the issue to be held in Dublin (funding remains unclear), welcomed the introduction of a gender policy by the regulatory authority, organised training courses for women writers in pitching and organised pitching to producers, meetings with broadcasters, and so on. We have now committed to pushing for formal quotas as a necessary step to ensure progress and are developing a specific set of proposals to lobby for.

We have also undertaken a couple of initiatives on bullying and harassment.

Thomas McLaughlin, Chairman.

David Kavanagh, CEO.