

# Annual Report 2020

## FLH – ICELAND

FLH currently has 121 members – screenwriters and playwrights. We have no staff and most of the work and activities falls on the hands of members of the board, which consists of five volunteers who are all active writers.

The board is unchanged since last year:

Margrét Örnólfsdóttir, Chair  
Ólafur Egill Egilsson, Treasurer  
Huldar Breiðfjörð, Secretary  
Nanna Kristín Magnúsdóttir, Board member  
Andri Óttarsson, Board member

Our sole income comes from our modest membership fees (equivalent of 60€). Members who have reached the age of 70 don't pay.

FLH is a member of:

- The Federation of Artists in Iceland
- The Film Council of Iceland
- Performing Arts in Iceland
- IHM (national CMO)
- NDU – Nordic Dramatists Union
- FSE

We have dialogue and work with the Film Institute of Iceland on matters which concern writers, as well as with the National Theatre and the Municipal Theatre of Reykjavík, with whom we have a negotiated agreement for playwrights.

We share information with our members on everything from applicable funds to events and opportunities of interest, and give advice as best we can with regards to contracts and other matters that may come up. But, as mentioned before, we neither have any staff nor lawyers, so we must limit our services accordingly.

### Contracts and Negotiations

We have no general writers' agreements in Iceland, neither with the producers nor the broadcasters. For a little over a year, we've had a working group on contracts, together with the Writers' Union (book authors) and the Directors Association, in the purpose of putting together model contracts, for writers of features and TV series. The work has taken longer than we intended, and the Covid 19 situation hasn't helped, but we hope to have some presentable documents by the end of the year.

Since we have a long history of not getting anywhere with the Producers Association, the new strategy is to try to come to an agreement with individual production companies and producers who are willing to make such “gentleman’s agreements”, in the hope that more will follow the example.

There are three broadcasters who commission TV drama in Iceland, but little to none inhouse production of scripted TV, thus having writers’ agreements with the broadcasters is not really a viable option. However, our guild, together with other authors’ and performers’ guilds, are demanding negotiations with the national broadcaster RÚV.

### **A new Film Policy 2020–2030**

In the beginning of this month (October) the Minister of Culture and Education presented Iceland’s first Film Policy, valid for the next 10 years. A Working Group of 12 people, representatives from all fields of the film industry, politicians and representatives from the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Industry and Innovation, worked on the policy for almost a year. Margrét Örnólfsdóttir, the Chair of FLH, represented screenwriters in the group. The highlights of the policy are; a long-awaited new investment fund for TV drama, an increase to the Film Fund, the suggestion that screenwriters and directors should be included in the artists’ salary system, and plans to offer film education on a university level, as soon as autumn 2021. The policy is very promising for Icelandic filmmaking, although nothing’s secure yet, since the state budget for next year hasn’t been approved.

### **Covid 19**

Iceland is probably one of the very few countries where the film industry hasn’t been terribly affected by the pandemic situation. In fact, there has been more production this year than ever before, especially of TV series. So far seven TV series have already been shot, two and currently shooting and the year’s not over yet. Furthermore, there are some 10 films (features and documentaries) expected to complete before the end of 2020.

There are also many projects in development, both series and features, and none that we know of have been cancelled especially due to the pandemic. Our members therefore appear to have enough work for the moment, but of course that could change in these uncertain times.

### **News of the year!**

Last spring, FLH was finally accepted as a full member of IHM, our CMO. We would like to use the opportunity and thank FSE, as well as our fellow Nordic guilds, for the support in the matter, which has been one of our primary struggles for years. We’ve won the battle but not the war, since the Writers’ Union still claims to represent screenwriters, and it has yet to be decided how the division is going to end up. However, at the moment all the members representing authors are united in fighting for a larger share of the cake, against the producers’ and the performers’ groups, so the quarrel will most definitely be settled in arbitration anyway.