



FEDERATION OF
SCREENWRITERS
IN EUROPE

Notes on FSE board meeting (draft) Online, by Zoom 26-27 May 2020

Were present:

Board members

Carolin Otto
Maciej Karpinski
Ana Pineda
Jacob Groll
Gail Renard
Nikolaj Scherfig
Alexandre Manneville

Staff

David Kavanagh
Amélie Clément

Introduction

Board members briefly exchanged news on shooting resuming in various countries and guilds involved in the elaboration of safety protocols.

Minutes of the previous board meeting (read item 10_20200427 FSE BM minutes)

The minutes of the board meeting held on Zoom on 26 and 27 May 2020 were unanimously approved.

FSE president's letter to Ministers of Culture in Europe

Carolin and David presented the letter that they wrote together, sent to the ministers of culture of EU member states, also distributed online (website, social networks and other target groups). Purpose of the letter: defend the role of culture, screenwriters are aware of the role of stories and Europe is a strong story.

<https://federationscreenwriters.eu/fse-president-carolin-otto-call-on-eu-culture-ministers-to-put-arts-culture-creativity-at-the-centre-of-our-recovery/>

Ana regrets that the efforts of the Culture minister in Spain do not get through. That letter might have no impact in Spain. Jacob said that in Austria the State secretary for Culture resigned, being very criticized although she had no power.

What to lobby for from now?

Maciej: will the emergency support schemes will have an effect on the long-term support for the audiovisual and cultural sectors? Assess what has gone wrong during the Covid-19 period and make proposals to improve the situation on the long term.

David: the guilds' answers to the short questionnaire confirm that in all countries the support systems put in place have not worked for all authors and artists, mostly those – the vast majority – who are freelancers/self-employed. Groups of writers were/are left behind. The current crisis has shown what does not work in the social protection of authors. FSE can tackle this issue.

Streamers made a lot of money during that period. They must contribute financially, as they have started to do in a few countries, but on the long-term and in each country. David will contact SAA to ask if SAA will pursue their campaign in favour of the URR, unwaivable right to remuneration.

In Poland the Polish Filmmakers Association (PFA) will try to convince Netflix to pay royalties. Maciej brings a positive note: due to the covid-19 crisis, Netflix has approached several governments to give money to the audiovisual sector. Without this crisis, this might have never happened. It is an opportunity to negotiate longer-term commitments for streamers. And Netflix and other platforms offer writers new sources of revenues (Gail).

In France, measures have been adapted thanks to the collective work of authors' organisations. The problem is that civil servants do not know well how systems work for authors.

>> Research on welfare systems for authors

It did not work well, many authors were left out, what went wrong, what should be improved, at national level, at European level... David thinks FSE should undertake a research programme on 1) emergency funding and 2) pensions, unemployment, social security for people working professionally in the art sector, to give us some kind of authority to tackle this issue and compare situations. Work with an academic department?

The board agrees with this proposal and asks David to draft a project.

>> Joint questionnaire across Europe

Ana proposes to start with a short individual questionnaire asking screenwriters a few questions on the level of experience, the main problems encountered during the covid-19 period, the main problems expected in the next year. A common questionnaire to be distributed to writers by FSE guilds. David said that many guilds already sent questionnaires to their members and might be reluctant to do it again. However several guilds plan to do an update to get a better overview of the situation, beyond the panic of the first weeks of lockdown.

Ana committed to draft a questionnaire and send it to the board.

Other issues discussed

- Will covid-19 and safety protocols change the way screenwriters have to write? If so, how long?
- Will there be more work or less work for screenwriters? How prices will be affected? ALMA has noticed that well-known screenwriters have more work but there are less opportunities for young and/or emerging writers. ALMA and WGGB are very careful about the evolution of prices.
- The future of live audience and consequently the future of movie theatres?
- Projects to build a European streaming service.
- The impact on playwrights, who will be hit much more and much longer (Gail in UK, Nikolaj in Denmark) and how they will find other sources of income (streamers, TV...).

Project on Collective Bargaining (read doc item 03_Application to DG Empl)

FSE is working with FERA and UNI MEI on an application to DG Employment (deadline 6 June).

Ana raised concerns about directors trying to enter the development schemes.

What's happening in the EU (read item 07_Zoom meetings proposal)

David talked about delay in implementing the copyright directive. Official delay in France; not yet officially in other countries and at European level.

Problems identified in several countries: in Italy producers try to be considered as authors to get a share. In Croatia there are also discussions on the definition of what an author is.

Amélie asked if FSE should anticipate and draw attention to the copyright directive again. David thinks it is not yet the moment. He thinks it will be very quiet during the Summer at EU level.

Zoom meetings (read item 04_Whats happening in the EU)

The board agreed to start with small meetings to informally exchange information on specific issues. Larger meetings will come later. Start with Netflix negotiation.

Larger meetings could be linked to the world conference (a mini online wcos in october 2020). Nikolaj will investigate.

End of the meeting.