



### 2021-2022 annual report to the FSE

2020 Pandemic recap:

1. Israel was shut down in March 2020.
2. Government support was given to all who suffered a drop of 25% minimum in income. A guild survey among members found that among those who consider screenwriting their primary occupation (i.e., most of their income is generated from screenwriting):
  - **64% suffered a drop in income by at least 25%.**
  - **21% reported a decline of at least 50%.**
  - **7% of the participants reported an increase in revenue.**
3. Part of the shutdown was a complete stoppage of all government funds supporting guilds and unions.
 

**SGL support was lowered by 50%.**
4. The whole industry was at a complete standstill. The SGI, in conjunction with the other creative unions, fought for a special grant to be given to films in mid-shooting so they could finish production. The result was a 16m NIS fund (approx. \$4.5m), barely getting them to the finish line.

**Today:**

5. The ministry of the treasury and the tax authority are demanding that some SGI members return the support grants they were awarded during the pandemic. Both express disregard for the screenwriting business's unique nature, sometimes taking months or even years to bear fruit.
 

Together with LAHAV, Israel's small business union, we hope to educate the tax authority and succeed in canceling this unreasonable demand. Instead, we aim to create a realistic compensation system that pays fair unemployment monies to eligible screenwriters and creatives.
6. When COVID hit, the SGI ramped up online workshops and increased communication with our members. Today, we can happily report that activity has returned to normal – people are not afraid to meet up in writers' rooms, public screenings, or professional workshops.
7. Our joint venture with the French Series Mania Festival - The Israeli-French co-writing residency – hit by the COVID fallout – came back in force and is currently selecting projects for the upcoming festival edition that will take place in Lille, France.

## **Legislation, regulation, and public lobbying:**

8. 2021 brought hope in the form of a change of government, as both ministers of communications and culture were replaced.

As the new MOC declared support for most of our views and announced his intent to tax OTT and put some regulatory statutes in place, it seemed like our struggle for regulation over OTT and streaming companies will have its day in the sun.

Alas (saw that coming, didn't you?),

Six weeks from now, both ministers will no longer be in office as we are heading for a new bout of elections – the 5<sup>th</sup> in the past four years.

#LookingForStabilityInTheWildWildEast

9. Amending the Communications Law:

This year, we drafted a legislative proposal that was later introduced by two MKs (members of the Israeli parliament), aiming to include OTT companies under the current communication law.

The amendment passed the introductory phase before the Knesset dispersed; therefore, it is obligatory for the next one to address and continue working on it. This is a small light at the end of the tunnel and a backup in case the next MOC won't continue the work of the current one (see 8).

10. The fight for proper remuneration:

KAN, the national broadcaster we fought for and helped get on the air, had been a true beacon producing high-quality drama. On the other hand – while producing and distributing four times more content, the sum allocated for remuneration stayed the same. The result: a drop of 75% in residuals.

The SGI led a campaign, followed by protests, radio interviews, and some guerilla tactics (some polite and some less so), backing up TALI, our collecting society, in their negotiations with KAN.

On 22/09/22, we received word that an updated, better agreement will be signed in the next few weeks. When we'll get a hold of it we will send the relevant clauses to the members of the FSE.

11. Inspired by the Israeli-French residency (see (7)), the SGI joined with ALMA and launched a union-run venture, bringing together writers from both Spain and Israel, connecting them and prepping teams to cooperate and create proposals for co-productions.

The inter-guild communication is inspiring and fruitful, and we intend to expand it.

12. Last but not least – the SGI was accepted to the FSE as a partner member. This year would be our first participating in the FSE's AGM, and as we stated in our request: "we come to listen and learn, and contribute to the good fight to the best of our ability, bringing our experience to bear and backing the FSE and its members."