

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

In 2023, BAFTRS continued admitting new members, and as of now, the association counts 44 people, most of whom are active working screenwriters. Our main activities this year were related to two pivotal for our profession laws - the Film Industry Act and the Copyright and Related Rights Act.

In 2021, changes were adopted in the Film Industry Act. While many of these amendments had positive intentions, the regulations, applying the law, caused great turbulence in the work of the National Film Center (NFC) and many of the competition funding sessions are blocked by legal claims. This happened because some of the texts are not clear enough or even contradict the law itself. Currently, the regulations are set to undergo public discussion again, and our association has submitted proposals to the NFC and the Ministry of Culture (MK). Our main battle is to introduce points for the experience of the screenwriter when evaluating television series projects. Currently, this category only takes into account the achievements of the director and the producer, but not the creator (writer). We expect these issues to be discussed in the coming months, even though there are strong lobbies and interests from various groups in the film industry.

Bulgaria is one of the EU countries that have not transposed yet Directives 789 and 790 of the European Commission. The texts prepared by the MK (under the management of the former minister) and submitted to the parliament are unfortunately not in line with the spirit of the two directives. They not only cover the minimum requirements, but in some aspects are cleverly distorted in a way to support the users rather than the authors. BAFTRS has been working jointly with our CMO Filmautor to prepare proposals. On June 14, our association organized a protest in front of the Parliament in support of the American screenwriters and with demands to correct the texts in the Bulgarian Copyright Act. Nearly 70 people attended the protest and it received coverage by all national media; there were subsequent interviews on the topic with members of our association. We put the main focus on the fact that no director or screenwriter in Bulgaria has ever received royalties for the subsequent exploitation of their works by the private national broadcasters. Our demands were officially presented to the Parliamentary Commission on Culture and Media. Representatives of our organization held numerous meetings with deputies from the Commission, as well as with the new Minister of Culture.

Unfortunately, the amendments in the Copyright Act were adopted at the first reading in this unfavourable form. Deputies made statements that the requested by the authors changes would occur between the first and second readings, declaring that they did not want to linger the process, as our country would face penalties from the European Commission due to the delay. We continue to stay in touch with the Ministry of Culture with the hope that our voice will be heard. The second reading of the amendments is expected to happen in the second half of November.