

Activity report of the year 2015

by the Executive Committee and FSE staff.

INTRODUCTION

2015 has been a very active year for FSE :

- three board meetings,
- one general assembly, one extraordinary general assembly,
- the preparation, vote and publication of the new statutes of the FSE,
- the creation of a new category of membership, thanks to active prospecting in collaboration with guilds and the confirmation of three new partner members for a three year period (SACD France, DAMA, SGAE),
- as a consequence, an improved financial situation, which has allowed the board to increase the number of working hours of the two staff members,
- the organisation of the FSE Award ceremony,
- raising the funds for the Award ceremony,
- the organisation of a lunch at the European Parliament,
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- a meeting with guilds and experts to discuss rights in the online environment,
- the development of a network of lawyers and experts,
- a meeting with lawyers and experts from CMOs to define better contracts,
- a close collaboration with FERA and SAA (in particular, on the joint document on Better contracts),
- the publication of a new leaflet on online remuneration and better contracts,
- meeting with Commissioners Oettinger and Navracics with FERA and SAA,
- a meeting with Commissioner Oettinger (Carolyn Otto and Jochen Greve, Berlin),
- a meeting with European Parliament President Martin Schulz (Sven Baldvinsson, Brussels),
- the participation of FSE to several groups of creators in Brussels - Creativity Works (a very wide grouping including producers, publishers distributors and so on), Authors and performers (with CMOs organised by GESAC), creators group (creators only) and audiovisual group (convened by MPA).
- the first meetings to prepare the Fourth World Conference of Screenwriters
- and some back office work to improve management tools and daily administrative and communication work.

The board and staff of the FSE are quite proud of all the work accomplished this year with incredible energy and still a great lack of financial and staff resources. 2015 has been a very important year at European level and it was important to increase the visibility of FSE in Brussels.

These results can be assessed in reference to the Three-Year Plan 2015-2018, available here:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/40jdgdgp869oxe5/fse%203y%20plan%202015_2018.pdf?dl=0

1. FSE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN 2015

Composition

Since the elections of the general assembly in November 2013, the Executive Committee of the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe is composed of :

Sven Baldvinsson (President) – Iceland
Robert Taylor (Vice-President) – UK
Stanislav Semerdjiev (Treasurer) – Bulgaria
Carolin Otto (Member) – Germany
Jean-André Yerlès (Member) – France

The mandates of the members of the Executive Committee run until the next general assembly (22-23 September 2015). The composition of the new Executive Committee will be voted at the 14th Annual General Assembly in Brussels.

Meetings

- 31 January 2015, Paris (offices of the French Guild of Screenwriters)
- 28 March 2015, Brussels (The board briefly met in Brussels after the Extraordinary FSE AGM)
- 22-23 June 2015, Paris (offices of the French Guild of Screenwriters)

The minutes of these meetings are available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/opas5tdhhkwsq5/AABqgsyssiWdzyzbpbFlbboWa?dl=0>

2. SOME DETAILS ON EVENTS AND PROJECTS

21st September 2015, Brussels

FSE European Screenwriters Award & lunch at the European Parliament

The idea of organising an award has been a project since long at the FSE. The idea was relaunched by Carolin Otto thanks to her contacts with the state of Bavaria in Germany. It was decided to make it a political event in Brussels, with a first part in Munich during the Munich Film Festival. In the course of the preparation, this first part has been dropped.

A partnership has been made with the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria to the European Union in Brussels, next to the European Parliament, to welcome the ceremony on 21st September. The Representation has accepted to host the event, merge their list with FSE list of guest, send the “save the date” (early July) and the invitation (early September) and collect confirmations of attendance. The invitation was sent to more than 3,000 contacts. While writing this activity report, there are more than 230 confirmations.

In addition the FSE has made contacts with MEP Julie Ward to welcome a lunch at the European Parliament on the same day (45 people).

On these occasions the FSE has made a new publication on “Better Contracts” to be launched at both events (printed copies). High and low resolution pdfs are available here: www.scenaristes.org.

The FSE applied to several organisations to finance the project and has managed to cover part of the costs (total budget between 20.000 and 22.000 euros). ALCS, VG Wort, De Auteurs, Literar Mechana. In addition, three guilds contribute financially, from Norway, Denmark and Finland.

The FSE hired a free-lance event manager for a few days to help organising the event (Laurence Muller).

7th May 2015, Brussels

Meeting with experts on contracts

Earlier in 2015, FSE has convened a grouping of lawyers connected with the various member guilds, which started work on possible improvement in contracts. In May, we convened a larger meeting involving a number of lawyers who had attended meetings of SAA the day before. In addition, Tomas Roson came from Spain at our invitation and with the help of Teresa de Rosendo (ALMA); Gerhard Pfennig of Initiative Urheberrecht in Berlin and a lawyer from Denmark at the invitation of FERA also attended. This meeting developed a listing of possible practical improvements of writers' contracts, which form the basis of the Better Contracts document we have just published.

The second part of this publication on Better Contracts is a joint enterprise of FSE and FERA (though FSE did the bulk of the work). SAA withdrew at the last moment but may come back!

27th March 2015, Brussels

FSE Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA)

In order to improve the general finances of the FSE, it was proposed to create a new category of membership. A revision of the statutes of the association was necessary. It was the occasion also to revise other parts of the statutes to comply with changes in Belgium law and the evolution of the FSE. An extraordinary general assembly was convened to approve the new statutes, including the new categories of membership and to approve the new partner members.

26th March 2015, Brussels

Meeting with guilds on Online Environment

Upon the initiative of the Screenwriters' Guild of Norway, the FSE organised a meeting called Defining Our Rights in the Online Environment which took place with the EGA. The issues raised are increasingly important and will need to be addressed in the coming months and years.

4th World Conference of Screenwriters (Paris, 19-20 October 2016)

The French Guild of Screenwriters has started to design a project and is looking for financial supports. Robert Taylor has convened a new Steering Committee to develop an agenda for the conference (second conference call in October).

Collective Bargaining

According to our Three Year Plan 2015 to 2018, we are supposed to continue concentrating on collective bargaining initiatives. We planned to make an application to the same fund in DG Employment but changes in internal procedures in Uni-Europa made that impossible at the last moment. We investigated two other programmes and decided to apply to a more research-focused fund. We brought SMITs (a media research facility) from the Free University of Brussels into the mix. However the work load of making a credible application proved too difficult at such a short notice and we reluctantly agreed that we would apply in 2016.

3. LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

We invite you to read the detailed report on EU policies written by David Kavanagh [here](#).

Additionally, the FSE Three Year Plan 2015-2018 ([download](#)) continues to provide us with a matrix to guide our actions.

FSE co-signed a joint letter with several other organisations of the audiovisual sector addressed to the European Commission on "Making the Digital Single Market Work: Key Principles for the Film and Audiovisual Sector" (April 2015). ([download](#))

FSE co-signed a joint "Creators and Performers Statement regarding the CJEU (Court of Justice of the European Union) proceedings on the Spanish private copying compensation system – Case C-470/14" (Jan. 2015). ([download](#)) We are currently considering a second statement on this topic, which we have been asked to approve.

We also formally endorsed the [SAA White Paper second edition](#), subject to two small changes which opened up the possibility that the SAA proposal is not necessarily best in every country but needs to take local realities into account.

David met with Commissioners Navracsics (Education, Culture, Youth and Sport) and Oettinger (Digital Economy & Society) with FERA and SAA. The meetings were interesting but proved to be of limited value.

The FSE President met with Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament. This was an important meeting with some potentially useful results. The meeting was with the five Presidents of the creators organisations – ECSA (composers), FERA (directors), EWC (literature), EFJ (freelance journalists) and ourselves. We have been trying to get this grouping together for some time but eventually it was on an initiative of the composers that we started to meet. There are significant differences between us, but they are much more modest than the differences between the members of the other groupings of which we are members. Have a look [here](#).

This grouping has now asked President Juncker for the Commission for a meeting. That would be really useful.

The meeting with Schulz has already resulted in a proposal to change the usual annual Creators conference hosted by ECSA into a conference, which we would all organise and participate in, and which President Schulz has said he would address.

We have suggested to them that we should redo the questionnaire to members that FSE did, but with all five organisations participating. (If that is not practical, we believe that we should do it again just for FSE.)

David Kavanagh attended several other meetings and conferences. Among others :

A workshop on “Atypical workers and collective bargaining”, organised in Dublin on 8 and 9 September 2015 by FIM, FIA, UNI-MEI and EFJ (read more [here](#)).

The “Writers and Directors Worldwide” Annual Meetings in Brussels on 3 June 2015 (read more [here](#)).

The “Creators Conference” a European forum organised the European Composer and Songwriter Alliance and initiated by ECSA, in Brussels on 23 and 24 February 2015.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

New FSE statutes

Proposed changes were discussed by the Executive Committee, then presented to the FSE member guilds. Contacts were made with a Belgian lawyer to check and amend the revised version. The vote of the new statutes was organised in Brussels during the Extraordinary General Assembly of 27 March 2015) according to a legal procedure. The EGA approved the revised statutes, which have been officially published in Belgium. French and English versions are both available [here](#).

New category of members : Partner members

FSE staff and board members, as well as FSE member guilds, made considerable efforts to recruit partner members. FSE produced two documents to support the campaign: the Three-Year Plan ([download](#)) and a document called “Become Partner Member” ([download](#)). FSE and guilds shared contacts with CMOs (numerous letters, e-mails, phone calls, meetings). In 2015, 3 partner members joined FSE for three years (2015-2016-2017): SACD (France), DAMA and SGAE (Spain).

In our view, we are just starting the campaign to recruit partner members. We need both to apply again to those CMOs which supported us with one-off project funds for new projects, but also to seek to increase the number of partner members.

We want to express our thanks to the many guilds who invested a lot of time and energy working to ensure that local CMOs helped in whatever way they could.

Some news from FSE office

Brussels office

FSE benefits from the continuing and strong support from UNI-Mei (Johannes Studinger). UNI-Mei has offered FSE to share its office. FSE can also use meeting rooms facilities. FSE pays no rent.

The staff is currently composed of :

Amélie Clément, free-lance FSE manager (Tours/Brussels), 20 hrs/week since January 2015.

David Kavanagh, free-lance FSE Executive Officer (Dublin/Brussels), +/- 2 days a week since January 2015.

Both are under contract until the end of 2015.

financial report

Due to the work load for the preparation of the FSE Award, we are not in a position to present member guilds a detailed financial report at this annual general assembly.

The FSE has received more income, thanks to new partner members and sponsors for the FSE Award, but the intense level of activities this year has engaged more expenses.

According to Belgium law, annual financial accounts must be approved by the general assembly within 6 months following the closure of accounts. Now that FSE annual general assemblies are convened in Fall (to coincide with world conferences), FSE should 1) change the calendar year for its financial administration or 2) convene an extraordinary general assembly before 30th of June each year to approve the financial accounts of the previous year. In order to avoid extra costs and travels with a physical meeting and, on the other hand, heavy, complex and expensive administrative procedures to change the calendar year, we are studying the possibility of organising a virtual AGM by e-mail, with one item on the agenda: approve the accounts.

SOME PROJECTS FOR THE NEXT YEAR

WCOS 04

If the French guild confirms the organisation of the Fourth World Conference of Screenwriters, collaborating with the French guild, IAWG and the other parties involved will be one of the main tasks for FSE in 2016.

Partner members

Together with guilds, FSE will continue to approach CMOs and other organisations to recruit new partner members.

Collective Bargaining

UNI-Mei is still willing to cooperate with FSE on a common project and apply to specific budget lines of the European Commission (DG Employment). Part of the work will consist in designing a project and preparing the application, for a project (if selected) starting end 2016.

Communication

The organisation of the FSE Award has been the occasion to get new contacts. There will be an important work to improve the database and visibility on social networks. A pending project is to have a new website (new hosting, new design).

Direct lobbying

Now that we have a clear and detailed policy statement on remuneration and better contracts, we can increase the amount of direct lobbying that we do ourselves, instead of relying on the contacts of other organisations to get our views included in joint statements or to piggy-back into various meetings.

So, in addition to continuing to work with various useful groupings, we will also seek meeting in the commission and the Parliament to pursue the agenda in our Better Contracts document.

Creators Conference

As outlined above, we propose to participate in the new Creators conference with the other four creators' organisations. This would again involve an invitation to the individual members of FSE to attend. Which would mean two FSE events for member guilds again next year – the Creators conference in the Spring and the WCOS in October .