

September 24. 2024

## **FSE Country report – Norway**

As requested, here are some initial information about the Norwegian Writers' Guild, as requested from FSE:

Contact information:

- Dramatikerforbundet / Writers' Guild of Norway was founded 1938 and is a union and a guild for screenwriters and playwrights.

You will find the official contact information for our Guild at the bottom of this page.

- Other important contacts:

Chair, main responsibility for the theatre field: Ellisiv Lindkvist

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FSE representative and co-chair, main responsibility for film and TV-series: Øyvind Rune Stålen

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General Secretary: Tonje Kristensen

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Legal officer: Kaja Hedenberg

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Administration (Office manager: Eli Bangstad)

[post@dramatiker.no](mailto:post@dramatiker.no)

Information Officer: Torunn Eikanger

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- Number of members:
  - Ordinary members: 511
  - Associate members: 101
  - Student members: 42

Many of our members work for both film, TV and stage. The numbers are quite vague, but it would be safe to say that more members work in film and TV-series, than in the theatre.

- URL links to collective agreements applicable to screenwriters in Norway:



- <https://s3.eu-north-1.amazonaws.com/dramatikerforbundet/NDFrammeavtale101219.pdf>  
Framework-agreement between Norwegian National Broadcaster (NRK) (TV) and Writers' Guild of Norway
  - <https://s3.eu-north-1.amazonaws.com/dramatikerforbundet/2023-06-12-Endelig-rammeavtale-dramaserier-VP-og-DF.pdf>  
Framework-agreement between national Producers Association and Writers' Guild of Norway regarding dramatic productions for TV.
  - <https://s3.eu-north-1.amazonaws.com/dramatikerforbundet/NDFrammeavtale101219.pdf>  
Framework-agreement between national Producers Association and Writers' Guild of Norway regarding full-length feature drama productions primarily for cinema.
- URL links to national legislation specific to screenwriters, covering the conditions of writing services and exploitation of author's rights, as well as aspects of social protection and taxation.  
<https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2018-06-15-40?q=%C3%A5v1>  
Writers' Guild of Norway does not provide any tax counseling.
- Collective management organizations (CMOs) to which our members belong, and their scope of intervention, specifying whether they are only involved in rights that must be managed collectively (such as private copying) or whether they are also responsible for managing the rights to appropriate and proportionate remuneration of scriptwriters, and in this case the rights that can be entrusted to management by CMOs (linear and non-linear exploitation, videograms, etc.).
- Norwaco, collective and individual for TV, education, museums and public places, also archive (productions published before 2015 on NRK), as well as collective compensation for private copying
  - Writers' Guild of Norway: collective and individual
  - F©R: individual rights management for streaming for directors, editors, photographers and some screenwriters.

## **Writers' Guild of Norway – the last 12 months**

### **Changes in Management**

Our former general secretary Astrid Storrusten resigned in December 2023, and we were forced to prioritize our resources to get through the months that followed. We managed until June 1<sup>st</sup>, when our new general secretary, Tonje Kristensen, came aboard. Tonje has a long and broad background in politics, both culture politics and more, and we expect to benefit strongly from her knowledge, her connections and her personal skills.

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### **TV Drama Situation**

After experiencing a veritable boom in tv drama production the last years, the gold rush is definitely over for now. The public broadcasters NRK and TV2 have both been forced to cut their budgets significantly, and Viasat, which has been one of the biggest platforms for ordering Norwegian tv-drama has all but shut down their drama department (undoubtedly connected with both their astronomical spending on sports rights and the failure to meet their goal in acquiring new subscribers in foreign markets). As a result, we have more competent Norwegian drama writers than ever (and more members of our guild), but at the same time, less available work. We have no doubt in the return of high activity, but since times are tough right now, we are afraid many talented screenwriters will give up their writing careers for other work.

In June 2023, we managed to sign a new agreement on rights with the producers. In short, the deal calculates the minimum payment for rights to the writers from the total budget of the production. We believe this deal structure is the most flexible and fair kind we could make, and it seems that it is being used more and more. However, some broadcasters and streaming platforms are refusing to accept the terms the producers have agreed upon, and this is a problem that we have yet to solve. When put before an ultimatum, the producers will choose to give in to the conditions of the buyer.

After signing the rights agreement, we have been preparing a demand for a collective agreement regarding salary for tv-writers. In this process we are leaning heavily on LO, the largest Norwegian labor union, of which we are a member since 2016. The change of the times has been beneficial in getting our members behind such a demand, as more and more screenwriters see the benefit in being paid in the form of a salary, as this provides them with a much stronger economical safety net, compared to those who simply invoice their pay. A salary qualifies the writers for unemployment pay, better health benefits and other social costs. Some writers have already started to demand salary payment since a few years back, but a collective agreement will provide a better framework that will be simpler for all parties.

### **Political Work**

Norway has still not implemented a co-financing scheme (AMT) for streaming services. Right now, the OECD is working on a global tax for large, multi-national corporations, and our government are concerned that they wouldn't be able to receive the OECD taxes from the likes of Netflix and Disney, if they are already taxed through AMT. Our efforts to convince the government that a demand for co-financing is different from a tax have not been successful so far.

We are also working for a stronger film commission, which would provide more work for Norwegian crews and creatives, as well as being a huge economic benefit for other businesses throughout Norway (hotels, caterers, transportation companies etc.). The Norwegian national budget will be released on October 7<sup>th</sup>. We can only be hopeful,

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but so far, we have not received any positive signals regarding this from our government.

### **Playwrights**

Writers' Guild of Norway also organizes playwrights, and we are mighty proud of our member Jon Fosse, who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2024. In 2023 we reached a new agreement with the theaters, which gave a significant payment bump for playwrights. However, the deal may have been so "good" that many theatres say they can't afford to produce new plays, and resort to reprise Ibsen and Fosse, or Shakespeare and Strindberg for that matter. Our biggest effort in the theatre field has been to work for an "Incentive for New Norwegian Drama", which would be a kind of state subsidy for putting new plays up on stage. Our goal is to get the state to fund half the rate for new Norwegian plays, to encourage more theatres to take a chance on fresh, original material. As of this week, the government has proposed such an arrangement. There will be a hearing this fall, on the specifics of this, and if all goes well, it will be implemented January 1. 2025.

On behalf of the Writers' Guild of Norway,

Øyvind Rune Stålen  
Co-chair

