



## FSE Newsletter

### February 2011

#### In this issue

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- Edito by Christina Kallas
- Campaign against 90 minutes of screenwriting in Turkey
- Union Rights for Self-Employed Creative Workers
- Spanish Copyright Manifesto
- World Copyright Summit 2011
- Flemish decision on Product Placement
- Digital Dividend
- Conference on Screenwriting Research in Belgium
- Digital Dividend
- Screenwriting conference in Australia

## FSE 10 years

#### Edito by Christina Kallas

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Our General assembly, which takes place on 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> March in Brussels marks ten years of the FSE. In this instance it seems appropriate that we use the opportunity of our meeting to **pause for a moment and look to the future.**

Our successes are far from insubstantial. Still, the problems we face are serious, indeed existential. The **RISE Festival**; the **First Conference of European Screenwriters** and the **First World Conference of screenwriters**; friendships struck with other guilds from around the world; lobbying of the European Union's institutions on the issues that face us; a lot of detailed work on the status of the writer and, in some ways most important, the **development of many creative and practical friendships bilaterally between many of the members of FSE**, mark just a few of the highlights of our hard work over the years.

On the other hand, none of the many initiatives we have tried have brought us to the point where we have consistent and sufficient funds available to us to establish the kind of full time professional organisation that we need. The Board of the FSE is very conscious of the difficulties which many members face in finding the fees for membership each year, especially in a time of recession – but at the same time we know that that money, of itself, is insufficient for even our basic needs. Still, planning our work, when we know that our resources are insufficient to the task in hand, was and remains a challenge.

In this difficult context we nonetheless have to plan, set goals and measure our successes. Broadly speaking the Board thinks that for the next period we should concentrate on three tasks in addition to the basic one of the constant search for funds. These are a) **EU lobbying** (reform of collecting societies, competition law and the right to collectively negotiate, the forthcoming Green Paper on audiovisual); b) **initiatives around the status of the writer** with a particular emphasis on initiatives to strengthen our exercise of the right to collectively bargain; and c) a **new**

**prioritisation of the bilateral and multilateral contacts and initiatives between members guilds as well as with writers organisations outside the FSE.**

We know how hard you all work and how many demands there are on your time – but **we hope that you will find time before our General Assembly to think about our collective priorities over the next period and to bring your ideas to the meeting** - and of course to learn how to sing 'Happy Birthday' or to bake a cake for our tenth anniversary.

Looking forward to seeing you.



Christina Kallas  
President  
On behalf of the Board and staff of the FSE

### Quote of the month

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The right to access culture, so often invoked, should never be confused with an alleged right to have free access to any cultural product whatsoever. We creators are willing to collaborate in the search for formulas that enable students and people with limited income to enjoy cultural products, but we firmly reject that, in a fully mercantiled society, ours would be the only unrewarded work.

► Point 6 of the Spanish Copyright Manifesto : [www.copirrait.es](http://www.copirrait.es)

## Collective Bargaining

### Campaign against 90 minutes of screenwriting in Turkey

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SENDER, the Turkish guild of screenwriters, organized a demonstration on 24<sup>th</sup> December in Istanbul to protest against the too long duration of TV series, which are over the world and European standards, mostly because of advertisement and the related regulations. In a press release sent by SENDER we can read : "The TV series in Turkey are notorious for their duration of 90 to 120 minutes. On the last couple of years the condition has got worse (...) This lowers not just the quality of what is written, but also the performance of actors and leads to unsecured working conditions (...) Approximately 1500 screenwriters, actors, cinema professionals and employees stopped their activity and gathered to protest against their working condition and the trend of ever-increasing episode run times." This demonstration is part of a large scale campaign against the 90 minutes of screenwriting while Turkey is on the threshold of a big transition on the broadcasting area.

FSE and several member guilds are supporting this campaign by providing information on the situation in European countries and by sending letters of support.

► **More information** at the end of this newsletter.

## Union Rights for Self-Employed Creative Workers

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ILO (the International Labour Organisation) will fund a survey that FIM (the International Federation of Musicians) will conduct on the impact of European competition rules on Labour laws and the rights of free-lance and self-employed workers. The European creators' group, including FSE, gathered in Paris on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011 to elaborate the framework of this survey.

▶ **References** : a survey by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living Working Conditions on self-employed workers: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/comparative/tn0801018s/tn0801018s\\_3.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/comparative/tn0801018s/tn0801018s_3.htm)

## Copyright

### Call for support to Anti-Piracy Law in Spain

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ALMA, the Spanish Scriptwriters Union, member of the FSE, is circulating worldwide a call for support from fellow screenwriters. "For the first time in Spain a member of parliament has bravely proposed an anti-piracy law (...) Various Spanish writers have signed a manifesto demanding political resolve and above all justice in this matter". The campaign is conducted by the Plataforma de Creadores y Artistas por el Copyright (a platform of creators and artists in favor of copyright).

▶ **Read and sign the Manifesto in English** : <http://www.copirrait.es>

▶ **More info** : [coordinacion@sindicatoalma.es](mailto:coordinacion@sindicatoalma.es)

### World Copyright Summit 2011

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CISAC (the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers) organizes on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011 in Brussels a conference on "Creating value in the digital economy / Create - Connect - Respect". This conference is presented as an opportunity to "discuss the future of creative industries and creators' rights in the digital age targeted at all those involved in the creation, production, licensing, distribution and dissemination of creative works".

▶ **More information** : [www.copyrightsummit.com](http://www.copyrightsummit.com)

## Industry

### Product Placement

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In September, the Flemish Government issued a decision on the use of a logo for the indication of product placement in TV programmes. The decision, made public in October 2010, obliges broadcasters to display the logo in a clear and contrastive way for at least five seconds at the beginning and at the end of programmes containing product placement and after every break.

▶ **More in IRIS newsletter** : <http://merlin.obs.coe.int/newsletter.php>

▶ **Publication** : *Product Placement*, a publication by the European Audiovisual Observatory, which you can download at [http://www.obs.coe.int/oea\\_publications/iris\\_plus/iplus3LA\\_2010.pdf.en](http://www.obs.coe.int/oea_publications/iris_plus/iplus3LA_2010.pdf.en)

## Digital Dividend

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The European Audiovisual Observatory announces a new publication of its IRIS Plus series, this time on digital dividend in the frame of the European transition to digital terrestrial television (DTT). The IRIS publications regularly report on legal developments related to the audiovisual industry in Europe.

► **More info** : [http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit\\_aliasid=2585](http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=2585)

## Screenwriting

### Conference on Screenwriting Research

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The International Screenwriting Research Network will held its fourth conference in Brussels on 8-9-10 September 2011 on the theme « Beyond Boundaries: Screenwriting Across Media ». The conference will bring together academics as well as practitioners interested in screenwriting research. "I have attended two of the previous conferences and I have found them very valuable and inspiring also from the point of view of the practicing screenwriter", says Raija Talvio, from Sunklo, the Screenwriters' guild of Finland.

The organizers invite submissions on various topics such as "Rethinking screenwriting in intercultural perspective", "New approaches to developing the screen idea", "Scriptwriting for interactive narratives (as games)", etc. The network also publishes "The Journal of Screenwriting", a peer-reviewed journal.

Registration costs : 75 euros / Deadline of call for papers : 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011

► **More in French** : [www.screenwriting.be](http://www.screenwriting.be)

► **More in English** : [www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=180925](http://www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=180925)

► **Contact** : [Ronald Geerts, rgeerts@vub.ac.be](mailto:Ronald.Geerts@vub.ac.be)

### Screenwriting conference in Australia

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"Just shoot me : getting the script on the screen" is the provocative title of the national screenwriters' conference organized by the Australian Writers Guild on 16-18 February 2011 in Victoria. "The Conference brings together the best of local and overseas writing talent for two and a half days — all designed to inspire, provoke thought, and to celebrate the best of screenwriting in Australia and beyond".

The AWG offers an interesting program focused on the craft of writing for the screen. Attendees will discuss issues such as the future of writing; the role of the show runner in US productions; the art and craft of adapting for the screen; writing for kids, for documentaries, for women, for games, etc. Featured guests are Shane Brennan, Nicholas Meyer, Jimmy McGovern, David Williamson AO, John Collee and Jan Sardi.

► **More info** : <http://www.awg.com.au/nsc/welcome.html>

### A few other events...

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#### 31 January in Rotterdam

MEDIA Mundus (2011-2013), a broad international cooperation programme of the European Commission for the audiovisual industry to strengthen cultural and commercial relations between Europe's film industry and film-makers of third countries, proposed a panel discussion

on how the further developments of the programme can respond to current and future challenges.

▶ **More info** : [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/mundus/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/mundus/index_en.htm)

### **10-20 February 2011 in Berlin**

Berlinale - Berlin International Film Festival

▶ **More info** : [www.berlinale.de](http://www.berlinale.de)

### **13-15 February 2011 in Berlin**

The Berlinale Co-Production Market will gather about 500 experienced international producers, film financiers, sales agents and distributors as well as broadcasting and funding representatives, who will come together to initiate international co-productions.

▶ **More info** : [http://www.berlinale.de/en/das\\_festival/berlinale\\_co-production\\_market/Berlinale\\_Co-Production\\_Market.html](http://www.berlinale.de/en/das_festival/berlinale_co-production_market/Berlinale_Co-Production_Market.html)

## **Culture**

### **Culture in Europe**

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**We are more** is a Europe-wide arts advocacy campaign set up by Culture Action Europe, the umbrella advocacy organisation for the arts and culture in Europe. "It will use the upcoming EU political and financial negotiations for the period 2014-2020 as a timely opportunity to develop and sharpen the arguments used when advocating for arts and culture. The ultimate goal of the campaign is to contribute to a strengthened recognition of the role of arts and culture in the development of our European societies (...) **We are more** is a positive message that communicates the multiple ways in which individuals, communities and arts organisations do more, and contribute more than is superficially apparent".

▶ **Join the campaign and read the manifesto in several languages** : [www.wearemore.eu](http://www.wearemore.eu)

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### **FSE monthly newsletter**

If your organization would like to have news published in the next issue of the FSE monthly newsletter, or if you have suggestions to improve it, please contact us at [info@scenaristes.org](mailto:info@scenaristes.org).

## In Depth...

### A report from SENDER

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The **TV series in Turkey** are notorious for their duration of **90 to 120 minutes**. On the last couple of years the condition has got worse; the shooting crew of one TV serial works **over 18 hours a day** while writing one episode certainly goes beyond screenwriter's energy and effort. This lowers not just the quality of what is written, but also the performance of actors and leads to **unsecured working conditions**.

On the 24th of December 2010, the largest protest of **Turkish Screenwriters Association** against 90 minutes of screenwriting took place in Istanbul. Approximately **1500** screenwriters, actors, cinema professionals and employees stopped their activity and gathered to protest their working condition and the trend of ever-increasing episode run times. Producers, unions and guilds have supported the **demonstration** and requested the **international standards**.

Turkish TV channels are increasingly exploiting the creative labor of the people who produce the **ever-longer shows**. However broadcasters say that finding ways to attract more advertising revenue is an economic necessity. The TV channels say that the minimum episode run time is **85 minutes** and it is the main way that they make their revenue. The reason for such long episodes is because the TV channels want to air more and more advertisements during a show.

In 1980's, the serials were not even **45 minutes**. In 1990's it was at most **50-60 minutes** in Turkey. The Turkish Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK) passed the advertising law seven years ago and revised it recently, which mandates no commercials be shown in the first 30 minutes of a TV serial, and that there be a minimum of 20 minutes between each commercial break. In order to insert more commercials into an episode, TV channels have made use of a legal gap: the law does not limit the length of the commercial breaks and RTUK does not regulate the length of the television shows. As such, show runtimes have and continue to increase (30+20+20+20+... minutes for four commercial breaks).

SENDER has lobbied the major TV Channels, Turkish Parliament and The Turkish Radio and Television Supreme Council to shorten the show runtimes to their original length of 45 minutes or increase pay and/or limit working hours for the industry's employees in correlation with the now 90-120 minute show runtimes. The TV channels have not responded yet, however noticed SENDER by media that they refuse to limit the show runtimes, adding that if show runtimes were cut in half, screenwriters' compensation would be cut in half as well.

**SENDER asks for the support of all screenwriter guilds and colleagues all over the world and requests that you follow our campaign as we aim to improve working conditions and protect creative rights for screenwriters and others employed in the TV and film industry in Turkey.**

[www.scenaristes.org](http://www.scenaristes.org)

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