



Federation  
screenwriters  
EUROPE



# joint communiqué

March 2010

In this increasingly globalized era, the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe (FSE) and International Affiliation of Writers Guilds (IAWG) believe it is in the best interest of writers and their representative bodies to enhance communications between our two organizations.

Together, we represent approximately 25,000 writers in 27 countries; together, we can best meet the challenges of our changing industry.

We plan to circulate periodic communiqués on matters of mutual interest in the areas of copyright, collective bargaining, collective licensing and the profile of the screenwriter.

Should you have a brief item or suggestion for subsequent communiqués, please forward it to Amélie Clément at the FSE (info@scenaristes.org) or Sarah Dearing at the IAWG (sarah@iawg.org).

## Follow-Up to the 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference of Screenwriters

The text of the joint declaration from the 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference of Screenwriters held in Athens last year is available on both the FSE and IAWG websites. There is talk of a second conference in 2012 and we welcome ideas for building on the success of last year's event.



*Intervention of Yomi Ayeni*

- FSE : [www.scenaristes.org/conference09.htm](http://www.scenaristes.org/conference09.htm)
- IAWG : <http://iawg.org/AthensDeclaration.html>





## Festivals

One of the issues arising from the floor of conference is the widespread exclusion of writer information from international film festival programs and promotional material. FSE Vice President Sveinbjörn Baldvinsson is currently drafting a letter for review by a committee of esteemed writers including Britain's Guy Hibbert, who made the initial suggestion, UGS President Olivier Lorelle, WGA East member James Schamus and WGA West member Howard Rodman, who independently brought the issue to the attention of WGA East Executive Director, Lowell Peterson, shortly after it was discussed in Athens.



*Fred Breinersdorfer, Arvind David, Rebecca Schechter, Julian Friedmann, Lucinda Englehart*

Once the letter is approved by both organizations, the initial planned action is to send it to the major festivals and to begin compiling data on which festivals are supportive of writers and which are not. Any information or specific festival experiences can be sent to either the FSE ([info@scenaristes.org](mailto:info@scenaristes.org)) or IAWG ([sarah@iawg.org](mailto:sarah@iawg.org)).



*Lowell Peterson, WGA East Executive Director*

## ACTA Talks in New Zealand

The next round of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) negotiations will be held in Wellington, New Zealand in April with a view to concluding the talks later this year. Copyright liberals and consumer groups are driving the debate with a focus on the secrecy of the talks and opposition to the proposed graduated response (three-strikes) to illegal downloads. While the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) is lobbying on behalf of rights holders, there is little public sympathy for the studios so the voice of creators is not being heard.

Steven Gannaway, Executive Director of the New Zealand Writers Guild, has proposed that we seize the opportunity to communicate a united writers' position on ACTA and anti-piracy measures prior to the talks. A draft will be circulated later this month with the intention of including a list of supporting Guilds.

An excellent summary of the state of the talks was published in the New York Times on Feb. 8, 2010.

- Link : [www.nytimes.com/2010/02/08/technology/08piracy.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/08/technology/08piracy.html)

## European Screenwriters Manifesto

Launched in February 2007, the Manifesto is still available in English and in other languages on the website of the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe. Signatures are still coming in, however, if you signed the Manifesto between February 2009 and January 2010, your signature may have been lost so please sign on again. If you haven't yet signed, please consider doing so.

- Manifesto : [www.scenaristes.org/manifesto.htm](http://www.scenaristes.org/manifesto.htm)





## Implementation of Anti-Piracy Bills

Several countries have recently tabled bills that would place the onus on rights holders to prove digital copyright violations, attach a monetary value, and file complaints with ISPs. One such proposal in New Zealand has prompted rights holders to issue a qualified endorsement of the anti-piracy measures, tempered by concern over the complexity of the procedures.

Should these sorts of measures be implemented either domestically, or through ACTA, are Guilds in a position to file complaints on behalf of their members or will this action fall to the collecting societies and other bodies? Now is the time to begin discussions and share strategies on how the rights of our combined membership will be served.

The European Audiovisual Social Dialogue Committee, of which UNI-MEI is a member, is calling on the European Commission to introduce specific legislation to protect copyright holders and to conduct more research into the financial impact of unlawful file sharing and the link to job losses. Such research could yield essential data for those Guilds whose digital bills will require that rights holders attach a realistic loss of revenue value to their claims of piracy. UNI-MEI's statement may be found on their website.

- Link : [www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/sec\\_20081016\\_gbkcEn](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/sec_20081016_gbkcEn)

## On the Horizon

### Funding for International Projects

Writer-Producer members may be interested in accessing the €15 million Media Mundus fund established to strengthen international cooperation in the audiovisual industry. The EU will provide the funding from 2011-2013 for projects submitted by

audiovisual professionals from Europe and from third countries. The first call for proposals is likely to be published in the second half of 2010.

- Link : [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/media/overview/media\\_mundus/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/media/overview/media_mundus/index_en.htm)

### Copyright Levies

Talks broke down in early January between the collecting societies, represented by GESAC, and DigitalEurope, the umbrella group for consumer electronics manufacturers, over changes to copyright levies. DigitalEurope will take the matter to the European Commission directly later this year arguing that the current system of levies is inconsistent and overly complex, with charges on a mid-range multi-function printer, for example, ranging from €178.84 (\$256.2) in Belgium, to nothing in the Netherlands. According to the Financial Times, the levies netted more than €2bn in 2009.

## Milestones

Writers of iLarious became the first creators of content for an iPhone app to be represented by a labor union, the Writers Guild of America, East (WGAE). Under the agreement, writers for apps such as "This Just In" (which delivers 10-15 jokes a day to the iPhone) will get to count their jokes written for the app towards WGAE health insurance and other benefits. Comedy writers covered by this new agreement hail from "The Daily Show", "The Onion", "Human Giant" and "Saturday Night Live" among other famous comedy programs.

iLarious is among 22 digital media companies who became WGA E signatories in 2009.

