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To Commissioner Neelie Kroes
Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for the Digital Agenda
Neelie.Kroes@ec.europa.eu

Brussels, January the 9th, 2012

Re. Who feeds the artist ?

Dear Commissioner,

I refer to your speech delivered to the Forum d'Avignon on 19 November 2011, *Who feeds the artist ?* As the representatives of Europe's working screenwriters I think we can say that we agree with every word you said.

The Federation of Screenwriters in Europe has as its members twenty four writers organisations for nineteen countries representing working screenwriters.

You acknowledge in your speech one thing that is central to us – which is the difficult, well-nigh impossible, economic situation of creators - and point out, what is obvious to us on a practical day-to-day basis, that the current economic situation in Europe is exacerbating those problems. Incidentally we agree that copyright is not the only issue here.

There is a second point from your speech where we agree entirely with the sentiment but have the impression that you believe that we do not. We are entirely in favour of innovation, of new thinking, of new ideas – how could we not be? We are creators and therefore instinctively supportive of the new, and secondly we have nothing much to lose economically.

Fédération des Scénaristes d'Europe // Federation of Screenwriters in Europe

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May we propose something simple? You are extremely clear in your determination to create a European digital market place. As you know such a market place is meaningless without content. We create content. Can the European Union allow the creators to establish the value and therefore the price of their work inside the new market place? Instead of having our work sold to producers and broadcasters before it is even made – and therefore with no reference whatever to what it's actual value in a digital market might be – can we be paid according to the success of what we create in the new market place which you are working so determinedly to create?

We are not convinced that large telecoms companies have our interests at heart. We do not believe that collecting societies are thinking much beyond their own survival. We do not have the resources to campaign at the level that either of those forces do. But we do create the lifeblood that sustains them both.

We, the organization which represents Europe's working screenwriters and which is in close collaboration with all the writers' organizations all over the world, are perhaps the only ones who can actively help turn the aspiration referred to in your speech to "deliver a system of recognition and reward that puts artists and creators at its heart" into reality. We are ready to work with you towards that end and would like to ask you to involve us in an agenda of change as early as possible.

We believe that this is the best way to ensure the creation of wonderful content which will feed the development of the new digital market place.

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you or your officials at your convenience to discuss any aspect of the contents of this brief letter and would like to repeat our appreciation of your excellent speech in Avignon.

Yours sincerely

Christina Kallas
President of the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe

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