



Federation  
screenwriters  
EUROPE

# joint communiqué

September 2010

## Organizing

### Animation

During negotiations for the 2010-2011 Independent Production Agreement (IPA), the *Writers Guild of Canada (WGC)* and producer representatives agreed to form an Animation Working Group to discuss statistics and working conditions in advance of the next round of bargaining in 2012. The group of animation writers and producers met early in June and the dialogue was significant and productive.

While many terms for animation writing are included in the collective agreement, the WGC has made negotiated minimum rates its top bargaining priority for 2012.

The second meeting will be held in late October. The producers agreed to provide specifics on budgets and financing, and the WGC will present additional information on the volume of contracts and levels of fees.

### Digital Media

1. In the first five months of 2010, the *Writers Guild of America, East (WGAE)* signed 23 digital media companies to new contracts. This more than doubles the number of digital signatories signed by the WGAE in 2009 and brings the total to 43.

Twenty eight writers have become Guild members as a result of these new contracts.

Further to this success, the WGAE announced in August that web news writer/producers at Chicago CBS station WBBM voted unanimously to be represented by the Writers Guild, East. These are the first news writer/producers working exclusively on web content to join the WGAE, the union that has long represented CBS News employees writing for television and radio.

2. The *Writers Guild of Canada (WGC)* has released new guidelines for writers and agents to consult when negotiating contracts for digital production. Writing for digital media, including mobisodes, webisodes, interactive dramas, podcasts and games are covered under the guild's collective agreement, however minimums are currently negotiable. Suggested rates were formulated by the WGC from statistics on existing contracts, and in consultation with members already working in digital formats.

The full text of the guidelines is available on the WGC web site.

### Feature Films

The *Australian Writers Guild (AWG)* has developed a Feature Film writing agreement which is fast becoming the industry standard. While Australian law





prohibits binding collective agreements, bi-lateral agreements are now in place with some of the country's biggest producers and production houses.

## Television

The *Writers Guild of Great Britain (WGGB)* has signed a milestone agreement with broadcaster ITV to bring minimum fees more into line with current standards and introduce 100% advances on many shows for the first time. For details, please go to : WGGB Blog : ITV

Send us news of your organizing efforts for inclusion in the next communiqué.

## Credits

Members of the *Writers Guild of America* strongly endorsed a revision to their screen credits manual to equalize the rules for writers who double as directors or producers on non-original scripts.

The new screen credits rule eliminates the regulation requiring that « production executives » such as writer-producers and writer-directors contribute at least 50% of the screenplay if they're not the first writer. That rule remains in effect for original screenplays.

With the approval, the language has been changed so that production executives and writers both must contribute « more than 33% » of the screenplay if they're not the first writer.

## Copyright theft and graduated response

The postponement of a vote at the European Parliament on the Gallo Report until the Autumn/Fall is another indication of the difficulties of finding an effective response to widespread copyright theft on the internet. The Report suggests some move towards the system of graduated response along the lines of those systems which have been introduced into law in France and in the United Kingdom.

The report reflects many of the same concerns seen in the draft of the proposed Anti Counterfeiting Trade Agreement recently published by the negotiators.

**Gallo Report :**  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-438.164+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>

**Anti Counterfeiting Trade Agreement :**  
[http://www.ustr.gov/webfm\\_send/1883](http://www.ustr.gov/webfm_send/1883)

## Net neutrality

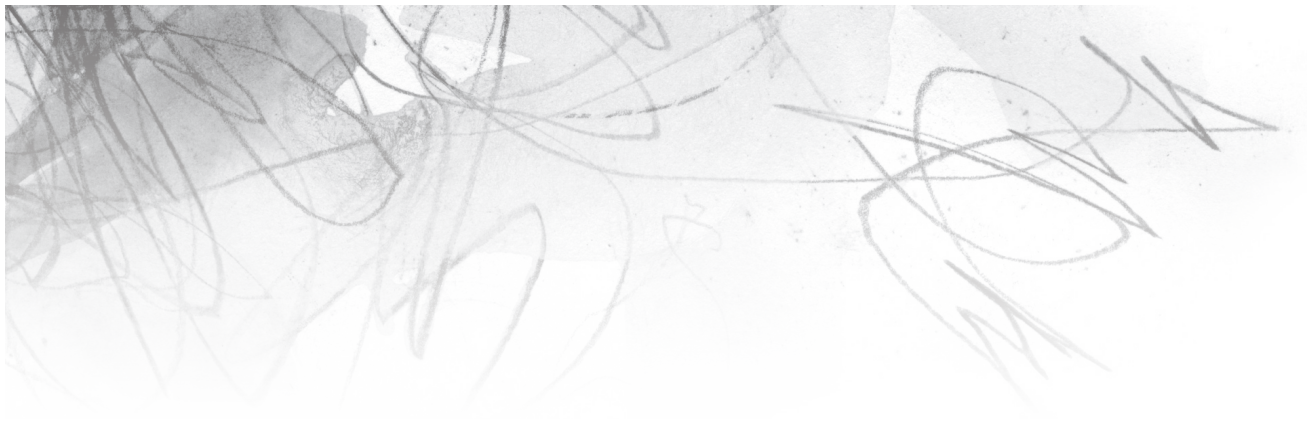
The Federal Communications Commission of the United States launched an Inquiry in June on issues related to the framework for broadband internet.

The Writers Guilds of America have filed comments supporting the concept of Net neutrality – the idea that all traffic on the internet should be treated equally, that ISPs and multinational conglomerates should be prevented from paying for faster access to consumers which would disadvantage creative independents and start-ups.

Also in June the European Commission announced a « public consultation on the open internet and net neutrality in Europe » to which the FSE will respond.

President Obama, Chairman Genachowski of the FCC and the Vice President of the European Com-





mission with responsibility for the Digital Agenda, Neelie Kroes, have all made public pronouncements committing themselves to Internet freedom.

**Federal Communications Commission's Inquiry :**

[http://www.fcc.gov/Daily\\_Releases/Daily\\_Business/2010/db0617/FCC-10-114A1.pdf](http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2010/db0617/FCC-10-114A1.pdf)

**European Commission :**

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/policy/ecomms/library/public\\_consult/net\\_neutrality/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/ecomms/library/public_consult/net_neutrality/index_en.htm)

## Digital Agenda

The new European Commission published its plans in its document « Europe 2020, A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth » which gives a high priority to the issues associated with the digital revolution. This was reflected in the makeup of the commission itself in which Neelie Kroes has been appointed as Vice President with responsibility for the Digital Agenda. Her desire to move quickly on the many issue was evidenced by the publication of a communication from the Commission entitled « A digital Agenda for Europe ».

Among the many proposals listed in the document is an intention to simplify copyright clearance, management and cross-border licensing by proposing a framework Directive on collective rights management by 2010.

**European Commission's strategy :**

[http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm)

**A digital Agenda for Europe :**

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/digital-agenda/documents/digital-agenda-communication-en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/documents/digital-agenda-communication-en.pdf)

## EBU proposal

One of the few practical suggestions put forward in the complex debate about licensing the distribution of audiovisual content online in Europe comes from

the European Broadcasting Union which points out that the principles behind the Cable and Satellite Directive of 1993, which regulated how rights holders are compensated when their material is retransmitted on cable, could also possibly be applied online.

**EBU :**

[http://www.ebu.ch/registration/policy2010/images/EBU%20Copyright%20WHITE%20Paper\\_EN\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.ebu.ch/registration/policy2010/images/EBU%20Copyright%20WHITE%20Paper_EN_FINAL.pdf)

## Festivals Action

A working group of members Guy Hibbert (WGGB), Olivier Lorelle (UGS), James Schamus (WGA E), Sveinbjörn Baldvinsson, (FLH), and Howard Rodman, (WGA W) has written a letter and questionnaire to survey the profile of writers at international film festivals. To date, six of the top festivals have received surveys, with more to follow. The results will be published in 2011 as a *World Screenwriter Film Festival List of Excellence*.

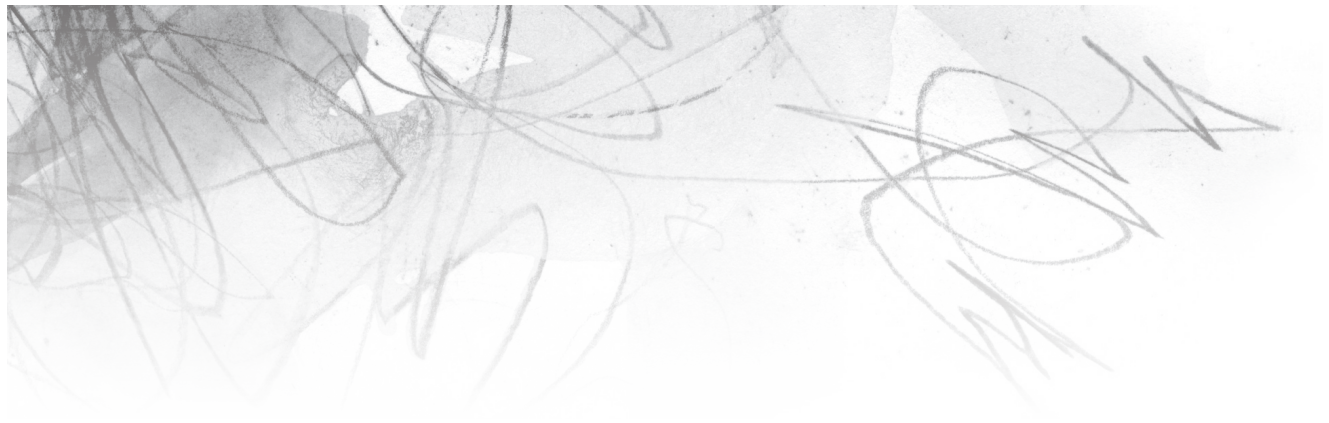
## WGA Awards

### Revised Submission Guidelines

Submissions for the WGA Awards will be accepted until 8:30 p.m. (EST) on Friday, October 15, 2010.

Under revised rules, theatrical screenplays produced under the jurisdiction of the WGA or of an affiliate Guild are no longer automatically deemed submitted for the award. A completed entry form must be submitted for WGA awards consideration.

To be eligible, a theatrical motion picture must have been written under the WGA MBA or under a bona fide collective bargaining agreement of the Australian Writers Guild, Writers Guild of Canada, Writers Guild of Great Britain, Irish Playwrights & Screenwriters Guild or the New Zealand Writers Guild.



Submissions for films written under the jurisdiction of an affiliate guild must include a letter from the affiliate guild verifying awards eligibility. Please note that an affiliate Guild may impose additional requirements for a writer to be considered covered by its collective bargaining agreement.

For television series, scripts must be contracted by a signatory to the MBA in order to be eligible and a completed entry form must also be submitted.

Additional information and entry forms may be found on both the WGA West and WGA East web sites.

## In Memoriam

### Screenwriter Suso Cecchi d'Amico

During the closing session of the 2009 World Conference of Screenwriters in Athens, a short film was aired in which the famous Italian scriptwriter Suso Cecchi d'Amico addressed the screenwriters of the world gathered in the conference room.



Caterina d'Amico, her daughter and CEO of Rai Cinema, translated :

« I am a crafts woman. Screenwriting is a craft in every sense. That is the way I have been doing it at any rate. I have been extremely lucky, because I have had a long, successful career; but most of all because my wonderful profession has enabled me to meet great people and to work with them, building solid friendships and having a lot of fun. Soon after I started writing films, I was the co-founder of the first Italian Guild of Screenwriters and Screen Directors. That was some 60 years ago, and we were only a fistful of lucky friends. So I am impressed and moved at the thought that so many distinguished colleagues are now gathering for the First World Conference of Screenwriters. I trust you will carry on fighting our battles in this world of growing complexity. I wish you all a most pleasant and fruitful meeting, and I wish I were with you. »

Suso Cecchi d'Amico died in Roma on 31 July 2010, at 96 years old. Her name is closely associated with the golden age of Italian cinema though she continued to work long after that period. She collaborated with Vittorio De Sica, Michelangelo Antonioni, Mario Monicelli, Luigi Comencini, Francesco Rosi, Mauro Bolognini, Franco Zeffirelli and above all with Luchino Visconti. In 1994 she received a lifetime achievement award at the Venice Film Festival.

