



**Press Release**  
**Brussels, 30th November 2011**

### **Audiovisual authors call on legislators to link them to the success of their works online**

European officials and a variety of actors from across the audiovisual sector came together in Brussels on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011 to look at what the digital revolution means for audiovisual authors like directors and screenwriters and came up with concrete ideas for how this revolution could be seized as an opportunity to finally link authors' remuneration more directly to the success of their works.

Organised by the Society of Audiovisual Authors (SAA), the conference was supported by four MEPs from different countries and political groups who guided the afternoon's discussions: Mr Berlinguer (Italy, S&D), Mr Borys (Poland, EPP), Mrs Trüpel (Germany, Greens) and Mrs Wikström (Sweden, ALDE).

Mrs Kerstin Jorna, deputy head of Commissioner Barnier's cabinet, in her opening speech welcomed a timely conference following the consultation on the online distribution of audiovisual works. The consultation's chapter on the remuneration of audiovisual authors was inspired by SAA's White Paper on the issue which calls for European legislation to ensure fair remuneration for the online use of works.

An audience of key European officials and actors from the audiovisual sector heard how screenwriters and directors work and make a living, heavily depending on copyright and royalties while also hearing how online services are trying to create a dynamic and thriving European online VOD market. The afternoon closed with a session on creative solutions that underlined the need for clear rules and how collective discussions and agreements have already worked in some countries and should serve as inspiration for successful solutions for the future.

SAA now looks forward to the results of the Green Paper consultation and the European Commission's plans for action on the remuneration of audiovisual authors. It will contribute to the European Parliament report on the "Distribution of Audiovisual Content Online" which will be prepared by MEP Jean-Marie Cavada (France, EPP) and continue to work with the sector to build consensus on how to guarantee screenwriters and directors take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the online market.

The day closed with a screening of the recent LUX Prize winner, *Les Neiges du Kilimandjaro* by Robert Guédiguian.

#### **Quotes**

Cécile Despringre, Executive Director, SAA said: *"I was delighted to see how much support our call for action and cooperation received today both from the officials and other actors in the sector. If we are going to create a thriving online market for European works which benefits authors then collective discussions and solutions are essential. This makes me very positive about the future."*

Stijn Coninx, renowned Belgian screenwriter and director: *“Being creative as a writer and director is not only a job, it is an attitude in life and a personal vision. Respect for authors in the audiovisual sector relies very much on clear rules with our partners and the public on both contracts, rights and remuneration’s issues.”*

Robert Staats, General Manager of VG Wort commented: *“Today’s discussions just go to show how important a role collective management organisations can have in guaranteeing authors a fair return for their creation. I hope Europe’s politicians and officials can use today’s proceedings as a solid foundation for future action to support Europe’s creative talent.”*

G rard Krawczyk, renowned French screenwriter and director added: *“We authors need you politicians to improve the functioning of the online market and get fair remuneration for the online exploitation of our works. This is not only fair reward for our personal investment, it is also the future financing of tomorrow’s works.”*

Luigi Berlinguer MEP, added: *“I don’t think anyone would argue that we need to guarantee that our creators are remunerated properly for their work. I am sure that my colleagues in the European Parliament will pay close attention to future initiatives with this aim in mind.”*

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**About SAA**

The Society of Audiovisual Authors (SAA) is an association of European Collective Management Societies representing audiovisual authors. Through its members (25 societies in 18 countries) SAA represents over 120,000 film and television European screenwriters and directors. More information [www.saa-authors.eu](http://www.saa-authors.eu)

**The SAA board of Patrons**

Made up of 15 prominent European writers and directors, the SAA’s board of patrons gives a public face to the thousands of authors working every day in the audiovisual industry and relays their concerns and expectations.

**About SAA’s proposal for a collectively managed unwaivable remuneration right for online uses**

The SAA published its White Paper on audiovisual authors’ rights and remuneration in Europe in February 2011. The White Paper aimed to clarify the current situation for audiovisual authors across Europe and to make proposals on how to improve their remuneration for on-demand exploitations, notably through a collectively managed and unwaivable remuneration right. SAA followed the launch of the White Paper with a series of meetings with officials and actors from the audiovisual sector to reach consensus on the possibilities for such a proposal. This culminated in the publication of a Frequently Asked Questions document in November 2011 and the organization of the conference “Audiovisual Authors Online - Seizing the Digital Revolution”. The full White Paper along with executive summaries and the FAQ can be downloaded [here](#).