



PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN FILM DIRECTORS ADDRESS THE FUTURE

The Federation of European Film Directors held its annual General Assembly in Opatija, Croatia on 23rd and 24th September as guests of DHFR, the Croatian Film Directors Guild.

FERA (Fédération Européenne des Réalisateur de l'Audiovisuel) welcomed the European Documentary Network (EDN) as new associate member and now represents 39 European directors' associations and over 20,000 film and TV directors from 29 European countries. FERA's President is distinguished Hungarian director, István Szabó, who attended the Assembly in person.

Important twin themes were the continuing importance of the European director's creative vision amidst current financial insecurities, and the parallel need for directors to work more closely with independent producer colleagues to secure investment in film, defend our legitimate rights and promote Europe's multi-cultural identity in a fragmenting audiovisual world.

Concern was expressed at the still inadequate distribution of European films. Film funding schemes, both national and via the EU MEDIA programme, were discussed in some detail. Many EU states have made severe cuts, but delegates applauded the new support mechanisms of host nation Croatia, achieved via close collaboration between directors, producers and government.

FERA members debated solutions for online licensing of their works, and the urgent need to facilitate cross-border access, which, with more effective enforcement of anti-piracy legislation, could be key factors in boosting economic growth in the audiovisual sector. The General Assembly agreed FERA proposals to be developed and submitted to the European Commission in reply to the Green Paper consultation.

A new FERA Audiovisual Advocacy Manual was unveiled, detailing key EU institutions, relevant officials, and EU audiovisual and copyright legislation. It is designed as a practical tool for the 39 member associations to lobby their own governments and their elected officials in Brussels more effectively on directors' issues.

A newly published set of FERA Contract Guidelines was acclaimed by the Assembly. With English, Hungarian, Romanian and Italian versions available, and more translations due by December, it highlights a director's creative and economic rights, and the problem of 'buyout contracts' that oblige many European directors to give away their secondary (re-use) rights to financiers without any royalty payments. FERA will be seeking European legislation to end buyouts through an enforceable, unwaivable right to fair payment for any re-use of a director's work.