[DE] Remuneration of Scriptwriters for Commissioned Productions

IRIS 2012-10:1/10

Alexander Scheuer
Institute of European Media Law (EMR), Saarbrücken/Brussels

According to unanimous reports by the parties involved, the Verband Deutscher Drehbuchautoren (Association of German Scriptwriters - VDD), Allianz Deutscher Produzenten (German Producers' Alliance) and Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (German public service broadcaster - ZDF) have reached an agreement on the main provisions of contracts between commissioned producers and authors. The agreement is designed to bring existing contractual structures into line with the changing conditions of use in the digital world and to ensure that authors are fairly remunerated.

The starting point is the selection of one of a number of model contracts, under which authors will receive a fixed sum for works used in ZDF programmes and online services for a set period of time.

In addition, it is possible to opt for the so-called "repeat royalty model", under which, as well as a basic fee, authors receive a share of the proceeds from any further use (repeats). The rate of remuneration for such use was halved, although this reduction was offset by the inclusion of other types of secondary exploitation.

In particular, screenplay writers will, in future, be entitled to a share of the proceeds from commercial exploitation of films. This includes proceeds from foreign sales, DVD sales, Video-on-Demand and other Internet-based forms of exploitation.

Eckpunkte der vertraglichen Zusammenarbeit für durch das ZDF vollfinanzierte Dokumentationen zwischen Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen und Allianz Deutscher Produzenten - Film & Fernsehen in der Fassung vom 1. Oktober 2012

Main principles of contractual cooperation between Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen and the German Producers' Alliance - Film & Television for documentaries fully financed by ZDF, version of 1 October 2012

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026