



Statement from the Screen Directors Guild of Ireland

Broadcasting Regeneration for a Twenty-First Century Broadcaster



Television the dominant cultural medium

- The positive nature of the national and international identity of Ireland is intrinsically linked to our unique and powerful contribution to storytelling through National dramatic and factual television programming. Television storytelling is essential for the development of a healthy democratic society and is a powerful means of self-reflection and delivers a genuine record for future generations.
- Television has the power to transform every part of our lives and as television becomes the dominant medium of our present and future, it is the bedrock on which the consciousness of the nation is built. Dedicated support of the TV content creators such as directors and writers is essential as it is their vision and energy that will help shape the Ireland of the future.
- The need for State support for television is recognised in almost every European country because television is a significant arts medium of the 21st century and the importance of the arts to economic expansion and diplomacy is well documented.
- Government support for the development and production of Irish television programming is essential if the vision and energy of its creators is going to continue to shape our future identity on a national and global stage.



Opportunities for Growth in today's Broadcasting Environment

- Local broadcasting content is more in demand than ever. Quotas obligating Netflix, Amazon and other streaming services operating in the European Union to dedicate at least 30% of their on-demand catalogues to local content had become enshrined into European law. Research released by Ampere Analysis calculated that Netflix and Amazon Prime will have to add hundreds more series produced in Europe its EU numbers up and that will translate into billions of dollars of new investment in the EU region.
- Broadcasting globally is in a time of disruption with immense change and new opportunity. Local European and international TV drama continues to go from strength to strength with no sign of 'peak TV' on the horizon and audience demand for bigger, bolder projects only growing.
- SVOD platforms are spending massively. European broadcasters and distributors are backing mixed drama portfolios where ambitious international dramas rub shoulders with lower-budget local language and genre pieces.
- New innovative ways of funding broadcasters are being used in Europe. Under new EU rules, member states are now allowed to require on-demand platforms to help finance the production of European content, for instance through levies paid into national funds. An exploration of other member states like France that already implement a so-called culture tax, which is paid by movie theatres, broadcasters, and internet service providers in the country and on-demand providers who pay a 2 percent streaming tax on the revenue it makes in the country.
- Digital access to new markets means new opportunities for Irish broadcasters to use innovation and productivity to exploit new customers for Irish made content in global markets.
- Screen Directors Guild of Ireland represents the leading lights in Ireland's Creative Economy. Irish directors are global innovators reimagining the future of screen entertainment by creating films and television shows that are enjoyed by millions of



people around the world. Irish directors can rise to the opportunity to develop content to meet global demand in this time of disruption.

3. What does all this Mean?

- In the last two decades it has appeared that the very idea of broadcasting as a service for Irish citizens is under threat of being swept away in a tide of global streaming services and yet the reality is there has never been more opportunity and more demand for indigenous storytelling and local broadcasting today.
- RTÉ's contribution is a small but very significant catalyst in starting TV productions in Ireland.
- RTÉ's independent producers Budget is not sufficient for the production of Irish drama by our national broadcaster. The lack of drama, film documentary production from our national broadcaster has an impact on the development of the creative community which has a long term impact in the ability to both develop Irish talent and attract international investment.



Four Key Recommendations

1. Robust investment is needed in RTÉ. In 2018 the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland recommended an increase of investment of 30M is needed to sustain RTÉ's vital services. A vibrant national well resourced broadcaster is a key service for any nation.
2. Investment in TV drama to engage in opportunities from European co-productions we recommend a separate drama fund to produce Irish made TV series.
3. Licence fee reformation is urgently needed to bring Irish broadcasting into the present day. The current Irish licence fee structure is not fit for purpose and collection method inefficient in today's digital age.
4. The fragmentation of RTÉ engagement between the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is not productive. We recommend that communications and culture should operate in the same department and to build on synergies on the investment in film.