

SAA 15th Anniversary

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Biographies



ILLUSTRATION BY: ROCÍO ÁLVAREZ

#WeLoveAuthors



Cécile Despringre

SAA Secretary General

Cécile Despringre studied International and European Law at the University of Paris I and holds a Master's degree in International Economic Law. After a traineeship at the Delegation of the European Commission in Geneva, she started her career at SACD as their European Affairs Officer in 1997. In 2001, she was promoted Deputy Director for European Affairs and Trade Negotiations. In 2006, Cécile became the CEO of FERA, the European association for film and TV directors. In 2009, she was offered to set up a new organisation, the SAA, the home for European collective management organisations of audiovisual authors in Brussels. Since March 2020, Cécile is also the President of the board of directors of Cineuropa.

Anna Gumbau

Master of Ceremony



Anna Gumbau is an international moderator and strategic communications expert, who brings energy, warmth and clarity to every stage. With more than 150 high-level events moderated, from EU policy debates to global climate summits, she is a trusted host who makes complex topics both accessible and inspiring. Anna is fluent in five languages and creates conversations that are lively, inclusive and impactful.

Glenn Micallef

EU Commissioner for Intergenerational Justice, Youth, Culture and Sport



Glenn Micallef is the European Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport in the von der Leyen II Commission. Before his appointment in 2024, he served as Chief of Staff to Malta's Prime Minister and as Director-General of Malta's EU Coordination Department. In his current role, he is responsible for shaping EU policies that strengthen intergenerational fairness, promote youth participation, and improve conditions for culture, artists and sport across Europe. At 36, he is the youngest member of the College of Commissioners and has quickly become a leading voice for ensuring that European policies reflect the needs and aspirations of both present and future generations.



Urša Menart

Slovenian
screenwriter and
director, SAA Patron

Urša Menart is a Slovenian writer and director. She has graduated in Film and TV directing from the University Of Ljubljana Academy for Theatre, Radio, Film and Television in 2010. Her two documentary films, *There Once Was a Land of Hardworking People* (2012) and *What About Mojca?* (2014) started her career as director and screenwriter. She made her debut feature as writer and director with *My Last Year as a Loser* (2018) that won the Slovenian national awards Vesna for Best Film and Best Screenplay. She collaborated with Kozole and Sviličić on *Half-Sister*, which premiered in Competition at Karlovy Vary IFF in 2019. She received the Župančič Award of the City of Ljubljana for Arts and Culture in 2019 and directed documentary TV series about literature and music in the following years. Lately, she has been working on her second feature *Everything that is wrong with you* coming out in 2026. She has been a member of the board of Directors Guild of Slovenia since 2014 and is currently serving as its chair.



Jochen Greve

German screenwriter,
SAA Patron and board
member of VG WORT

Jochen Greve studied communications, theatre and history. Before being a writer, he worked as an assistant director, screenwriter and producer of various academic works, films and TV movies. In the mid-1980s, he started working as an advertisement writer and won a “Silver Lion” at the International Advertising Film Festival in Cannes. In the early 1990s, he started writing for TV and cinema and his film *Trickser* won several German TV awards. He has written several popular and critically acclaimed television films and series, among others, episodes for the *Tatort* crime fiction series, as well as two episodes of *The Fox* (*Der Alte*, 2015) and of *Barcelona Crime* (*Der Barcelona Krimi*, 2017), of the same genre. Crime, psychological and intimate plays are his specialities. He wrote seven episodes of the TV series *Watzmann ermittelt* between 2021 and 2025. He has been a Board member of VG Wort since 2019.

Barbara Hayes

SAA Chair (ALCS)



Barbara Hayes has been the Chair of the SAA since November 2015, after representing the Authors’ Licensing & Collecting Society (ALCS) on the SAA Board for several years. She joined the ALCS in January 2004 and has been Deputy Chief Executive since 2006. Barbara focuses much of her work on lobbying to protect and promote authors’ rights at UK, EU and international level. She has also been involved with the work of the All Party Writers Group, seeking opportunities to bring issues regarding writers to the attention of the UK parliamentarians.

Jochem Donker

LIRA



Jochem Donker is the General Counsel and Director of International Affairs at CEDAR B.V., a service organisation in the Netherlands for six CMOs, collecting remunerations for authors and other right owners. In this capacity, Jochem Donker represents Stichting LIRA, the Dutch CMO for (screenplay) writers, at the Board of Directors of CISAC (International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers). Before joining CEDAR, he practiced law for several years at the Amsterdam based law firm Höcker Advocaten, with a specialisation in copyright, trademarks and other aspects of intellectual property and information law.



Emmanuelle Du Chalard

Head of Copyright
Unit, EU Commission

Emmanuelle Du Chalard works in the European Commission as Head of the Copyright Unit in DG CNECT. She joined the Commission in 2010 and has been working on EU copyright policy and legislation since 2014. Previously, she worked on internal market policies, in the Unit responsible for regulated professions. She holds a Master degree from the Paris Institute of Political Sciences.



Teona Strugar Mitevska

Screenwriter and director, North Macedonia

Teona Strugar Mitevska is a Macedonian filmmaker born in Skopje in 1974 in an artistic family. Trained as a painter and graphic designer before studying film at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, she debuted with the short *Veta* (2001), awarded at the 52nd Berlin Film Festival. Together with her siblings, she co-founded Sisters and Brother Mitevski Production, through which she has directed numerous acclaimed films, including *How I Killed a Saint* (2004) and *God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunija* (2019), winner of the 13th LUX Audience Award of the European Parliament. Her latest feature, *Mother*, was selected to open the Orizzonti section at the 82nd Venice International Film Festival.

Bill Anderson

Chair of FERA



Bill Anderson is a director and writer whose career spans more than three decades in British television and film. A graduate of the National Film and Television School, his first feature *Creatures of Light* won the Chaplin Award at the Edinburgh Film Festival. Since then, he has directed acclaimed dramas including *Mr Selfridge*, *The Mill*, *Sword of Honour*, *Boudica*, and the pilot of *Lewis*, as well as *Spooks*, *Doctor Who* and the RTS-nominated *Guardians*. In 2019, Abrams Press published his first book, *The Idle Beekeeper*, a celebrated work on empathy and sustainable beekeeping. Beyond his creative work, Bill has played a leading role in the industry as former Vice Chair of Directors UK and is currently Chair of FERA, the European association for film and TV directors.

Emma Rafowicz

MEP, Vice-Chair
of the Culture
Committee



Emma Rafowicz is a French politician from the Socialist Party (PS). She began her activism at a young age with SOS Racisme and joined the Young Socialist Movement at 15, later becoming a member of the PS in 2011. From 2020 to 2024, she served as Deputy Mayor of Paris's 11th arrondissement, in charge of culture, crafts, and heritage. In parallel, she was appointed to relaunch the Young Socialists, becoming president in December 2020 and re-elected in 2023 with strong support, leading the movement until 2025. Elected to the European Parliament in June 2024, she currently serves as Vice-Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT), is a member of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) and the Delegation for Relations with India, and a substitute member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and the Delegation to the EU–UK Parliamentary Assembly.



Cato Kusters

Belgian director, SAA
Patron and member
of deAuteurs

Cato Kusters combined a master's degree in directing with a bachelor's degree in editing at RITCS School of Arts. For Evi Cats, she edited *Les Murs Qui Crient* (2022), which won the VAF Wildcard for documentary. She worked as a director and editor on music videos for Eyes of Another, Bluai, Kids With Buns and KRANKk, among others. Her graduation short, *Finn's Heel* (2022) won the Award for Best Belgian Student Short at Film Fest Gent and caught the attention of Michiel & Lukas Dhont, with whom she began development of her debut feature *Julian*. The film had its world premiere at the 50th Toronto International Film Festival and was the opening film for Film Fest Gent 2025.



Aleksander Pietrzak

Polish director and screenwriter,
SAA Patron and Board Member of ZAPA

Aleksander Pietrzak graduated from Music School with a focus on piano, Warsaw Film School in directing and University of Warsaw with a Liberal Arts degree. His diploma movie *Mocna kawa wcale nie jest taka zła* (*Strong Coffee Is Not That Bad*, 2014) and his last short *Ja i mój tata* (*Me and My Father*, 2017) won over 20 awards in Poland and abroad. At age 25, he directed his feature film debut, the black comedy *Juliusz* (2018). It was nominated for the Golden Lion award in Gdynia Film Festival and enjoyed wide release in Polish cinemas. His television debut came in 2019 with the very popular Polish comedy series *39 and a Half Weeks*. He is also a lecturer at Warsaw Film School and hosts the radio-show Cinema t.b.c. In 2022 Alek created a new film festival called “Big Festivalowski” which opened its line up to the world’s best comedies and seeks to educate new members of the industry about comedic craft.

Patrick Raude

SAA Vice-Chair (SACD)



Patrick Raude graduated from the French National School of Administration, the National School of Posts and Telecommunications and ENS Cachan, and is a University Associate Professor of Economics and Management. He began his career in telecommunications and has international experience, having worked in Brussels and Japan. From 1997 to 2002, he worked at the Budget Directorate. Thereafter, he became advisor for media, film, cultural industries and digital affairs to the Prime Minister, before being appointed Director of Media Development and member of ARCEP. He became, in 2011, Director of regulation, relations with the State and European Affairs at the Française des Jeux. Since January 2016, he serves as Secretary-General of the SACD. He is also vice-chair of the SAA Board of Directors and vice-chair of CISAC’s Board of Directors.

Jana Vozárová

SAA Board
Member (LITA)



Graduated from the Faculty of Law of Comenius University in Bratislava, Jana Vozárová has been working at LITA since 2001. During her time at the organisation, she focused on copyright law, international relations, building an information system and online services for LITA's communication with authors. She was first appointed as the organization's director in 2018. In June 2022, she became a member of the Board of Directors of the SAA.



**Lisette Ma
Neza**
Brussels' first city poet

Lisette Ma Neza is a poet with a camera. She was born in the Netherlands, and is now based in Brussels. In 2017 she was the first Dutch-speaking woman to win the Belgian Poetry Slam Championships. Till 2026 she still is Brussels' first ever city poet.