



Activity report and plan 2020

This extraordinary year had plans for a Plenary Meeting in Tromsø, Norway, a Satellite meeting in Galway, Ireland, a Campus in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and a Plenary Meeting in Belgrade, Serbia. Unfortunately, all these activities had to be cancelled or changed due to the COVID-19 crisis.

This activity report includes an overview of the events, activities and publications IETM has made during the first six months of 2020 and the events that are planned in the second part of the year.

ACTIVITIES

January - June 2020 (already executed)

EVENTS

SINGLE DAY EVENT - NANTES, FRANCE

DATE 20 January 2020

PARTNERS [LA MAGNANERIE / MAG.I.C International Cooperation](#) and [Think Prod](#)

ATTENDEES 33 participants from 9 countries

Our Single Day Event during the [Biennales Internationales du Spectacle](#) in Nantes brought together representatives of independent performing arts production companies with the aim of exchanging and sharing insights in order to better understand the ecosystems in which they are embedded.

BEYOND THE URBAN WEBINAR

DATE 16 March 2020

PARTNERS [Cultural Action Europe](#), the [European Network of Cultural Centres](#) and [Trans Europe Halles](#)

188 ATTENDEES

IETM hosted the webinar to discuss joint policy recommendations aiming to support culture in non-urban areas. Building on many years of fieldwork on the topic, and different perspectives from the four networks involved, our [joint project](#) aimed to highlight the significance of culture and the arts in non-urban and peripheral areas, identify challenges for the many existing and potential projects in those areas, and offer policy solutions to support them. We launched '[Beyond the Urban: Contemporary arts and culture in non-urban areas as keys to a sustainable and cohesive Europe](#)', our policy paper jointly developed by the four networks, as well as IETM's new publication [Art in Rural Areas](#)

ADVOCATE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS - WEBINAR

DATE 03 April 2020

PARTNER [Dansarena Nord](#)

100 ATTENDEES

Right at the start of the spread of COVID-19 in Europe - IETM did a survey which showed that the crisis had a catastrophic impact on our sector. Different governments - some more than others - have responded with emergency measures to help those under existential threat. Cultural organisations and individual artists have shown tremendous solidarity with their peers back home and all over the world. But what's next? How do we transform the urgent survival plan into a long-lasting revival strategy? How do we make sure our sector is not left aside amidst yet another economic turmoil?

IETM's Head of policy and research Elena Polivtseva introduced this session by sharing the [outcomes of our Corona Survey](#) before updating participants on our future advocacy steps. Turkish/Australian Theatre director and Interdisciplinary artist Görkem Acaroglu then opened the discussion with two main questions on the agenda : where would we like to be one year after the COVID-19 crisis and how can we get there ? This discussion was originally planned to take place during the IETM Tromsø Plenary Meeting.

WHERE DOES FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION REMAIN? - WEBINAR

DATE 24 April 2020

PARTNER [Dansarena Nord](#)

81 ATTENDEES

Throughout the world, some governments have introduced drastic measures against the COVID-19 outbreak, suspending many fundamental freedoms and rights until further notice. In this context, the friction between the proclaimed and the actual freedom of expression is growing. Criticism and undesirable information are targeted by new regulations in law against disinformation, especially on social media. Social distancing increases existing inequalities of representation and further restricts access to the public sphere. What can we do to give everyone a voice in today's context? How can we do this whilst protecting artists and their rights? This discussion was originally planned to take place during the IETM Tromsø Plenary Meeting.

DIGITAL JOURNEY TO TROMSØ 2020

DATE 30 April 2020

PARTNERS [Dansarena Nord](#) and [Vårscenefest](#)

372 ATTENDEES

Lockdown measures taken by governments across the globe to contain the spread of COVID-19 forced us to cancel our [Spring Plenary meeting in Tromsø](#), initially planned from 30 April to 3 May 2020. However, our performing arts family needed more than ever to stay united. Our Digital journey to Tromsø gave our members and guests a taste of what we had planned for the Plenary and allowed them to get together - in a virtual space - around the theme Art and Activism.

This exceptional format was a unique opportunity for our community to both explore new ways of gathering in times of containment and keep the IETM spirit living remotely.

The programme included an opening Yoik led by Sami artists, a welcome word by the organisers, an inspiring keynote speech, an online networking activity into groups, as well as an

informal Kodak-moment where we all raised our glasses and cups to the spirit of activism, solidarity and fellowship.

RESOURCES

[Mapping of the performing arts in Norway by Melanie Fieldseth](#)

This mapping commissioned by IETM explores the rich history of Norway and its independent performing arts scene. The publication discusses local changes in narratives and artistic practice, and examines structural issues and needed policy change. It also gives a look into Northern Norway and Sàpmi performing arts culture, its history of activism, and the need for further artistic plurality.

ARTICLES

In the framework of the meeting, we commissioned a series of articles in order to bring in new perspectives on activism in the world of the performing arts:

[Willing change in a world of many crises](#) Independent cultural worker and theatre critic Ragnhild Freng Dale explores activism in the performing arts and the opportunities it opens. From *Yes Men* to *Nordting*, she looks into different examples of political activism in the arts, with a focus on current movements in Northern Norway.

[On Art and Activism](#) Israel Aloni argues that the lack of governmental support for artists has pushed them to pursue activism but contends that art ought to remain independent of the civil-political sphere.

[In Search of Complexities: Documentary Theatre in Today's Russia](#) Anastasia Patlay talks about creating documentary theatre with Moscow-based company Teatr.doc.

PROGRAMME <https://www.ietm.org/en/digital-journey-to-tromso-2020/programme>

VIDEO <https://www.ietm.org/en/digital-journey-to-tromso-2020/video>

[A NEW ECONOMY FOR THE ARTS - WEBINAR](#)

DATE 08 May

PARTNER [Dansarena Nord](#)

185 ATTENDEES

Building on the discussion held during our previous [Advocate for the future of the arts](#) webinar on 3 April 2020, we reflected on how the current COVID-19 crisis might be an opportunity to rethink the economy of our sector and shift paradigms. After this period of destruction, rather than attempting to retrieve what the sector was before, we should collaboratively aim at constructing a new order of interaction and exchange. How can we now place artists and audiences at the center and build institutions around them? How can we shift our economy to more sharing models, focusing on processes rather than on products? How to change the nature and conditions of funding to reflect the social role of the arts? How to be less dependent on public sources? How to build bridges with other sectors to be stronger together? This discussion, originally planned to take place during IETM Tromsø Plenary Meeting.

VIDEO <https://www.ietm.org/en/a-new-economy-for-the-arts-webinar/video>

REWIRING THE NETWORK - ONLINE BRAINSTORM SESSION

DATE 19 May

PARTNERS [Idea Consult](#)

131 ATTENDEES

As part of our [longer trajectory](#) imagining a more sustainable future for the performing arts - and defining the role IETM can take in it, the IETM membership had its first Rewiring online brainstorm session.

The questions on the agenda were: What's on our mind? What's challenging and inspiring our work? Where do we want to go and what would we need a network for? And what can all of us bring to the table to have a real sustainable impact?

After an introduction about systemic approaches to change and transition, participants broke out into virtual groups to share and exchange about their most pressing issues, on the challenges they encounter, and brainstorm on how existing experiments and new ways of thinking and doing could be the building blocks for a more sustainable future on the artistic, human, social, economical and ecological level.

PARTICIPATORY AND IMMERSIVE CREATION

DATE 27 MAY

38 ATTENDEES

In recent years, participatory art practices and immersive projects have boomed while inclusion became a central topic to our sector and societies. In parallel, artistic practices have gained more and more attention through their political aspects, being part of demonstrations and movements without leaders and activating citizenship. Where do the two dynamics meet? What does it mean to include the public in a participatory way, giving them an active role, and when does that become a political act? What difficulties do we encounter in our experiences of creating or taking part in a participatory performance? What mistakes have we made and what can we learn from them?

In this fishbowl conversation, the IETM immersive creation group invited our members to listen to and share arguments and examples, in particular difficulties and failures, of participatory, inclusive and politically engaged processes of creation.

IETM MEMBERS VENUES

DATE 28 MAY

An international online talk with IETM members running venues to discuss their respective situation in the current crisis and collectively look into the future.

On the agenda were:

- Challenges venues are facing today.
- Solutions to deal with those challenges.
- Needed action at the EU, national, regional and local policy levels to improve the situation.

SEASON CLOSING: STAYING UNITED AS AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

DATE 24 June

69 ATTENDEES

Let's face it: no one expected a season like this! Already affected by budget cuts and deflection of cultural policies at the end of 2019, the cultural ecosystem and the performing arts have been dealt yet another severe blow at the dawn of the twenties with the COVID-19 outbreak. Venues remained closed, cancellations succeeded each other, and the whole sector was

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casually invited to ride an unprecedented wave of digitalisation with little consideration of the value of the arts.

On the eve of an unusual summer break, we invited IETM members and guests to a season-closing online talk to assess how to keep supporting each other in the months ahead and start sketching the first lines of a new season that will, hopefully, herald a resilient future for our sector.

MEMBERS REGIONAL AND NATIONAL MEETINGS DUE TO COVID-19

During COVID-19 crisis our members have gathered online to connect and talk about their status, challenges and solutions regarding the impacts of the pandemic. These meetings have been with a general focus as well as a regional and national focus.

Here is a list of the meetings which were organised through IETM:

20 March 1st Members meeting at the beginning of the COVID crisis

26 March UK members meeting 1

2 April Netherlands members meeting 1

3 April Nordic countries members meeting 1

7 April Spain members meeting 1

8 April Germany and Austria members meeting 1

9 April Italy members meeting 1

9 April Baltic region members meeting 1

14 April Ireland members meeting 1

14 April Central and Eastern Europe members meeting 1

15 April Portugal members meeting 1

21 April Ireland members meeting 2

23 April North America members meeting

29 April Portugal members meeting 2

4 May France members meeting 1

5 May Central and Eastern Europe members meeting 2

6 May Spain members meeting 3

8 May UK members meeting 2

13 May France Members Meeting 2

14 May Central and Eastern Europe members meeting 3

21 May Ireland Members Meeting 3

27 May Iberian Peninsula members meeting 1

28 May Netherlands members meeting 2

10 June Baltic region members meeting 2

1 June Ireland members meeting 4

ACTIVITIES

On-going activities and plans for July - December 2020

EVENTS

July - December 2020

[10 July - 1 September General Assembly by written consent](#)

As physical events IETM is organising cannot take place and in accordance with a Belgian Royal decree, the IETM 2020 General Assembly will be held via written procedure. This is the only option available according to Belgian law and was approved by IETM's board of directors. All the members who have paid their membership fee will receive documentation and a voting template form as well as instructions on how to proceed. Taking into consideration the European Summer holidays period, members have until 1 September to return their vote.

[1-2 October IETM Multi Location Plenary](#)

As we cannot gather in Belgrade, Serbia, as planned, we hope members will be able to gather in multiple locations across the world and take part in activities organised locally by IETM members. The IETM Secretariat will organise online events each day to bring the membership together virtually.

This innovative and special Plenary Meeting format will combine participation in both online and physical activities.

[5 November Rewiring the Network - IETM membership 2nd brainstorming session](#)

After this first phase of Rewiring the Network, we now have a clear idea of our transitions: in other words, we now know what we want to move away from and which explicit practices and values we want to be central in the future. On 5 November IETM members will gather for a second online brainstorm session in which we will start the next phase of our intensive trajectory. As part of this phase, we will discuss how the international performing arts community can implement the transitions and what should be the role that IETM and other accelerators might play in the actual transition process.

Early December Satellite Galway (Dates to be determined)

PARTNERS [Theatre Forum, Galway 2020](#), [NUI Galway](#)

A Satellite meeting on the ecology of the performing arts and our role in creating more equilibrium in that ecosystem. The Meeting will investigate how to mitigate climate change and limit the damage being done. It will examine practical and philosophical responses to imagine an ecology fit for the future. It will also offer an insight on artistic works that inspire adaptation. Originally planned to take place in Galway in June 2020, the meeting will take place online. Depending on the COVID-19 restrictions, a small physical gathering in Galway will offer a larger programme.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

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Each year, IETM is asked to speak and take part in dialogues on diverse topics. Here is an overview of the speaking engagements we delivered so far in 2020:

- 3 April** Immunity of the Arts organised by Dutch Culture
- 8 April** COVID-19 Special Series Arts Council Malta lab: Shifting Online
- 28 April** The future of Performing Arts and Culture in Europe after the COVID 19 Crisis organised by Omnium Cultural
- 28 May** Future of Creative Economics organised by Trans Europe Halles and Cumediae
- 10 June** Liberties in Lockdown organised by the European Libreal Forum
- 12 June** Culture Action Europe Annual General Assembly
- 13 June** Europe My Home organised by Art Lab
- 25 June** European Theatre Forum preparation meeting
- 1 July** Webinar organised by Art Council Malta

EVENT PARTICIPATION

Each year, IETM takes part in events organised by third parties on diverse topics. Here is an overview of those events so far in 2020:

- 2-7 February 2020** Fadjr festival Tehran Iran
- 3 March** A Greener Festival Conference London
- 8 April** CAMP Creative Agent Manager Producer event
- 21 April** Culture Relations Platform Consortium Meeting
- 24 April** SHIFT meeting organise by ELIA on environmental issues
- 29 April** Culture Relations Platform meeting with Steering Committee
- 6 May** SHIFT partners meeting
- 13 May** ON THE MOVE partners meeting
- 26 May** European Theatre Forum preparation meeting
- 4 June** Meeting with the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
- 18 June** Online Workshop on Music & Sustainability
- 25 June** European Theatre Forum preparation meeting
- 26 June** United for a New Future: dialogue with the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
- 26 June** Promoting Artistic Freedom in Europe; partners meeting

PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

[Arts in Rural Areas by Fernando García-Dory, Piotr Michałowski and Laura H Drane](#)

This new Fresh Perspectives highlights the valuable contribution contemporary arts have in non-urban areas and brings the views of three experts on sustainable ways to improve conditions for artists working in those areas. It also highlights several examples of best practices, centres and on-going projects in rural areas, many of which are led by IETM members.

This publication was commissioned in the context of a larger [advocacy project](#) IETM launched together with Culture Action Europe, the European Network of Cultural Centres and Trans Europe Halles to raise the visibility of culture happening in territories beyond urban centres. The first part of the publication is a position paper co-authored by the four networks detailing how to ensure the recognition of non-urban culture at a policy level.

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[Performing arts in times of the pandemic: status quo and the way forward by Elena Polivtseva](#)

At the dawn of lockdown measures taken by governments across the globe, we have circulated a survey among our members to get a grip on how the new reality has affected them so far. Based on the key findings of the survey, this report outlines the situation on an international scale, identifies the most burning needs of the sector in times of the pandemic and presents an overview of governments' responses to the COVID-19 crisis. The report concludes with policy recommendations intended for EU, national and local authorities.

[Mapping of the Performing arts in Norway by Melanie Fieldseth](#)

This mapping commissioned by IETM explores the rich history of Norway and its independent performing arts scene. The publication discusses local changes in narratives and artistic practice, and examines structural issues and needed policy change. It also gives a look into Northern Norway and Sàpmi performing arts culture, its history of activism, and the need for further artistic plurality.

[Live Arts in the Virtualising World by Elena Polivtseva](#)

Global lockdown measures have generated a wave of digitalisation, and the performing arts have undoubtedly been pulled in with it. As it is not that obvious for the live arts to jump from the real life domain to the Internet, we need to ask ourselves: what does this mean for the future of our sector? Based on the key findings of a short but effective survey we circulated among IETM members, this report compiles 7 key points covering the concerns with digitalisation and how to go about it effectively. It attempts to inspire the further debate on the digital presence of the live arts and puts forward a few policy messages on how to reconcile live arts and the digital world, amidst the social distancing times, and, of course, beyond.

[Rewiring the Network by Joris Janssens, Martina Fraioli and Delphine Hesters](#)

As part of our major [Rewiring the Network](#) project, IETM published a series of blog posts in which we explore the past, the present and the possible futures not only for our network but also for the performing arts sector as a whole, through the prism of sustainability. Now compiled in a single publication, our Rewiring the Network series opens with an in-depth introduction to the Rewiring project and to the specific methodology we have been following. Flashing back to past achievements of IETM from the early eighties until now, we then identify the initial promises and pressures of international cultural networking and the conditions for the success. Finally, the two last episodes introduce the *Pressures Radar* and the *Promises Radar*, two online interactive whiteboards which you can navigate to explore respectively current unsustainable and sustainable practices within our sector. This series serves as a base to start (y)our reflection - and corollary action - towards a more sustainable future for the performing arts.

[Rewiring the Network Episode 4 by Joris Janssens and Martina Fraioli](#)

This spring, IETM has been designing transitions for the performing arts. In a first [series of blog posts](#), we looked back on the history of international networking, and on the pressures and (sometimes weak) signals of hope in our current situation. We did so on the basis of a survey of IETM members. After mapping the current situation, we came together on 19 May 2020 with 140 members in a [large online brainstorm](#). There we started to design our preferred futures for the performing arts. In this blog post, the last before the summer, we present the results of the brainstorm, and briefly hint what the next phase of the project will look like.

ADVOCACY

The first months of the year have been marked by the COVID-19 crisis, which made us shift our advocacy efforts towards two goals: 1) short-term: demanding immediate support for the cultural sector at all levels; 2) long-term: identifying the most crucial issues which will determine the post-covid future of the arts sector and shaping the discourse in the right direction. We have been closely following up the developments at the EU level, flagging our members regarding the most significant measures and developments. Moreover, we have been in a close dialogue with our members on their national situations, allowing for an exchange of best practices in advocacy among our members and taking actions towards national policy-makers in support to the art sector in particular countries.

Rescue the Arts: Plea to national governments

Written by IETM and co-signed by [Circostrada](#), [European Theatre Convention \(ETC\)](#), [IN SITU](#), [European Dancehouse Network \(EDN\)](#), [European Festivals Association \(EFA\)](#) and [Trans Europe Halles \(TEH\)](#) the plea was translated into 12 languages and widely distributed throughout Europe and beyond by the IETM membership. We called on national governments to take the following measures:

- Grant artists and cultural professionals access to unemployment payments and social benefits, and compensate their losses caused by the COVID-19 crisis.
- Support culture and the arts through the *EU Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative*.
- Create emergency and hardship funds for the cultural sector, outside of existing budgets of cultural ministries and art councils. Such instruments must be formed of finances from other budget lines specially dedicated to mitigating the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.
- Apply flexibility to all existing funding schemes, allowing beneficiaries to decide whether they should postpone, cancel or transform activities, or extend the cycle of the funded project.
- Augment investment in culture and the arts in 2020 and beyond, aiming at their revival and sustainability.
- Preserve the internationalisation budgets, as they are crucial for the capacity-building and development of the local artistic scene.
- Initiate a far-reaching debate on the current nature of the status of the artist with a view of ensuring sustainability of artists' careers, practices and activities, as well as artists' freedom of expression, social and financial recognition, and individual well-being.
- Explore the possibility of introducing a universal basic income to protect people from future crises and force-majeure situations.

- Integrate culture and the arts in economic and social regeneration and future-transformation strategies, recognising their tremendous value for the well-being of citizens, as well as their power to unite people, even in times when it is impossible to commune.

Accompanying our Plea to national governments, we disseminated a report of a [survey](#) we circulated among our membership, which proved that the international artistic community has been showing enormous solidarity and creativity dealing with the challenging reality caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

Moreover, we provided our members based in the EU (including the UK) with a [template letter](#) to address national governments and a list of their national and regional Managing Authorities handling the EU Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII).

We have been following up on the new EU recovery mechanism New Generation EU, as part of the new Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, joining forces with other networks and organisations on advocating a proper support strand for culture.

Framework for Working Conditions of Artists

This year we will continue our work on advocating a special Framework for working conditions of artists at the EU level. This meant to be a set of principles, which would trigger legislative and non-legislative activity at the EU and member states level aimed at improving multiple aspects of artists working conditions, such as social security, taxation, contracts, wages, mobility, among others. Such a framework would stimulate member states to exchange best practices and follow up on each other's progress in the field.

IETM met with Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, on 4 June to discuss the situation in the performing arts sector today. One of the topics on the table was a possibility of designing a European framework for the working conditions of artists. IETM is currently working on further advocacy of this proposal, engaging with other associations and networks and identifying allies at the policy level.

Touring of the performing arts in Europe

We have been advocating a special touring scheme for the performing arts at the EU level for a couple of years, and this year we are very proud to announce that such a scheme has finally seen the light. The new call for tenders contains a considerable shift towards digitalisation of performing arts circulation, due to the Covid situation. However, our recommendations to keep the digital component as complementary to the physical one have been taken into account, and the live nature of touring is still central in the call. We will continue working on the mobility and art circulation themes, with a view of ensuring that the new scheme for touring is part of the future Creative Europe programme 2021-2027.

EU future budget and Creative Europe 2021-2027

We have sent a letter to Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission President, on the importance of the Creative Europe programme, asking for the raise of its budget. Moreover, we co-drafted several policy-papers with other networks and co-signed a few letters:

[Brexit and a Cultural Way Forward](#)

[Creative Europe budget at stake: your action is needed](#)

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[Letter to Commissioner Mariya Gabriel and Members of DG EAC listing proposals to cope with the consequences of Covid](#)

[Investing in Europe's next generation by investing in culture - Joint sector call signed by over 90 organisations](#)

[Culture Action Europe: Uphold Culture in the EU budget](#)

PROJECTS

[REWIRING THE NETWORK](#)

PARTNER [Idea Consult](#)

IETM began working on a new strategy for the network in 2019. Internal work on environmental issues led to a new larger trajectory entitled Rewiring the Network being developed further and executed in 2020. Our aim is to reflect on the development of a more sustainable future for the performing arts, and the role IETM can take in it. The results of which will help develop IETM's vision and define our future strategy. The next large event of the project will be on 5 November 2020

PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

[Culture Relations Platform](#)

IETM is one of four organisations behind the Culture Relations Platform, led by Goethe Institut. This EU-funded project is designed to support the EU to engage in international cultural relations with the main objectives of:

- Providing policy support on international cultural relations;
- Supporting cooperation among cultural and creative sectors;
- Strengthening communities and networks of cultural practitioners.

[SHIFT](#)

IETM is one of the networks behind the Erasmus+-supported project SHIFT, Shared Initiatives for Training. IETM leads a work package on Gender Relations within the project.

[Freemuse](#)

IETM takes part in advocacy for improvements of Artistic Freedom in Europe and is one of the organisations behind the New Agenda on Freedom of Artistic Expression launched at the European Parliament on 21 January.

[Europe Beyond Access](#)

Europe Beyond Access is a transnational project supporting innovations from disabled artists in theatre and dance across Europe. It is Europe's largest Arts and Disability programme, championing disabled artists on the international stage, building audiences for their work, and developing a network of leading mainstream institutions that are committed to commissioning and presenting work by disabled artists at the highest level. IETM supports Europe Beyond Access as a Dissemination Associate.

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