

#METOO IN THE CULTURE SECTOR: *From call-outs to structural change*

SHIFT Session › 22 October 2021, 15:30-17:00 CEST › Villeurbanne Parcours of IETM Lyon 2021

#METOO in the Cultural sector: *From call-outs to structural change*

**SHIFT session happening as part of the
Villeurbanne Parcours of IETM Lyon 2021**

The session will be held on Friday 22 October 2021, 15:30 - 17:00 CEST at Théâtre National Populaire (TNP), 8 Place du Dr Lazare Goujon, 69100 Villeurbanne, France.

No matter how atrocious and particular #MeToo cases are, they are never only related to an individual perpetrator. Sexual harassment and power abuse are forms of structural violence and are thus deeply entangled with the dominant gender, racial, economic and power structures.

Following an [online session](#) held as part of the [SHIFT – Shared Initiatives for Training](#) project on 6 October, **this conversation, held as part of the Villeurbanne Parcours in Lyon, will dive deeper into the topic and focus on the steps networks can take together to combat sexual harassment and power abuse.** You can find more info on speakers in the description of the Parcours Villeurbanne in the [full programme](#).

Context

The aim of the SHIFT Gender and Power Relations work is to **research cases** of sexual harassment and power abuse that have been revealed and discussed in the European arts field in recent years, with a focus on the developments since the #MeToo period. The team of researchers also aims to **propose solutions-oriented strategies** for creating equitable and safe work environments for culture professionals.

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The final publication, to be launched in November, will be based on diverse resources collected within a three-month period and enriched by two feedback sessions. Our research has focused on:

- Existing literature and publications on the subject
- Analysis of a selection of existing internal documents (such as codes of conducts)
- Interviews with 23 cultural professionals recommended by the SHIFT partners
- Discussions and exchanges with the arts sector through a) an online session that was held on 6 October and that gathered 65+ participants from Europe to discuss the first three takeaways of our research and b) this very session during the IETM Plenary Meeting in Lyon on 22 October.

The discussion on 22 October is particularly valuable for the team of researchers and writers behind this publication. We plan for it to be as practical as possible and we hope our collective conversation will help European cultural networks to adopt new practises and update existing ones.

This session coincides with a growing #MeTooTheatre movement in France. Recent public allegations have gained mainstream media attention and a portion of the sector has mobilised to demand action from the Ministry of Culture.

We assumed that, on a European scale, the timelines of national and regional #MeToo movements would vary. And our research has shown stark differences, mainly between countries in Western and Northern Europe and those in the Southern and Eastern parts of the continent. For instance, in countries such as Belgium, Iceland, and Sweden, the #MeToo movement has been widely influencing the debates on work cultures in the performing arts since 2017-2018, and just recently important legal steps have been taken in 2017/18 cases, such as in Iceland and Belgium. In places such as Croatia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, and Slovenia, we see that the #MeToo movement in the cultural sector has only advanced in recent months.

There are two main questions that we wish to raise during the session:

- How can we **act collaboratively on an international level** to create safer working spaces in the arts, while also taking into consideration different socio-political contexts across Europe?
- What can or should be the **specific roles of European cultural networks**, especially with regards to mobilising the arts sector and campaigning for better working conditions?

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Brainstorming possible strategies for networks and actions they could take to combat sexual harassment and power abuse

Some propositions from the team of researchers

European cultural networks could:

- commit to consistently addressing sexual harassment and power abuse and raising awareness about the issue. For example, by regularly addressing these topics as part of gatherings and meetings.
- provide safe spaces for discussions, research, training, and workshops in a consistent, regular manner (especially taking into consideration activists and professionals involved in change processes, who cannot count on local support)
- actively contribute to and circulate research. For example, by reporting or collecting new case studies and informing their members about ongoing developments
- join forces to lobby for safer, prevention-oriented working conditions at the European level (for example, pushing to make EU funding contingent upon an organisation having an up-to-date, internal code of ethics).
- approach existing workers unions/federations about partnering together to improve working conditions in the arts at a transnational level.
- jointly support creating a central, digital platform housing policies, codes of conducts and research (the [FIA-International Federations of Actors' resources page](#) could be the starting point of such a platform)
- encourage and support working groups across networks where members a (artists, cultural professionals, experts and activists) can meet to gain mutual support and assess transformation processes
- work together on transnational solutions that could protect freelancers working across borders are of paramount importance (in close cooperation with workers' unions and federations).

Some proposals made during the 6 October online gathering

European cultural networks could:

- be instigators of member's informal volunteer one-on-one consultations to share stories and advice particularly between more experienced professionals and more emerging ones.

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- go beyond knowledge sharing and work on capacity building. For example, by offering training that would allow arts professionals to identify the behaviours associated with power abuse and sexual harassment.
- offer a training-based certification on these topics for their members. For example, similar to the model of Green certification on which European cultural networks are working on as part of the SHIFT project.
- work collaboratively to connect local and national initiatives.
- become involved in Culture Action Europe's advocacy work for a European 'status of the artist', with an eye to including the prevention of sexual harassment and power abuse in the cultural workplace as part of this.

New ideas and proposals will be developed during our SHIFT session in the Villeurbanne Parcours of IETM Lyon 2021 on 22 October.

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