

IETM - On the Road Munich

Sat 24-10-2020, 10 am - 4 pm, Pasinger Fabrik

SUMMARY

On the Road Munich, held as a hybrid format live and on Zoom, was opened by **Ása Richardsdóttir**, Secretary General of IETM. Quoting the publication *Shifting Gears*, she underlined the pressure in the independent arts to do more rather than less and the need to **slow down**, to reconsider and remap: How do we want our art form and our continent to be reshaped in the future?

Axel Tangerding, organiser of On the Road Munich, gave a brief recap of the Munich Plenary “Res Publica Europa” from 2018, with its three main topics EUROPE, DIVERSITY and FUTURE. He contrasted the austerity measures weakening the already fragile independent arts sector with the **identifying and binding power** of this very sector and formulated four core points which in the course of the meeting were discussed and developed.

Three keynote speakers set the tone for the ensuing working groups, one for each main topic, online and live. **Ulrike Kuner** from the Austrian Association of Independent Performing Arts criticised the funding systems for putting the focus still on houses and products instead of on **artists and development**. She reminded us of the lacking funding and pension schemes for senior artists and of the need for **transparency and fairness** within any funding scheme. **Max Dorner**, inclusion activist and Officer for Arts and Inclusion of Munich’s Cultural Department, split his analysis into two parts – before and after Corona. There is no big stabilising network of artists working in the field. He identified **accessibility** as the key for **visibility**, education as the basis for empowerment and wished for **solidarity** between the artists. **Krystof Koláček**, founder and manager of the Prague festival Kutna Hora and also Manager of Divadlo X10, pointed to the opportunities that lie in each crisis, if we speak up and with one voice, if we adapt without lowering the quality of the work or the working conditions. He sees challenges in the use of the **digital formats** – whether desirable or necessary and the need to **collaborate** and **to promote** the (independent) arts.

After splitting into six working sessions followed by a lunch break, we had one spokesperson of each session reporting back to the plenary. There were several points sharpened, for instance the appearance of a new group of “disabled” persons - artists or audience - which are not digitally versatile. The terms “abled”, “disabled”, “handicapped” were discussed, also the gap between wanting to be recognised as an artist and to be visible as a handicapped artist. Best practices were shared (Wilke / Dudus, Opitz / Kastner, Dimov). There was the plea from Polish artists to support them against an unseen attack on their livelihoods and artistic freedom. It was remarked that the new cultural geography of European capitals has not been registered yet and that diverse cultural backgrounds are ignored. The contrast between urban and rural artistic work needs attention.

The ensuing discussion was rounded off by **Stephan Behrmann** of the Bundesverband für Freie Darstellende Kunst, pointing to **solidarity** as a key moment, including issues like diversity and creating a network for working with disabled artists which tend to be less prominent in times of crises. The idea of Europe can only be carried further with **exchange on all levels**. He also highlighted the need of a campaign, the need to be loud and the need to find a narrative that politicians understand: **It is the Independent Arts Sector which is practising Europe, stabilising and building it.**

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Here is what the meeting concluded.

- 1 In order to ensure society's social health and security which are both based in and strengthened by the arts, funding must not be cut but increased.
- 2 The pressure groups and associations of the independent sector should unite their efforts to influence politicians and funding bodies and to get their work recognised as an important economic and social factor.
- 3 Solidarity between the arts is absolutely necessary. This includes different art forms, genres, professions and nations: we stand in for each other, we work for our society and we need these societies to be more aware of this benefit.
- 4 Exchange as a core instrument to strengthen the European idea must be supported by an appropriate framework on a national and a European level, for the independent arts. This includes European projects, touring and general mobility. Instruments include residencies, scholarships, research grants and education.
- 5 Individual artists and cultural workers must have the right to social benefits. We call for a revision of the current funding system and the corresponding contracting system. We have to reach a future sustainability on a social, economic and ecological level.

There were certain concrete steps we agreed upon:

The plea from our Polish colleagues will be carried into the next meetings, we will try to instigate residencies and work opportunities for them and use media-relations to draw attention to the Polish situation. Please contact Paul Bargetto/Warsaw for any requests: paulbargetto@gmail.com

We urge our heads of associations to unite their voices and their efforts, to look for colleagues from other sectors, countries and organisations to formulate one common goal. A framework of instruments supporting the arts needs to be put in place supporting European exchange and transnational mobility.

We wish for a Europe-wide media campaign showing our audience, our funding bodies and our politicians what we do, how we do it and why it should be important for them that we survive.

Here are the links that appeared in the chat:

trailer [Res Publica Europa 2018](#), [European Theatre Forum](#), [Europe Beyond Access](#), [Falckenberg-Schule](#), [Resolution for Recovery of Culture in Europe](#), [Rewiring the Network](#), [IETM Multi Location Plenary 1-2 October](#), [article on cultural suppression in Poland](#).

Team On The Road Munich:

Axel Tangerding (management), Dr. Gabi Sabo (programme development/ moderator), Gaston Florin/Jacqueline (moderator/performer), Elsa Büsing (organisation/chat host), Helen Varley (chat host), Marianne Klausen (chat host), Leonard Bölingen (IT), Markus Ludewig (IT)