



POLICY STATEMENT

Recommendation for the Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026

17 February 2022

Endorsed by



European
Dancehouse
Network



Stronger Together

EAIPA European Association
of Independent Performing Arts

POLICY STATEMENT

Recommendation for the Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026

The Work Plan for Culture is an essential mechanism for steering Member States' collective strategies in addressing the issues that are relevant for cultural and creative sectors in the European Union. As the implementation of the current Work Plan 2019-2022 is coming to an end this year, it is vital to make sure that the priorities of the forthcoming Work Plan 2023-2026 embrace the important developments the CCSs and our societies at large have been facing in the past few years.

In this regard, we, an alliance of key largest performing arts networks and associations in Europe, call on the Member States to include **support to greening the performing arts production and to sustainable and geographically balanced cross-border distribution of the performing arts**, aiming to support multilingualism and cultural diversity in the EU, as one of the priorities of the Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026. This priority is entirely in line with the EU guiding strategies, such as the Green Deal and its Just Transition Mechanism, as well as the European Democracy Action Plan.

We regret that the current Work Plan for Culture did not include any specific topic on performing arts, while it did address other sectors (such as cultural heritage, audiovisual sector and music). The **performing arts sector is the largest European cultural sector in terms of employment¹**, and it suffered the most from the COVID-19 pandemic, **with 90% turnover loss in the first year of the pandemic²**. Therefore, the performing arts sector undoubtedly deserves a greater focus both at the EU and Member States level in the upcoming years.

Sustainable and geographically balanced distribution of the performing arts should be featured as a priorities of the Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 for the following reasons:

1. The value of cross-border distribution

Showing European performing arts across borders is valuable both for the development of artistic communities and for shaping open and inclusive societies. Experiencing performing art works from other countries and cultures helps us to grasp the diversity and complexity of the world we live in. Traveling across borders and hosting productions from abroad inspires new artistic approaches, contributes to renewing working practices and makes artistic careers blossom.

¹ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/642264/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)642264_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/642264/EPRS_BRI(2019)642264_EN.pdf)

² https://www.rebuilding-europe.eu/files/ugd/4b2ba2_1ca8a0803d8b4ced9d2b683db60c18ae.pdf

2. Geographic imbalances

However, **the current performing arts distribution system in Europe is geographically imbalanced**. The research conducted as part of Perform Europe³ demonstrates that cross-border touring and presentation of the performing arts in Europe mostly happens within the borders of the same macroregions⁴ or even within the same countries⁵. As an example, West-European export their art the most, while artists from East-European countries tour predominantly within the borders of their own macroregion. The levels of support to cross-border touring and presentation varies greatly across macroregions (see graph). These imbalances hinder the creation of a European unity and prevent the European cultural diversity from flourishing.

The funding schemes:	Northern Europe	Western Europe	Southern Europe	Eastern Europe	Balkans	Eastern Partnership + Tunisia
Create enough international touring opportunities for artists from my country						
Present a wide range of international performing arts works in my country						
Legend	The schemes adequately contribute to the dimension				The schemes do not contribute to the dimension at all	

3. Current lack of support to green distribution

In the last decades, environmental concerns have been affecting visions, artistic practices and organisational models in the performing arts sector. There have been many diverse initiatives, from greening practices to performances and works helping us to collectively imagine a different, more sustainable future. However, the pace and extent of this varies greatly from country to country. The possibility of greening production, presentation and mobility practices remains an expensive affair. Besides, it requires knowledge and skills, access to technologies, as well as the readiness to compromise on one's visibility, international fame, diverse artistic offer, and for those based in the most remote areas - on translational physical connections of all

³ Perform Europe is an EU-funded project which aims to rethink cross-border performing arts presentation in a more inclusive, sustainable and balanced way.

⁴ In the framework of the Perform Europe research, the following macroregions were identified: 1. Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia 2. Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia 3. Eastern Partnership: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, + Tunisia 4. Northern Europe: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden 5. Southern Europe: Cyprus, Malta, Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal 6. Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, France, the Netherlands, UK, Ireland

⁵ https://www.ietm.org/system/files/publications/Perform%20Europe%20Insights-%20Sustainability%20through%20innovation_0.pdf

sorts. Needless to stress - ecological concerns in action are to be found in places where there are more resources, better geographical and infrastructural connectivity, longer history of structured cultural policies, and the overall social, political and economic preoccupation with the ecological matters. However, even in those places, according to the Perform Europe research, **the level of support for greening the touring and distribution practices is very limited**⁶.

The COVID-19 reality has created a space for a deeper reflection on how to adopt greener practices; it shed some light on how to reinvent mobility, adopt digital solutions, rethink scale and success. The sector has been experimenting with digital tools, but more artist-led research is needed, in order to realise the artistic and greening potential of digitalisation (taking into account the necessity to measure the digital carbon footprint).

Therefore, we are convinced there is not only a great opportunity but also an **acute necessity to support the greening of the performing arts production and to address sustainable and geographically balanced cross-border distribution of the performing arts as part of the Work plan for Culture 2023-2026**, through peer-learning activities, OMC process, research and high-level events. The entire European performing arts sector would welcome such a focus, as extremely high needs in this regard have been identified through the entire Perform Europe process.

We remain at your disposal for any further information and assistance in designing the Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026.

IETM – International network for contemporary performing arts is one of the oldest and largest international cultural networks, representing the voice of over 500 performing arts organisations and individual professionals working in the contemporary performing arts worldwide. Their mission is to advocate the value of the arts and culture and empower performing arts professionals through access to international connections, knowledge and a dynamic forum for exchange. They also work to stimulate the quality, development and context of the contemporary performing arts, in all their diversity.

EFA - the European Festivals Association is a community dedicated to the arts, the artists and the audiences. EFA's main role in the permanently developing world of digitisation and globalisation is to connect festival makers so to inform, inspire and enrich the festival landscape. In this perspective, EFA is a festivals' service, knowledge and training provider; the oldest cultural network of European festivals! It was established to bridge the distance between organisations and all kinds of stakeholders and to create connections internationally. All this in function of the enrichment of a festival's own artistic offer and its organisational opportunities. EFA guides the discourse on the value of arts festivals. A sector that is so unique and that shares a myriad of concerns on intellectual, artistic, material and organisational level deserves a strong umbrella organisation that supports local initiatives and gives arts festivals a unified voice.

⁶ https://www.ietm.org/system/files/publications/Perform%20Europe%20Insights-%20Sustainability%20through%20innovation_0.pdf

EAIPA – the European Association of Independent Performing Arts was founded in 2018 as the umbrella organisation for associations and interest groups from all over Europe representing the independent performing arts internationally and at the European level. EAIPA operates at a B2B level and its members, in turn, represent the actors from the professional independent performing arts field on the respective national levels. The designation ‘independent performing arts community’ comprises all professional freelance theatre-makers, artistic ensembles, and independent institutions and structures working in the genres of dance, theatre, circus, performance, music, performing arts for children, and youth theatre as well as overall interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary artistic work. Currently, 17 members from 15 different countries are part of the organisation.

For more than 15 years, **Circostrada** has been working to develop and empower the fields of circus and street arts in Europe and beyond. It supports professionals and cultural stakeholders at large by boosting professional exchanges, collecting data, fostering training, knowledge sharing and promoting innovation in both sectors. With more than 135 members from over 35 countries, Circostrada acts as a bridge between all field players and EU policy makers, relaying their needs and advocating for greater means and more structured cultural policies. Circostrada is coordinated by ARTCENA – French National Centre for Circus Arts, Street Arts and Theatre, and is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union and the French Ministry of Culture.

EDN – European Dancehouse Network, formed in 2004, is an association of more than 36 dance houses connecting across Europe and beyond, with a shared ambition: strengthening professional practice, developing audiences and enhancing public engagement and progressing the network. In pursuit of this mission EDN's purpose is to champion, strengthen and communicate the dance house model as providing the optimum conditions and most effective means necessary for the structural development of dance as a contemporary art form, at all levels of engagement. EDN is the dance house network of Europe, where each member subscribes to cooperating, sharing resources, capacity building and intelligence gathering. Confronted with the challenges of the world today we stay for connectedness, identity and empathy building, resilience and the vital impact of the performing arts in society.

The European Theatre Convention (ETC) is an artistic platform for creation, innovation and collaboration. As the largest network of public theatres in Europe, ETC has more than forty European Theatre Members from over twenty countries, reflecting the diversity of Europe's vibrant cultural sector. Founded in 1988, ETC promotes European theatre as a vital social platform for dialogue, democracy and interaction that responds to, reflects and engages with today's diverse audiences and changing societies. ETC fosters a socially-engaged, inclusive notion of theatre that brings Europe's social, linguistic and cultural heritage to audiences and communities everywhere. Powerful and professional ETC governance ensures that the network will strive and grow taking into consideration latest trends and developments.