

What are the aims of the Arts Festivals' Declaration?

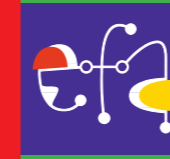
- to unite arts and culture festivals of all kinds to engage in Intercultural Dialogue
- to highlight the excellence of festivals in developing and promoting Intercultural Dialogue
- to increase the circle of festivals, national associations and cultural networks explicitly engaged in Intercultural Dialogue sharing experiences and best practices
- to pave the way for a closer collaboration on a local level among festivals, with all kinds of partners as well as across all kinds of borders
- to raise awareness among European citizens of the importance of enhancing dialogue amongst cultures in a global society

Who signs the Arts Festivals' Declaration?

All music, dance and theatre festivals, rock, pop and jazz, literature, film and philosophy festivals, children's and street arts festivals and all kinds of arts and culture festivals, national festivals associations and cultural networks across Europe and beyond are invited to sign the Declaration and to engage in promoting and implementing its aims and objectives.

The up-to-date list of signatory parties is available on a special webpage dedicated to the Arts Festivals' Declaration at www.efa-aef.eu

This webpage assembles and documents best practices and projects implemented in the festival world throughout the year and beyond.



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The European Festivals Association (EFA) is a membership organisation representing hundreds of arts festivals across Europe and beyond. In its more than fifty years of existence, the Association has grown into a representative, open and dynamic network with more than a hundred music, dance, theatre and multidisciplinary festivals, national festivals associations and cultural organisations from 38 different (mainly European) countries altogether. Since 2004, the EFA offices are based in Belgium, in the heart of Europe.

All EFA members have in common significant objectives, incorporating artistic, cultural, social and political facets. They share the love for ART, they are INTERNATIONALLY oriented and they thrive on INNOVATION. Each festival is set in its own very special context but all strive at generating a stimulating and collective, individual atmosphere among AUDIENCES and artists.

To find out more about EFA and its detailed work programme visit the EFA website at www.efa-aef.eu

EFA thanks for their support



With the support of the European Union budget line "Support to organisations which promote European culture"

ARTS FESTIVALS'
Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue
AN INITIATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN FESTIVALS ASSOCIATION



The Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue is an initiative of the European Festivals Association (EFA).

Latest news and relevant information may be found on the Arts Festivals' Declaration webpage at www.efa-aef.eu.

The Arts Festivals' Declaration is an initiative taken at the occasion of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) (www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu).

EFA is partner of the Steering and Contact Group of the Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue (www.efah.org).

EFA collaborates closely with 'A Soul for Europe' (www.berlinerkonferenz.eu) in this framework.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the European Festivals Association (EFA) we are delighted to present you with the Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue – the EFA flagship project initiated in the framework of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

The Declaration invites music, dance and theatre festivals, rock, pop and jazz, literature, film and philosophy festivals, children's and street arts festivals to join forces and highlight the outstanding excellence of arts and culture and, in particular, festivals for developing and promoting intercultural dialogue! We unite in this common venture in the conviction that festivals represent an essential tool for the interaction of people from different cultures, ethnic groups, religions, languages, beliefs and social backgrounds visiting, working for and performing at festivals every year!

With the participation of European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Mr Ján Figel, the Declaration starts its journey on 8 January 2008 in Ljubljana with a festive signing ceremony. From there, it travels to all festivals and other signatory partners across Europe and beyond to promote its aims and objectives. A special webpage dedicated to the signing procedure, best practices and projects implemented in the festival world throughout 2008 and beyond is available on the EFA webpage at www.efa-aef.eu.

We wish all of you a fruitful
European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

Darko Brlek
EFA President

Hugo De Greef
EFA Secretary General

Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue

In this increasingly globalised and multicultural society, facing cultural diversity has become a major challenge. Migratory flows and the successive enlargements of the European Union have brought the European peoples and cultures into continuous contact and exchange, so that living in a multicultural community has become the norm for millions of people.

The significance and the role of culture in the process of European integration are aspects which can no longer be ignored. In this new social context, the different facets of the cultural identity of the individual and of the local communities are constantly subject to a process of renewal and revision. Festivals have been playing a key role in this process, as they represent an ideal location where, in a festive atmosphere, the different cultural streams and phenomena closely linked to immigration and multicultural communities find an ideal place for free and peaceful expression.

They have always been powerful promoters of the protection of the fundamental right of freedom of expression and their programmes helped to boost the circulation of ideas and people, the creation of a more peaceful coexistence and the promotion of an active European citizenship.

European arts festivals initiated a vital process of circulating and giving visibility to the different cultural streams of European arts and cultures, which represented a significant step toward the development of intercultural competences. Festivals, while respecting and promoting the regional and national diversity of the local communities, cultures, values and traditions, have at the same time been highlighting a common European heritage by promoting a culture of mutual exchange and respect for cultural diversity. Disadvantaged people, youth and minorities living in this more open and complex society must be given, like all other people who are temporarily living in the EU, the possibility of accessing active citizenship.

Cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and the economic impact of culture have now gained a top position on the agenda of the EU. The decision of the European Union to declare 2008 the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue is the latest step in a long-term plan to create an ever closer union between the peoples of Europe as well as providing all citizens with the opportunity of participating actively in intercultural dialogue in order to strengthen the coexistence of different cultural identities and beliefs, to highlight their common heritage, and at the same time to acknowledge and look respectfully at the differences of individual and local experiences.

Festivals play a powerful role in turning a multicultural society into an intercultural society, a strategic step in the process of integration:

- First of all, **festivals reach broad audiences**. The number of people attending festivals keeps increasing, which in turn shows a growing interest in the events organised in the frameworks of festivals. Reaching the largest number of people for the promotion intercultural dialogue is an important goal, as there cannot be any intercultural interaction if the people have no means to get in touch.
- Festivals give **artists** from all over the world the opportunity of increasing and developing their artistic experience, thus initiating a process of mutual exchange of artistic excellence among different countries. In particular, the artists-in-residence programmes allow artists to live and work in new contexts and to combine their own experience with the local one, creating a positive and illuminating example of **integration**.
- Differently from other media, the audiences attending festival events are encouraged to actively participate in them. Festivals, conceived as plural and open moments to be shared and participated in by the largest number of people, enhance the concept of **participation** and promote a **sense of belonging**, as they are expressions of a local community, but at the same time address international and European topics.
- Festivals boost **cultural tourism**. Every year millions of visitors decide to attend festivals in different regions or countries, coming into contact with new and different cultures and learning about foreign traditions and history.
- Festivals are unique **expressions of the local community**, as they are firmly rooted in the local environment, but they are also very often linked to national and international contexts. They are challenges to local traditions - as they acknowledge cultural diversity - but at the same time they also stimulate innovation and respect the common cultural heritage.
- Festivals play a unique role in the context of **education** by promoting a culture of peace and shaping understanding and respect amongst groups of people. Fringe activities, extensive use of new technologies, schemes and activities conceived especially for young people are particularly useful tools to **reach youths** and communicate with them, sharing values such as respect for other cultures, and launching education processes in the field of intercultural exchange.
- Outreach and fringe activities provide easy and open access to the cultural activities of festivals for all kind of audiences, attracting all kinds of people, thus enhancing the process of **social inclusion**. More and more festivals' events take place in convivial atmospheres and in open venues which can be accessed basically by all, including disadvantaged people and ethnic or cultural minorities.

Festivals and other parties signing this Declaration are engaged:

- In building an effective intercultural dialogue, in the conviction that such a dialogue represents an essential tool for peaceful interaction among different cultures, ethnic groups, religions, languages, beliefs and social backgrounds. Such interaction will in turn encourage a respectful and enriching exchange of ideas and help identify the boundaries that define individuals and communities;
- In raising the awareness of artists, managers, collaborators, volunteers regarding Intercultural Dialogue conceived as a **respectful and free exchange among communities and individuals** and aimed at the promotion and maintenance of cultural diversity which is indispensable for the protection of human rights and democracy;
- In opposing stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and ignorance about different, foreign or minority cultures and are committed to and engaged in promoting Intercultural Dialogue in the framework of the European Year and for the years to come by mobilising their collective creative resources and celebrating participation as a bond among people.
- In disseminating the European Year documents and its core ideas to the largest number of people possible and ensuring visibility for the logo, brochures and all communication and information materials referring to the European Year in order to promote its essence and objectives.