

## Report

Seminar: **ORGANISING PERFORMANCES IN TIMES OF TERROR THREAT**

Organisers: European Festival Association (EFA), Overleg Kunstenorganisaties (oKo),  
Pearle\* - Live Performance Europe, Social Fund of the Performing Arts in Flanders

Date: 12/09/2016

Place: Brussels - Beursschouwburg

Speakers: Gérard Alcabas, Phillip Brown, François Freynet, Damien Godet, Arjan Jonge Vos,  
Sébastien Justine, John McQuillen

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**Note:**

Besides this report all presentations of the speakers are available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/k4twv82lkwbgcfl/AAA2SmLs7R1JyfLxyTSp2ws2a?dl=0>

In annex - the agenda.

### INTRODUCTION – the topic of the seminar

In recent years the awareness and frequency of attacks committed in the name of religious and political motivations has increased. Paris, Brussels, Nice were the latest atrocities of this kind taking place in Europe. In this climate of insecurity and real threats of carnage all those who welcome audiences have an extra preoccupation with the safety of the public, the artists and staff.

Crowded places in the public space or in buildings are often the target for people with the intention to attack as many individuals as possible. The attack on the Paris concert hall Le Bataclan has put the live performance sector to seeking information and guidance on how to establish emergency plans, set up means for prevention, train staff, communicate with audiences, whilst maintaining a general atmosphere of joy and pleasure for artists, personnel and the audiences.

The seminar wants to exploit what we can learn from past attacks, what has been done and which plans have been set up in different countries to face future attacks and in which ways the live performance sector can collaborate with police forces and the government to be prepared in times of terror threat.

Welcome words were given by Eva Nunes (EFA), Maarten Bresseleers (SOCIAL FUND of the PERFORMING ARTS in FLANDERS) and Anita Debaere (Pearle\*-Live Performance Europe).



## PRESENTATIONS

### THE STORY OF BATACLAN CONCERT HALL

**François Freynet**, Consultant Security, founder of AFL Conseil

In the beginning, François Freynet explained the whole situation in Paris during the attacks, what happened in the course of the evening and where it happened. He mentioned key points about the attacks – how the terrorists behave, who their target is, etc. From what happened it can be said that a building doesn't provide shelter anymore, as aggressors are moving fast, progressing in the city or/and into a theatre. None of those spaces are designed to resist and aggressors are looking for easy initial targets with low risks of fighting back. The approach before those attacks was to reduce criminal action and fear of crime by architecture and urban management: however, **now we move from the “avoiding the attack by defending space” concept to a “minimizing the casualties by anticipating the actions and reactions” concept.**



Minimize the number of potential victims by:

- Shortening the attack's first phase, with an accelerated response time line.
- Accelerating the efficient evacuation of the most people possible, looking for secured emergency exits in the second phase.
- Extract the most targets possible from firing angles and the terrorist progression way in the second phase.

⇒ See more info about weaknesses and strengths of venues in the speaker's presentation.

### AN INSIGHT TO THE ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN IN FRANCE SINCE THE ATTACKS

**Sébastien Justine**, Secretary-General, FEPS (Federation of employers' associations in the public and private live performance in France)

Sébastien Justine gave an insight into the activities that were implemented after the attacks. France was set under a state of emergency. This meant that a lot of things inherent to their democratic system came under pressure, such as the freedom of manifestation. Police forces have new possibilities in defending public safety against threats, i.e. police officers are allowed to wear their weapons off the job during performances. This created a discussion in the sector how to practically handle the controls of such officers before a concert or a show.

**General impact on the performing arts sector:**

- **performances cancelled,**
- **loss of audiences,**
- **security of venues reinforced.**



**Other consequences of the attacks:**

- An alert system **VIGIPIRATE (ATTENTAT)** was reinforced and the “alert attentats” level was declared. It was created a long time ago. The Vigipirate term was used for the first time in 1995 after the attacks in RER St-Michel. However there was already a system of “vigilance” since 1978 after the attacks in Orly and in Paris (Irak Embassy). **VIGIPIRATE (ATTENTAT)** led to different control measures and recommendations to the public. Venues have to comply with security measures for which no legal frame exists yet, such as controls of persons at the entrance of a theatre (must be allowed by the authorities).
- After the attacks on Bataclan in November 2015, an **emergency fund** was installed. Organisations can draw on this fund in case of delays of performances, loss of income, loss of employment or in order to take extra security measures.

- Another initiative from the French government was a **cross-sectoral meeting** about economic continuity, in which representatives Performing Arts also took part. Different ministries were involved with the aim to reinforce security in organisations, to help with temporary unemployment, etc.
- **Training programmes** for employees in theatres and other organisations, were set up with the aim to learn how to react in case of an attack, how to recognise suspect behaviour, etc.

## THE CASE OF THE UK

*John McQuillen, director of STRaR Ltd.*

The UK has a long history of facing criminal attacks in Northern Ireland and works since 2003 on extra measures to protect crowded places that resulted in a first publication in 2006.

The **national security** concept is based on **4 strands**:

1. prevention,
2. pursue those who are involved in terrorism,
3. protection of crowded places,
4. if the worst happens, how can we come back on our feet?

There is a **difference between threat and risks**.

*Threat* is about the capability to attack us - the meaning and the intent.

*Risk* is vulnerability.



With the Olympics in 2012 all measures and existing plans were revised and included different sectors: religious centres, shopping malls, hospitals and schools. The program needed to be overarching. Today, there is a list of 400 top visited centres for which security plans exist and other places can learn from those to adapt it to their own situation.

There is also attention for risk management: where are you strong, where are you weak. According to John McQuillen an **organisation has to work at different levels to properly manage the risk**:

1. Policy: setting out what is to be achieved
2. Operational: setting processes in place to make the policy work
3. Physical: the “hardware”
4. Partnership: working with those who can or are needed to make security work
5. Training: making sure that those with a role to play in the security welfare of the site are properly equipped and empowered to act effectively

It is important to give confidence to your public and to tell them which security investments and measures you take.

## QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

**Rachel Feidler Medialaan:**

*How to approach outside events, e.g. on a beach, where you don't know who's coming?*

- ⇒ In the UK: it's an obligation to have a security company; they do an assessment and inform the local police. A holistic analysis of the location must be carried out.
- ⇒ In France: it remains an open field, which is not designed for good protection. Keep the main principles in mind: how to escape on the lateral side, train your employees to anticipate on the attack, look what are the best points to frame the territory, how to manage your perimeters. In France, it was decided to bring an open air festival into a closed building as otherwise the protection of the venue was impossible.

**Malmberg Aleksi**, Finnish Cultural Institute in Brussels:

*We have an idea of what is being done, but where is the limit of the actions?*

- ⇒ In France: part of the security measures is useful “show business” otherwise people wouldn’t come. Some of the measures are efficient, see the access control in the stadium on Friday 13th (the terrorists tried 3 times to enter but didn’t succeed). But you can never know how surprisingly the action will be and how smart they are. So you know in advance that some actions will succeed.
- ⇒ In the UK: trainings are very important and it must be clear that measures need to be done properly; control can never be done half-hearted.

## FEEDBACK ON THE EXAMPLES GIVEN BY EXPERT

**Arjan Jonge Vos**, Strategic Security Advisor

### THE SITUATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

Since March 2013, the actual level of security is 4 in the Netherlands, which is nearly the highest as elsewhere. 260 potential terrorists travelled to Iraq and Syria to get trained, and radicalisation in society and politics/elections is the order of the day.

As for the security matrix, 15 sectors are included in the system: one sector is the public events for which an early warning system was built. The advantage is that the Dutch government and the sector have agreed on security measures in advance.

Realistic approach (- see statistics in presentation): terrorism has existed in the EU for a long time and today we are even not at the highest point.

Communication after an attack (from the viewpoint of a spokesperson):

- Buy yourself time and show compassion/empathy with what happened.
- Second step: investigations.
- Do not draw conclusions.
- Never blame anyone in public as this will turn against you.
- Take care to have a coherent and similar message from all involved people and organisations (take time to find this message with them).



## PANEL DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE SECTOR

Arjan Jonge Vos asked **what has been changed in theatres, concert halls and other venues.**

- **Gérard Alcabas** explains that already since 2008 specific measures were taken in Théâtre du Châtelet which is situated in a high risk zone in Paris. For example:
  - Who is having access, control of the public, control of bags, etc.
  - Participation in the special training sessions - how to protect the public of the Châtelet theatre.
  - An audit about the building (where are the exits, how do they look like, how to lock the doors, how do the public and artists come in, ...).
  - A complete inventory from the inside and outside (how to make sure that the public doesn’t wait too long outside = how to organise the queue).
  - Recruitment of two persons wearing civilian clothes to control the outside (cars, suspect behaviour, ...) and the area around Châtelet.
- **Roel Proesmans** (in the public), project manager and consultant, advised a.o. the Gentse Feesten (a city festival) and reported about the preparation for the events in this summer (2016):
  - People who worked for the festival (around 2.000) were screened by the police.
  - On the territory: from 2pm onwards there was no access anymore to the city and all cars were screened.



- At all entrances, military and normal policemen were installed, and they came from all over the country.
  - There were also spotters in civilian clothes from the police all over the city.
  - All garbage bins were in transparent plastic and emptied every 30min.
  - The number of cameras was doubled and at the control centre was a permanent team of 30 people.
  - People working for the festival got an emergency number in case they spot suspicious behaviour or people.
- **Damien Godet:** Reported on protecting the Avignon festival (around 1,3 million tickets sold and 500.000 tourists visiting the city during summer time).
    - Not every place could have been protected in the same way, so they tried to identify the higher risks places.
    - They worked with extra security companies.
    - There was a lack of time to inform and train all the people for every venue, and not enough budgets.
    - Monthly meetings were organised by the police and especially visits of VIP-people (ministries) were set in a scenario.
  - **Phillip Brown:** describing the situation of theatres in London and across the UK mentioned that audiences need to see that there is continuity in the approach to checks and others. Sometimes London is considered as high level risk zone, local theatres have less attention, but local venues often cannot employ extra people or pay external advisors. Westminster has 84 theatres so this area is rather easy to co-ordinate, but they cannot apply that system to the 400 regional theatres.
    - ⇒ Theatres in other cities have to be protected in the same way as London theatres, if not attacks will just be shifted and there will be no overall balance in the UK.
    - ⇒ Therefore the Society of London theatre (Solt) and Uktheatre have hired him to streamline the approach to security across the UK. Important in doing so, is to keep this as simple as possible so that everyone can adhere to it.



## QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

**Thomas Bergmann** from the European Parliament:

*What does it mean financially? There is no general rule and guidance, should the EU work on this? In terms of liability, does anybody know what happened with Bataclan?*

- ⇒ *Gérard Alcabas*: Before the attacks we employed three people who were rather busy with fire regulations, now we employ 11 people on top; only if VIP's are attending our performances, extra police is foreseen, otherwise we operate on our own.
- ⇒ *Phillip Brown*: The costs are on the side of the employers, not only in terms of extra employment, but also with regard to the loss of ticket sales; as regards insurances, according to UK legislation the employer has to prove that he did everything that was possible, if not the victims family could turn against the theatre (for the moment there are no such cases).
- ⇒ *Sébastien Justine*: I didn't hear from extra claims after Bataclan as it could easily be considered as force majeure because the criteria are fulfilled. After the attack, such events are considered more predictable, so it becomes more difficult to recognize force majeure now. It has to be decided by judges, so we can't be so affirmative. I am speaking about "process" rather than "rules" for the attacks because we are not sure that rules are required. There are very strong rules about security. I think that it is more an issue on the way to apply them rather than creating new rules. Recently a big event in Lille was considered as being too difficult to handle security wise so it was decided to cancel all activities. France has extra funds. UK, the Netherlands and Belgium don't have this.
- ⇒ *John McQuillen*: The EU could give incentives for targets that are important for the EU with the aim to reinvest, or create subsidies, give funding for specific tools helping the sector.

**Jean-François D'hondt** from Bozar:

*What is the reaction of the public in France?*

- ⇒ *Damien Godet*: The Avignon festival communicated more than ever (a lot through SMS, but also an extra explanation on the program, website, etc.); the public was sympathetic and came earlier to the performances and was patient when queuing up; only one person refused to show his bag and he could not enter.
- ⇒ *John McQuillen*: In the UK the public is rather complaining when their bags are not controlled, it shows that everybody takes it seriously; also pre-warnings in order to make the public attentive what can be brought into the theatre is helpful. It is important to be aware of not creating another problem, such as the queue on the street that could be a target.
- ⇒ *Gérard Alcabas*: The public changed its habits, people come now 1 hour before the performance starts (instead of 30min.) and we try to let them in as soon as possible (before there was a tradition to gather on the stairs in front of the theatre).



## CONCLUSIONS & KEY POINTS

Conclusions were given by Maarten Bresseleers, Leen Laconte and Anita Debaere who said that there was clearly an interest for sharing best practices with experts from across Europe and noted from the discussions that there was interest to further explore this topic.

### 10 KEY POINTS ADDRESSED IN THE SEMINAR

1. Move away from “avoiding the attack by defending space” to “minimizing the casualties by anticipating the actions and reactions”.
2. Work on leading principles for safety plans and emergency plans.
3. Take care of not creating another problem with your security plan – such as long queues on the street before a performance, which could be a target.
4. Check safety of buildings/venues. Identify higher risk places.
5. Inform and train all the people/staff for every venue.
6. Create public – private cooperation and have a realistic approach.
7. Change the way in which you cooperate with authorities and the society in general (police and government).
8. Work on new toolkits and instruments for venues.
9. In case of an attack: take care to have a coherent message from all people and organisations involved.
10. Exchange good practices and experiences within European networks as the terror threat goes beyond national borders. Which role for EU institutions in the future?

# Annex

Programme of the seminar



## ORGANISING PERFORMANCES IN TIMES OF TERROR THREAT

Brussels, Beursschouwburg

12 September 2016

### PROGRAMME

#### 13.30 Registration

#### 14.00 Welcome & introduction

*Eva Nunes, European Festival Association*

*Maarten Bresseleers, Social Fund of the performing arts Flanders*

#### 14.10 The story of Bataclan concert hall

What happened on that tragic day of the terror attack? how did the process go and the communication with all those involved (staff, audience, police, ...)? And how has this influenced the way in which concert halls and venues are dealing with security since then?

*François Freynet, consultant Security, founder of AFL Conseil*

**14.30 An insight to the actions undertaken in France since the attack** What were the consequences of the attack on the sector? Which actions were undertaken? How did the sector take precautions immediately and for the future?

*Sébastien Justine, Secretary-General, FEPS Federation of employers associations in the public and private live performance in France*

#### 15.00 The case of the UK

Already in 2007 guidance was developed for the sector to undertake risk management: what exactly should organisers, festivals, venue owners undertake in developing a risk management policy? Has there been changes or new elements included after the recent terror threat?

*John McQuillen, a leading authority on counter terrorism protective security management, Director & co-founder STRaR Limited*

#### 15.30 Coffee break



### **16.00 Feedback on the examples given by expert.**

What do the cases from France and the UK tell us? What can be concluded and how can the issue of security be taken forward? From your own broad expertise, what can we learn from other sectors or cases?

*Arjan Jonge Vos, Strategic Security Advice*

### **16.15 Panel discussion with representatives from the sector**

*Arjen Jonge Vos, moderator*

*Panel:*

- *Gérard Alcabas, Délégué général chargé de l'exploitation du Théâtre du Châtelet*
- *Damien Godet, Administrateur du Festival d'Avignon*
- *Magali Leich, Safety & Security advisor Bozar Brussels*
- *Phillip Brown, Head of Technical and Risk, Society of London Theatre & UK Theatre*
- *John McQuillen, Director & co-founder STRaR Limited*

Questions to the panel include: What actions can one undertake in the own organisation? How have you been handling security aspects? What do you expect from the government or other bodies or organisations?

### **17.30 Conclusions and recommendations**

*Maarten Bresseleers, Social Fund of the performing arts Flanders*

*Leen Laconte, Platform Arts Organisations in Flanders*

*Anita Debaere, Pearle\*-Live Performance Europe*

### **17.45 Aftertalk drink**

### **18.30 Closure**

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