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**Festivals**  
Open doors. Open minds.  
Build societies!

## Festivals: Open Doors. Open Minds. Build Societies!

2010 EFA General Assembly and Conference explores the artistic, social and political responsibility of festivals

### Press Release

25 March 2010

The European Festivals Association (EFA) holds its 58th General Assembly and Conference from 8-11 April in Merano/Italy under the motto "Open The Door". It is hosted by the südtirol classic festival/Meraner Musikwochen that celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2010. 120 festival directors and delegates from 38 countries discuss the need to increase access to festivals for artists and citizens. The official opening ceremony on 8 April at 18.00 at the Stadttheater includes keynote speeches by Nicola Sani, renown Italian composer and media artist, and by Doris Pack, Member of the European Parliament and Chairwoman Culture Committee, as well as a piano recital by Fazil Say.

This year's EFA General Assembly and Conference is organised as integral part of the **2010 EFA flagship project "Open The Door"** ([www.Open-The-Door.eu](http://www.Open-The-Door.eu)). EFA has been awarded official partner of the European Union in the framework of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion the European. "Open The Door" invites festivals to invest into and reflect upon the transforming power of arts and culture in our societies today.

EFA aims to define co-responsibilities of festivals and politicians in terms of increasing access to arts. In his **keynote address on "Festivals: Where are we?"** **Nicola Sani** reflects on the state of play of festivals from the perspective of the artist and festival director. **MEP Doris Pack** is "deeply convinced that it is only through culture that Europe can grow together in peace." Aware of the importance to foster a real dialogue between political decision-making level and the arts, EFA invites to experience a stimulating conversation between Mrs Pack and Mr Sani, moderated by **Simon Mundy, poet and novelist, festival director and cultural policy adviser.**

The exchanges of the grand opening pave the way to fruitful discussions during the one-day **conference on 9 April** moderated by **EFA Secretary General Kathrin Deventer**: It includes inspiring speakers such as **Fabrizio Grifasi** (Romaeuropa Festival), **Martin Honzik** (Festival Ars Electronica), **Hugo de Greef** (Flagey, Founding member European House for Culture) and **Helen Lloyd** (BBC Proms). Four professionals from different backgrounds are moderating four thematic workshops: **Valeria Marcolin, Jelle Dierickx, Salvatore Marra and Yohann Floch.**

"EFA stands for immense cultural diversity and the highest level of artistic and cultural excellence. The EFA General Assembly is the most important moment for EFA and its members to discuss issues of the festival business. In 2010, we invite all EFA members and festivals worldwide to commit to the message of the 'Open The Door' campaign: to jointly work together on increasing access to culture through festivals. We also invite public authorities to take the arts and cultural dimension into full consideration when reflecting on the integration of European and the world's societies today," underlines **EFA President Darko Brlek.**



EFA is the umbrella organisation for festivals across Europe and beyond representing more than 100 festivals, national festivals associations and cultural organisations from 38 countries. Information on EFA and its activities as well as the outcomes of the gathering can be found on the EFA website at [www.efa-aef.eu](http://www.efa-aef.eu).

Contact:  
Juliane Reissig,  
Communication  
European Festivals Association  
Kleine Gentstraat 46  
9051 Ghent-Belgium  
T +32 9 241 8080  
F +32 9 241 8089  
[Juliane@efa-aef.eu](mailto:Juliane@efa-aef.eu)  
[www.efa-aef.eu](http://www.efa-aef.eu)

