



“Europe is a cultural project”: Festivals engage through sustainable partnerships

Press Release

13 September 2009

EU Culture Commissioner Ján Figel' meets European festivals in Linz, European Capital of Culture 2009

On 13 September 2009, the European Festivals Association (EFA) together with Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, and 20 festival directors from all over Europe look back on five years of intense work for culture and for Europe. The meeting takes place at the occasion of Linz – European Capital of Culture 2009 and the opening of the Brucknerfest Linz 2009. “EFA today thanks Mr Figel' for his steady and strong support! We underline at the same time festivals' readiness to provide open and international platforms for artists to create and for audiences to access culture also in the next five years and beyond,” underlines EFA President Darko Brlek.

Since its move from Geneva to Belgium in 2004, the European Festivals Association has developed various projects that reflect the belief that Europe is first and foremost a cultural project: the EFA BOOKS series, the European Atelier for Young Festival Managers, the European House for Culture, the FestLab for Creativity and Innovation – all highlight culture and arts as catalysts for the innovative and creative development of a European society.

A Declaration of Commitment to confirm festivals' engagement for a cultural Europe also in the future is signed by all present festivals and cultural representatives.

“Ambitious objectives need strong and sustainable partnerships! EFA and its members are signalling to the future EU Culture Commissioner to continue to stand up strongly for culture and recognise the role of arts, artists and arts festivals in the European integration process,” stresses EFA Secretary General Kathrin Deventer. With the aim to establish a sustainable cultural infrastructure and to leave a lasting impact on the city's long-term cultural, economic and social development, Martin Heller, Artistic Director Linz – European Capital of Culture 2009 (www.linz09.at), echoes this view.

The press is invited to the meeting organised in collaboration with the Brucknerhaus Linz on 13 September at 14:00 at the premises of the Brucknerhaus.

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Milestones of EFA's European engagement 2004-2009

- 2004: EFA moves from Geneva/Switzerland to Ghent/Brussels; **Secretary General Hugo De Greef** underlines EFA's "role to create a platform for art and culture in Europe"
- November 2004: First **Berlin Conference**; **European Commission President José Manuel Barroso** underlines that cultural values range above economic ones
- October 2005: **Darko Brlek** is elected **EFA President**
- May 2006: First **meeting** of festival directors and **Ján Figel'**; **European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth**
- 2006: EFA launches international training programme **European Atelier for Young Festival Managers**
- 2006: **EFA BOOKS 1 "Still so much to be done"**: contribution of European Commission President José Manuel Barroso on the centenary of Denis de Rougemont
- November 2006: Second **Berliner Conference**
- 2007: EFA on steering committee of the **Platform for Intercultural Europe**
- June 2007: conference "**Cultural Networks at Work**" organised in collaboration with ISPA results in launch of the Declaration of Intention to set up the European House for Culture
- December 2007: Second **meeting** of festival directors and **Ján Figel'** in Brussels
- January 2008: launch of the **Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue** at the occasion of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in the presence of Ján Figel'; the project features as partner of the European Year and the Declaration travels the world
- March 2008: **EFA BOOKS 2 "Give, Get or Get Off. Challenges for cultural networks today"**
- May 2008: **Kathrin Deventer announced EFA Secretary General**; in her mission she underlines her ambition to continue EFA's international working programme
- June 2008: EFA selected Board member of the European Commission's **Access to Culture platform**, chair of the working group on Audience Participation, inputting strongly on EU cultural policy and acting as an active leader of the platform
- September 2008: legal establishment of the **European House for Culture**, an EFA initiative supported by Ján Figel'
- October 2008: **EFA BOOKS 3 "Cahier de l'Atelier"** including a foreword by Ján Figel'
- November 2008: conclusion of the **Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue** in the presence of Ján Figel'; underlining future engagement for intercultural dialogue
- November 2008: Third **Berlin Conference** and presentation of the new organisational model with a decentralised organisation and the participation of 50 young Europeans. New seat: European House for Culture
- January 2009: **meeting** of EFA President Darko Brlek, EFA Secretary General Kathrin Deventer, Frans de Ruiter, President of the European House for Culture, Hugo de Greef, General Director of the Flagey with **Ján Figel'**
- March 2009: launch of the **FestLab for Creativity and Innovation** at the occasion of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation in the presence of Ján Figel'; with the FestLab project EFA features as official European partner of the 2009 European Year
- April 2009: second **European Atelier for Young Festival Managers** in Varna/Bulgaria
- May 2009: **EFA BOOKS 4 "Dialogue. Festivals Act for an Intercultural Society"** including a foreword by Commission Director General Odile Quintin
- September 2009: **third meeting** of festival directors and **Ján Figel'**
- September 2009: launch of the **European House for Culture**, at the initiative of EFA

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