



**WWW.OPEN-THE-DOOR.EU**



**Festivals**

Open doors. Open minds.  
Build societies!



FestFlash of the European Festivals Association No 2 / June 2010

## Open the door to politics, to civic debate and to Europe

One of the missions of the 2010 flagship project “[Open The Door](#)” of the [European Festivals Association](#) (EFA) is to *open the door* to reflection and debate on the importance of arts and culture for societal development. In 2010, under the motto “Festivals: Open Doors. Open Minds. Build Societies,” festivals involve all stakeholders in a political discussion on the role arts and culture play. In this FestFlash particular focus is given to the work and activities of festivals in South Eastern Europe: How do festivals and politics from this region and how does the EU ‘open doors’ to Europe?

### In the spotlight...

#### The importance of arts and culture in society: Festivals from South Eastern Europe urge recognition

On 5/6 June 2010, [Ivo Josipović, President of Croatia and former long-standing director of the Music Biennale Zagreb, signed a Commitment to open doors to arts and culture and to Europe](#). Together with 30 festivals from South Eastern Europe, EFA urges a broad recognition of the role of arts and culture in society and closer cooperation between the Balkan region and the rest of Europe.

Next to Ivo Josipović, Darko Brlek (EFA), Antun Tomislav Šaban (Croatian Composers' Society), David Baile (International Society of the Performing Arts, ISPA, on behalf of 350 members from all over the world) and festivals from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Kosovo, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey call for a long-term support of the cultural sector in political, structural as well as in financial terms. "The variety of inherent values culture and international cultural collaboration bring about must become a focal point in all policy areas," states the [Commitment](#). [Read the full report](#) and consult the [picture gallery](#)!



### What does the Commitment urge?

- arts and culture policies should be recognised as a **priority action line in the *aquis communautaire***.
- arts and culture should be taken into consideration in **neighbourhood as well as other external affairs policies** of the European Union.
- arts and culture have an enormous potential to foster the **regional development** and also **integration** of the Balkan region into the European community.
- arts and culture are central to active **involvement by civil society** in the political decision making process at local, national and EU level during the accession process.
- **mobility** of artists and cultural operators both in the region and between the region and the rest of Europe must be strongly supported in order to allow for exchange of innovative ideas and talents that benefit European society as a whole.
- **funding opportunities** for cultural actions, organisations and festivals (both in the region and beyond) that enhance integration and European co-operation, civil society dialogue, mobility and access to arts and culture in the Balkans need to be advanced in order to make optimum use of the potential of arts and culture.
- the **development of an independent cultural sector** must be supported in the long-term in political, structural as well as in financial terms.

## In conversation with... Ivo Josipović, President of Croatia

*The conversation took place at the occasion of the meeting of the European Festivals Association on 5/6 June 2010 in Zagreb organised at the honour of the election of Ivo Josipović as President of the Republic of Croatia. Cultural actors in Croatia and in the neighbouring countries pin their hopes on Mr Josipović to advance the recognition of arts and culture among politicians not related to the cultural sector.*



**Ivo Josipović:** My policy is to build strong relations in the region and with our Eastern neighbours. I think we are on the right way. We have many problems in the region and not all issues are solved yet. The message of the Zagreb meeting is not only a message for this region, it is a message for the whole world. Especially now that we are facing very critical times in our history, not only in economic terms, but also in terms of creating a unity in Europe. This is a challenge.

And arts and culture play a role in this: do we have money for cultural work and can we invest more? That is one question for me. Another, maybe more relevant, is: what does culture mean in society? I am trying to involve culture in other policies and present culture to the Croatian Council or in meetings. Everybody has to understand the contribution of culture. The situation can be improved if politicians, cultural actors and artists have a proper relation, a proper goal on Europe. Connecting culture and politics is not always easy, though.

**Antun Tomislav Šaban** (General Secretary Croatian Composers' Society): It is very important for our country to have Mr Josipović, a man of arts and culture, as President. I think it is a very strong signal towards Europe and the rest of the world. During his first 100 days in office one of Ivo Josipović's focal points was neighbourhood policy. In the same spirit, the European Festivals Association and the Croatian Composers' Society are eager to reinforce the contacts and activities in the region - which reflects the policy of President Josipović and shows that we are on the same course.

**Kathrin Deventer** (EFA Secretary General): It is an important task for EFA as a European network to bring this message that we are committing to today back to Europe, to the European Parliament, to the European Commission, to the President of the European Council, Herman von Rompuy, to the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, as "continuing the dialogue between political decision-makers at all levels and cultural operators, both from the region and European level" (**Commitment**) is of utmost importance.

In the past 6 years, EFA has engaged a lot in the support of a dialogue with political decision-makers. Coming from the field of culture, you, Mr Josipović, understand of course the importance of the dialogue between civil society and political decision-makers. In this region, this dialogue is much needed. Denis de Rougemont, founder and first President of the European Festivals Association, a great visionary and a truly European, already said there is "still much to be done" [see **EFA BOOKS 1**]. I think Europe is facing a crises, not only an economic one but also one of identity: "Why do we have Europe?" many Europeans ask themselves today. We need dialogue. This year, EFA has taken the initiative to launch a campaign to "Open The Door" also in a political sense.

**Biljana Zdravkovic** (General Manager BEMUS - Belgrade Music Festival): We imagine that now culture will be better understood and represented. This is so important: what I see in Serbia is that politicians are not aware of what is going on in the field of culture. We have to try to make politicians understand how important culture and intercultural dialogue are - which can support political dialogue.

**Antun Tomislav Šaban**: The Commitment "Open The Door" is very important for authors as well as for performers because we are aware that festivals around the world are a communication tool and a platform that enables us to disseminate our artistic visions, our ideas, and communicate them to people in all countries around the world.

*The upcoming FestFlashes put festivals into the spotlight that open doors for artists and audiences and that open doors to arts and culture for everybody!*

## FestFlash Highlights

### Music Biennale Zagreb: Connecting artists, institutions and audiences



**Broadening Biennale** is a project that is to be realised within the Music Biennale Zagreb (MBZ) 2011 programme. In its form, it is conceived as a co-production between the festival and the five national theatres across Croatia. Based in Zagreb, the MBZ is thus opening its doors to four new cities through their theatres - Split, Rijeka, Osijek and Varaždin. Five new musical stage works have been commissioned from Croatian composers. It is of great importance to the MBZ to act as a link between all levels of cultural life in Croatia, connecting artists, institutions and audiences.

## Belgrade Music Festival: Reaching goals through cooperation

Following the extremely difficult historical period in the Balkan region and a period of isolation for some of the countries, it was culture that first established new communication paths between ex-YU states. Borders today, at least in the field of culture, are mostly bridged. Therefore, BEMUS, the Belgrade Music Festival, initiated the establishment of a symphonic orchestra that would gather the best musicians from the region: [NO BORDERS ORCHESTRA](#).

## Audiences, creativity, education: REMUSICA Festival in Prishtina successful despite major challenges



In the framework of [REMUSICA](#), the Prishtina International Contemporary Music Festival, EFA Secretary General [Kathrin Deventer contributed](#) to a round table (23-24 May 2010) of festivals from the Balkans - Albania, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia - to discuss the specific challenges festivals face in the region. Despite all difficulties, REMUSICA succeeds in attracting broad audiences, in being educative and in being creative by giving composers the chance to create new works.

## Festival Internacional de Música y Danza de Granada: Granada dialogues

At the occasion of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion the Festival Internacional de Música y Danza de Granada dedicates its "[Diálogos](#)" series to the Year's objectives and incorporates the aims of "Open The Door". The discussion rounds with both national and European participations, including artists, politicians, cultural operators, academics and journalists, focus on topics such as social inclusion, intercultural dialogue, education, social responsibility; each time the role of the arts in the different contexts is explored. An in-depth interview coming soon!

## DanceMe: Long-term cross-media participatory project on the internet

[DanceMe](#) is a cross-media participatory project about Performing Arts and Web 2.0. It creates an interdisciplinary creative lab lasting 12 months. The project will involve the internet community as well through a web platform. Performers are going to be set in an art-in-residence programme, where they will be free to create. DanceMe is a great opportunity for young European artists to experience how other European artists deal with creative processes. [Read ahead!](#)

## Black International Cinema Festival: opening doors to film makers and tackling societal issues



The [Black International Cinema Festival](#) (4-8 May, Berlin) contributes to better understanding and increasing cooperation between people from various cultural, ethnic, national and religious backgrounds, in order to reduce prejudices and support a peaceful and respectful living together in our multi-faceted society! Through the processes of art, education, culture and dialogue the festival tackles a variety of issues (religion, gender, etc.). In 2010, this was done through film screenings, seminars and a photo exhibition. [Read ahead!](#)

## EFA General Assembly & Conference: 100 festivals committed to open doors to artists and audiences



The European Festivals Association (EFA) held its 58th General Assembly and Conference from 8-11 April 2010 in Merano/Italy. As part of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, 130 festival directors and delegates from 38 countries committed to the statement to “Open The Door” and thus to increase access to festivals for artists and citizens. [Read ahead!](#)

### How to commit to “Open The Door”

The European Festivals Association invites all arts festivals to commit to the initiative “Open The Door” at the dedicated website: [www.Open-The-Door.eu](http://www.Open-The-Door.eu).

Festivals who express their commitment are invited to [submit their best practice](#).

### About FestFlash and EFA

The 2010 FestFlash series brings news about festivals and their activities implemented in the spirit of the “Open The Door” initiative.

Latest news and relevant information may be found on the **Open The Door** website at [www.Open-The-Door.eu](http://www.Open-The-Door.eu) and on the EFA website at [www.efa-aef.eu](http://www.efa-aef.eu)!

“Open The Door” is an initiative of the [European Festivals Association](#) in the framework of the [European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion](#). As in 2008 and in 2009, EFA is official partner of the European Year.

The **European Festivals Association (EFA)** is the umbrella organisation for arts festivals across Europe and beyond. Over more than 50 years, EFA has grown into a dynamic network representing more than 100 music, dance, theatre and multidisciplinary festivals, national festivals associations and cultural organisations (representing on their behalf more than 1,000 festivals) from 38 (mainly European) countries. Since 2004, the EFA offices are based in Belgium.

EFA is initiator of the **European House for Culture** ([www.efa-aef.eu](http://www.efa-aef.eu)), a member of the EU Platform on ‘Access to Culture’ and collaborates closely with ‘[A Soul for Europe](#)’.



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

Connect with us online:



EFA thanks for their support:



With the support of  
the Flemish government

