



The European Festivals Association: Together for a Cultural Europe

COMMITMENT

Europe has a future if it chooses to be a cultural Europe! In this declaration, arts festivals commit themselves to combining their collective forces and striving to further develop a cultural Europe based on creativity, participation and civic commitment.

Every year, thousands of artists perform on festival stages around Europe, presenting arts to a broad audience.

Millions of citizens from all sections of society attend festivals in different cities, regions and countries, come into contact with different arts and cultures and learn about different traditions and history.

Festivals promote the most distinguished artists and ensembles, but they also highlight new talents and unusual productions. Their immediate impact is the creation of new values in the artistic, cultural, educational and social spheres.

Festivals contribute to social inclusion and livening up a city's life. They support citizen pride and well-being, the sharing of values, ownership, social responsibilities and citizenship. In short: they offer a genuine added value for all people from all walks of life.

Thus, festivals are invaluable platforms for promoting artistic excellence, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, and for offering a window on the world.

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The European Festivals Association is always attentive to opportunities that foster collaborations. The network stimulates an intense exchange of practices among its members but it also spreads these good practices to everybody who may find them useful.

In particular since its move to Belgium in 2004, EFA has extended its activities to the needs of the sector in general. In this collaborative spirit, EFA has devised flagship projects:

the **Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue** (January 2008), the **FestLab for Creativity and Innovation** (March 2009), the **EFA Books Series** (launched in December 2006, the 4th volume was published in May 2009), the **European Atelier for Young Festival Managers** (in 2006 and 2009) and the **European House for Culture** (in September 2008)

They show the significant commitment of festivals towards a cultural Europe.

Continued commitment: EFA in the next 5 years

EFA and its members, in view of EFA's 60th anniversary in 2012, confirm to the upcoming European Commission and to the next European Commissioner in charge of culture to support the development of the vital, dynamic, innovative cultural sector that is essential to the construction of a Europe based on diversity, participation, curiosity and knowledge of our invaluable artistic and cultural potential and heritage.

- Through its support of the **work of hundreds of arts festivals**, EFA and national festivals associations and networks play an active role in the promotion of artistic excellence and access to arts and culture: EFA members come from 40 countries, and their work encompasses music, dance, theatre and a multitude of other disciplines; they take place in small towns and remote villages, in urban hubs and entire regions. In their growing diversity they are united in their work for a cultural Europe;
- Through its training programme, the **European Atelier for Young Festival Managers**, EFA supports life-long learning at an international level and contributes to professional networking and the continued support to artists: under the motto "Car le vrai rôle d'un festival est d'aider les artistes à oser, à entreprendre des projets" young managers from all over the world are offered new ways of developing arts festivals in which the artist and his work are central;
- Through fostering the role of **festivals as platforms for dialogue**, EFA invites festivals to open its doors and offer time and space for public reflection by artists, cultural actors, politicians, business representatives, academics, journalists..... – communicated broadly in the framework of festivals;
- Through the **FestLab for Creativity and Innovation**, EFA contributes to the excellence and originality of festivals and supports **artistic creation and creativity** offering a platform for artistic directors to exchange on an international level and enter into co-productions;
- As part of the FestLab, the **European Festivals Association Award** is further developed into an Artists Prize at European level that aims to promote and support artistic excellence and give it an international operation and visibility through European festivals;
- Through the growing **EFA BOOKS series**, EFA promotes the sharing of knowledge and the stimulation of thought on a cultural Europe: also the next editions of the EFA BOOKS will focus on the role of the arts, arts festivals and civil society in the process of creating a Europe of Europeans, from in-depth historical reflections to anecdotal experiences and very personal testimonies on Europe's integration, its opportunities, its intensified exchanges and its historical landmarks;
- Through its growing contacts with festivals and cultural actors **outside Europe**, EFA aims to further the mutual inspiration and internationalisation of festivals' work: growing partnerships with festivals in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Mediterranean area, Euroasia and the American continent will lead to strengthened networking, understanding and mutual inspiration;
- Initiated by EFA, the **European House for Culture**, in 5 years time, aims to be a House that will encourage meetings between all who believe that culture and art have a fundamental role to play in society – a place where the voice of the cultural sector is given a physical manifestation in the conviction that a cultural Europe can only be built through strong alliances between the players in the sector on the one hand and an intense dialogue with the European and other regional/national public institutions on the other.

Wishing the new European Commissioner a successful, dynamic and significant mandate with powerful regulations and innovative policies, EFA is offering its network capacities to contribute to the improvement of communication channels between cultural institutions and public authorities, educational institutions and the creative industries. Therefore, EFA encourages all parties to fully exploit the opportunity offered by festivals and the European House for Culture to engage in the debate.