

## Festivals Cities Conversations

### Contributions & responsibilities of festivals and cities towards Europe

Friday, 19 June 2020, 13.00 – 14.30 PM

***This session is co-organised with:*** A Soul for Europe in the framework of the European Festivals Association and A Soul for Europe's "Festival Cities for Europe" Initiative.

***With introductions by:*** Nele Hertling (A Soul for Europe), Cécile Finot (Clermont-Ferrand European Capital of Culture), Airan Berg (Festival der Regionen), Monica Urian (European Commission)

***Followed by break out groups***

***And a reaction by:*** Luca Jahier (President of the European Economic and Social Committee), Volker Hassemer (Cities for Europe, A Soul for Europe), Damian Boeselager (MEP)

***Facilitated by:*** Cristina Farinha (Cultural and Creative Sector Policy Expert) and Katherine Heid (European Economic and Social Committee)

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## Challenge

**Fact: Europe (and here we always mean a larger Europe, not just the EU), is a continent of festivals. And of cities.**

**Assumption: Europe is not only a citizens', let alone only an economic or political project. Europe is also a community; a community embedded in and with a responsibility for the world.**

**Another assumption: The development of Europe is citizens' driven. Citizens, and civil society play a key role in the formulation and implementation of Europe's development.**

**Based on these assumptions, we say that a city together with its festivals and citizens has a task to fulfill for Europe.**

We invite festivals and cities to connect with each other in order to give Europe a face/soul. We invite these two players to use the creative power of art and culture and the place of a city to strengthen the possibilities and willingness of citizens to become active in the future development of Europe. What kind of examples exist or can we come up with to raise 'awareness' about Europe? What can we propose to each other that underpins common needs: dialogue, communication, interaction, connections bottom up.

In our zoom meeting, we assume that it is not enough to say: 'We are in Europe, we have European public, we have European audiences, so we are Europe'. It is about using the potential of festivals and cities and their daily contacts with citizens to make them more aware about Europe; it is about keeping the idea of Europe present, creating consciousness, and responsibility through the presence in artistic and cultural events. It is about an enlarged potential of the arts, for Europe – it is about including stakeholders into the debate and awareness for our European responsibility.

If we agree with this task, join the zoom meeting that will brainstorm **concrete actions how Festival Cities can materialize our co-responsibility for Europe, in particular in times of COVID when new approaches, partnerships and priorities for our societies are formulated.**

**What can we, festivals and cities together, do for Europe? How can ideas for Europe between festivals and cities be implemented?**

## Targets

The zoom meeting targets festivals, cultural and social initiatives as well as **cities and their cultural relations**. Cities are creative centres. They are the place where civil society has its chances to take responsibility, to cooperate with the political decision makers on many different levels and to develop social innovation and active citizenship. The power of culture as a motor for dialogue with partners of various disciplines and citizens is immensely strong in a city.

**Festivals** are a strong feature in the cultural industries all over the world and a partner to many creative stakeholders in a city. They are places and creative neighbourhoods for meeting people, of dialogue and exchange, of learning and understanding. They act as a prominent urban and creative hub and as an important player in the public space: a festival's artistic experience is an atelier for **citizens' participation**, ready for an action how artistic creativity supports and fosters democracy.

The results of this workshop: a series of actions in cities and festivals, ultimately target **the festival audiences and citizens as well as the creative and social entrepreneurs in the city.**

## Organisers

### A Soul for Europe

A Soul for Europe (ASfE) connects and mobilizes citizens and democratic institutions across Europe to foster a sense of responsibility for Europe that is under continual construction. The idea is to establish alliances with politics in order to be able to dialogue on a permanent level about the best ways to work for Europe. We start with the idea to make better use of the specific potential that arts and culture have to create encounters between people and create communities. A Soul for Europe is convinced that various alliances in various cultural fields can become active partners in the concrete implementation of the this starting point of ASfE.

### European Festivals Association

The European Festivals Association (EFA) started with a new understanding of its role. Not to neglect the previous one (that of the organisational cooperation and support of the European festivals), but to go beyond it. The motto "Europe for Festivals - Festivals for Europe" formulates the goal and task.

EFA accepts the challenge of this phrase: Festivals see themselves as responsible for the development of Europe and are proud to contribute to this development. They see themselves as an alliance whose spirit is determined by the commitment to contribute to the success of Europe with the specific power of the festivals.

With this initiative, the festivals want to challenge and encourage others in other areas of culture to form similar alliances. They are willing to cooperate with such alliances. Europe should increasingly be able to rely on such civil initiatives.

A first cooperation is particularly obvious for the festivals: a cooperation in a Festival Cities Initiative. As the festival venues, the cities are being treated by the festivals as their "Siamese twins" - they are partners born for each other.

### Some links on the topic

- A Soul for Europe: <https://asoulforeurope.eu/>
- Clermont-Ferrand Candidate European Capital of Culture 2028: <https://www.clermont2028.eu/>
- Festival der Regionen: <https://fdr.at/en/>
- European Economic and Social Committee: <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en>
- Cities for Europe: <https://www.citiesforeurope.eu/>