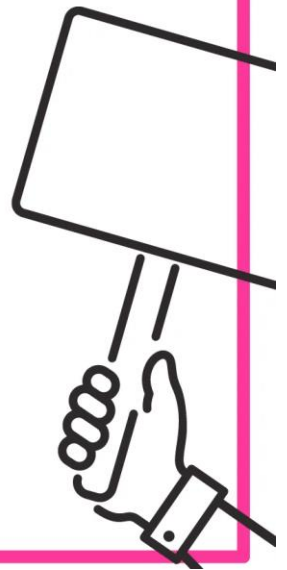


Culture Action Europe calls for **Artistic Freedom and Autonomy of the Arts**



September 24, 2024

Call for Artistic Freedom and Autonomy of the Arts

As members of Culture Action Europe, we would like to express our growing concern over the increasing political intervention by governments in the work of cultural organisations across Europe. We acknowledge efforts of the EU to ensure freedom of expression for arts and media, and call upon Articles 11 and 13 of the European Charter of Human Rights and Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union to safeguard this basic human right. We therefore strongly condemn the many egregious restrictions on artistic freedom, freedom of expression, and organisational autonomy, a trend that is gaining traction in several European countries.

34% of respondents in the [‘Creative Pulse’](#) survey indicated that they have been either significantly or somewhat affected by limitations on their freedom of artistic expression.

Freedom of artistic expression and artistic autonomy are increasingly under pressure from political parties, as well as anti-democratic political and social movements. In light of the rise of far-right parties and recent instances of constraints on artistic freedom, we anticipate a growing use of censorship as a default mechanism, which we unequivocally reject.

In accordance with Articles 11 and 13 of the European Charter of Human Rights, and reflecting the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights, as outlined in Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union, we call upon European institutions to take action to safeguard the freedom of artistic expression.

We urge the European institutions to incorporate aspects of the freedom of artistic expression into its annual Rule of Law report, supported through a European observatory on the freedom of artistic expression. We call for further research on the state of artistic freedom in Europe and the adoption of measures to protect and safeguard artists' ability to create without censorship, political interference, or intimidation.

We call on all EU Member States to fulfil their responsibility to protect and promote freedom of artistic expression and safeguard the artistic autonomy of publicly funded institutions. We urge Member States to adhere to the guiding principles of the EU's Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026, which recognises artistic freedom as fundamental to the human ability to address challenges, think critically, innovate and invent.

Cultural institutions across Europe, including arts education, are crucial defenders of democratic values and champions of a pluralistic society, which makes them key targets for those who oppose these ideals. It is vital to ensure that cultural spaces can continue to operate as open and democratic environments that resist intimidation and political interference. This can only be done if the organisational autonomy of cultural institutions is safeguarded and over-instrumentalisation of public funding instruments by policymakers is avoided.

This would also align with the commitment outlined in the [political guidelines](#) for the next European Commission 2024-2029 and the [EU Strategic Agenda](#) 2024-2029, both of which emphasise the need to protect European values and freedoms.

On behalf of

Culture Action Europe

and its co-signatory members:

EMMA – European Music Managers Alliance

Alberto González Pulido

ARC Research & Consultancy

Association of Independent Theatres in Czechia

Chris Torch

Círculo de Bellas Artes

DSI Swinging Europe

ECHO – European Concert Hall Organisation

European Festivals Association – EFA

ELIA

ENCC

European Theatre Convention – ETC

European Folk Network

IG Kultur Österreich

IndieGesta APS

Intercult

Jeunesses Musicales International

Michael Culture Association

On the Move

Opera Europa

Pearle*-Live Performance Europe

sabaa.education

Space-time Works

The Artists' Association of Sweden / Konstnärernas Riksorganisation