



## Now Europe needs culture and culture needs Europe

*Open letter addressed to:*

*Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission*

*Ms. Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth*

*Mr. David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament*

*Mr. Andrej Plenković, President of the Council of the European Union, Prime Minister of Croatia*

*Ms. Nina Obuljen Koržinek, Minister of Culture of Croatia*

*Heads of state and government of European countries*

*Ministers of Culture of European countries*

The global coronavirus pandemic has hit Europe heavily and at its core. Every day, it turns people's lives upside down, in the way they live, consume, trade, and travel. It profoundly questions our societies.

The cultural sector, and in particular the live performance sector, is heavily hit by the crisis. The confinement measures taken by national governments have, within a few hours, put on hold their main purposes: bringing together groups of people that share the work of artists at the same time and in the same place.

Europe is our real working field. Artists have always been circulating, Europe has been shaped by exchanges between creators. Today the work of artists; the development of our ensembles; orchestras; companies; the productions and audiences of our festivals; concert halls and theatres; our operas; take place at European level.

The difficulties that we are experiencing because of the pandemic are not only a national concern, but a European one.

Several European countries have adopted emergency measures to secure the work and the living of artists and cultural organisations at national level. We are grateful for that. However, comparing the different measures Europe-wide, the response is very unequal from one country to another. We cannot risk having some countries removed from the cultural map of Europe as a consequence of the crisis. In addition to that, foreign artists who were supposed to perform in another country often do not benefit from the same emergency measures as local artists.

Following numerous appeals, like those from [Culture Action Europe](#), [Live Europe](#) and an [Open petition](#), the European Commission has already announced a certain number of measures towards the cultural sector, including flexibility in the management of its cultural programmes, and we are grateful for that. However, this will not be sufficient. The time has come to show a real European solidarity. In the words of Commissioner Mariya Gabriel<sup>[i]</sup>: 'It is often in times of turmoil that people are resorting to culture. Now it is our turn to show our gratitude to this sector, the treasure of Europe.'

The European Union must place culture at the heart of its project, as it can only find its soul in artistic creation and cultural diversity. The coronavirus pandemic forces our policy makers to deeply reconsider our models. An economic and political construction, the European Union has the possibility and the obligation to become a cultural and humanistic construction, and it must have the necessary means to do so.

It is an illusion to think that in a few months live concerts, shows, museums and heritage sites will continue where they stopped. Our work cannot be put on hold. It will be affected by the crisis for a long time.

**This is why we call upon all countries in Europe: EU member states and other European countries to each include culture, live performance and artists in their emergency funds.**

**We also solemnly call upon the European Union and all countries making up the European Union to be aware of this urgency, to dedicate a considerable part of its Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative to the cultural sector, and in particular to the live performance sector, and to invest massively, urgently and profoundly in a Europe of culture.**

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[i] Press conference held on Wednesday 8 April 2020

## CO-SIGNATORIES OF THE LETTER

ACCR - Association des Centres culturels de rencontre  
AEC - Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen  
CIA - Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes  
CIRCOSTRADA - European Network for Circus & Street Arts  
Culture Action Europe  
ECHO - European Cities of Historic Organs  
EDN - European Dancehouse Network  
EFA - European Festivals Association  
EFNYO - European Federation of National Youth Orchestras  
EJN - European Jazz Network  
EMC - European Music Council  
EMCY - European Union of Music Competitions for Youth  
EMU - European Music School Union  
ENCATC  
ENCC - European Network of Cultural Centres  
EOFed - European Orchestra Federation  
ERIH - European Route of Industrial Heritage  
ESTA - European String Teachers Association  
EUROPA NOSTRA  
European Choral Association - Europa Cantat  
EVTA - European Voice Teachers Association  
FACE - Fresh Arts Coalition Europe  
FEST - Federation for European Storytelling  
IAML - The International Association of Music Libraries, Archives, and Documentation Centres  
IMC - International Music Council  
IMZ International Music + Media Centre  
INES - Innovation Network of European Showcases  
JM International  
NAMM International  
ON THE MOVE  
PEARLE\* - Live Performance Europe  
Polish Music Council  
PROCUR.ARTE  
REMA - European Early Music Network / Réseau Européen de Musique Ancienne  
RESARTIS  
TEH - Trans Europe Halles  
TENSO - European network for professional chamber choirs  
Think Big ! The European network for large ensembles of jazz and improvised music  
World Federation of Amateur Orchestras

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