

PRESS RELEASE – 13 November 2020

European Theatre and Performing Arts Sector Calls for Urgent Plan to Revive the Arts

Signed by 12 major European theatre and performing arts networks, The Dresden Declaration sets out conclusions from the first ‘European Theatre Forum 2020: European Performing Arts in Focus’ and calls on Europe to urgently create a plan to revive the sector during and after the pandemic.

The [European Theatre Forum 2020: European Performing Arts in Focus](#) just closed its online doors. More than 150 policymakers, artists, theatre-makers, theatre & performing arts structures gathered and created, for the first time ever, a collective political voice for the theatre and performing arts sector. The Forum delivered a strong signal on the importance of culture in Europe, fundamental for every democratic society. The meeting was organised in the frame of the German EU Council Presidency and in cooperation with the European Commission and the German Minister of State for Culture and the Media.

After a seven-month dialogue process, 12 European theatre and performing arts networks representing artists, companies, production houses, theatres, festivals and academies (also known as the [Consortium](#)) publish today the Dresden Declaration of the European Theatre Forum, calling for a continued and deepened policy dialogue and the creation of an EU support strand focused on theatre and the performing arts. Furthermore, the Consortium formulated “The Way Forward”, 8 concrete suggestions for the future of the sector.

- **Continuing the dialogue**

Today, amidst the COVID-19 crisis, it has never been more evident that an open dialogue and enhanced collaboration across the entire creative value chain of theatre and performing arts creation, production and distribution as well as the concerted cooperation with political

stakeholders at all governing levels are the sector's key assets for envisaging a sustainable future. Thus, the Consortium stresses the need that the pan-European sectoral collaboration – which is about learning from and about each other, creating a strong common voice and enhancing the policy dialogue – must be continued, deepened and taken to the next level.

- **European support for theatre and the performing arts**

The pan-European focus on the performing arts sector at the first European Theatre Forum, including the sector's challenges, values and possible policy actions, has clearly shown a European added value. In light of the highly fragmented national and regional policy instruments supporting the sector (touring and co-production schemes, funding strategies, educational programmes, etc.), there is a need for coordinated action to enhance transnational collaboration and promote diversity in theatre and the performing arts. But for that to happen, it is imperative to develop a unified European vision for the sector's recovery and sustainable future. Certain structural issues and challenges faced by the sector across Europe – in various forms and to various extents – would be best addressed at the EU level, complementing measures and programmes undertaken by the EU, and promoting and sharing best practices.

- **8 suggestions for 'The Way Forward'**

The Consortium strongly believes that it is high time to establish clear strategies, concrete formats and special tools with which the sector can deepen the dialogue and, in collaboration with EU policymakers, develop the pan-European actions needed to support the European theatre and performing arts sector. The Dresden Declaration defines 8 suggestions on how to start this process with relevant actions. It includes the urgent need to defend the freedom of artistic expression and acknowledges the undeniable power of the arts to open minds and encourage critical reflection. Read the full Declaration and its 'Way Forward' [on the European Theatre Forum website here](#).

EUROPEAN THEATRE FORUM 2020

EUROPEAN PERFORMING
ARTS IN FOCUS



Initiative Group

European Theatre Convention, Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste and International Theatre Institute – German Centre are the initiative group for a European Theatre Forum, in the frame of the German EU Council Presidency, in cooperation with the German Minister of State for Culture and Media and the European Commission.

Consortium Group



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