









Dear Members of the European Parliament, Dear President of the Parliament, Ms. Metsola, Dear Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education, Ms. Nela Riehl,

We, cultural institutions and artists from across Europe, are alarmed by current cultural policy developments in various EU member states. While the Hungarian cultural sector has already been largely brought into line through new media laws and budget cuts, politically motivated layoffs are currently taking place in Slovakia – to name only the dismissals of the directors of the National Theatre and the National Gallery. The attacks on artistic freedom have reached an almost absurd level in many member states: at the National Theater of Sofia, a play over 100 years old, set in a fictitious Bulgaria, was performed without an audience in its first opening night due to attacks from ultranationalist circles, who physically prevented the viewers to enter the building of the theatre. In Austria, the right-wing nationalist Freedom Party (FPO) is threatening to cut funding for "woke" culture – which simply means all culture beyond local music organizations – while in the Netherlands, Geert Wilders' "Freedom Party", in France the Rassemblement National and in Germany the AfD are pushing for radical cuts in funding for all cultural institutions and efforts that are not "traditional" and "national". These cuts have already been implemented in many areas, according to the logic that what has been destroyed will not recover quickly.

We are aware that one of the principles of the European Union is not to intervene in the cultural policies of its various member states, but only to support them in "crises and unexpected challenges", as stated in the EU Strategic Framework for Culture. So let us be clear: culture in Europe is facing just such a crisis. For many months, even years, and in some member states even for a whole decade, cultural institutions have been subjected to a political campaign that restricts freedom of expression and artistic freedom and eliminates everything that does not conform to the political line of right-wing conservative, nationalist party alliances through cuts or bans. These are no random cuts, but betray an orchestrated cultural-political strategy aimed at the disappearance of a diverse European culture that has grown since 1989. "Brussels

should lose political significance," is how the 'Vienna Declaration', which Herbert Kickl and Viktor Orbán, the leaders of the two strongest Central European right-wing parties, recently signed, sums it up. Because let's not be deceived: where open, non-partisan, cross-border culture disappears, the European unification and peace project itself will eventually disappear as well.

In view of this, we call on you to address the current developments in the EU member states in the European Parliament and to finally take an explicit stand. Important areas of European culture and transnational cooperation have already disappeared in the face of radical re-nationalization, and important cultural institutions have been filled with compliant bureaucrats - or starved to death - in many countries. In the face of looming cuts, we see self-censorship, fear and depression spreading. We therefore stand in solidarity with artists who have been dismissed or obstructed in their work, and with cultural institutions across Europe that are threatened with closure or have already been closed. Violently preventing a premiere from taking place in front of an audience, as happened in Sofia, is a more than clear warning that too many red lines have already been crossed.

We ask you to address the acute threat to a consistent European cultural policy and to speak out clearly about the attacks, bans, layoffs and cutbacks in the individual EU member states, We must build on the solidarity already shown by thousands of artists and arts organisations across Europe in condemning these brazen attacks on artistic freedom, and in using the power of international networks to multiply potential solutions. Both the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the EU's Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 demand protection for artistic freedom. We urge Member States and European institutions to fulfil their responsibilities to these documents – and provide even more safeguards by implementing a 'European Culture Freedom Act' as part of the Rule of Law.

Not only the reputation, but the existence of European culture in its diversity is at risk. Europe is based on the openness of the cultural life of the individual countries and their free cooperation. If these disappear, the European project loses its soul and meaning. Please act! It is not too late!

Yours sincerely,

Milo Rau & Artemis Vakianis (Directors, Vienna Festival (Wiener Festwochen) | Free Republic of Vienna, Austria & Member of Prospero – Extended Theatre)

Matej Drlička (Dismissed Director Slovak National Theatre, Slovakia, Member of ETC and Member Opera Europa)

Vasil Vasilev (General Director National Theatre Ivan Vazov, Bulgaria & Member of ETC and Prospero)

Cláudia Belchior & Heidi Wiley (President & Executive Director, European Theatre Convention - ETC)

Serge Rangoni (General Director Théâtre de Liège, Member of ETC & Lead Member of Prospero – Extended Theatre)

Karen Stone (General Director Opera Europa)

First signatories:

Albania

National Theatre of Opera, Ballet and Folk Ensemble Abigeila Voshtina, General
 Director

Austria

- brut Wien Kira Kirsch Artistic, Director
- brut Wien Stephanie Höltschl, CEO
- Schauspielhaus Salzburg Jérôme Junod, Head of Dramaturgy
- steirischer herbst Ekaterina Degot, Director and Chief Curator
- **steirischer herbst** Pieternel Vermoortel, Senior Curator
- Tiroler Landestheater Irene Girkinger, Artistic Director
- Volkstheater Vienna Kay Voges, Director
- Wiener Festwochen | Free Republic of Vienna Vanessa Wang, Programme Coordinator

Belgium

- Antwerp Symphony Orchestra Joost Maegerman, CEO
- Arts Centre BUDA Kristof Jonckheere, General Director
- Brussels Philharmonic Gunther Broucke, General Manager
- Centre for Fine Arts BOZAR Juliette Duret, Head of CINEMA
- **DE SINGEL** Michiel Vandevelde, Curator Performing Arts
- DE SINGEL Hendrik Storme General & Artistic Director
- European Festivals Association Kathrin Deventer Secretary General
- het TheaterFestival Nora Mahammed general manager
- IETM International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts Ása Richardsdóttir, Secretary General
- Kaatheater Babara Van Lindt, General and Artistic Coordinator
- KANAL-Centre Pompidou Guy Gypens, Head of Live Arts
- La Monnaie / De Munt Peter de Caluwe, General & Artistic Director
- La Monnaie / De Munt Florian Köfler, Director of Artistic Planning & Production
- Les Halles de Schaerbeek Matthieu Goeury, Director
- Muziektheater Transparant Guy Coolen, Director
- NTGent Barbara Raes Co-Artistic Director and Member of Prospero Extended Theatre
- Opera Ballet Vlaanderen Jan Raes, CEO
- Opera Ballet Vlaanderen Jan Vandenhouwe, Artistic Director
- Opera Europa Audrey Jungers, Managing Director
- Opera Royal de Wallonie Stefano Pace, General and Artistic Director
- Palais des Beaux-Arts de Charleroi Jean-François Demeyere, *Programmateur Arts de la Scène*
- STUK Arts Centre Steven Vandervelden, Artistic and General Director
- Theatre de Liege Audrey Brooking, Programming Director
- Théâtre les Tanneurs Alexandre Caputo, Artistic Director & Co-CEO

- Toneelhuis SON The collective artistic direction of Toneelhuis
- VIERNULVIER Franky Devos, General Coordinator
- VIERNULVIER Ilse Devroe, Team Coach Communication & Ticketing
- KVS Brussels City Theatre Michael De Cock, Artistic Director

Bosnia and Herzegovina

• International Theatre Festival MESS Sarajevo Nihad Kresevljakovic, Director

<u>Bulgaria</u>

- Theatre and Music Centre Kardjali Galab Bochukov Director
- Theatre and Music Centre Kardjali Roumi Nikolaeva Expert European theatre projects
- National Theatre Ivan Vazov Pierre Francois Limbosch, Set Designer / Invited Guest Artist

Croatia

- Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb Iva Hraste Sočo, General Manager & Artistic Director, Board Member of Opera Europa
- Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb Tena Stivicic, Head of Drama
- Croatian National Theatre Rijeka Dubravka Vrgoc, General Manager and Artistic Director

Cyprus

- Cyprus Theatre Organsation (THOC) Marina Maleni, THOC Secretary of the Board, European Theatre Convention Board Member
- Cyprus Theatre Organsation (THOC) Maria Efstahiou, Publications and PR Officer

Czech Republic

- 8smička Monika Krčmárik, Production Manager
- **8smička** Natálie Brzoňová, *PR Manager*
- Divadlo International Theatre Festival Dora Štědroňová, Chairman of Program Board
- National Theater Brno Martin Glaser, General Director
- National Theatre Prague Martin Kukučka, Artistic Director
- National Theatre Prague Lukáš Trpišovský, Artistic Director of Drama
- National Theatre Prague Jolana Dvorakova, Administrative Director of Drama
- National Theatre Prague Jan Burian, General Director
- National Theatre Prague Nina Jacques, Dramaturg

Denmark

Dansk Danseteater Marina Mascarell, Artistic Director

• mitos21 Iphigenia Taxopoulou, General Secretary

Estonia

- Baltoscandal festival/ Kanuti Gildi SAAL Priit Raud, Artistic Director/ Managing Director
- Estonian Association of Performing Arts Institutions Liina Unt, General Manager
- Estonian National Opera Ott Maaten, Director General
- Fondation Ugala Theatre Garmen Tabor, Executive Director
- Kuressaare Theatre Piret Rauk, Director
- MTÜ Teater Nuutrum Jaanus Nuutre, Director
- Rakvere Theatre Velvo Väli, Executive Director
- SA Vene Teater Anne-Lii Päiv, Member of the Board
- Vaba Lava SA Märt Meos, Member of the Board
- Von Krahl Theatre Jaak Prints, General Director

Finland

- & Espoo Theatre Matilda von Weissenberg, Managing Director
- Finnish National Opera and Ballet Thomas de Mallet Burgess, Artistic Director
- MiklagardArts Erik Söderblom, Director
- Myllyteatteri Miira Sippola, Director
- Viirus Theatre Helsinki Essi Rossi, Artistic Director
- Zodiak Center for New Dance Ari Tenhula, Managing Director

France

- CCN Ballet National de Marseille Clémence Sormani, Executive Director
- European Dance Development Network (EDN) Laurent Meheust, Co-President
- Festival d'Avignon Magda Bizarro, Programming Co-Director
- Festival d'Avignon Tiago Rodrigues, Director
- Festival de Marseille Marie Didier, Directrice
- La Rose des Vents, Scène Nationale Lille Métropole Villeneuve d'Ascq Audey Ardiet,
 Director
- Maillon Barbara Engelhardt, Artistic Director
- Maca (french artistic agency) Matthieu Banvillet, *Director*
- MC2: Maison de la culture de Grenoble Arnaud Meunier, General Director
- MC93 Maison de la Culture de Seine-Saint-Denis Hortense Archambault, Director
- Opéra de Lille Caroline Sonrier, Directrice
- Opéra National de Lyon Richard Brunel, General and Artistic Manager
- Opéra National de Lyon Claire Hebert, Deputy General Manager
- Opéra National du Rhin Alain Perroux, Directeur Général
- Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier Occitanie Valerie Chevalier, General Director
- Passages Transfestival Metz Benoît Bradel, Artistic & General Direction
- Théâtre Durance Elodie Presles, Director
- Théâtre GRRRANIT Scene Nationale Belfort Eleonora Rossi, Executive Director

- Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers Nathalie Pousset, Deputy Director
- Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers Christophe Rauck, Director
- Théâtre National de Bretagne Isabel Andreen, International Development Manager

Georgia

- **Tbilisi International Festival of Theatre** Nutsa Burjanadze, *International Program and Projects Producer*
- Tbilisi International Festival of Theatre Ekaterina Mazmishvili, General Manager

Germany

- Academy for Theatre and Digitality Dortmund Marcus Lobbes, Director
- Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe Nele Tippelmann, *Head of Youth Theatre (Junges Staatstheater Karlsruhe)*
- Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe Hans Christian Firmbach, Intendant
- Bayerische Theaterakademie August Everding Veronika Jabinger, 2. Head of Acting Department
- Bayerische Theaterakademie August Everding Susanna Werger, Head of Communications
- Bayerische Theaterakademie August Everding Barbara Gronau, President
- Bayerische Theaterakademie August Everding Maria Goeth, Head of Communications
- Berliner Ensemble Amely Joana Haag, Dramaturg
- **Deutsches Theater Berlin** Iris Laufenberg, *Artistic Director*
- European Theatre Convention (ETC) Christa Müller, *Dramaturge & Honorary Member ETC*
- **Festival FIND** Florian Borchmeyer, *Program Curator*
- Kunstfest Weimar Rolf Hemke, Artistic Director
- KunstFestSpiele Herrenhausen Rainer Hofmann, Head of Programming
- KunstFestSpiele Herrenhausen Beate Schueler, Curator / Dramaturge
- Opernfestspiele Heidenheim Matthias Jochner, Head of Administration Opernfestspiele and Culture City of Heidenheim
- Opernfestspiele Heidenheim Marcus Bosch, Festspielintendant
- Staatsoper Hamburg Georges Delnon, Intendant
- Staatsschauspiel Dresden Joachim Klement, Artistic Director
- Staatstheater Braunschweig Anne Belatra, Head of Workshop
- Staatstheater Braunschweig Dagmar Schlingmann, Generalintendanz
- Staatstheater Karlsruhe Uta-Christine Deppermann, Director Artistic Administration
- Theater & Sinfonieorchester Aachen (Aix-La-Chapelle) Elena Tzavara, General Director
- Theater and Orchestra of Heidelberg Holger Schultze, Artistic Director
- Theater Magdeburg Bettina Pesch, Verwaltungsdirektorin; stellv. Generalintendantin
- E:UTSA Mona Sharifi, Actress
- ITI Germany Yvonne Büdenhölzer and Thomas Engel, President and Director

<u>Greece</u>

- National Theatre of Greece Yannis Moschos, Artistic Director
- National Theatre of Northern Greece Maria Lazaridou, Production Coordinator
- National Theatre of Northern Greece Mirto Tsipa, Publication Office

Hungary

- Radnóti Miklós Theatre, Budapest Adél Kováts, Managing Director
- Freeszfe Laszlo Upor, President
- Független Előadóművészeti Szövetség Kata Kopeczny, Secretary
- Hungarian Theatre Dramaturgs Guild Eszter Orbán, Co-President
- Örkény István Színház / Theatre Máté Gáspár, Appointed Director
- Proton Theatre Dóra Büki, Managing Director
- Trafo House of Contemporary Art Beata Barda, Executive Director

<u>Ireland</u>

• European Dance Development Network (EDN) Louise Costelloe, Co-President

<u>Italy</u>

- BASE Milano Linda Di Pietro, Artistic Director
- Emilia Romagna Teatro / Teatro Nazionale (ERT) Valter Malosti, *Director & Member of Prospero Extended Theatre*
- **ErosAntEros POLIS Teatro Festival** Agata Tomšič, *Artistic Director, Director, Dramaturg, Actress*
- ErosAntEros POLIS Teatro Festival Davide Sacco, Theatre Director and Artistic Director
- Fondazione I Teatri di Reggio Emilia Paolo Cantù, Director
- Fondazione Teatro della Toscana Riccardo Ventrella, Head of International Projects
- Fondazione Teatro Due Francesca Gandini, Producer
- Fondazione Teatro Fraschini Pavia Francesco Nardelli, General Director
- Liv.in.g. Cristina Carlini, Co-founder
- Ravenna Teatro Alessandro Argnani, General Director
- Ravenna Teatro Francesca Venturi, Producer
- **Teatro Sociale Como** Barbara Minghetti, *Artistic Director*

Kosovo

- National Theatre of Kosovo Kushtrim Sheremeti, Director
- Rame Lahaj Foundation Besmir Vokopola, Artistic Coordinator

Latvia

- Dailes Theatre Juris Žagars, General Manager
- Dailes Theatre Viesturs Kairišs, Artistic Director

<u>Lithuania</u>

- Lithuanian National Drama Theatre Eglė Švedkauskaitė, Artistic Director
- State Small Theater of Vilnius Gabriele Tuminaite, Artistic Director

Luxembourg

- Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg Tom Leick-Burns, Director
- Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg Anne Legill, Deputy Director

Malta

• ARC Research & Consultancy Davinia Galea, Managing Director

The Netherlands

- De Brakke Grond Lisa Wiegel Artistic Leader
- De Toneelmakerij Paul Knieriem, Artistic Director
- De Toneelmakerij Paulien Geerlings, Dramaturg
- **De Toneelmakerij** Marjolein Van Bommel, *General Manager*
- Nederlandse Associatie voor Podiumkunsten Mirjam Terpstra, Managing Director
- Noorderzon Festival Mark Yeoman, Artistic Director

North Macedonia

 Lokomotiva- Centre for New Initiatives in Arts and Culture Biljana Tanurovska-Kjulavkovski, Program Director

Norway

- Black Box Teater Jørgen Knudsen, Artistic Director
- Det Norske Teatret Kjersti Horn, Artistic Director
- Det Norske Teatret Anders Hasmo, Dramaturge
- **Det Norske Teatret** Irene Halvorsen, *Director*
- Festspillene i Nord-Norge Ragnheiður Skúladóttir, Artistic Director and CEO

Poland

- Divine Comedy Festival Bartosz Szydlowski, Artistic Director/ Theatre Director
- JK Opole Theatre Norbert Rakowski, General Manager and Artistic Director
- Nowy Teatr Piotr Gruszczynski, Dramaturg

- Nowy Teatr Krzysztof Warlikowski, Director
- Nowy Teatr Małgorzata Szczęśniak, Set Designer

Portugal

- BoCA Biennial of Contemporary Arts John Romao, Artistic Director
- Fundação Centro Cultural de Belém Delfim Sardo, Member of the Executive Board
- Fundação Centro Cultural de Belém Aida Tavares, Artistic Director Performing Arts and knowledge
- São Luiz Teatro Municipal Miguel Loureiro, Artistic Director
- São Luiz Teatro Municipal Ana Rita Osório, Executive Director
- Teatro do Bairro Alto Francisco Frazão, Artistic Director
- Teatro do Noroeste Centro Dramático de Viana Tiago Fernandes, Community Project
 Director
- Teatro do Noroeste Centro Dramático de Viana Nuno J. Loureiro, Actor
- Teatro do Noroeste Centro Dramático de Viana Ricardo Simões, President and Artistic Director
- Teatro Nacional D. Maria II Rui Catarino, President
- Teatro Nacional D. Maria II Pedro Penim, Artistic Director

Romania

- Constanța State Theatre Erwin Şimşensohn General Manager / Artistic Director
- Teatrul National "Lucian Blaga" Cluj-Napoca Mihai Petre Maniutiu, Manager
- Teatrul Național "Lucian Blaga" Cluj-Napoca Ștefana Pop-Curșeu, Artistic Director
- Piese Refractare Gianina Carbunariu, Director & Playwright

Slovakia

- Ján Palárik Theatre in Trnava Lucia Mihálová, Artistic Director
- **Open Culture!** A non-partisan and non-hierarchical platform bringing together over 1,900 individuals and 300 organizations professionally active in the fields of culture, arts, and the creative industries in Slovakia.
- Slovak National Gallery Lucia Gregorova Stach, Senior Curator
- Slovak National Gallery Katarina Vass, UX Researcher
- Slovak National Gallery Damir Demovič, Gallery Educator
- Slovak National Gallery Lubica Liskova, Deputy Director
- Slovak National Gallery Erika Trnka, Directress of a SNG branch
- Slovak National Gallery Alexander Alan Arce, Exhibition Technician/Art Handler
- Slovak National Gallery Juraj Starovecký Videographer, Photographer
- Slovak National Theatre Mário Drgoňa, Dramaturge
- **Študyo s.r.o**. Branislav Matis, *Information Designer*
- Association / International Theatre Festival Divadelná Nitra Darina Kárová, Director

<u>Slovenia</u>

- Prešeren Theatre Kranj Rok Bozovičar, Interim General Manager
- Prešeren Theatre Kranj Eva Belčič, Head of PR and Marketing
- Slovene National Theatre Drama Vesna Jurca Tadel, Managing and Artistic Director
- SNG Nova Gorica Mirjam Drnovšček, General Manager
- SNG Nova Gorica Ana Blažica, Dramaturge
- SNG Nova Gorica Marko Bratuš, Artistic Director
- SNG Nova Gorica Jani Murovec, Stage Technician

<u>Spain</u>

- Opera de Butxaca i Nova Creació Dietrich Grosse, Manager
- **RESAD** Maria Gomez
- **RESAD** Ruben Sainz
- Teatro de la Maestranza Javier Menénendez Álvarez, General Director
- Temporada Alta Narcís Puig i Tarrés, Deputy Artistic Manager

Sweden

- Dramaten Mattias Andersson, Artistic Director
- Folkoperan Tobias Theorell, Artistic Director
- Folkteatern Göteborg Lotta Lekvall, CEO
- Göteborgs Stadsteater Björn Sandmark, CEO
- Göteborgs Stadsteater Linda Zachrison, Artistic Director
- Malmö City Theatre Petra Brylander, CEO/Artistic Director
- Malmö Theatre Academy Fredrik Haller, Rector
- Mitos21 Staffan Valdemar Holm, Director, Playwright
- Royal Swedish Opera Ellen Lamm, Interim Artistic Director
- Wermland Opera Kjell Englund, CEO/Artistic Director

Switzerland

- Accademia Dimitri Corinna Vitale, Teacher
- Accademia Dimitri Marek Turošík, Coordinator of the MA program and teacher
- Accademia Dimitri Anna Gromanová, Artistic Director
- Culturescapes Jurriaan Cooiman, Founder/Director
- Kaserne Basel Tobias Brenk, Artistic Director
- La Bâtie-Festival de Genève Claude Ratzé, Director
- orchester.ch Verband Schweizerischer Berufsorchester Toni J. Krein President
- Schauspielhaus Zürich Ulrich Khuon, Artistic Director
- Schauspielhaus Zürich Anouk Wallerath, Personal Assistant to the Artistic Director
- Tanzhaus Zürich Catja Loepfe, Artistic Director
- Theater Neumarkt Hayat Erdoğan, Artistic Co-Director, Dramaturge

<u>Ukraine</u>

- Center of contemporary art "DAKH", Gogolfest Vladyslav Troitskyi, Founder/President
- Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theater Anastasiia Haishenets, Deputy General Director-Art Director for International Cooperation
- Lesia Ukrainka Lviv Academic Dramatic Theatre Olha Puzhakovska, Executive and Artistic Director
- Lesia Ukrainka Lviv Academic Dramatic Theatre Viktoria Shvydko, Deputy for Development

United Kingdom

- Battersea Arts Centre Pelin Basaran, Head of Programming
- Cambridge Junction Matt Burman, Artistic Director & CEO
- Colchester Arts Centre Anthony Roberts, Director
- Fenton-Micklem Arts Consultancy Matt Fenton, Co-Director

INTERNATIONAL

Argentina

- Paraiso Club Buenos Aires Ariel Farace, Curator
- Paraiso Club Buenos Aires Ignacio Sánchez Mestre, Curator

Australia

• National Theatre of Parramatta Joanne Kee, Creative & Executive Producer

Canada

- L'USINE C Angela Konrad, Intendantin
- PuSh International Performing Arts Festival Gabrielle Martin, Artistic Director

United States

- **CEC ArtsLink** Simon Dove, *Executive Director*
- Skirball Jay Wegman, Director