

Presentation

The **European Festivals Association** (EFA) is the major network of arts festivals in Europe. It represents more than 100 festivals in the field of music, dance and theatre from altogether 38 countries, as well as 13 national festivals associations. Since 2004, it has an office in Brussels.

In the framework of shaping the next generation of EU Programmes (2014-2020), the European Commission has invited EFA to consult with festivals in order to develop a proposal for a new policy on an EU level which maximises the potential and the dynamics of festivals in a more targeted and efficient way.

The European Festivals Association proposes to set up a new programme: **Europe for Festivals - Festivals for Europe**.

The objective of the proposed programme is to generate and deliver an added value to those actions and activities carried out by festivals that increase their contribution to the artistic and cultural life in Europe, as well as their visibility and outreach. By promoting visibility of Europe's unique values, the programme creates a greater awareness and increased participation of citizens in Europe as a cultural project.

The programme foresees several elements, with one key output: a **Europe for Festivals Guide**. This Guide is published as a book every second year and is also available on website and apps form. It includes two main groups of festivals:

1. the **EU Label "European Festival X (year)"** is given as recognition to a larger group of festivals for their European quality. "European Festivals X" are nominated in a decentralized way in partnership with local/regional and national partners on a bi-annual basis;
2. the **EU Award "Festivals for Europe"** is assigned to a small group of festivals based on a bi-annual call. Awarded festivals are selected for their excellence based on a set of criteria (see the full proposal).

The **Europe for Festivals Guide** is incorporated in a sophisticated communication and promotion package as well as a programme implementation that foresees both activities in festivals and a bi-annual networking and gala moment.

Through this programme and the involvement of European festivals, the positive energy existing within the festivals' landscape will contribute to the promotion of Europe as a cultural project. It will deliver positive results to the European Union: it will take up many festivals into a dynamic where now only a few participate. It will involve local networks and partners which form part of the labelling nomination system. It will deliver a strong image of Europe towards so many festivals that are included in the programme.

The proposal included in this dossier is a working document and is presented to the European Parliament Culture Committee on the 22nd November 2011. It is further discussed at the round table 'Festivals meet EU Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou' on the 15th December 2011 and aimed to be launched at EFA's 60 Years Jubilee Gala in Bergen on the 24th May 2012.



In 2012, EFA celebrates 60 years: 60 Years On!
Celebrate the Arts, Transform People, Imagine the World.

Working document: Introduction

Festivals for Europe

Arts festivals have grown immensely in Europe. They are an important player in its cultural life. The growth refers to the attractiveness of the format but also to festivals' impact on artistic and cultural activities – as well as on social, economic, regional and tourist development. Festivals are strong drivers of the message that Europe is first of all a cultural project. A festival generates the attention of the public and the press more than the regular cultural offer. This is a general characteristic that applies to almost every festival.

A festival is a place, an environment and a format where artists have artistic freedom. The audience often searches for the unknown in a high-level festival rather than in the regular cultural offer: artistic creation, rather than cultural consumption, is at festivals' core. A festival is the perfect way to trigger cultural participation and promote cultural diversity. It has the power to develop intercultural competences since citizens from all backgrounds meet in the seat of a festival. Additionally, a festival is an element in the tourist industry with direct and indirect economic impact: festivals in the field of cultural industries are major sources of employment and contribute to the economic growth of cities and countries as many studies show.

Most of all, festivals are trans-national players. Within the cross-border artistic practice (international co-production, creation, supporting development of new arts forms), festivals are at the same time rooted in the local context – and sometimes even have a mission to develop the local cultural practice (because of, for example, a lack of regular cultural offer). The quality of festivals manifests itself in this double ambition: dominant at a local level and positioned at an international level - even with a pioneering, leading character at times.

Europe for Festivals

In the framework of the Europe 2020 Agenda, the European Commission, more than ever, addresses civic and social issues and reaches out to European citizens: a citizens' Europe, inclusive and participatory. Within the European Years for example, social themes are given attention to, such as intercultural dialogue, social inclusion, fight against poverty, volunteer work or Citizens (proposed European Year 2013). A Europe of Europeans, based on active participation, is an asset for Europe's future development.

The EU started to highlight the results and impact of the arts and cultural sector in all areas of life – impacting on all areas of policy making. An enhanced trans-sectorial cooperation is envisioned and, in this context, a stronger positioning of arts and culture in a wider political context. Festivals are one of the most suitable partners to promote Europe's civic and social mission, they are not only carriers but, by their very nature, truly embrace these transversal issues concerning European citizens and creative power.

Europe for Festivals - Festivals for Europe

Europe is first of all an inter-cultural and cosmopolitan project: culture is part of the solution needed in today's world. If Europe has become a project of firstly economic and later financial cooperation, it was due to a longing for prosperity and striving for keeping a long lasting peace in Europe. However, this cooperation was only possible thanks to the dialogue between people, citizens, and collective identities. European history is based on cultural contacts and cross-border cooperation and holds a rich heritage of artistic objects and expressions. Europe is literally thriving with master-pieces. Audiences can access a vast number of iconographic arts pieces in our museums, they can access numerous exquisite artistic objects in most areas of contemporary creation: dance, theatre, music, visual arts, etc. The EU is keen to engage in process-oriented cross-border sustainable development of the cultural sector and at the same time create emblematic moments of artistic contemporary creation and diffusion of works in order to add to our prosperous legacy. Undoubtedly European artistic legacy would be written further without the EU, but the EU can make sure, to an extent that no other body can, that Europe is seen as a cultural project and make this perception tangible.

The four starting points of this programme for festivals, and the main reasons for the European Commission to continue supporting arts festivals in Europe are:

- the uniqueness of leading festivals' positioning as locally dominant and internationally placed;
- the strengthening of the continuation of cultural legacy;
- making Europe tangible to citizens as a cultural project;
- a comprehensive communication and engagement process to involve all citizens into this dynamic.

Festivals: promoters and carriers of the message 'If Europe has a meaning, it is a cultural one.'¹

The objective of the programme is to generate and deliver an added value to those actions and activities in festivals that increase their contribution to the artistic and cultural life in Europe, as well as festivals' visibility and outreach. By promoting visibility of Europe's unique values, the programme creates a greater awareness and increased participation of citizens in Europe as a cultural project.

In detail, the programme aims to:

- involve European festivals in shaping, developing and promoting the European Agenda towards a cultural Europe 2020;
- mobilize festivals to increase creation, circulation, promotion and presentation of artistic creations, artists, arts managers and arts heritage in festivals;
- protect cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue where as many people as possible come in touch with artistic creations and artists;
- give visibility to emblematic moments of contemporary arts production, creation and presentation;
- ensure activities and a comprehensive communication process in order to reach out to citizens.

A programme is set up and a Call developed for festivals to participate in the programme.

Actions of the programme

The programme foresees one main output: a **Guide - the Europe for Festivals Guide** - with **two main groups of festivals included**:

- the EU Label "European Festival X (year)"
- the EU Award "Festivals for Europe";

Both elements foresee a nomination, selection and implementation scheme.

The **Europe for Festivals Guide** is incorporated in a sophisticated communication and promotion package as well as a programme implementation that foresees both activities in festivals and a bi-annual networking and gala moment.

1. The Europe for Festivals Guide

- Labelled festivals form the broad mosaic of European arts festivals from all disciplines, countries, cities and regions.
- They communicate the enormous richness of festivals towards a broad public and the media.
- This Guide is an open, growing list of labelled festivals selected every second year. Inclusion in the Guide is subject of a bi-annual decision process.
- The programme guarantees the quality of the Guide and, therefore, the value for the included festivals.

The Guide

- is a book (with international distribution);
- is a website (with public and intranet parts);
- is an app (application);
- is published for the first time in 2014 and then on a bi-annual basis: 2016, 2018...;
- includes:
 - Festivals Labelled "European Festivals X";
 - Festivals awarded "Festival for Europe".

¹ Michael Zeeman: "Als Europa iets is, dan is het een cultureel begrip", in: 'Hedendaags Babylon. Cultuur en het nieuwe Europa' (2004)

2. The EU Label “European Festival X (year)”

- EU Label “European Festival X (year)” is given every second year.
- Festivals are nominated in 2012 ‘European Festival 2013 & 2014’ (2 years following the publication).
- Festivals which are labelled “European Festival X (year)” are included in the Guide that is published every second year: the Guide “Europe for Festivals”.
- The labelling system is based on the quality criteria mentioned below. A decentralized pre-nomination system with participation of national associations, local and regional contact points is defined in the organisation of the structure.
- The inclusion in the Guide is:
 - a quality assessment;
 - interpreted to be quite broad and accessible.
- The “European Festival X (year)” labelling includes categories (to be developed further) that guarantee the quality of the Label. Inclusion requires high standards of quality and is at the same time inclusive and representative for European festivals’ diversity and distinctiveness for European objectives/values.
- Included festivals can receive symbols in the Guide per level, type or genre.

Included festivals contribute and benefit from:

- in connection to, and together with, the festivals granted the **“Festival for Europe” award**, the “European Festival X” labelled festivals are part of an active programme implemented by a coordinating body, with focus on communication, reflection, promotion through different kinds of media, production, creation and circulation of creations;
- to be labelled the “European Festival X” means to be part of the Guide;
- labelled festivals have access to specific communication tools (logo, flag...);
- the labelling is to be communicated towards authorities on local/regional/national level;
- labelled festivals contribute to the media/communication campaign for the use of the Guide on local/regional/national level; as well as to the trans-national communication action (e.g. through the support of a network of online bloggers, young journalists’ mobility, online interview, bookis, to be built in a decentralized way).

3. The Award “Festival for Europe”

An award is attributed to a number of festivals every second year: the Award “Festival for Europe”.

It is awarded a limited amount of time (to be defined: bi-annual with possibility to renewal) and to a small amount of festivals (e.g. max 45).

- Awarded festivals both develop a network that offers a platform for creation and circulation of artistic objects and set the example of, on one hand, leading artistic activities and, on the other hand, reaching towards a broad public and the media.
- This Award is the basis for an open, growing network of festivals selected every second year. Being awarded and keeping the Award is subject of a bi-annual evaluation and decision process.
- The programme sets the conditions under which a festival is granted the Award “Festival for Europe”. The programme guarantees the quality of the award and, therefore, the value for the chosen festivals.
- In connection to, and together with, these awarded festivals, the award supports an active programme implemented by a coordinating body, with focus on communication, reflection, promotion through all kinds of media, production, creation and circulation of creations.

Awarded festivals contribute and benefit from:

- exclusive use of the “Festival for Europe” Award towards authorities on local/regional/national levels;
- contribute to the media/communication campaign for the use of the Award on local/regional/national level, as well as contribute to trans-national communication action (e.g. through the support of a network of online bloggers, young journalists’ mobility, online interviews, bookis, to be built in a decentralized way);
- set up citizenship initiatives – debates following a certain model - live-streamed and online;
- invest in training for young festival managers;
- actively take part in the Europe for Festivals bi-annual Gala;

For parts of these extra activities within the programme, festivals can receive subsidies.

Communication and promotion

The programme is anchored in a package that benefits awarded and labelled festivals and broadens the 'core' of the Award and Label.

The programme has an extensive branding and international, visible communication campaign of the Guide:

- in partnership with the international leading media (TV, newspapers, magazines,...);
- including the Guide in all EU and non-EU countries, languages;
- broadened through the decentralized implementation system: for information on the site/in its campaign, through the co-production/cooperation with partners, involved networks;
- a website for information and communication;
- apps;
- others (private-business partnership);
- festivals are part of international contacts of the network beyond EU borders.

The EU Label “European Festival X (year)”

Nomination criteria

The nomination criteria for “European Festival X” are based on a list of qualities. They do not define the festival, but describe mainly the identity of the body as a festival. The quality assessment has to ensure that the selection is broad and represents Europe’s diversity of arts festivals and their distinctiveness for European objectives.

The information needs to ensure the quality in all 4 levels:

- European
- arts
- cultural
- festival

and includes:

- “European”: motivation why the festival includes a European dimension following conditions included for the Label;
- “Arts”/“Cultural”: motivation why the festival is an ‘arts’ or a ‘cultural’ festival e.g. arts disciplines involved, extra activities for artists and international cooperation (creations and co-productions), extra activities for audiences participation (increase of access to culture);
- “Festival” as a body: locality, periodicity, years of practice, legal structure, city, country, subsidy.

EU Award “Festivals for Europe”

Conditions / Values (award criteria)

Based on the role of festivals and their capacity for engaging in broader European objectives, the capacity to fulfil this role, and therefore be awarded the EU Award “Festival for Europe” and included in the Guide, is defined through a set of values or conditions:

- **Creation:** the festival has to be active in contemporary creation. It has to be the initiator of new creations and offer appropriate time, space and resources for experimental activities. The intention is the close relationship with artists and the readiness to take responsibility for making their work possible. The creation(s) has (have) to be co-productions with other festivals and other artistic practitioners (residence centres, concert halls, theatres, opera houses, etc ...) from other countries worldwide, or at least in Europe. There should be at least three co-producers involved. The festival has to commission at least five creations/co-productions. The executive producer of each new creation can be different. Support to artistic residencies is a plus.
- **Diversity and distribution of international creations:** the festival’s program has to have a majority of programmed creations coming from other countries, including co-productions with local or national artists in an international co-production.
- **Interculturality:** Interculturality is the European/global reality. It is clear that festivals are acting within this context in terms of shaping, promoting and increasing intercultural competences of citizens and help deconstruct stereotypes and stigmas. They raise awareness, through actions in their program, to stimulate the acceptance of this reality and, in the first place, the values for Europe, by a broader audience.
- **Innovation:** festivals provide an excellent context to give innovative artists the occasion to create or to be presented to an audience open to experimentation and avant-garde artistic objects. It is mostly through festivals that new tendencies and new artistic forms and expressions are accepted by a broader audience. The role of arts festivals is to program and produce innovative work. Festivals presenting innovative artistic creations have spill-over capacity also to players outside the cultural sector (industries, economies, policies, territorial development ...), they broaden creative skills that enable people to embrace change as an opportunity and foster the individual and collective talents and competences.
- **Multidisciplinarity / Transdisciplinarity:** today’s reality in the arts is the mutual influence of different artistic disciplines and, even more, the integration of different artistic disciplines in a new form and even cross-sectorial links in something new. Again festivals are precursors of this development.

- Sustainability: real results in the arts creation, production and presenting of artistic quality and in building up of an engaged audience are maximised through sustainability in the relations with artists and audience, with all stakeholders and partners involved in the festival business. Sustainability refers to environmental and economic aspects, to personal, institutional and political frameworks on different territorial realities: local, regional, national, European and global level.
- Participation and social inclusion: festivals open doors to the most diverse artists and audiences taking stock of social diversity, cultural diversity, including excluded artists and publics. They contribute to increasing access to culture, participation and interactivity through the set up of participatory projects. Cultural rights are implemented as fundamental rights for artists and audiences in the seat of festivals' production. In this context 'diverse' can refer to: social, age, gender, cultural diversity, etc. It implies the existence of programmes for excluded (economic, social, cultural, ...) audiences with the aim of increasing access to culture.
- Education: festivals play an important role in the context of education by promoting a culture of peace and the shaping understanding and respect amongst groups of people. Fringe activities, extensive use of new technologies, schemes and activities envisaged especially for young people are particularly useful tools to reach youth, to communicate with this age range, to share values such as respect for other cultures and to launch education processes in the field of intercultural exchange.
- International reality: through all these conditions festivals collaborate with partners from the artistic fields from seven or more countries – inside the European Union, but also with actors outside the EU.

This is a working document for a proposal of a new programme [Europe for Festivals - Festivals for Europe](#) programme. Parts of the proposal were discussed during the EFA General Assembly and Conference 2010 "Open The Door" in Merano on 9 and 10 April 2010 with 130 festival representatives from 38 countries. It was further discussed at the occasion of EFA's General Assembly and Conference 2011 "Out of the Box – Into the Light. What's inside Festivals?" in Varna on 28 April – 1 May 2011 in an exclusive meeting with a representative of the European Commission.



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EFA thanks for their support:

