

CALL ON THE EU AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCIES TO

DOCUMENT AND MONITOR VIOLATIONS OF ARTISTIC FREEDOM IN EUROPE

Europe 09 April 2025

Freedom of artistic expressions for artists and cultural institutions and organisations in Europe are increasingly under pressure from political parties, as well as anti-democratic political and social movements.

As highlighted by Commissioner Glenn Micallef (Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport) during the first structured dialogue of the Committee on Culture and Education in February 2025:

“On artistic freedom and freedom of expression, we see worrying developments in different parts of our Union and outside of our Union. Civil society has been very active in championing the cause, but this has to be a cornerstone of our work in the Culture Compass. It has to be one of the areas that guides our work in the cultural sector. Culture, freedom of artistic expression, freedom of expression in general, these are three elements that we need to reaffirm our commitment to very clearly, along with Member States and in this [CULT] Committee.”

The **EU Workplan for Culture 2023-2025**¹ stresses: *“Artistic freedom is a fundamental part of cultural work, and the protection of artistic freedom has proved to be an important element as regards strengthening the link between culture and democracy. Artists and stakeholders within the cultural sector are facing new and increasingly difficult challenges. Joint efforts to enable artists*

¹ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022G1207\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022G1207(01))

and cultural actors to freely exercise their professions throughout the EU are therefore of utmost importance. This issue not only concerns terms and conditions for artists, but also determines whose voices are heard”

Threats and violations of basic artistic- and cultural rights remain largely overlooked and are only documented and monitored by a few Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) with limited resources.

As acknowledged in the **2023 Council of Europe Report, *Free to Create: Artistic Freedom in Europe***²: *“Monitoring and documenting the state of artistic freedom is still at an evolutionary stage, and coverage is not consistent, particularly so in authoritarian states where freedom of expression is suppressed. While physical attacks, litigation and imprisonments tend to be well reported, threats to artistic freedom are often “under the radar” and difficult to measure.”*

In response to these urgent concerns, we the undersigned organisations representing European creators, cultural institutions and organisations and artistic freedom organisations, call for The Fundamental Rights Agency, FRA, as well as National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) to engage and allocate resources to **systematically incorporate documentation of artistic freedom violations in their work, reports and advocacy.**

By taking these steps, FRA and NHRIs can help ensure that artists and cultural actors across Europe are not silenced but instead empowered to contribute to vibrant, democratic, and pluralistic societies.

We are looking forward to further dialogue and co-operation.

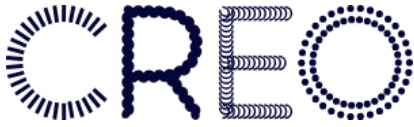


Artists at Risk (AR), is a mondial network of artistic institutions, non-profits, municipalities, state institutions and international organisations to assist, relocate and fund artists who are at risk of persecution or oppression, or are fleeing war or terror.

**ARTISTIC
FREEDOM
INITIATIVE**

Artistic Freedom Initiative (AFI) facilitates pro bono immigration representation and resettlement assistance for international artists who are persecuted or censored.

² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/-/free-to-create-report-on-artistic-freedom-in-europe>



Creo is Norway's largest union for arts and culture, and a member of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), representing almost 11 000 members.



Culture Action Europe (CAE) is the major European network of cultural networks, organisations, artists, activists, academics and policymakers. The political voice of the cultural sector in Europe, the first port of call for informed opinion and debate about arts and cultural policy.



ECSA - The European Composer and Songwriter Alliance represents around 30,000 music creators from more than 25 different European countries.



EMC – The European Music Council is comprised of 75 members across three categories: 34 European and International Music Organisations, 28 National/Specialised Music Organisations, 13 National Music Councils.



ECCD -The European Coalitions for Cultural Diversity is an association of national coalitions which promotes the diversity of cultural expressions bringing together 11 national coalitions in a federation covering all professions in the artistic and cultural sectors.



FIM The International Federation of Musicians / Federation Internationale des Musiciens, is a global union federation bringing together trade unions representing music performers from 70 countries.



FREEMUSE is an independent organisation advocating for freedom of artistic expression and cultural diversity with Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC) and Consultative Status with UNESCO.



International network
for contemporary
performing arts

IETM – International network for contemporary performing arts is an international cultural network, representing the voice of over 500 performing arts organisations and individual

professionals working in the contemporary performing arts worldwide.

**ON
THE
MOVE**

On the Move support artists and professionals to operate internationally providing information on cultural mobility.



Pearle* - the "**Performing Arts Employers Association League Europe**" represents through its members more than 13 000 managers of theatres, concert venues, theatre production companies, orchestras, operas, ballet and dance companies, festivals, promoters and other professional organisations in the performing arts in Europe.



PEN International is recognised as the world's foremost association of writers, operating across five continents in over 90 countries, with 130 Centres as well as a leading international charity and expert on freedom of expression.