

*EAIPA POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS / 11.11.2022***SUBJECT: FUNDING STRUCTURES FOR THE INDEPENDENT PERFORMING ARTS IN EUROPE**

With our latest survey from November 2022, we examined the funding structures for the independent performing arts in several European countries. Expert interviews and an extensive questionnaire form the basis of this international comparative study.

On November 10th 2022, we held an Online Event focusing on 'funding structures for the independent performing arts in Europe'. As a result of our survey and the Online Event we hereby recommend specific topics.

The analysis and results correspond with Thomas Fabian Eder's findings in his dissertation 'Independent Performing Arts in Europe. Institutional Consolidation and Precariousness of an Emerging Field'. Through the conduct of expert interviews and the dissemination of a large-scale survey, EAIPA contributed to an international comparative study concerning the European Independent Performing Arts, conducted by Thomas Fabian Eder at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich. This study further substantiates the presented recommendations. Publication of the corresponding monograph is planned through Routledge in 2023.

RESUMEE: A GAME OF LUCK AND PUZZLES

Throughout Europe, cities, counties and nations have established individual funding structures and art funding legislation. Consequently, the funding structures of the independent performing arts are singular formats and different funding bodies have not been harmonized.

First funding opportunities for the independent performing arts sector emerged in the 1970s, mostly on the level of local authorities. In the following years, some federal regions also developed funding systems, followed by national instruments. Since then, all funding instruments are considered subsidies - with the effect that no authority takes full responsibility to finance an entire production or provides full structural support to artists or companies. In some countries, several funding sources can be combined; in some countries artists have to choose if they apply for municipal or federal funding.

In general, it is a highly fragmented 'system' – or, rather, not a system but a range of opportunities. The success rate for partial funding is between 10 – 20% max; usually artists do not get funding on a regular basis but only every two years.

There are funding opportunities for project-based work, 1, 2 and 4-year funding, travel grants, stipends and scholarships, grants for special reasons (like outdoor, circus, transdisciplinary work, etc.)

In some countries, private foundations also offer funding opportunities, often related to a special topic or theme (e.g., social inclusion, artistic research).

Every grant has its own application process, including different forms, budget structures, funding criteria and accounting regulations.

Artists and companies therefore need to develop a deep knowledge of complex applications, deadlines, funding systems and rules; to know whether certain funding opportunities are complementary or in-compatible, and the ins and outs of the accounting procedure – which is usually a very detailed process (i.e., the form and kind of documents that are required).

Developing this knowledge, as well as the time artists must invest in the application, management and completion of the final account and report, is usually not covered by the grants. The time, ideas and energy that are invested in an application process are commonly regarded as unpaid self-investment – unpaid efforts often spent in vain given the low success rate.

Moreover, the educational structures for performing arts professionals primarily focus on honing artistic skills required for the profession, without preparing graduating artists and young professionals for the administrative requirements to produce funded work. In consequence, many young artists learn how to compile all necessary forms and data by ‘trial and error’, taking them years to find secure footing in the market. Support by professional managers is often neither available nor affordable.

With regard to these challenges, the European Association of Independent Performing Arts makes the following policy recommendations:

REVISION OF ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- Art funding laws or policies need to be adapted in order to give clear descriptions of the strategy and aims of the respective funding and political bodies. E.g., the development of artistic aesthetics, practices, landscapes, structures and communities.
- These objectives need to be in accordance with other funding bodies and policies on local / state / national level, and a common strategy should be developed. As a result, funding opportunities could (automatically) be combined, e.g. regarding the development of emerging artists or for touring and knowledge transfer of established artists.
- The aim should be to describe the ‘common’ interests (and identify and combine the funding instruments for this purpose) and to describe the local or national interest (and identify the funding instruments for this interest, e.g., the handling of local topics). In any case, time horizons must be discussed: Should the funding stimulate projects or/and long-time engagements with artists and structures? How do the funding instruments cater to the needs and demands of the artists?
- We recommend starting moderated mutual processes, together with politicians, administrative personnel and representatives from the artistic scene. The guiding questions are: ‘What do we want for the independent performing arts sector? What do we have in common? How can we combine money and efforts? How can we put it into practice?’



- In consequence, laws for art funding will most likely need to be revised and funding formats must be adapted.
- At the European level, we also recommend establishing an ongoing and transparent dialogue between member states and the EU culture department; how contemporary performing art and art forms should be funded and how European funding instruments should complement national and federal funding. One leading issue must be how artists benefit from the financial investments and how they can financially secure their artistic life.

HARMONIZATION

- The politicians responsible for art and culture should review existing laws for art funding on local, regional, national and EU level with the aim to harmonize them on the basis of an agreed strategy.
- This should then affect the application processes, especially forms, accounting and reporting requirements.

SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS: ARTISTS AND COMPANIES

- Artists and companies need help and support to be able to manage the administrative and organizational workload. We therefore recommend establishing and financing ongoing training programmes on local, regional and national level. We also highly recommend the establishment of an official national education system for production managers.
- Existing training programmes run by national independent performing arts associations should be established and developed permanently, as comprehensive knowledge is already available.

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