

Event Report:

EAIPA in Sofia



EAIPA

The European Association
of Independent Performing Arts

In October 2022, EAIPA's Bulgarian member, ACT Association, hosted the European Association of Independent Performing Arts in Sofia for its extra-ordinary general assembly. In this context, numerous meetings, working sessions and presentations took place to connect and strengthen the relationship of associations from all over Europe.

The visit also gave opportunity to visit the newly built centre for contemporary arts "Toplocentrala" in the heart of a beautiful park in the city. Vesko Dimov, former chairperson of ACT Association Bulgaria and now director of Toplocentrala, invited EAIPA members to the centre for working meetings and the assembly.



The idea behind Toplocentrala is to create the necessary infrastructure and better conditions for the development of the independent community with an on-site production office, permanent consulting, a residency program, regular educational activities and much more.¹

¹ EAIPA: Introduction to the Independent Performing Arts in Europe. 2nd edition, 2021. P.18



The EAIPA events also took place at the same time as the Bulgarian showcase week of the annual ACT festival, giving EAIPA members the opportunity to get an impression of the Bulgarian independent performing arts scene and to see shows on the different stages of Toplocentrala.

Besides internal working sessions and the assembly, all present EAIPA members actively engaged in professional events of the ACT festival, which allowed exchange with Bulgarian professionals as well as with international guests: EAIPA'S President, Ulrike Kuner, gave a public presentation about EAIPA's work and engagements, followed by a presentation of project manager Esther Baio. Other EAIPA members, who also curate festivals in their respective countries, were actively involved in discussions regarding programming and curating.

New members

One important point on the agenda for the extra-ordinary general assembly was the resolution to include two new membership statuses in the association's statutes:

"Peer Membership" for organisations who share interests with EAIPA but do not meet the requirements for a full membership. And "Urgent Membership" for organisations and individuals who do not meet the criteria to become a peer or full member but find themselves in a situation of crisis and require the support of an international European network.

The new resolution was passed and allowed three new membership applications to be accepted:

A new full member is the "Theatre Forum" from Ireland, whose aim is to strengthen Ireland's performing arts community in order to advance its interests and ensure a sustainable future. "PERFAS – Performing Artists South Tyrol" from Italy, who represents artists from all three official language regions (German, Italian and Ladin), is a newly formed organisation for the province of South Tyrol and EAIPA's first Peer Member. Their aim is to interact with politicians and to connect on an international level. Alex Borovenskiy from ProEnglish Theatre in Kyiv joined via zoom and gave a shocking yet inspiring presentation of the situation in Kyiv and the brave artists who are still producing art even in times of war. EAIPA is happy to welcome ProEnglish Theatre as its first Urgent Member.

Audience engagement & political participation of artists

During the recent pandemic, artists were forced to join the political dialogue because their livelihoods depended on it. Now that the artistic world sees a return to previous

conditions, EAIPA has observed that the signs of political activism seem to fade. The question is therefore: How can artists be made to continue to engage as political subjects – or to at least fill out surveys, which are an important tool for advocacy. Having the active participation of artists is important to show politicians that artists care about their rights and that they want to be involved in the development and change of structures that affect them. The discussion on this topic led to various proposals - from paying artists for their participation in different processes, personally calling and inviting artists and politicians to transparency on all levels, live streaming every discussion, invitations to roundtables with politicians and celebrating results. EAIPA will continue to encourage artists to stand up for themselves because their voices matter in the process of creating laws and structures which make the creation of art and a livelihood as artist possible.

Winona Bach & Esther Baio

EAIPA's upcoming events include:
"Fairness in Focus" – a series of online events that highlight different aspects of the infrastructure surrounding artists in the field of the independent performing arts:

19.01.2023 | 14–16 h CET

social insurance systems

09.03.2023 | 14–16 h CET

minimum fee recommendations & fair pay

11.05.2023 | 14–16 h CET

intermittency systems

Register via <http://www.eaiipa.eu> or this QR Code:



