

MENTAL HEALTH IN FOCUS

Overview Report

Esther Baio



Bundesministerium
Kunst, Kultur,
öffentlicher Dienst und Sport

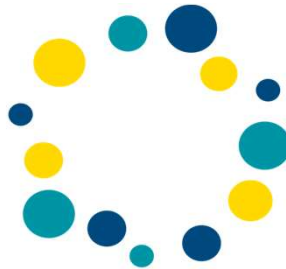
Why mental health of artists?

EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026

4 priorities

The resolution focuses on 4 different but complementary priorities:

- artists and cultural professionals: empowering the cultural and creative sectors
- culture for the people: enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture in society
- culture for the planet: unleashing the power of culture
- culture for co-creative partnerships: strengthening the cultural dimension of the EU external relations



Why mental health of artists?

EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026

21 actions

In relation to the priority areas and working methods described in the text, the resolution sets out 21 actions covering specific issues such as:

- the working conditions of artists
- the role of culture for health and well-being
- access to culture, cultural participation and democracy
- the role of libraries
- the sectors' green and digital transitions
- culture, cultural heritage and climate change
- quality built environment
- and international cultural relations, including Ukraine



Why mental health of artists?

2023 Report of the OMC (Open Method of Coordination) working group of member states' experts: The status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals

“The important role of the CCS for our economies, societies and individual well-being and empowerment has been increasingly recognised at both EU and Member State levels, nationally, regionally and locally. However, this existing and growing acknowledgement of culture also requires recognising the importance of a fair and supportive environment for artists and cultural and creative professionals.”



Why mental health of artists?

2023 Report of the OMC (Open Method of Coordination) working group of member states' experts: The status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals

“In addition to basic statistics, Member States should collect more detailed data about the situation of artists and cultural workers for evidence-based policymaking. Data collections should provide better understanding of the realities and needs of the CCS, e.g. combining multiple occupations, work relationships and various sources of income (payment methods and frequencies, income rates), the nature of work contracts, access to security and protection, time spent on artistic work, working environment, atypical working hours, motivations and barriers that facilitate or limit work in the CCS, well-being indicators and educational backgrounds. A gender perspective should be kept in mind in all data collections



Financial Worries: retirement



German Association for Independent Performing Arts:

Study: “Below average. Employment situation and social security in the performing arts” (2023)

- presents the results of a quantitative study conducted as part of the "Systemcheck" research project
- provides differentiated insights into current employment situations and the status quo of social security in the performing arts
- also looks back into the past: The interviewees provided information on their employment and social security histories since the age of 18
- In addition to the status quo, typical employment biographies are also revealed.



Financial Worries: retirement



German Association for Independent Performing Arts:

- The average annual net personal income of people working in the performing arts in 2021 was €20,500.
- Adjusted for purchasing power, the average annual gross income earned by individuals since the age of 18 is well below this at €12,000.
- Gross income from the performing arts accounted for a good 70 per cent of this figure
- The average net household income of respondents in 2021 was €31,500. There is no indication that the respondents' low personal incomes are compensated for by additional income from their partners, neither for women nor for men



Financial Worries: retirement



German Association for Independent Performing Arts:

- 5 % of ipa professionals are not covered by pension insurance
- The average monthly pension contributions paid by the respondents of €236.50 for those with statutory insurance, €148.10 for those with KSK insurance and €339.60 for those with private insurance mean that they can expect a pension barely above the basic income support level.
- On average, the subjective pension expectations are 780 euros.
- Around half of those surveyed have supplementary pension insurance with low monthly contributions averaging 116 euros



Financial Worries: retirement



German Association for Independent Performing Arts:

- Other reserves for old age are held by 57 per cent of respondents, with the median amount of other reserves being EUR 50,000. However, the reserves are very unevenly distributed and are also used by respondents to cover loss of earnings in times when they are not working.
- Other risks, such as unemployment, occupational disability, accident and continued payment of remuneration in the event of illness (daily sickness allowance), are rarely covered for (multiple) solo self-employed persons and hybrid workers and are rather underdeveloped.
- Despite low incomes, low pension expectations and above-average concerns about old-age provision, respondents in the performing arts show a high level of identification with their profession. They want to practice their profession beyond the statutory retirement age.

Financial Worries: retirement



German Association for Independent Performing Arts:

- The majority of respondents categorise retirement provision as a cause for concern.
- Around 90 per cent - regardless of their status - are somewhat or very worried.

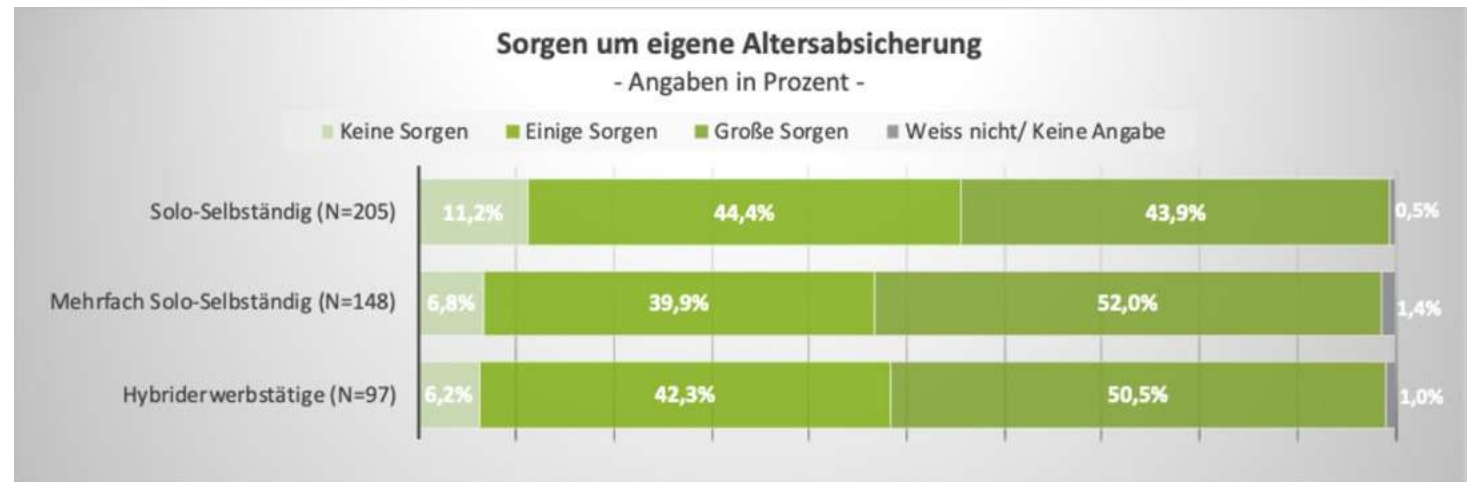


Abbildung 30: Sorgen um die eigene Altersabsicherung nach Erwerbsstatus; Quelle: Quantitative Befragung von „Systemcheck“, Hybriderwerbstätige und (Solo-)Selbständige auf Basis von maximal vier Beschäftigungen im letzten Monat, eigene Berechnungen (INES Berlin)

Financial Worries: retirement



Austrian Association for Independent Performing Arts:

"Being sick is far too expensive" - Report on the survey on retirement provision and pensions for independent performing artists and cultural workers in Austria (gift magazine 03/23)

The survey ran from Nov. 2022 to Apr. 2023 and consisted of two questionnaires: one for retired and one for non-retired artists and cultural workers. The terms active and non-active were avoided, as many retired artists are or have to be artistically active beyond retirement age



Financial Worries: retirement

Austrian Association for Independent Performing Arts:



- The survey participants often live on a poverty line and see themselves at risk in old age
- For 70 % of those surveyed, the state pension is less than €1,250 per month (the current at-risk-of-poverty threshold (60 % of the median income) is € 1,392 per month (12 times a year) for a one-person household)
- Those who have already looked at their status in the pension calculator are often so shocked by the information that they push the topic further away



Financial Worries: illness

Austrian Association for Independent Performing Arts:

- Self-employed persons face a double burden in the event of illness, as they only receive sickness benefit from the 42nd day.
- The fees in the scene are so low that no reserves can be built up for six weeks of sick leave



Financial Worries: physical limitations

Austrian Association for Independent Performing Arts:



Dancers and other highly physically active artists report that their profession causes physical wear and tear even in their early 30s. Accidents, injuries, operations and illnesses result in long recovery periods during which no income can be generated. Even afterwards, it is not possible to take on commitments to the same extent immediately, as physical resilience and muscle strength as well as appropriate technique must first be trained. It is particularly burdensome for the entitlement to sick pay only on the 42nd day, as most artists cannot build up reserves for such a long period of time.



Financial Worries: High uncertainty, low predictability

Austrian Association for Independent Performing Arts:



Many artists encounter start-up difficulties in the form of poorly paid or unpaid engagements or even the complete cancellation of their work because older artists with more experience are favoured. In addition, most actors start out with smaller and supporting roles that are paid less. Young artists are therefore already starting out in the professional world with ambivalent feelings about the professional world. Even later on, the project-based structure of the independent theatre scene makes it almost impossible to plan ahead. Self-employment means that there is no entitlement to unemployment benefit between engagements, while voluntary unemployment insurance is rarely obtained by the self-employed due to very unattractive conditions.



Financial Worries: Self-management

Austrian Association for Independent Performing Arts:



Activities that have nothing to do with art per se, but which artists are nevertheless confronted with in their day-to-day work - such as founding an association, taxes, bookkeeping, payroll accounting, salary negotiations, etc. - are not or not sufficiently taught to them as part of their training. These activities quickly become overwhelming, as they have to be carried out alongside the artistic work and often take up the main focus.



Dance Counts Report 2022

A North-South project



[Dance Counts Report 2022](#) brings together key findings from two major all-island research projects seeking to understand the working conditions and experiences of dance practitioners on the island of Ireland: the Dance Counts survey and the Dance Conversations study.

Dance Counts Report 2022

A North-South project



Section 1 explores the [Costs of Dance](#), including conditions of income and the financing of dance as well as working processes and indications pointing to the profession's condition of multi-jobbing.

Section 2 examines the [Spaces for Dance](#), including where individuals access dance work, the quality and experience of those sites, and the importance of space for dancing with others.

Section 3 gives regard to [Wellbeing and Caring](#), considering areas such as work-life balance, physical wellbeing and the impact of juggling caring responsibilities and work in dance.

Section 4 considers responses regarding the availability and scope of [Education and Training](#) on the island.

Dance Counts Report 2022

A North-South project



Work-life Balance

The precarious nature and multi-jobbing aspects of dance, which are discussed in the “Costs of Dance” section, create challenges in ensuring work-life balance. A culture of consistent overwork as an aspect of ‘normality’ in dance work prior to the pandemic was common amongst respondents in both studies. The restrictions put in place during the pandemic afforded a welcome slowdown from this pace, however the resultant effect on work opportunities, income, and in-person practice also impacted on dancers’ wellbeing.

Dance Counts Report 2022

A North-South project



Work-life Balance

Dance Counts survey respondents refer to burnout, a frantic pace of work, long hours, and stress in some qualitative responses:

“Longer hours in rehearsal, late technical rehearsals, working on Saturdays. Being overworked and stressed during pre-production time.”

“Overworking and overwhelm being seen as normal.”

“The endless cycle of making work in response to funding cycles, with short life-span and no opportunity to revive/restage.”

“The frantic rat-race nature of the work. Now not being enough but always running to the next thing. No time for reflection and evaluation.”

“Working 6-day weeks 1 day off does not allow your body to recover”

Dance Counts Report 2022

A North-South project



Work-life Balance

“Burnout. Sad truth of self-employment is that you must work when it’s there regardless of your health. Because you never know where your next job will be so you take it while you can.”

Dance Counts Report 2022

A North-South project



Physical Wellbeing

Regard for physical wellbeing was a shared concern for respondents across both studies. In the Dance Counts survey, respondents drew attention to the increased challenges faced by dancers in maintaining their physical wellbeing as they age.

Dance Counts Report 2022

A North-South project



Physical Wellbeing

“Lack of access to space to move and an injury triggered by stress [...].”

“Losing my fitness”

“Not being able to train, its so hard being stuck in a small space.”

“Not having the facilities available to maintain technique & lack of job opportunities

“Stamina and maintenance”

“Staying fit and healthy and show ready.”

Dance Counts Report 2022

A North-South project



Caring, Parenthood, and Dance

The impact of caring responsibilities on the working conditions of respondents was a strong shared theme to emerge across the Dance Conversations study and the Dance Counts survey. In the survey, 30% of all respondents answered positively to having a caring responsibility for a child/children, with a further 4% of respondents caring for another person, and 3% of respondents caring for both a child/children and another person.

Dance Counts Report 2022

A North-South project



Caring, Parenthood, and Dance

A common threads:

- difficulty of juggling caring and professional roles as a dance artist, and the impact this juggling of “a dual identity, as a mom and as an artist” has on working practices.
- issues connected with the profound impact that pregnancy and childbirth have on a dancer’s corporeality
- ability of dance artists with caring responsibilities to travel overseas to present work and engage in international network development

Dance Counts Report 2022

A North-South project



Caring, Parenthood, and Dance

A common threads:

- issue of having to use domestic spaces to work in was also a shared experience, with all artists with children discussing the challenges of having to use family spaces to train and choreograph in, especially during the global pandemic
- caring responsibilities are shown to impact on the ability of carers, especially women who are mothers, to sufficiently sustain their professional dance practice.

Equity global scoping review of factors related to poor mental health and wellbeing within the performing arts sectors

DR LUCIE CLEMENTS
MAY 2022

This scoping review was commissioned by Equity to explore the current research and information regarding the possible factors related to poor mental health and wellbeing within the performing arts sectors.

Background:

In 2015, ArtsMinds, in collaboration with The Stage, Equity and Spotlight found that 46% of performing artists self-reported poor or average mental health. One in five of the 5,000 survey respondents was seeking help for their mental health.

In 2016, a survey of 2904 people working in the Australian entertainment industry (across an extensive number of roles within dance, music, acting, presenting, entertaining, producing, directing, managing, technicians, operating and roadies) was published (van den Eynde et al., 2016). 41% of performers, 38% of people in a support role, and 31% of technicians/crew had received a diagnosis of a mental illness, with depression being by far the most common diagnosis.

Background:

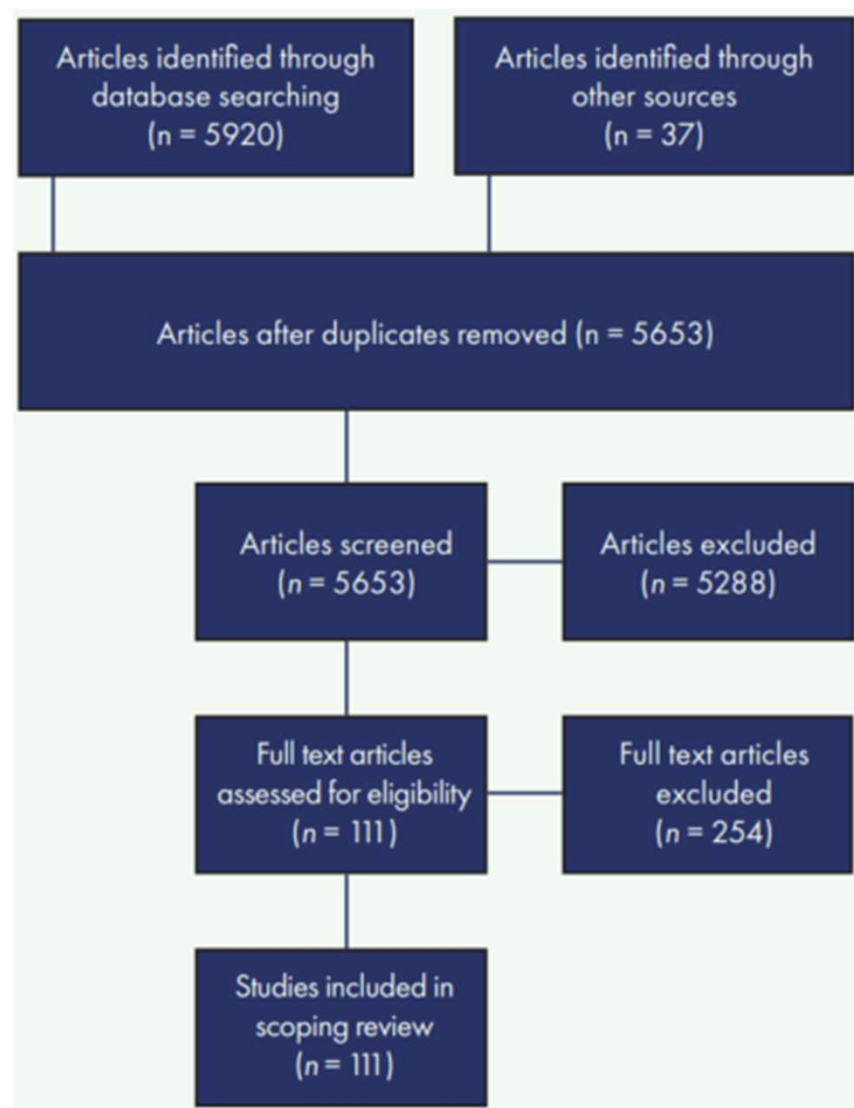
In 2019, The Record Union reported that 73% of independent music makers had experienced stress, anxiety, or depression concerning their role as a music creator.

Emerging evidence shows the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on an industry already at risk for poor mental health. Rusak et al. (2021) report that 63.5% of Australian performing artists rated their current mental health as worse than preCOVID-19 pandemic.

Background:

Published reports have tended to explore rates of poor mental health, with a lesser focus on the causes or factors which relate to poor mental health in the performing arts sector.

The review was written by Dr Lucie Clements. The research commenced on 21 January 2022 and was completed on 05 April 2022.



Findings from the Scoping Review

- a general lack of research in mental health in the performing arts
- Most of the published literature within the area of mental health and the performing arts focuses on music and dance
- less literature was found which explicitly explored factors related to mental health in freelance performing artists
- failure to acknowledge and explore key issues related to diversity and mental health

Factors related to Mental Health in the Performing Arts Sectors

The socio-cultural context of the performing arts sectors

- The portfolio career and job precarity (approx. 71% freelance: short term work; “minimum obligation on both sides”; irregular hours, expectation to be flexible, multiple jobs, multiple roles)
- Finances
- Relationships with managers and directors
- Aesthetic ideals in the performing arts sector
- Lack of preparation for the sector (students are predominantly underprepared in education for how to look after their psychological wellbeing once in the industry)
- Access to mental health services in the sector

Factors related to Mental Health in the Performing Arts Sectors

Situational factors related to poor mental health

- Performance (auditions/competitions/performances: increased stress through potential of negative evaluations or rejections; soloists)
- Injury and Illness
- COVID-19

Factors related to Mental Health in the Performing Arts Sectors

Personal factors related to poor mental health

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Class
- Disability
- Student / Professional Status
- Neurodiversity
- Generalized Joint Hypermobility
- Childhood Experiences
- Coping Strategies
- Confidence and Resilience

Links

- EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/news/council-of-ministers-agrees-on-new-eu-work-plan-for-culture-2023-2026>
- 2023 OMC Report -The status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professional: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/01fafa79-1a13-11ee-806b-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>
- BFDK – Systemcheck: <https://darstellende-kuenste.de/projekte/systemcheck>
- Unterm Durchschnitt. Erwerbssituation und soziale Absicherung in den darstellenden Künsten: <https://darstellende-kuenste.de/mediathek#list-item-698>
- Gift magazine IGFT: <https://freietheater.at/gift-magazin/>
- Dance Counts Report 2022; Ireland: <https://www.danceireland.ie/dance-counts/report/>
- Equity global scoping review of factors related to poor mental health and wellbeing within the performing arts sectors: <https://www.equity.org.uk/media/hwignp3cu/mental-health-report.pdf>