

# REPORT

## LIVE STYLE EUROPE WORKING GROUP

### Cooperation & Representation Within the music sector

Second online session – 20th of May 2020

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## Context

To follow up the first working group session and given the circumstances that come with an online meeting, this second working group session was based on sharing best practice and experience on two topics:

1. **How to create cooperation partnerships on regional/national level**
2. **How to start a dialogue with policy makers**

## Topic 1 - How to create cooperation partnerships on regional/national level?

Through the **shared experience**, we can identify **common indicators** on how cooperation mechanisms within the sector can function and what hurdles exist:

- **Cooperation between national and regional organizations** can work well as this allows to dialogue to authorities on different governmental levels at the same time. Conflicts can rise in terms of legitimacy matters. It should be clear who negotiates with whom in order to make the most out of such a cooperation.
- **Finding common ground** with partners seems the biggest hurdle to overcome. Most participants explain that they cooperate mainly on very broad, **consensual topics** (e.g. more money for culture) and each association then fights their own sub-sector issues.
- Building **fruitful cooperation takes time**, a lot of time. The road towards good and trustful relations can be rocky. In the end, it is worth investing those efforts as it builds strong organizations that can act on different political levels.
- **Informal meetings** are as important as formal meetings. Exchange and dialogue is an important step. We can already identify partners and build a relationship before we really need them.

- **Encourage other sub-sectors to create their own representative organizations** and support them in the process. This will create right from the beginning a strong foundation for working and fighting together.
- Certain cooperation require **formalization**. When deciding to work together in the long term, it seems important to define the framework of the cooperation.

## STORY TELLING

### FEDELIMA (France)

In France, venues are structured on a national level (Fedelima) and on regional level (regional music sector networks). When negotiating with the Ministry of Culture, Fedelima relies also on the vision of the regional networks. Fedelima and the regional networks' members have similar business models.

When negotiating for better condition for the sector on a regional level, it is important to bring the different authorities and partners together at the same table. In this sense, the cooperation between networks works well. The regional representative organization has good contacts to local partners and institutions, while Fedelima has a direct link with national authorities. Fedelima also trains regional networks on their Survey methodology. This allows to gather specific indicators for regional matters and arguments for regional negotiations.

Conflicts can occur when setting up political statements as regional networks and Fedelima do not always share common grounds. It happens that they speak in on one voice, but this is usually not in a direct cooperation but in a joint action involving many representative partners from the music sector.

The question on representation on a national level of the sector can lead to conflicts between Fedelima and regional networks. The regional networks feel the need to be represented at national level, especially in the recently created Centre National de la Musique (CNM) that gathers national representatives of the French music sector. In France, cultural policies are more and more decentralized to the regions which also raises the question on what is being negotiated on national, and what on regional level.

### NKA (Norway)

In Norway, a multitude of networks exist. On national level, NKA is the only one that is genre free. It can be difficult to find common grounds with the other national live music organizations, but they cooperate in a network for the whole industry on broad topics (e.g. "we need more money for culture"). Cultural matters get also more and more decentralized. Six regional network exist representing concert organisers and artists. NKA is in a good relationship with them, like a big brother.

### Clubcircuit (Belgium, Flanders)

In Belgium, culture is regional competence. There are good contacts between regional organizations (with Court-Circuit), but no political cooperation as culture is not a topic in national debate.

In Flanders, venues and clubs are well organized and speak with one voice, but it can be difficult to find common grounds with other organization of the music business (managers federation, artists organization, author rights organizations). The Covid-19 crisis reunited the whole sector and cooperation seems to work, but it is not certain if this will last after the crisis. However, it is very encouraging to see that such a cooperation is possible.

OKO is a platform that reunites culture & arts organizations from all sectors (theatre, dance, writers, film, music, etc.) on topics like employment rules and fair practice. OKO has become an important organization that has a lot of power when negotiating with authorities. It took time to build such a fruitful cooperation and the road to good relationships can be rocky. In the end, it is worth investing those efforts as it builds strong organizations that act at political levels (e.g. Club Circuit & Court-Circuit at regional level; Live DMA at European level). OKO and VI.BE organize a global meeting every year to bring common topics on the agenda to work on together. Seeing each other in person, and informal networking are important to keep up good relations.

### **Court-Circuit (Belgium, Wallonia)**

In Wallonia, the sector works differently as their peers in Flanders. Several attempts to cooperate with other parts of the sector and with Flanders region (e.g. on artistic topics), but these projects only lasted a given time and did not lead to a sustainable cooperation.

Political cooperation exist, but there is a lack of a “shared space” to discuss together before bringing forward a joint call or statement. Court-Circuit encouraged other sub-sectors of the music ecosystem to create their own associations. Now six representative organizations exist that represent the “small” & “independent” part of the music sector (venues & clubs, booking agencies, record companies, PR agencies, musicians, small labels). Together they formed a platform called CCMA (Comité de concertation Musiques Actuelles) and appointed a person to represent them in the different government negotiations and media. Through this, cooperation becomes more natural and they manage to speak in one voice and make the needs of the sector understandable for the government. They are also part of a taskforce reuniting other parts of the CCS.

### **Petzi (Switzerland)**

Culture is both regional and federal policy competence. This decentralization has also effects on how the music sector is structured and even how representative organizations are structured. Petzi is organised in two national committees, one in the French speaking part of Switzerland and another in the German speaking part of the country. Once a year, they exchange about their experiences. Petzi usually does not work with booking agencies or other sub sectors who have their own associations.

Since the Covid-19 crisis, cooperation with other sub-sectors of the music ecosystem and the cultural sector started. The crisis pointed out important gaps in the political system that reflect then on the sector (national and regional guidelines for venues can be contradictory). Two taskforces were created to bring forward common issues (e.g. they are working on a status for artists at the moment). In Switzerland, everybody knows everyone as the country is quite small. Cooperation is just starting now when urgently needed. Certain organizations are not part of this (e.g. the bigger festivals & promoters) as they do not share the same values.

## ACCES (Spain)

Spain is a decentralized country with representative music associations in almost every region (ACCES supported the creation of most of them). These associations did not use to work together and ACCES tried to reunite them to speak with one voice. The state-wide association ES Musica was recently created to bring them together (managers, promoters, labels (maj + indie), author rights, venues). ES Musica tries to be the interlocutor at national level. Other scenic arts are very well structured and organized in Spain and have well established relationships with the Ministry of Culture. ES Music attempts to be the recognized interlocutor for live music and to counterbalance the heavy influence of big promoters and managers in national negotiations (e.g. ticketing policies). It seems also important to reunite all the venues associations in a joint platform as their cause is not heard within the music sector.

## Live ME (Estonia)

To some extent, Music Estonia (ME) and PRS share the same values although they do not necessarily have the same objectives. They come together on the topic of creating a sustainable music ecosystem and they share the view that it is important to take care of this in their own country to then also have good export and international audiences. The Ministry of Culture is quite conservative and trying to win back electors through better regional policies. In this sense, Live ME and PRS are working together to emphasise also the message that good music venues are important all over the country and not only in the capital.

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## Topic 2 - How to start a dialogue with policy makers?

The experience of the participants revealed that each organisation found their unique way in establishing stable exchange with policy makers:

### How to get your foot in the door:

- (Radical) **public action to create attention** can allow to be seen by policy makers in the first place
- **Partnering with organisations** that are already recognized by the authorities can create a first good contact
- **Build your way up** – start to create good relationships with policy makers on a local level before addressing your concerns on a national level. The support from local policy makers can open doors for your needs.
- **Use data of your network** to get the policy makers' attention. You can show your importance with numbers: the number of members of your organisation, numbers on cultural activities organised by your members, number on their contribution to employment, their economic impact, etc.

## How to improve relationships:

- Bring forward concrete proposals (e.g. regular concertation meeting, a yearly conference, etc.) in order to turn loose relationships with public authorities into a regular and serious dialogue in the form of a concertation committee.
- Identify policy priorities of the authority in charge and show that your organisation can help them
- Use your Live DMA membership to show policy makers that you are not only an expert of the situation in your country, but that you are part of a big organisation recognized by the European Commission.

## STORY TELLING

### ACCES (Spain)

10 years ago, several organisations from the music sector noticed a legal lack in regards to music. Other cultural sectors could refer to laws regarding their arts, but this was not the case for music. Different organisations started to meet trying to imagine what such a “music law” could look like in Spain. It took one year to write an ambitious report that included different professions from the sector, as well as representatives from music education and conservatories. This report was submitted to the Ministry of Culture who was receptive and sensitive to this cause. This was the first public awareness that music is a sector with an important economy that reaches you people through education, but also through different practices such as concerts and music consumption.

In response to this report, the Ministry of Culture asked the sector to present a project. A tool in form of a concert-circuit for emerging artists during the winter months was created: musicians/bands play 7 concerts in different venues and all musicians are equally remunerated, they also receive a subsidy to create a new record and to set-up a marketing campaign. This project still exists today and led to the creation of the network GPS that brings together venues, promoters, labels, and musicians. This was the first time when popular music got considered by public authorities and by the institutional side of the sector.

### FEDELIMA (France)

The dialogue with national and regional authorities started around 20 years ago. They felt the urge to change the nature of relationship of public bodies giving subsidies to venues. Their aim was to transform this top-down relation to a horizontal partnership. 20 years ago, the few venues involved in Fedurock (former Fedelima) were a bit more radical in their advocacy work: they were striking and took a representative from the Ministry of Culture into hostage in order to get heard. After that, relationships with the Ministry got more peaceful.

10 years ago, Fedelima brought forward the request for a concertation space with the Ministry of Culture that brings together the Ministry, the sector, as well as local authorities. This helped a lot to structure the sector and to gain visibility. This consultation space still exists and is used a lot. A charter was established stating that all participants are equal. They have a meeting every two months and discuss a broad range of topics including cultural actions, sustainable development, gender balance, etc. This concertation space is very effective and other sectors are jealous of it as it can give them the opportunity to influence a law or regulation before it is released. Fedelima puts a lot of effort to keep this concertation space alive.

### **Clubcircuit (Belgium - Flanders)**

It took over 20 years to get to today's strong cooperation and representation of live music venues within the cultural sector in Flanders. In 1998, the Décret de la Musique was published and from that moment on it was possible to have national support for pop/rock venues. Clubcircuit was founded around this period. In 2004, another important step was set with the Décret des Arts that includes all cultural sectors. These political actions helped to really build up importance for the venues.

When bigger venues joined Clubcircuit, this helped to increase the power of representation of the organisation. It really took time to be recognized by politicians. Some factors that played into this were the increasing number of venues and big venues (venues are a business to be taken seriously) and the age of the music professionals (not being "youngsters" anymore). Once you have good relationships with some politicians, it is really important to keep them close to your side.

### **Court-Circuit (Belgium - Wallonia)**

Since their beginning, Court-Circuit has been talking with politicians. Until 1996, they received no money and the first project they got funded was for supporting emerging musicians through a contest. This project worked until 2004 when they decided to expand it to touring support for musicians. As there was no place to organise quality gigs (venues had no money), they advocated for a venues subsidy. This subsidy helped venues to create good spaces for musicians with good technical equipment. Their argument (we need money to make good venues to support the musicians) worked at that time and they represented 10 live music organisers (only two of them were venues). 10 years later, they started to include more venues into their organisation. The Ministry of Culture had no real knowledge of the sector and asked Court-Circuit for help. In this sense, the Ministry gave new missions to Court-Circuit and more funding for them and the venues. In those negotiations, the survey took an important role to show the sector's importance at EU level. Recently the Ministry of Culture changed and Court-Circuit needs to make a new strategy on how to work with them.

### **Live ME (Estonia)**

Live ME still have a very important job to do explaining the Ministry how the sector works. ME established last year good dialogue with municipalities in a first phase in getting into dialogue with authorities, then Corona happened. They work on different levels to reach the attention of policy makers. They work with media and they have identified the Ministry's priority topics (e.g. Estonian language) to really tailor their arguments. There is still some way to go before relationships become more natural. Live ME is growing quite fast which feeds their impact in negotiations. ME exists already for 5 year which helps the branch Live ME to build on already good existing regional contacts as ME focuses a lot on local markets and policies.

### **PETZI (Switzerland)**

In Switzerland, dialog often starts first on a local level with municipalities. Depending on the outcome of this contact, Petzi will knock on the doors of the regions or national governments. Petzi organised themselves in a way that the regional associations speak with the regional and local authorities and the Petzi national committee is the main interlocutor for the Ministry.

In 2017, Petzi organised for the first time a conference in the capital in order to show and discuss Swiss pop music and culture and they invited politicians to join the event. They were able to point out some issues they wanted to discuss with the different public authorities (e.g. subsidies for venues). In Switzerland politicians are quite accessible and it is easy to speak with them. However, it takes a lot of time for them to make things work so that the situation can evolve.

### **NKA (Norway)**

NKA exists for 40 years and in the beginning (first 20 years), they were not really represented in national dialogues as rock music (what NKA represented at that time) was not recognised as culture. This changed in 2005 when rock/pop venues could seek public funding. At the beginning of the 2000 started the boom of the festivals and the venues and clubs benefitted from this new trend. The acceptance for pop and rock music grew. NKA opened their membership to the festivals which led to an important push. The organisation grew and became more powerful which had a significant impact on their relations with policy-makers.

During the last 15 years, NKA could confirm their position and their relationship depends on who is in place at the Ministry. During the last 10 years, Norway saw eight different Ministers of Culture. Each time, it takes time to re-create the relation with the Ministry. NKA also has good relations with one of the two major federations in Norway representing the whole cultural sector which helps to get meetings with policy makers. Different NKA staff members are involved in building relations with policy-makers depending on the topic (this can be at national or regional level).

The Covid-19 situation showed that NKA gets good visibility in media (e.g. national TV) and that they have a direct contact to policy makers.

## **PARTICIPANT'S TOP TIPS**

**Anders' tip:** It is important to establish good connections with policy makers, in different kind of political parties and at different levels. Informal meetings around a coffee worked out pretty well to get the concerns of the sector through. Explaining our sector is still a big thing to do, even after such a long time (40 years of NKA).

**Armando's tip:** Talk with the General Director of Culture rather than with the Minister. They might be more familiar with the regulations and they directly work on laws. Politicians are not cultural professionals, this is why we need to teach them how our sector works. Establishing relationships with different parties is important in the long term, even if you do not agree with them.

**David's tip:** It is important to work with data. Politicians are sensitive to that. It is really important to have a good story-telling with the data to show them what you are, how many, and what you need. You can also refer to other situations in Europe by comparing data. This also shows the politicians that you have an expertise that they can consult.

**Thomas' tip:** Be very clear on what you represent and what you are doing. It is important to have a clear message so that politicians can understand.

**Henri's tip:** Be a good dialogue partner and try to see things from the politicians' perspective. Bring them your expertise and ask for support from municipalities before entering in national negotiations. Having this local support might give you already some sort of recognition.

## What's next?

The two online working group sessions allowed to find out that a lot of good practice exist on cooperation exist within Live DMA. The participants brought forward the idea to create an output in the form a report or guideline that showcases those positive stories on cooperation.

It does not seem ideal to create a "cooperation guideline" as the situation in each country or region is different. Participants said that they are available for future short online meetings to work on the output. Participants did not express their need for an additional working group on the topic.



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