

Summary

LIVE MUSIC VENUES AND CLUBS IN EUROPE FACE RISING COSTS AMID PANDEMIC RECOVERY

Facts & Figures of the live music sector, data 2019-2022, Publication January 2025

Live DMA released a new Survey report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the live music sector during 2020-2022, and the **challenges faced in the recovery process, including high inflation and sharp increasing costs**. It also includes data from 2019 to provide a comparison of the sector's performance before the pandemic and in-depth analysis of the venues' business models per type of legal status. In addition, the report contains interviews with several venue directors, and pages with figures of music venues and clubs per European country or region.

In 2019, live music venues and clubs were thriving, with annually increasing numbers of artist performances, audience visits and job creation, contributing significantly to the cultural, social, and economic life in Europe. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, starting in March 2020, imposed severe restrictions on the sector, including lockdowns, limited capacity, and event cancellations. These measures led to a sharp decline in income, particularly for private commercial venues that rely on ticket sales and audience attendance. Public and non-profit venues were more financially resilient, relying on regular government subsidies to cover some of their costs. **Despite government support for wages and fixed costs, many venues, artists, workers, and suppliers in the sector experienced significant financial losses.**

In 2022, most venues could reopen normally, programming many rescheduled concerts from 2020 and 2021, leading to a **recovery in audience attendance**. However, the **financial situation remained precarious, with rising costs**—particularly for energy, housing, employment, and food and beverage purchases—putting significant pressure on venues' budgets. Although government support helped, it did not fully compensate for the increasing costs, and many venues faced financial deficits. The situation was particularly challenging for private commercial venues, which received less government support and had fewer financial reserves compared to non-profit and public venues.

Looking ahead to 2025, the report highlights ongoing challenges. Inflation and rising costs, particularly for energy and employment, continue to strain venues' financial stability. Many venues are struggling to generate enough income to cover rising costs, especially private commercial venues that rely almost entirely on audience revenue. As a result, many venues are forced to reduce staff and cut back on diverse programming, including support for emerging artists and less mainstream music genres. **This impacts the cultural diversity and talent development that are central to many venues' missions.**

The report concludes by **calling for continued government support to ensure the sector's sustainability**. It stresses the need for policies that address the rising costs, provide stable subsidies, and support inclusive and diverse programming. Without ongoing assistance, the live music sector risks long-term financial instability, which could harm artists, workers, and the wider cultural ecosystem.