

Live DMA Strategy 2024-2028

1. MAIN CHALLENGES FOR THE LIVE MUSIC SECTOR

The live music sector, as highlighted in Live DMA's Survey reports, is a vital force in terms of activities, employment, and economy, with a wide diversity of artistic genres and mixed economic models. Music venues, clubs, and festivals serve as key platforms for artist talent development in Europe, from supporting local bands to hosting internationally renowned acts. These spaces are central to social gathering, offering a diverse range of artistic experiences in both rural and urban areas, and are deeply embedded in their communities. They play a significant role in local economies and foster strong connections with people, reinforced by the participation of around 48,000 volunteers daily. Despite their importance, the sector faces political, social, and economic challenges in an increasingly globalised world. Live DMA venues and clubs collectively organise over 400,000 live performances and attract more than 70 million visitors annually, underscoring their cultural and economic significance.

The live music scenes now face the financial damages of the crisis and constraints with inflation costs, which reduce their capacity to take risks when booking non-mainstream artists. They are going through an employment crisis, with a lot of skilled professionals who left the sector during the shut-downs, and so, a high pressure on the remaining teams. There is an increase of noise & neighbouring complaints as a result of decades of absence of live music representatives in urban planning strategies and gentrification. There is a shift in audience practices, and competition with global players, which create pressure on event organisers: they have to grow to survive. Besides, the live music professionals rate challenges related to inclusion or climate change among their top priorities.

Political challenges

- The vital importance of music for wider society is not valorised enough
- Furthermore, there's still a lack of recognition of venues, clubs, and festivals for their social, cultural and economic impact
- Similarly, live music is often not recognised as a proper business and profession

Social challenges

- Lack of inclusion and diversity on many levels: artistic, audience, professionals
- There is a gender gap in the music sector, both on stage and for people working behind the stage
- There is an economic and artistic inequality between genders working in the sector
- There is a need to take action regarding climate change through the green transition of the sector.
- There are barriers to access social and ecological solutions for the sector

Economic challenges

- Market concentration in the live music sector endangers artistic diversity and a mid-sized, non-profit or owner driven music sector.
- Solidary, idealistic and not for profit business models struggle to stay sustainable in competition with the profit based economic system, which makes it difficult to maintain the financial sustainability of the sector
- There's a need to develop ownership solutions for live music scenes
- The working conditions of the live music sector still are in need of many improvements

2. LIVE DMA

Live DMA is a horizontal and participative governance body, created in 2012, to gather and represent live music venues, clubs and festivals through European national associations. Together, these associations commit to meet, share and exchange their knowledge and experiences in order to raise solutions to the identified challenges. Together, they participate to define a fair and sustainable model for the live music sector, in accordance with the ethic charter and statutes of the network.

Through time, Live DMA has grown in terms of size and impact. Today, the network is composed of 20 members situated in 16 countries. The members are regional and national live music associations that represent over 3400 music venues, clubs and festivals located all over Europe.

3. GOAL AND STRATEGY

Live DMA aims to use its strategic position as an international network of live music associations to create connections among a fragmented sector and provide tools and showcase best-practices that will benefit all the members, and beyond. Together, music venues, clubs and festivals participate in the redefinition of the live music sector, through representative associations, based on bottom-up strategies and horizontal governances.

Thus, based on Live DMA's scope of action together with the current identified challenges and needs of the European live music sector, the 2024-2028 strategy has been defined.

The 2024-2028 Live DMA strategy focuses on three types of strategic lines: Advocacy; Capacity Building; and Cooperation.

3.1 ADVOCACY

Main goal: Live DMA carries out policy analysis and builds strong partnerships to influence the political framework that affects the live music sector.

3.2 CAPACITY BUILDING

Main goal: Live DMA empowers live music actors with tools, knowledge and resources.

3.3 COOPERATION

Main goal: Live DMA connects national and regional associations to structure the European live music sector.

ACTION PLAN 2024-2028

Based on Live DMA's goals for the next five years, the network will target the following actions:

ADVOCACY:

- Valorise the role of venues in live music, and the role of music in wider society.
- Provide the sector with current data on structural and infrastructural trends, by also including partnerships with universities and research centres.
- Develop collaborations with EU and global partners from the music sector.
- Elevate the dissemination strategy to increase the impact of Live DMA and members' findings, resources and messages.
- Push for redistribution or support schemes that balance out the financial risks of the independent live music sector.
- Help develop solutions to protect the EU's live music diversity and competitiveness.
- Support the improvement of live music professionals' working conditions, including wellbeing and mental health, and equity and equality.
- Facilitate the sustainable transition of the live music sector.

CAPACITY BUILDING:

- Develop capacity building opportunities for members' members focusing on shared priority topics, especially in the fields of digitalization, sustainability, and accessibility.
- Facilitate exchange of knowledge, best-practice and networking across Europe.
- Influence the creation of new research and education methodologies that are beneficial for the live music sector.

COOPERATION:

- Provide autonomy to member organisations for creating peer learning activities and other initiatives.
- Support the creation of new live music associations all over Europe and the globe and help them connect.
- Connect members' members through innovative and collaborative ways, on shared priority topics, especially in the fields of digitalization, sustainability, and accessibility.