



Attn. Minister of Culture  
BAROK  
Confederation of Independent Syndicates  
Confederation "Podkrepa"  
Union of Bulgarian Artists  
Union of Bulgarian Musicians and Dancers

Ref: 2010/AD/P5979

Brussels, 28 April 2010

Dear Sirs,

During the social dialogue working group meeting on Monday 26 April in Brussels we were informed about the plans of the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture to cut funding for 7 theatres, 3 orchestras and the State music theatre. This information has shocked the European performing arts sector and PEARLE, the Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe which represents over 4,000 organisations within the performing arts sector in Europe, wishes to convey its grave concern about this matter. The EAEA, European Arts and Entertainment Alliance representing the trade-unions as FIA, FIM and UNI-MEI, have expressed equal concern and wish to be associated with this letter.

In these times of financial hardship, taking away people's right to culture is a terrible decision. We've know from surveys across Europe that it is exactly in these moments that people most keenly seek a few hours of the inspiration that only live performance can offer. As a result audience figures are actually going up in country after country. The clear message is that culture is firmly embedded in society as a whole and in the personal lives of its individual members. To take that away puts a great responsibility on the shoulders of policy makers, with non-predictable consequences. But one is very foreseeable - the lack of culture and the arts encourages ignorance and a loss of moral compass in society, thus providing the perfect conditions for a growth of crimes as 'the Untouchables', 'the Insolents', 'the Octopus', 'the Forgers' etc.

We would like also to stress the importance of public investment in the arts. An investment of 1€ in the arts, contributes more than 3€ value to the whole economy. This is important to take into account when taking serious decisions on reducing the amount of investment through public spending in the arts. The adopted Green paper "Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries" of the European Commission launched on 27 April also focuses on the great cultural

and economic value of our sectors and advise the governments for the respective increase of the subsidies needed.

Obviously, the consequential unemployment would have the most serious consequences for the workers concerned and their families, who will face at best an uncertain and precarious future.

We urge you to take these and other issues into consideration in order to reverse the situation. Pearle\* urges the Minister and the Bulgarian performing arts sector to cooperate in seeking solutions that avoid the drastic steps now contemplated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matti A. Holopainen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matti A. Holopainen  
President