

Setting a New Agenda: Partnerships for Artistic Freedom

Wednesday 8 November 2017

Side event, Room II, UNESCO HQ, 2-3 PM

Artistic freedom is a global challenge. The rights of artists to express themselves freely are under threat worldwide, especially where artistic expressions contest or critique ideologies, beliefs and social preferences. Artistic freedom violations denote the denial of one of the fundamental prerequisites of democracy. In this regard, UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions is instrumental in addressing some of the key challenges at stake: right to create, right to freedom of movement, right to freedom of association, right to protection of the economic and social rights of artists, right to participate in cultural life. The mobilization of strategic partnerships – Member States, international artists' associations, human rights institutions, judges, prosecutors – is becoming essential to ensure efficient actions. They can help to address key challenges, such as:

- **Monitoring** – in spite of the seriousness of the matter, artistic freedom violations are still under-reported at national, regional and global levels.
- **Awareness** – knowledge of relevant human rights protected under international law, such as the UNESCO 2005 Convention and the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist, is modest.
- **Solidarity** – very few artist organizations are vocal about challenges relating to artistic freedom and advocacy is predominantly made by human rights and freedom of expression organizations.
- **Action Plan** – contrary to artist and cultural professionals, journalists all over the world are well organized and are able to address freedom of expression issues, in particular through the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists.

This side event is organized on the occasion of the 39th session of the General Conference by the Culture Sector and the Permanent Delegations to UNESCO from Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. It is set in advance of the launching of the 2018 edition of UNESCO's Global Report "Reshaping Cultural Policies", foreseen on 14 December 2017 during the eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee of the 2005 Convention.

The discussion, introduced by the UNESCO video "Artistic Freedom is not a luxury", will be moderated by Francesco Bandarin, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture, and followed by Q&A.

Key questions to be addressed:

- Why do we need to enhance monitoring of artistic freedom, and what are the key challenges?
- Who are the key stakeholders, and what tools are at their disposal?
- How to mobilize strategic partnerships to enhance capacities for monitoring?
- How can artist communities become more vocal about their rights and raise public awareness of challenges in relation to artistic freedom?
- What can artists learn from journalists? Is a "UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Artists" the way forward?

PANELISTS:

Katja Holm is Vice-president of the International Federation of Actors (FIA) since 2016. She was elected to the Council at the Danish Actors Association in 2000 and became President in 2009. She is also a member of the council at the Danish National Commission for UNESCO. She is still an active actress, and has recently participated in “The Bridge 3”, “The Heirs” and “Follow The Money”.

The International Federation of Actors (FIA) is committed to the protection and promotion of freedom of artistic expression. FIA responds in an ad hoc way to instances of persecution and censorship of performers, with letters to governments, petitions and campaigns as some of the tools at its disposal to further their cause.

Srirak Plicat is the Executive Director of Freemuse since April 2017. Previously, he was director for Asia Pacific at Transparency International. As director of the International Mobilisation Programme at Amnesty International in London, Dr Plicat was responsible for AI’s mobilisation strategy, global human rights activist coordination, people engagement, youth activism, and operations and regional projects in over 15 countries in Europe, Africa and Asia. Dr Plicat advocated for regional human rights protection in Asia, having served as a member of the Working Group for the Establishment of the ASEAN Human Rights Mechanisms.

Freemuse defends the right to artistic freedom worldwide. Freemuse uses thorough research and documentation of violations of artistic freedom to influence governments and decision-makers to change laws and practices that limit artistic expression. Freemuse works with international bodies – including the UN Human Rights Council, special procedures and special rapporteurs, UNESCO and EU institutions – to secure the right to artistic expression is respected, and to ensure that violations are monitored and violators are held accountable.

Diana Ramarohetra is the Artwatch Africa Project Manager of Arterial Network. The project aims to defend and promote Artist Rights in Africa, especially Freedom of Creative Expression, through training, artistic collaboration and advocacy campaigns. Diana is the former Secretary General of the Institut Français of Rwanda. She started as journalist and she has worked with festivals in Madagascar, Rwanda and Ivory Coast.

Artwatch Africa aims to assert, promote and defend artist rights and freedom of creative expression for artists and cultural practitioners in Africa. Artwatch Africa also addresses equitable access to resources and opportunity, provision of infrastructure, legal support mechanisms, copyright and intellectual property, cultural diversity, and culture in formal and informal education systems.

Elin Rosenström works since 2009 at the Swedish Arts Council in Stockholm, and since 2013 as Senior Adviser for international issues, mainly related to UNESCO and the EU. She is responsible for missions related to the UNESCO 2005 Convention, international cultural cooperation and the EU-program Creative Europe as Head of Creative Europe Desk Sweden.

The Swedish Arts Council is a public authority body under the Swedish Ministry of Culture whose task is to promote cultural development, cooperation and access. The Council achieves this by allocating and monitoring state funding, alongside other promotional activities. The Swedish government has also commissioned the Swedish Arts Council to encourage the creation of more cities of refuge for refuge for writers and other artists who live under threat in their home countries.