

The Ultimate Cookbook

FOR CULTURAL MANAGERS

The EU Green Deal and Live Performance Organisations

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The Ultimate Cookbook for Cultural Managers
The EU Green Deal And Live Performance Organisations

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EFA Care for and Share the Alliance (2025-2028)

Care for and Share the Alliance is the Creative Europe Network programme 2025-2028 of the European Festivals Association (EFA). It will explore the guiding question: *"How do the arts, arts festivals, cities and regions specifically contribute to better living conditions of people and of the planet?"* The project focuses on two priorities: increasing accessibility to and of the festival sector for participation and interaction in the Alliance; deepening Alliance stakeholders' capacities and expanding their impact.

EFA aims to develop and improve the awareness, responsibility and critical thinking of festivals and festival cities and regions to play an active role within our societies. Besides networking and capacity building, EFA's activities contribute to the social and cultural development of localities, nations, and international communities within the EU and beyond, equipping festivals and their stakeholders with new models of trans-sectoral work.

Initiatives focusing on the arts and the communities are at the core of EFA's work, developing a language tailored to their needs while engaging colleague networks and audiences in activities and policy dialogue to share this language and create a meaningful impact. For that, EFA teams up with ***The Festival Academy***, ***Pearle**** and ***A Soul for Europe***.

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Let's act
for a sustainable
live performance
sector!

Prologue

The European Festival Association (EFA) and Pearle*-Live Performance Europe have been working together since 2014 to improve knowledge on the practical and legal aspects of cross-border cooperation in the performing arts. This cooperation was made possible with the support of the Creative Europe programme through the RISE project from 2014 to 2017, the EFA RISE 2 project from 2017 to 2021, and the Revealing the Alliance project from 2021 to 2024. This fruitful collaboration now continues for another four years with the Care for and Share the Alliance programme that runs from 2025 to 2028.

In 2015, we began to organise a series of seminars and workshops with contributions from legal and academic experts, addressing a wide range of topics related to the cross-border dimension of live performances. Participants were invited to formulate their questions in advance, which revealed many common challenges faced by cultural managers across Europe. These seminars led to the creation of *The Ultimate Cookbook for Cultural Managers* series, which blends theoretical explanations with practical cases and suggestions for solutions. Over time, the scope of the series expanded to cover European policies with major implications for our sector, such as the green and digital transition.

The series continues under the Care for and Share the Alliance project, while also exploring new horizons as we tackle the topic of sustainability, one of the most urgent matters globally and of utmost importance to all organisations, festivals, artists and managers working in the cultural sector across Europe and the world.

Cross-border working and international collaboration are deep in the DNA of the live performance sector. These aspects are more necessary than ever when trying to make a substantial contribution to international Climate Target Goals.

Since the publication of the first cookbook on the EU Green Deal in March 2023, several initiatives have been taken and new ones proposed, while our society has know considerable changes. From 2025 onwards, the Commission launched a series of Omnibus simplification packages, responding to pressure to cut administrative burden and boost competitiveness.

Inside this cookbook you will find all the necessary ingredients as well as several recipes for cooking this "sustainability" dish. As with all dishes, you can add spices, flavours or other ingredients, depending on your taste and needs.

We would like to thank Pearle* and EFA members for sharing their experiences as well as the EFA and the Pearle* team for their insights.

Introduction

These days, whatever the activity of artists and cultural professionals, whatever performance is produced by a live performance organisation or an artist's manager, the ultimate question is: "...and how sustainable is it?"

Sustainability is the most urgent matter in today's world and should be at the core of our missions, projects and objectives. It is not surprising that most of our professional work and operations are already weighted against the principles of sustainability.

Given that the live performance sector is characterised by cross-border work and international cooperation, it is certainly important to get an overview of common sustainability goals, political objectives, policy frameworks and measures at the EU level. In short: it's useful to get to know the European Green Deal in more detail and become familiar with the actions which must be considered in an organisation's day-to-day operations.

Knowing the Green Deal also means you will have a better idea about which concrete topics related to sustainability are on the agenda of national policymakers or will be on it in the near future. The EU Green Deal sets standards and implementation deadlines for specific measures, indicating when they must be applied at the national level.

This cookbook will help you to navigate the jungle of EU law, the numerous initiatives related to the Green Deal and the impact of the Omnibus simplification packages. The Green Deal is an EU framework; its legal effects are implemented through EU legislation and national measures. This publication explains the principles of EU Climate Goals and will help you to identify initiatives that are relevant to the live performance sector. Insights into the EU Green Deal help you to better understand and use the wide range of tools, guides, calculators and initiatives that have been developed in the cultural sector.

This cookbook will allow you to gear your own activities towards European climate targets and understand how you or your organisation can contribute to those goals actively and substantially. You may explore the chapters independently from each other, ranging from a focus on the production of performances, to buildings and stages, outdoor events, touring and travelling of audiences, and last but not least reporting and funding.

A quick reminder...

What is sustainability?

Sustainability refers to a balance between the environment, social equity and the economy. It assumes that our natural and physical resources on Earth are finite and need to be used wisely so that they are not depleted and remain available in the long term. In this sense, according to the UN World Commission on Environment and Development, "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Regarding the cultural sector, sustainability in the broad sense includes durable action on artistic, human, social, economic and environmental aspects. In this cookbook, we focus primarily on the environmental part, as it mostly relates to actions proposed by the EU in the Green Deal. We explore how artistic productions and the dissemination of live performances can be organised in an environment-friendly way, taking into account the aims of EU Climate Goals and associated objectives.

Getting
some simple
green basics
to build up
understanding...

The basics of EU Climate Law and the EU Green Deal

In recent years, the climate crisis has evolved into the most urgent topic the world faces. Combatting climate change has been placed high on the EU agenda. In the European Commission's Communication on the European Green Deal, it reads:

> *This Communication [...] resets the Commission's commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges that is this generation's defining task. [...] The EU has the collective ability to transform its economy and society to put it on a more sustainable path.*[1]

EU legal action on climate law started to develop more than 30 years ago. The first initiative was a strategy to limit Carbon Dioxide emissions and improve energy efficiency in the early 1990s. This was then followed by an initial commitment by the Union in 1992 to stabilise carbon dioxide emissions: the European Economic Community signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (the UNFCCC). The UNFCCC constituted the first step to prevent human interference with the climate system on a global scale.

Why and how does the European Union take climate action?

The legal answer is straightforward: it is included in the EU Treaty. The Treaty allows the European Union to address climate change through EU law. That's why a wide range of environmental protection requirements are part of EU policies and actions.

> **Article 191 TFEU states:**
>
> *Union policy on the environment shall contribute to the pursuit of the following objectives:*
>
> 1. *preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment,*
> 2. *protecting human health,*
> 3. *prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources,*
> 4. *promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and in particular combating climate change.*

1. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The European Green Deal. COM/2019/640 final, p.2.

While non-EU countries have individual greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction pledges (called "Nationally Determined Contributions"), it is a unique feature of the EU that its 27 Member States have decided to jointly contribute with EU-wide GHG reductions to global climate neutrality. This allows the countries to distribute efforts in a more effective way.

Climate neutrality: Making a Deal

With the European Green Deal presented in 2020, the topic of environmental sustainability was made the EU's number one priority and gained momentum.

A blueprint for change: *The European Green Deal*

The so-called "EU Green Deal" is the Commission's flagship initiative on climate change, aiming to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. It is a set of new policy proposals in different areas, such as energy, environment, circular economy, mobility, agriculture, biodiversity, building renovation, innovation and sustainable finance. At the same time, existing sector policies, such as the EU Emissions Trading System, CO_2 emissions of cars and vans, energy efficiency, energy performance of buildings, etc., are being reviewed to match the increased climate policy ambition. New financial instruments, such as the Social Climate Fund, have also been created to help citizens and small enterprises deal with the climate and energy transition.

This is how the European Commission wants to ensure that Europe becomes the first continent in the world to be a net-zero emitter of greenhouse gases by 2050, while developing the economy without increasing resource use.

The Commission is very ambitious and has made a lot of funding available for the transition: the Green Deal Investment Plan earmarks €1 trillion in total until 2030. Half of this amount will be mobilised directly through the EU budget, other parts come from private investments and Member States through the InvestEU Guarantee and the Just Transition Mechanism.

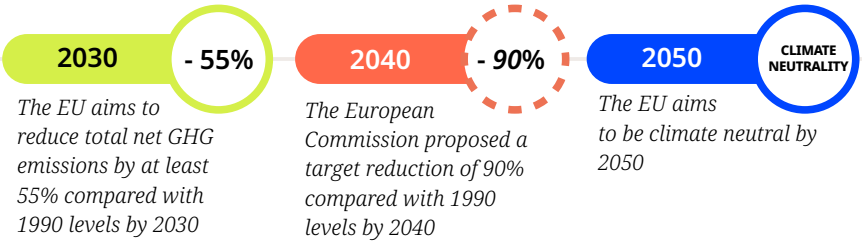
The process to launch the Green Deal and make climate change one of the core topics of the Union started a few years earlier with two cornerstones: The EU's 2030 Climate and Energy Framework and the ratification of the Paris Agreement in 2016.

The EU now has three legally binding climate targets:

— **2030** is the date mentioned as the deadline to reduce EU emissions by at least 55%, compared to 1990 levels.

— **2040** is the new date mentioned as the deadline to reduce EU emissions by at least 90%, compared to 1990 levels.

— **By 2050**, the EU aims to be the first climate-neutral economy and society, reducing net GHG emissions to zero. The emissions that won't be mitigated would be extracted, for example, via forest and carbon capture and storage technologies.



Source: *European Commission: Main EU climate targets*

The objective of climate neutrality is set out in the EU Climate Law, which puts into effect the proposals of the Green Deal.

Also keep in mind the "Fit for 55" document. Fit for 55 is a Communication presented by the Commission in 2021 that outlines how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 by at least 55% compared to 1990 levels.

What is happening in EU Member States?

The EU Climate Law sets out Union-wide climate targets, but they do not apply individually to each Member State.

Apart from their obligation to comply with EU energy and climate legislation, it is up to national governments to draft their own Climate laws in line with EU common goals and implement related EU legislation. An example is the Effort Sharing Regulation. This law defines the amount of emissions a Member State is allowed to emit in sectors that are not part of the EU Emissions Trading System (such as the building and transport sectors). Another example is the Energy Union Governance Regulation. This law provides a common template that EU Member States must use to develop integrated national energy and climate plans.

In the end, the European Commission will look at and assess the national measures (in the first instance by the end of September 2030) and may issue recommendations to Member States.

Today, already half of the Member States have adopted or are about to develop national and economy-wide Climate neutrality targets. However, not all European states have adopted national framework climate laws yet, and not all climate laws are equally strong.[2]

... and what about the live performance sector?

When reading the European Green Deal and related legislative and non-legislative proposals, you will notice that most measures are targeted at some key sectors that emit the majority of CO_2 emissions, such as the construction sector, the agricultural and food sectors, and the transport & aviation sectors.

But the EU Green Deal will impact the economy as a whole, and other sectors are also asked to increase their efforts to reduce climate-damaging emissions. Concretely, certain measures and legislative texts will have a direct impact on the live performance sector, as you will see in the different chapters of this brochure.

So, let's go into more detail and introduce you to EU measures on the circular economy, textiles, waste, ecodesign and energy efficiency, mobility strategies and CO_2 emissions measurement.

2. For further information, see report CAN Europe (2023) 'Climate Laws in Europe. Essential for achieving climate neutrality'

Now take
a deep breath
and dive into
*the **EU Green Deal***
to explore
*its impact on **your***
own activities

The production of a performance: thinking circular

Production processes go hand in hand with the use of different manufactured goods and the creation of waste. This is also true in the production of different kinds of live performances.

As part of the EU Green Deal, the European Union aims to drastically reduce waste, recycle a wide range of products and ultimately make sustainable products the norm. This happens through a set of strong legislative measures which must be implemented by various sectors.

The following strategies, action plans, rules, legislative proposals and texts are of importance in this context. They are often targeted at products; but at the same time, they allow live performance organisations — as professional users of those products — to further reflect upon and put into practice their own strategy for adapting their production process by reducing waste and contributing to the circular economy.

Let's first take a look at how the EU plans to encourage society to move towards a circular economy.

The Circular Economy Action Plan

Attention!

Circular Economy Act to be proposed by the Commission in November 2026

Here we focus on all materials and products that are part of a production and that can be reused or recycled.

Adopted in March 2020, the second Circular Economy Action Plan is one of the main building blocks of the European Green Deal. The action plan brings together initiatives addressing the entire life cycle of products, including how products are designed, as well as ensuring that waste is reduced and that used resources are kept in the EU economy for as long as possible. The action plan consists of concrete legislative measures such as a Strategy on textiles and an Ecodesign product regulation.

For live performance organisations, the Action Plan matters because it drives two distinct streams of regulation that affect different parts of your operation. The first stream concerns the materials your organisation consumes during a production: textiles for costumes and stage design, wood and metal for sets, packaging used in catering, and the waste generated by all of these. The second stream concerns the products your organisation purchases as durable assets: lighting fixtures, audio equipment, professional electronics, batteries, in other words, things you expect to use for years, maintain, and eventually replace.

These two streams correspond directly to the two work plans through which the EU is implementing the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR): Work Plan 1, which focuses on textiles, furniture, iron, steel, aluminium and other materials, and Work Plan 2, which is expected to bring electronics, professional audiovisual equipment and other technical products into scope. The two parts of this chapter reflect that structure.

Now it's your turn: have you thought about...

- ***Materials?*** Which materials do I choose for a performance, and can I increase their circular use within my own organisation?
- ***Life span?*** Can I improve the lifespan of a used product by working together with other organisations or schools, for example, reusing costumes and other textiles, stage lighting and other technical equipment, and building materials such as wood or metal?
- ***Recycling?*** Can I recycle the materials and products used properly, or do I have to get in contact with my city/region to discuss new ways of recycling?

Important to know: The Digital Product Passport (DPP)

Under the ESPR, manufacturers of products are required to provide a standardised digital record containing verified information about the **product's environmental profile** (carbon footprint, supply chain origin, repairability and recyclability). The DPP is being rolled out progressively from 2025. It is the practical mechanism allowing transparency and verified, comparable product information, and will become an increasingly important tool for purchasing decisions and sustainability reporting across both the materials and the products dimensions of your work.

Why does the DPP matter for your organisation?

- ***Better purchasing decisions:*** it allows you to compare the environmental footprint of different products using standardised data rather than marketing claims.
- ***Sustainability reporting:*** DPP data can feed directly into your organisation's carbon accounting and sustainability reports.
- ***Avoid greenwashing:*** the EU is actively cracking down on unsubstantiated green claims. DPP data will be verified and reliable.
- ***Supply chain transparency:*** it allows you to demonstrate to funders and partners that the products you purchase meet environmental standards.

While the DPP is foreseen for certain product categories, the Commission plans to widen its scope to include a wide range of products. This would help live performance organisations cover various products under their carbon footprint analysis.

Now that we know about the overarching circular economy action plan and the Digital Product Passport (DPP), the next part focuses on the materials used in a production and their waste.

Making the show: textiles, materials, packaging and waste

Here you find an overview of the four key EU initiatives and their impact on the production process of a performance.

The centrepiece is the Ecodesign for sustainable production regulation as it relates to all kinds of products and devices used in an artistic production, festival set-up, or other (on stage, backstage, and on site). This regulation will also come back in the second part of this chapter, which focuses on electronic equipment.

EU initiative		Impact on the production process of a performance
The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR)	→	Textiles, furniture, iron, steel and aluminium
EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles	→	All fabrics: costumes, stage curtains, drapes, etc. Requirements for durability, repairability and recyclability
Waste Framework Directive	→	Food, beverages, use of plastics, etc.
Packaging & Packaging Waste Regulation	→	All packaging received when purchasing materials and used, such as for merchandising

The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR)

The ESPR was adopted in July 2024 and is now applicable across the EU. It replaces and significantly broadens the previous Ecodesign Directive, which covered electronic products and their energy efficiency.

The first ESPR work plan covers product categories relevant to stage design: textiles, furniture, iron, steel and aluminium.

What does it mean concretely?

For live performance organisations, it is about what information is available when making purchasing decisions. When you order aluminium for a set or fabric for costumes, the manufacturer of those materials will be required to provide verified environmental data through a digital product passport (DPP). This data, which includes the material's carbon footprint, recycled content and end-of-life recyclability, becomes available for use in procurement decisions and sustainability reporting.

The Commission is developing design requirements under the ESPR that will require textiles placed on the EU market to meet minimum standards for durability (resistance to wear, washing and use), repairability (accessible seams, replaceable components), and recyclability (mono-material or easily separable compositions). For costume designers and wardrobe buyers, this progressively changes what is available in the supply chain: fabrics and garments that do not meet these standards will be phased out of the EU market.

Remember!
In practice, circular set design involves three principles:

— choosing materials that can be reused in future productions or by other organisations,

— designing sets in modular or reversible ways that allow components to be extracted and reused rather than demolished,

— building relationships with other theatres, production companies, and schools who can absorb materials when a production closes.

Advice to performing arts organisations

Although not embedded in the Green Deal, for performing arts organisations it is recommended to check the situation regarding the copyrights of a design when developing circular set designs.

Let's have a look at the different EU initiatives in the matter.

The EU Textile Strategy

Here we focus on fabrics used for costumes and clothing, but also all kinds of textiles used on stage, such as curtains.

According to the Commission, the EU consumption of textiles has, on average, the fourth highest impact on the environment and climate change, after food, housing and mobility. The main target for this strategy is the fashion industry and, more specifically, fast fashion.

The Commission's Sustainable and Circular Textiles Strategy was adopted at the end of March 2022 and lays out a set of actions and legal initiatives. Both the production and the consumption of textiles are addressed in the text, which implements the commitments of the Green Deal and the above-mentioned Circular Economy Action Plan into concrete policy on a more sustainable use of fabrics.

In the context of a live performance production using textiles, it is interesting to investigate the Commission's set of actions, which include the definition of design requirements for textiles to make them last longer, be easier to repair and recycle. Overproduction and consumption should be stopped. The Commission also wants clearer information on textiles: a digital product passport (DPP) would give information about its origin and the production chain, and increase the transparency of textiles. Finally, greenwashing is to be tackled by ensuring the accuracy of companies' green claims.

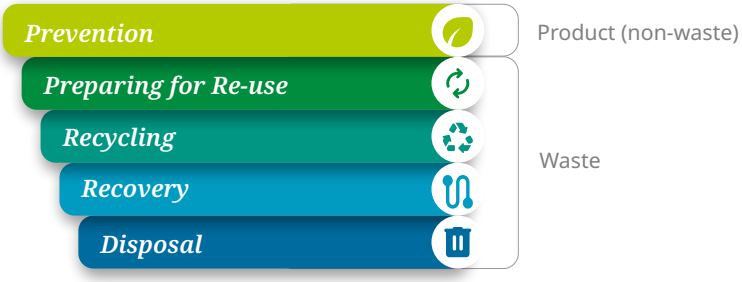
Now it's your turn: have you thought about...

- ***Durable quality?*** Can I double-check with the supplier, or the company selling textiles for live performances and try to get accurate information about the origin and durability of the textiles, as well as sustainability standards in the production chain?
- ***Circular use?*** Is there a way of reusing textiles used for a performance, either by my own organisation or by another one, to lower the consumption of textiles and increase their circularity?
- ***Way of working?*** Can the artistic creation be discussed to allow for an increased use of recycled and/or durable textiles? What about textiles quickly worn out due to intense usage (i.e. by dancers)?
- ***Sharing materials with other organisations?*** Instead of each organisation making costumes, can you borrow from each other? Does your sector organisation have a database where you can browse to rent costumes you need?

The Waste Framework Directive

Here we focus on waste reduction at all phases of a production and during the dissemination of a live performance.

Most obligations under the revised Waste Framework Directive (in force since 16 October 2025) fall on manufacturers and waste operators: food manufacturers and sellers have to comply with food waste reduction targets (30 % less waste by 2030); textile manufacturers must take full end-of-life responsibility for their products, covering the costs of collection, sorting, and recycling, while registering with national authorities to report the volume of goods placed on the market.



Source: European Commission: Waste Framework Directive

Good to know

For the live performance sector, the Directive is useful mainly for the principle it sets out, establishing an EU waste hierarchy, which favours prevention and reuse over recycling, recovery and disposal as the last resort.

Tip for production teams

Concretely, for production teams, this means that the question "where does this material go when we are finished with it?" must be answered before the material is purchased, not after the production closes.

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation is more directly relevant to our sector. It was adopted in December 2024 and sets three core objectives: restrict unnecessary packaging, make all packaging recyclable by 2030, and create a market for secondary raw materials by increasing recycled content in new packaging.

Think of food and drink packaging at outdoor festivals and events, or of packaging arriving with set materials and consumables.

All packaging used or distributed in the EU must be recyclable by 2030.

Tip for outdoor events and festivals

For outdoor events and festivals with catering operations, this means reviewing supplier contracts as soon as you can: food and drink packaging that cannot be proven recyclable will be considered non-compliant.

The regulation restricts certain unnecessary single-use packaging formats. The specific restrictions vary by national implementation, but the trend is clearly toward elimination of packaging that serves no functional purpose and toward reusable alternatives where it is feasible.

Tip for festival operators

For festival operators, compostable service ware, refillable containers and deposit-return systems for reusable cups are all established alternatives that are now becoming the expected standard rather than an innovation.

Now it's your turn: have you thought about...

- ***Reusable systems?*** Can catering at your venue or festival switch from single-use to reusable cups, plates and cutlery, backed by a deposit-return system?
- ***Distribution materials?*** How are brochures, programmes and promotional materials packaged and sent out? Could plastic wrapping be replaced by paper or a reusable alternative?
- ***Audience awareness?*** Can you help reduce the waste your audience generates, for example through clear sorting bins, on-site signage, or a short awareness message before or during the event?

The Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive (EmpCo)

EmpCo requires environmental claims to be clear, specific and verifiable. Generic or blanket statements such as "sustainable", "eco-friendly" or "climate-neutral" will no longer be acceptable unless the organisation making them can substantiate the claim with concrete, verifiable data (for example, in the future, from a DPP) which has been confirmed by an external and officially recognised accreditation body. Claims about future environmental performance, such as "climate neutral by 2030", will need a documented action plan with measurable interim steps, not aspiration alone.

EmpCo is aimed primarily at claims towards consumers (B2C), but live performance organisations can benefit from the information made available.

Attention

The Directive also holds accountable whoever uses or passes on a claim, not only whoever first made it: an organisation that repeats a supplier's or manufacturer's sustainability claim without checking it can still be held responsible if that claim later proves unsubstantiated.

These rules become binding from September 2026.

Advice to cultural organisations

For cultural organisations, the practical guidance now is**: do not make environmental claims you cannot back up** with verified data. This applies to grant applications as much as to public marketing. Funders are becoming more sophisticated readers of sustainability claims, and the legal context is moving toward accountability (see chapter on reporting and funding). Stating what you have measured and what you are working toward is more credible than aspirational language without evidence.

The electronic equipment

The second dimension of circular production concerns the products your organisation purchases as durable assets: stage lighting fixtures, audio systems, wireless microphones, mixing consoles, amplifiers, signal processors, computers, tablets and the batteries that power an increasing range of portable equipment.

These products are governed by a distinct and evolving substantial regulatory framework. The following four rules are the main ones of relevance to live performance organisations.

EU initiative		Impact on the production process of a performance
ESPR	→	Professional electronics
Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE)	→	Collection, recycling and recovery obligations for end-of-life electronics
EU Batteries Regulation	→	All battery types including industrial, portable and vehicle batteries
RoHS Directive	→	Theatre lighting

The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR)

The ESPR second work plan, covering electronics including professional audiovisual equipment, is the most significant upcoming regulatory development for the technical equipment used in live performance.

From 2027, live performance organisations will see tangible added value: manufacturers will be required to provide DPP, meet minimum durability and repairability standards, and ensure that spare parts are available for a defined period after a product is placed on the market. Organisations purchasing new equipment after these requirements enter into force will have access to standardised, verified environmental data for all major purchasing decisions.

Good to know

Professional equipment, such as lighting, audio, trusses and stages, already has a long durability and is often repaired by the manufacturer itself or another professional service provider.

Remember!

Here again, the DPP will provide standardised, verified information about each new product's environmental profile.

Tip

Consider the concept of "Service by design": the equipment is not sold to cultural organisations but rented out. The manufacturer or dealer continues taking care of the equipment and takes it back at the end of the contract.

The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive

The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive sets the framework for collecting, recycling and recovering end-of-life electronics across the EU.

For live performance organisations, WEEE obligations arise in two situations: when purchasing new equipment (a contribution to a national WEEE scheme is typically included in the purchase price), and when disposing of end-of-life equipment (routed through authorised WEEE schemes).

All electrical and electronic equipment used in a theatre or venue counts as WEEE at end of life: electrical cables in general, lighting fixtures and dimmers, audio equipment, amplifiers, microphones, mixing consoles, video projectors, screens, computers and stage machinery with electronic controls. This is a broad category, and the obligation to route end-of-life items through authorised collection schemes is legally binding regardless of the age or condition of the equipment.

The WEEE hierarchy places reuse above recycling: equipment that is still functional should be offered for reuse (for example, to the amateur sector, schools, smaller venues or community organisations) before it is submitted to a WEEE collection scheme. Documenting this reuse is both good practice and increasingly expected in sustainability reporting.

Remember!

Give away your old equipment in the first instance for reuse. If the equipment is at the end of life, dismantle it where possible and provide different parts for reuse or waste.

EU Batteries Regulation

The EU Batteries Regulation, in force since June 2023, fundamentally overhauls the EU framework for batteries across all categories: portable batteries, industrial batteries, electric vehicle and starting batteries.

For live performance organisations, the most directly relevant categories are portable batteries (in wireless microphones, handheld devices, battery-powered lighting and effects equipment) and industrial batteries (in large battery systems used for portable power or energy storage, such as those used at festivals).

Did you know?

Wireless microphone systems are among the most battery-intensive equipment in live performance. A large theatrical production using 20-30 wireless channels, performing several shows per week, may dispose of hundreds of AA or rechargeable batteries per week.

The Batteries Regulation creates clear obligations: disposable batteries must go to collection schemes, rechargeable batteries must be managed under WEEE obligations when replaced, and from 2027, the battery DPP will provide carbon footprint and performance data that should inform purchasing decisions on replacement systems.

Attention!

The battery DPP does not apply to all batteries, only to three categories: electric vehicle batteries, e-bike and e-scooter batteries, and industrial batteries. Industrial batteries are used, for example, in portable power stations at festivals.

Organisations that have already switched from disposable to rechargeable battery systems for wireless equipment are well-positioned: rechargeable systems have a substantially lower per-show carbon and waste footprint than disposable alternatives and are increasingly the expected professional standard. Organisations still using large quantities of disposable batteries should treat the Batteries Regulation as an additional argument for completing the transition.

The Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive (RoHS Directive)

Here we focus specifically on stage lights such as spots or moving lights.

The RoHS Directive, which entered into force on 21 July 2011, aims to prevent risks for human health and the environment by managing electronic and electrical waste and reducing the use of hazardous substances in products brought into the European Market. This is done by restricting the use of certain hazardous substances in electronic equipment that can be substituted by safer alternatives. Restricted substances include heavy metals, flame retardants or plasticisers.

The live performance sector is impacted by the RoHS Directive, since discharge lamps used in theatres and concert venues can contain small amounts of mercury, a hazardous substance restricted in the EU. While those lamp types are frequently replaced due to technological progress, suitable new technology alternatives are still lacking for other high-output, full-spectrum light sources. For this reason, the European Commission currently provides for an exemption for those lamps.

The RoHS exemptions for mercury-containing discharge lamps in professional performance applications are subject to ongoing review. As LED alternatives continue to mature, the justification for maintaining exemptions for an increasing number of applications weakens.

Attention!

Organisations should not plan their long-term equipment strategy around the assumption that exemptions will be renewed indefinitely.

Recycling obligations are clear: broken or end-of-life discharge lamps must be routed through **hazardous waste streams**, not general waste. Recycling programmes for discharge lamps used in the live performance sector are in place in several EU Member States, sometimes organised collectively through sector associations. Where such collective schemes do not exist, organisations should establish contracts with specialist hazardous waste collectors.

Now it's your turn: have you thought about...

- ***Financial support?*** How can my organisation secure funding to gradually replace existing stage luminaires or replace them with new-technology solutions and more energy-efficient LED lamps?
- ***Recycling?*** Can my organisation ensure that broken lights are disposed of in an appropriate way and, if possible, recycled?
- ***Reuse?*** If lighting equipment is replaced in my organisation, can it still be of use in other contexts, such as in the amateur sector or in schools?

Good to know

Most sustainability management standards were not written with the realities of a theatre or opera house in mind. This is changing: the newly created ISO Technical Committee 354 is currently working on a new guidance document: 'Event sustainability management systems: Guidelines for application of ISO 20121:2024 in cultural organisations' (ISO/AWI 26540). Expected to be published in 2028, it should give live performance organisations a sector-specific reference point for building their own sustainability management system.

*Let's **step inside** our buildings and stages to **reduce their footprint**.*

Building and stages: saving energy

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the EU works on increasing energy efficiency to save resources and lower the CO_2 footprint of the economy.

One of the most important tasks in this context is to make buildings future-proof by using **alternative sustainable materials for construction** to improve their energy performance.

This chapter provides you with an overview of European measures in this field and explains how live performance organisations can play their part in lowering the energy consumption of their buildings and stages. It also looks at the consumption of water, which is becoming a priority in the climate debate.

The EU's Renovation Wave Strategy

Throughout the EU, buildings account for 40% of energy consumed, 52% of EU natural gas consumption, and approximately one third of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions. 75% of EU buildings have poor energy performance, and 85% were built before 2000. Improving their energy performance is therefore central to achieving the EU's climate goals, and it is now a legal obligation working its way through national legislation in every Member State.

The Renovation Wave Strategy was launched in 2020 with the aim of considerably reducing energy consumption. The Commission wants to double the annual energy renovation rate of buildings by 2030. By 2050, the EU's building stock must be fully decarbonised, with all buildings required to meet zero-emission standards.

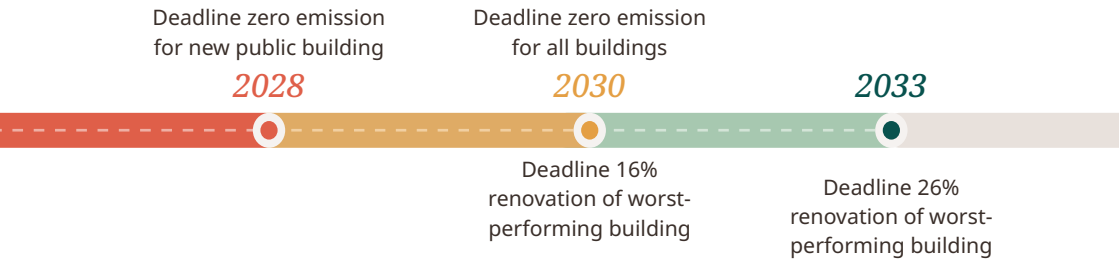
The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)

The revised Energy Performance of Buildings Directive entered into force on 28 May 2024. Member States had until 29 May 2026 to transpose it into their national legislation.

The EPBD is built around four focus areas:

- **Renovation:** minimum performance standards and national renovation plan
- **Decarbonisation:** zero-emission buildings, solar deployment, phasing out fossil fuel heating
- **Modernisation and system integration:** smart readiness, electric vehicle charging, indoor air quality
- **Enabling framework:** energy performance certificate, renovation passports, one-stop shops, financing.

The EPBD introduces zero-emission buildings as the new standard for new construction. New public buildings, such as theatres or concert venues, must meet this standard from 2028; and all new buildings must meet it from 2030. For non-residential and public buildings, Member States must also renovate the worst-performing 16% of the stock by 2030, rising to 26% by 2033.



Source: European Commission: Main EU climate targets

Financial incentives for the installation of new boilers powered by fossil fuels were required to end from 1 January 2025. This provision is already in force across all Member States that have transposed the EPBD. Member States may go further by setting timetables for phasing out fossil fuels entirely. For venue operators planning heating system replacement, this makes heat pumps or renewable alternatives the financially supported and legally expected options.

The EPBD introduces a gradual phase-in of requirements for solar energy installations, starting with public and large non-residential buildings where solar is technically and economically feasible. The requirements are being implemented by Member States following the transposition deadline of May 2026.

Attention!

Venue operators should check the national transposition in their country for the precise thresholds and timelines, but the direction is clear: new and significantly renovated public buildings are expected to install solar infrastructure where feasible.

For venues with appropriate roofing and roof space, solar photovoltaic installation makes financial sense regardless of regulatory obligation: energy costs remain structurally higher whereas solar technology costs have fallen dramatically. The EPBD's solar requirements reflect commercial reality as much as regulatory ambition.

The revised EPBD introduces a requirement to calculate and disclose the life-cycle global warming potential of new buildings in their energy performance certificate. The disclosure requirement applies from January 2028 for new buildings with floor area exceeding 1,000 m^2, and from January 2030 for all new buildings. This is a prospective requirement affecting new building construction projects; it does not yet apply to existing buildings.

Good to know:
Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS)

The EPBD introduces Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS), mandatory renovation thresholds that require the worst-performing buildings to be brought up to a minimum energy performance level by set deadlines. The specific thresholds are determined nationally, but the EU sets the framework. For non-residential buildings such as theatres, concert halls, opera houses and cultural centres: the 16% worst-performing buildings on the basis of 2020 data must be renovated by 2030, and the 26% worst-performing by 2033. These are mandatory, not advisory. However, what constitutes the 16% or 23% is set nationally, which means the practical obligations vary across Member States.

What to do now?

Check your building's energy performance certificate and ask your national authority where it sits relative to the MEPS threshold.

... and what about historic theatre buildings?

Historic theatre buildings **or buildings of a specific architectural merit** can get an exemption from the rules and new requirements, but Member States must agree to apply this option. If they get an exemption, their minimum energy performance requirements will be less strict and better adapted to the nature of the building.

The directive offers Member States flexibility in deciding which parts of the building stock to focus renovation efforts on and whether to apply exemptions, while still meeting the overall objective. With this flexibility, not all heritage buildings will automatically receive exemptions in all countries.

The exemption applies to MEPS and not to energy performance certificates (EPC). Protected buildings are no longer exempt from EPC requirements when a building is sold, rented or undergoes a major renovation (25% of the building's value).

The Commission's revised text also underlines that **public buildings** which are frequently visited by the public (including theatres which are explicitly mentioned) **should set an example** and show that environmental and energy concerns are taken into account. Therefore, these buildings should be subject to energy certification on a regular basis.

With the help of the following table, explore the most important features of the EPBD you should have on your radar depending on whether you want to improve an existing venue to make it future-proof or build a new one.

	Existing buildings / renovations	New buildings
Does my building need to be zero-emission?	**Not yet**, only by 2050. However, it should follow a gradual path toward that target	**YES** From 2028: new public buildings. From 2030: all new buildings
Do I need to respect minimum energy performance requirements?	**YES** Requirements are set by national governments	**YES** Requirements are set by national governments
Do I need to respect minimum energy performance standards?	**YES** The concrete standards are established at the national level. Member States must renovate the worst-performing 16% of non-residential buildings by 2030 and 26% by 2033	**YES** The standards are established at the national level. (see column on the left)
How do I calculate or measure the energy performance of my building?	The methodology is determined in each country, at the national or regional level, based on several ISO standards. The EU sets a common framework, so Member States must include certain aspects in the calculation such as heating, insulation, air conditioning, ventilation, solar systems, etc.	
Are there specific rules for historic theatres?	**YES** EU countries can exempt buildings because of their special architectural or historical merit (incl. theatres)	**Not applicable** for new buildings
Do I need to create infrastructure for solar energy?	**YES** Charging points must be included; the amount depends on the national transposition.	**YES** Charging ponts must be included; the amount depends on the national transposition.
Do I need to create infrastructure for sustainable mobility (charging points)?	**YES** Charging points must be included; the amount depends on the national transposition	**YES** Charging points must be included; the amount depends on the national transposition.
Do I need an energy performance certificate for my building/cultural space?	**YES** If the venue is renovated, newly sold or rented out. Or if the venue is owned/occupied by public bodies	**YES**
Do I need to display an energy performance certificate in my building/ cultural space?	**YES** If the building has a useful floor area >500 m^2. Smaller buildings if occupied by public bodies & frequently visited by the public	**YES** If the building has a useful floor area > 500 m^2. Smaller buildings if occupied by public bodies & frequently visited by the public

Heating in buildings

At the end of 2022, the EU institutions agreed to introduce a carbon price on buildings and road transport fuels. This is done through the European Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS2). Originally due to start in 2027, its launch has since been postponed to 2028, following an agreement by EU institutions in late 2025 as part of the revision of the EU Climate Law.

The new carbon price will apply to petrol, diesel, and heating fuels such as natural gas. Why? Because their emissions have continued to rise over the last few years. A price ceiling of €45 per tonne of carbon emitted will be applied by Member States until 2030.

Good to know

Emissions from buildings represent 28% of all emissions covered by ETS2, with the remaining 61% coming from road transport. This means that the two areas most relevant to live performance organisations, venue heating and touring transport, together make up nearly the whole of ETS2's scope.

... and what about theatres, concert halls and other venues?

For live performance organisations, the introduction of a carbon price means a new tax on the heating of their buildings, whether it is a public or private institution. As theatres, concert halls and opera houses have huge surfaces to heat, the tax will have an impact on their overall budget and the usage of heating, once it comes into effect in **2028**. Office heating is also included in the scheme.

Good to know: Social Climate Fund

Through a dedicated Social Climate Fund, part of the revenues from the auctioning under the EU ETS2 will be used to support vulnerable households and micro-enterprises.

The fund will amount to roughly €87 billion (including Member State co-financing) and has been running since 2026 (until 2032), ahead of the new carbon price taking effect. It will be financed by the revenues generated by ETS2, with around 25% of the funding coming from EU countries.

Stage Lighting

Stage lighting has its own specific regulatory history within the broader Ecodesign framework, more specifically the **Regulation for Ecodesign requirements for light sources and separate control gear**. As the regulation is to become part of the broader ESPR, it is also expected that the technical exemptions for light sources used in theatre and concert venues will be phased out. In practice, older models are already no longer available on the market, as a consequence of the transition of lighting equipment to LED.

As mentioned above, an issue for live performance has been the mercury present in discharge lamps, which are restricted under RoHS but for which LED alternatives were not previously available for all special applications.

The Commission maintained sector-specific exemptions for discharge lamps used in professional performance during the transition period. As of 2026, the LED market has matured significantly for most performance applications. High-output, full-spectrum LED fixtures from major manufacturers now meet the artistic requirements for the majority of professional stage applications. However, some specialist applications still have limited LED alternatives, and the exemptions remain currently relevant for these specific use cases.

Good to know

Stage lighting is often the first sustainability target when performance venues discuss energy efficiency, but the numbers put it in perspective. Stage lighting only accounts for approximately 5% of the overall energy consumption of a theatre. The majority is consumed by HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning), which represents approximately 60-70%.

... and what about funding replacement to LED stage lighting?

If your organisation is assessing whether to replace stage lighting and adapt it to LED lamps, note that the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility, which supported exactly this kind of investment in several countries, closed the uptake of new commitments in 2026. For ongoing funding support, look at other options, such as your country's allocation under EU cohesion policy funds, which the Commission has indicated will partially take over this role from 2027 onward.

Remember

Saving energy and precious resources of our planet is high on the EU's agenda. The EU puts great emphasis on the renovation of buildings and wants to ensure that newly built houses, offices and other public and private spaces follow stricter rules on their energy performance. National governments can exclude historic theatres from those rules.

Carbon pricing will impact venues' heating bills in the live performance sector from 2028.

Ecodesign requirements remain crucial for stage lighting, as further phase-outs may be introduced in the coming years.

European Water Resilience Strategy

Here we add a specific focus on water management for venues, festivals, and productions.

Energy performance tends to dominate a venue's sustainability agenda, but water deserves specific attention. A live performance venue's water use is concentrated in a few predictable places: audience sanitation during short and intense peaks around performance start and interval times; backstage facilities; catering and bar service; and cooling towers or air-conditioning.

The **"Water Efficiency First"** principle from the European Water Resilience Strategy applies to your building (as well as the festival field – see chapter on outdoor events). This principle requires water use to be reduced and made more efficient before any new source is developed. Low-flow and dual-flush fixtures, push taps and shower flow regulators in dressing rooms and public sanitation cost little to install once and pay back over years.

Cooling towers and HVAC systems deserve particular attention, since a poorly maintained system can quietly become one of a large venue's biggest water uses, especially during summer runs and heatwaves when cooling demand peaks.

Where a building is already being renovated under the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, a **water audit** can be folded into the same planning process. Rainwater harvesting from roof catchment and greywater reuse from handwashing basins can also supply non-potable uses such as irrigation, toilet flushing and cleaning.

Now it's your turn: have you thought about...

- Planning an energy-friendly renovation?
- Calculated the energy performance of the building?
- Considered a green roof or planting trees and shrubs around the building?
- Invested in low-flow and dual-flush fixtures, push taps and shower flow regulators?
- Undertaking a water audit?
- The impact of carbon price on heating of buildings and the tax due?

Moving on to the ***key question****: is mobility in tune with sustainability standards?*

Touring and travelling audiences

When discussing sustainability, one issue that immediately comes to mind is how to adapt or reduce travel patterns. Travel is central to our sector — whether by performing arts professionals, audiences, or suppliers delivering equipment — which is why it features prominently in the debate about sustainable productions. And for good reason: audience travel is one of the biggest contributors to the overall carbon emissions of an event, and touring activities increase the CO_2 footprint of a live performance organisation.

However, the shift to more sustainable mobility schemes is challenging.

Let's have a look at how the European Commission is tackling this topic in the context of the EU Green Deal.

Good to know

Transport (including road, aviation, maritime and rail) roughly creates a quarter of the European greenhouse gas emissions. For that reason, the transport sector is one of the priorities within the EU Green Deal. Transport-related greenhouse gas emissions should be cut by 90% (compared to 1990 levels): this is the target for 2050.

The EU has numerous programmes and initiatives in place to support greener transport and reaching targets. Examples already exist, such as electric shuttles and cars, or buses using natural gas, whilst the aviation sector is already experimenting with greener flights, using sustainable aviation fuels. There are two carbon-pricing instruments: a new emissions trading system for road-transport fuels, and the tightening of the existing EU ETS together with new rules on aviation fuel.

... and what about the live performance sector?

The live performance sector is not part of the transport industry: it does not work on the energy performance or emission standards of vehicles, nor does it research alternative fuels. But the sector can still play its part by adapting its practices and reducing emissions linked to mobility, whether from touring, from travelling audiences, or from suppliers delivering products to live performance organisations.

The EU's vision: mobility still matters

In the EU Green Deal and related initiatives, the European Commission does not propose ways to reduce mobility itself. On the contrary, the Commission treats mobility as a precondition for economic and social life. The principle of free movement of people and goods is one of the fundamental pillars of the European Union and its internal market.

Thus, rather than reducing mobility, the aim is to make the transport sector greener and promote more sustainable modes of moving and travelling.

Concretely, carbon-neutral options for travel should be developed. One of the Commission's actions is supporting the development of the railway network, including cross-border connections. As a result, by 2030, train travel under 500 km should become carbon neutral, and the number of high-speed trains should double. The Commission is also working on zero-emission solutions on the road: at least 30 million zero-emission vehicles should drive on European roads by 2030. On the agenda for the aviation sector are renewable and low-carbon fuels.

However, our society is not yet travelling in a carbon-neutral way – so in the meantime, other solutions, including the reduction of the CO2 footprint, are much needed to cut harmful emissions.

What are our options when touring by road or air and for audiences?

Touring by road: the EU Emissions Trading System 2 (ETS2)

Here we focus on the diesel and petrol powering trucks, vans and tour buses that carry artists, crew, sets and technical equipment from venue to venue.

Alongside the existing EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), described in the chapter on energy in buildings, the EU has created a second, separate carbon market: the EU ETS2.

ETS2 puts, for the first time, a carbon price on the fuels used in road transport and in the heating of buildings.

? *... and what about the live performance sector?*

For live performance organisations, ETS2 means that touring by road – trucks carrying stage sets, technical equipment and instruments, vans and buses carrying crew and artists – will gradually become more expensive as fuel costs rise. This will particularly affect touring companies, festivals bringing in productions from abroad, and orchestras or ensembles travelling with heavy equipment.

An option is to replace the vehicles you use with carbon-friendly ones, such as electric vehicles. This comes, of course, with an important investment, while the availability of electric trucks is still quite low.

The single most effective way to reduce the road-transport carbon footprint of touring seems to be to change the touring pattern. A tour that sends a full truck to a new city for every single performance generates far more transport emissions than a run of several consecutive performances in one place, where the same truck journey is shared across multiple shows.

Slow or smart touring – fewer locations, more performances per location – reduces carbon emissions per audience member, increases efficiency, and reduces costs. The carbon argument reinforces the financial one. It also deepens artistic relationships with venues and communities. Together, they make the case to presenting venues and to funders.

Now it's your turn: have you thought about...

- ***Consolidated touring?*** Can consecutive performances in a city, region or country reduce the number of trips your trucks and buses need to make?
- ***Shared transport?*** Can your organisation share trucks, vans or buses with other touring productions, instead of each driving separately to the same destination, to increase load efficiency and reduce the number of vehicles on the road?
- ***Cleaner vehicles?*** When renewing contracts with transport providers or for your own fleet, can you favour electric or low-emission vehicles?
- ***Budgeting ahead?*** Have you factored the gradual rise in fuel costs into future touring budgets, so increased costs don't come as a surprise from 2028 onwards?
- Impact on the workforce and their ***work-life balance?*** How do new touring patterns affect working time and time away from home?

Touring by air: the EU ETS and ReFuelEU Aviation

Here we focus on flights taken by touring companies, artists and crew, and on the fuel used to power them.

Aviation has been part of the EU ETS since 2012. The free allowances that airlines used to receive have been progressively phased out: since 2026, airlines must buy all of their EU ETS allowances at auction for flights within Europe, rather than receiving a share of them for free.

Aviation is also expected to become greener. The EU requires airlines to blend the fuel with an increasing share of **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)**. This process began in 2025 with a mandatory SAF blend of 2%, rising progressively to 6% by 2030, 20% by 2035 and 70% by 2050. Airlines must also uplift at least 90% of the fuel they need at each qualifying EU airport, so they cannot avoid blending obligation by refuelling outside the Union and carrying extra weight into it – the so-called "anti-tankering" rule.

Good to know

The financial gap between travelling by rail and air for European touring is changing. Rail has historically been seen as more expensive than travelling by air for anything beyond short distances, but several factors are altering the comparison:

- ***ETS aviation costs:*** the end of free allowances in 2026 makes intra-European flights structurally more expensive.
- ***SAF cost pass-through:*** as the blending mandate rises toward 6% by 2030, airline fuel costs increase and are passed to fares.
- ***Rail investment:*** EU and national investment is expanding high-speed networks. Several routes now have journey times competing with air travel.
- ***Night trains:*** a network of overnight services has been relaunched on several European routes, enabling long-distance travel without a day of travel time.
- ***Freight by rail:*** for equipment, rail freight is increasingly cost-competitive with road for distances over 500 km, particularly as ETS2 road fuel costs rise from 2028.

Touring organisations may wish to consider rail as the default option for journeys under 500 or 700 km, switching to air only where there is a specific operational reason that rail cannot serve (bearing in mind that connectivity varies significantly across Europe, especially in remote areas or for travelling to and from the islands).

Tip for artistic touring!

Over 700 km, compare travel time and all-in costs including luggage, transfers and environmental add-ons. Over 1.500 km within Europe, rail remains a viable option for overnight trains. Note that these guidelines apply to mainland continental routes. For island territories, aviation remains the only viable option, and the focus should shift to consolidating itineraries and minimising the number of flights per tour.

Outside Europe, aviation is currently unavoidable for most touring but should be minimised through tour routing.

Now it's your turn: have you thought about...

- ***Route planning?*** Can flights be consolidated into fewer, more efficient itineraries, rather than multiple separate trips?
- ***Alternative transport means?*** For touring within Europe, could the train replace the plane for certain journeys? By 2030, the EU wants train travel under 500 km to become carbon neutral, and to see twice as many high-speed trains as today.
- ***Booking ahead?*** Can flights and touring schedules be planned early enough to benefit from more efficient routings and, where available, airlines already exceeding the SAF mandate?
- ***Cooperation?*** Can your organisation team up with other event organisers to build tours of consecutive days in one region, reducing the number of flights needed for artists and crew?

Travelling audiences

Here we focus on how audiences get to and from a venue or event, and on the broader EU mobility strategy that shapes their options.

If we need to travel while reducing harmful emissions, our society must shift towards more sustainable transport modes. This is one pillar of the European Commission's action in its mobility strategy: more passengers should travel by rail and commute by public transport; people should use more active transport modes, such as cycling and walking.

One focus of the EU in this context is urban mobility. The Commission encourages large and medium-sized cities to put in place their own sustainable urban mobility plans by 2030. By that date, the Commission wants to have at least 100 climate-neutral cities in Europe.

Monitoring across hundreds of cultural organisations shows that audience travel regularly makes up a third of an organisation's combined carbon footprint, or even more, with short-haul flights being a major contributor. For live performance organisations that are trying to lower their carbon footprint, audience footprint isn't merely a side issue.

Good to know

In several European countries, theatres, concert halls and festivals cooperate with public transport providers to increase alternative ways of travelling for audiences. For instance, the ticket for the event might already include the public transport ticket, or the audience can get discounts on tickets for buses, trams or trains. Sometimes, venues and festivals rent extra coaches or work with the local public transport company to carry audiences from outside the city to an event and back home.

The transformation of mobility: is going digital a solution?

In recent years, digital solutions have been promoted as a way to help society reduce travelling and lower CO_2 footprint. Reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic, teleworking and video-conferencing, as well as online live events, became part of the "new normal".

Yet can the digital transformation of society reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to sustainable living? What about the negative environmental impact of the digital shift? Digitalisation still relies heavily on energy, water, land, and resources such as rare metals, to name just a few.

This trade-off has become more visible and more urgent. Artificial Intelligence is a fast-growing driver of this footprint. The rapid growth of data centres in Europe is expected to result in a near doubling of the sector's electricity needs by 2030. In addition, cooling these centres also consumes significant amounts of water, in some cases in regions that are already under water stress.

There is also a phenomenon known as the rebound effect: when a digital tool becomes cheaper, faster or more convenient, people and organisations tend to use it more, sometimes cancelling out the environmental savings it was meant to deliver. Studies estimate this can offset 30 to 60% of the expected energy and carbon savings from AI efficiency gains. A streaming platform that lowers the cost of watching a performance online may generate more total viewing and more emissions than it saves in avoided travel.

It's a complex topic. In short, opinions and research differ in their evaluations and assessments of how digital transformation impacts the environment overall. Measuring the impact of digital technologies remains difficult, and there is no European or international standard method for assessing the impact of the use of digital products and means. What is clear is that "going digital" is not automatically "going green"; its climate benefit depends entirely on how, how much, and for what it is used.

... and what about the live performance sector?

Leaving aside the difficulty of clarifying the environmental impact of digital products and technologies as a whole and coming back to the topics of touring, audience travel and online streaming, it has been acknowledged that digital means can be considered to reduce an organisation's CO_2 footprint.

But the same caution applies here as elsewhere: streaming a show, adopting AI-based audience-targeting or programming tools, or shifting more operations online is not a neutral choice. Before treating 'digital' as a default sustainability solution, cultural professionals may find it useful to ask themselves:

— ***What is this replacing?*** A digital alternative only helps the climate if it genuinely substitutes for a more carbon-intensive activity (e.g. touring, flying, printing) rather than simply adding a new activity.

— ***How much is enough?*** Watch out for rebound effects. Does making something available online lead to so much extra use that it erodes the emissions it was meant to save?

— ***Where does the energy come from?*** A digital service run on renewable-powered infrastructure has a different impact than one that isn't.

— ***Is it necessary?*** Sometimes the simplest, low-tech option remains the most sustainable one.

Digital tools are a genuine part of the solution for reducing the sector's environmental impact, but only when adopted thoughtfully and honestly, and alongside other concrete measures such as audience travel schemes.

A challenging issue:
organising outdoor events
in extreme weather conditions

Outdoor festivals and live events

Festivals and outdoor concerts or events have a special relationship with nature: it is a living ecosystem that hosts the event, absorbs its footprint and is increasingly shaped by a changing climate.

In this part, three developments in EU environmental policy are of relevance: the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the Nature Restoration Law, the European Water Resilience Strategy, and the rise in droughts, heatwaves and wildfires across Europe. Those are now recognised by the European Commission and the European Environment Agency (EEA) as a structural risk rather than an exceptional one.

For festivals, open-air venues and touring productions, this is not an abstract policy discussion. Outdoor events depend on healthy land and water, consume both intensively over a short and intense period, and are directly exposed (audiences, artists, crew) when a heatwave, drought or wildfire hits during the summer festival season.

Explore in this part how the key EU environmental policies are relevant when organising outdoor events.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Nature Restoration Law

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 was adopted in 2020 and is one of the key initiatives of the European Green Deal. It aims to put Europe's nature on the path to recovery with a commitment to protect at least 30% of the EU's land and sea area. The Nature Restoration Law Regulation entered into force on 18 August 2024, giving EU countries a legal obligation to actively restore, not only preserve, degraded ecosystems.

... and what about festivals and outdoor events?

Live performance organisations don't manage forests or rivers, but many are staged inside or near the ecosystems this law is trying to restore.

A festival's footprint on nature is real and measurable, even though the event itself is temporary. Crowds, vehicles, stages and camping areas compact soil and strip vegetation in ways that can take a site months or years to recover from. Noise, vibration and night-time lighting disturb breeding, feeding or roosting wildlife, especially since the spring and summer breeding season overlap with the festival calendar. Light pollution also affects nocturnal species such as bats. Litter and microplastics from glitter, confetti and decorations end up on site or washed into nearby watercourses.

Most of this footprint is manageable with a few decisions made early.

Tip! Think of the following when organising an outdoor event:

- ☑ ***Making an inventory:*** A short ecological baseline survey before the event identifies what is actually on site and where the sensitivities are, and repeating it afterwards shows whether the site is recovering.
- ☑ ***Fencing and clear signage*** around watercourses, nesting areas or root zones protect the places that need it most, while shielding or dimming lighting at a site's edges and capping sound levels further from sensitive habitat limits disturbance without compromising the show. For soil compaction on vulnerable ground, decking accompanied by a simple restoration plan – reseeding and aeration – closes the loop after the event.
- ☑ ***Banning microplastics:*** On the purchasing side, banning synthetic microplastics in decoration costs nothing and prevents a lasting problem.
- ☑ ***Organising local habitat clean-up and investing:*** Festivals that return to the same site year after year are also well placed to go further: organising a local habitat clean-up, tree and wildflower planting, or an environmental fund reinvested in the area turns an obligation into a visible partnership with the local community.

Now it's your turn: Have you thought about...

- ***Lighting and sound?*** Can stage lighting be shielded or dimmed at the site's edges, and can sound levels be capped further away from sensitive habitat?
- ***Timing?*** Can dates avoid the most sensitive breeding or flowering period for the site's plants and animals?
- ***Materials?*** Are decorations and confetti free of synthetic microplastics, or can they be replaced?
- ***Local partnerships?*** Is there a local nature reserve, park authority or conservation groups your organisation could involve, to get advice and give something back to the local community through habitat restoration or a biodiversity fund?

The European Water Resilience Strategy

On 4 June 2025, the European Commission adopted the European Water Resilience Strategy in response to what it describes as a "broken water cycle". The Strategy sets three objectives: restoring and protecting the water cycle as a basis for sustainable water supply; building a water-smart economy; securing clean and affordable water and sanitation for all at all times. Its guiding principle is the Water Efficiency First principle: water use must first be reduced and made more efficient, including through reuse and recycling.

... and what about festivals and outdoor events?

Outdoor festivals need drinking water, sanitation, catering and cleaning water, and irrigation for grass or planting. All delivered and disposed of in a matter of days, frequently in rural areas with limited existing infrastructure and often during the hottest and driest weeks of summer.

This peak (very high and short-term) demand, which happens exactly when local supplies are under the most stress, can put a festival in direct competition with local communities and agriculture, particularly in regions already under water-scarcity restrictions. Wastewater and greywater from temporary toilets, showers and kitchens need a proper collection and disposal route, since untreated discharge into watercourses or soil harms both water quality and the ecosystems the Nature Restoration Law is trying to protect.

Tip!

The EU's priority order – reduce and reuse before sourcing more – translates well to a **festival water plan**: measure actual on-site consumption first, fix the biggest predictable losses (leaking pipes, over-run irrigation, single-use rinsing), and only then look at bringing in additional (bottled) water.

Applying this order tends to be cheaper and more resilient if local supply is restricted.

Now it's your turn: Have you thought about...

- ***Refill infrastructure?*** Can free drinking-water refill points replace or reduce single-use bottled water for audiences, crew and artists?
- ***Reduce fixtures?*** Push-button taps, shower flow regulators, dual-flush and waterless toilets are small fixes that cut consumption without asking anyone to go without.
- ***Reusing rainwater?*** Could rainwater be collected on site for reuse?
- ***Reusing greywater?*** Could greywater from handwashing and showers be redirected into toilet flushing?
- ***Wastewater plan?*** Is there a clear, permitted route for greywater and wastewater disposal, agreed with the local water authority before the event?
- ***Chemicals?*** Are all cleaning products and paints used on site eco-friendly, and is there a separate collection route for oils, greases and paint waste, rather than pouring them down a drain?

When the weather turns against you: droughts, heatwaves and wildfires

The EU's 2021 Strategy in Adaptation to Climate Change, 'Forging a Climate-Resilient Europe', starts from a simple premise: even with strong mitigation, some level of climate change and its extremes are now unavoidable, so the EU and its Member States must prepare to live with them.

Europe is warming roughly twice as fast as the global average, and the European Environment Agency's most recent assessment counts droughts, floods, heatwaves and wildfires among the handful of climate risks requiring urgent action across the continent.

... and what about festivals and outdoor events?

An outdoor event concentrates many people, often with tents, temporary structures, generators, and cooking in the open air, during the same summer weeks when heatwave, drought and wildfire risk now peak across Europe. That changes the perspective of what **duty of care and risk planning** need to cover. Heat stress and heat-related illness become a genuine risk for audiences, artists and crew, particularly during multi-day events with camping and limited shade. Local or regional fire bans can restrict or prohibit open flames, barbecues, and smoking areas during high fire-risk periods, sometimes announced with very little notice. Sites near forests or dry grassland carry a real wildfire proximity risk, so evacuation routes and clear communication need to be worked out in advance rather than improvised on the day. Drought-linked water restrictions, discussed above, tend to coincide with a site's period of peak demand.

Now it's your turn: Have you thought about...

- Discussing in great detail your event with the local fire brigade?
- Maintaining a contact point with the meteorological institute or nearby weather station? A constant update of possible changes in the weather pattern is crucial to keep your audience safe.
- Contacting your insurance company?
- Forecasting info signs for the audience?
- Providing sun protection and shade?

Now that we know about the different parts of the EU Green Deal...

...let's read how ***reporting on sustainability and funding*** *go hand in hand.*

Reporting and funding

Another field in which sustainability principles are becoming more and more important is the funding of – or investment into – an artistic project or a live performance organisation. By now, "sustainability" has become a selection criterion for various EU projects, and increasingly a condition attached to loans, grants and even commercial partnerships.

Before looking at where the funding itself can be found, it is worth understanding two EU laws that are reshaping this landscape: the CSRD and the CSDDD, and how reporting can be a condition to obtain financial support.

Reporting

The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)

The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) requires certain companies to report in detail on the environmental, social and governance impact of their activities, following the European Sustainability Reporting Standards.

In 2025-2026, the EU adopted a broad simplification package known as "Omnibus I" which significantly narrowed the scope of both the CSRD (and the CSDDD). Since then, the CSRD only applies to companies with more than 1.000 employees and a net annual turnover above €450 million.

In practice, this means that theatres, festivals, opera houses or other production companies in the European live performance sector do not meet these thresholds directly. Direct CSRD reporting obligations are, in other words, not something most of our sector needs to prepare for.

But it matters to us in the following situations: when a live performance organisation works with a company that is itself subject to CSRD, you may be asked to supply sustainability data even though you are not legally required to report yourself.

Think of a large company that is a sponsor of your event.

The European Commission has recommended a lightweight **Voluntary Sustainability Reporting Standard (VSME)** for SMEs to make it easier and fairer to answer these requests for our organisations. It also introduced a limit on what a large company can ask a smaller partner to disclose.

The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)

The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) requires large companies to identify, prevent and mitigate negative human rights and environmental impacts across their own operations and their value chains. Following the same Omnibus I revision, its scope was narrowed to EU companies with more than 5.000 employees and over €1.5 billion in worldwide turnover. This threshold is even higher than the CSRD's, so again, essentially no live performance organisation in the EU falls directly within its scope.

However, due diligence means an in-scope company must actively look down its value chain.

In practice, this means **that if your organisation is part of the value chain of a company in scope of the CSDDD, you may face contractual sustainability clauses or due-diligence questionnaires.**

Loans from banks

Banks operating in the EU are themselves subject to sustainable-finance rules.

In practice, this pushes banks to increasingly ask their clients for information before granting a loan, or before labelling it as green or sustainable.

Remember

Finally, remember what was written on the DPP at the beginning of this publication (see Production of a Performance, p. 15) – this will allow you to better collect information on the ecological footprint of materials in a product.

Tip

For all these reasons, it is worth starting now to adapt your organisation's internal systems for collecting basic sustainability information such as energy consumption, waste, travel and mobility data, because your funders, banks and partners will increasingly ask you for it.

Some funding opportunities and loans are, in fact, already conditional on this kind of reporting. With this in mind, let's turn to where the funding itself can be found.

Good to know

There are various calculators, tools, guidance already available and developed in, by, and for the sector. Some are open source, others ask for a fee.

Before integrating one in your organisation, this is what you should do :

First, list your needs carefully.

Second, use this publication to identify which laws and reporting conditions apply to your organisation, as well as where you can obtain information on the DPP, and which are relevant for your situation.

Then make an evaluation of what tools can best work for you.

Funding

Sustainability principles for EU projects

A 100% sustainable approach is not (yet) mandatory to be eligible as an applicant for an EU project. However, for example, in the (current) Creative Europe funding programme, you can gain extra points and get priority over other project proposals when considering an environmentally friendly approach and actions.

The Creative Europe funding programme encourages cultural organisations to 'co-create, adopt and disseminate more environment-friendly practices' and to 'raise awareness on sustainable development through their cultural activities'.

Good to know

The European Commission has proposed that from 2028, Creative Europe's cultural strand will be folded into a new, larger programme called AgoraEU. AgoraEU would merge Creative Europe with the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme into a single instrument supporting 'culture, media and civil society', with a proposed budget of €8.58 billion - more than double the combined current funding levels of the programmes it replaces[3].

3. Commission Communication 'A dynamic EU budget for the priorities of the future – the MFF 2028-2034', COM(2025) 570, proposal for a Regulation establishing a European Competitiveness Fund, 16 July 2025.

Sustainability requirements for "green loans" and the EU taxonomy

For banks, it is increasingly important to green their portfolio and introduce sustainability criteria.

And as the European Commission has the aim to green the economy, it has created a sustainable finance framework and a classification system of economic activities (a "taxonomy") which substantially contribute to the EU's environmental objectives.

... and what about festivals and outdoor events?

Good news: the cultural and entertainment sector is part of this EU taxonomy scheme!

The Commission points out that: "arts, entertainment and recreational activities [...] provide essential services and solutions towards increasing collective resilience of the whole society, and they can increase climate literacy and awareness."[4]

In this way, they substantially contribute to the Green Deal objectives.

In practice, this means: a loan or credit for a live performance organisation can count as a "green investment". In this case, banks will seek to get information on the kind of green efforts that will be undertaken with the lent money.

Think, for example, of a production or a creation that plays a role in increasing the awareness of the audience of climate issues or a festival that solely uses eco-friendly materials, chooses low-carbon-footprint food, and organises alternative transport schemes for the audience, setting an example for society.

Tips for live performance organisations seeking green loans

- Ask your bank to label the financial support for your organisation as "sustainable" (pointing at the EU taxonomy)
- Which actions in your activities – artistic and non-artistic ones – are sustainable and can be highlighted for banks and other funders?
- Which actions would you consider contribute to climate literacy and awareness of audiences?

4. EU Taxonomy Climate Delegated Act (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2139), recital (44)

The New European Bauhaus initiative

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) is a Commission initiative to translate the European Green Deal into tangible and concrete projects on the ground, throughout all EU countries. It aims to bring a cultural and creative dimension to the Green Deal.

The NEB is about rethinking the way we live together and finding innovative, aesthetic, and sustainable solutions for our living spaces – buildings and public spaces – bringing together creative expressions and new technologies.

The NEB now runs on its own dedicated multiannual funding tool, the NEB Facility (2025-2027), anchored in Horizon Europe and combining several other EU programmes.

In the description of the thematic axes, the Commission points out the value of cultural events:

> *Cultural assets (heritage, arts, local craft, know-how, etc.), natural assets (landscapes, natural resources, etc.) as well as social assets (social economy enterprises, local organisations and associations etc.) make a place unique. Cultural life, arts events, and concerts are opportunities for connection and social interaction, the binding element that creates a sense of belonging.*[5]

In December 2025, the Commission adopted a new Communication, "New European Bauhaus: From vision to implementation", setting out how the NEB will scale up as a driver of the clean transition. For the first time, one of its three core objectives is explicitly about culture: "harnessing the transformative power of education, arts and culture to boost creativity and innovation for local transformation"[6].

New tools exist alongside this, including a NEB Academy for reskilling and business support, a NEB Advisory Hub to improve access to funding for smaller players, a NEB Investment Accelerator to attract private and blended finance, and a NEB Label to recognise exemplary projects.

Under the current EU budget, €1.4 million from nine EU programmes has already gone into the NEB, which now counts close to 2.000 organisations in its community and over 700 projects delivered in its first five years – a growing network worth being part of.

5. EU Taxonomy Climate Delegated Act (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2139), recital (44)
6. Commission Communication 'New European Bauhaus: From vision to implementation' and accompagnying proposal for a Council Recommendation adopted 16 December 2025 as part of the European Affordable Housing Plan.

Now it's your turn: Have you thought about...

- ***Partnerships?*** Your organisation might become a partner in a specific NEB project.
- ***Alternative dissemination channels?*** Through NEB projects, your organisation could find new ways of dissemination – not showing a performance in its usual environment/venue but resetting it in a different context and a different location.
- ***Urban strategies?*** Your organisation can connect to local and urban communities, or to citizens' initiatives, being part of a NEB project and create a long-lasting effect.

Good to know

In autumn 2021, the Commission published an online interactive tool and a guide on EU funding for clture, called CulturEU, covering all existing EU funds that Member States and the sector can use, including those outside the Creative Europe programme. In total, this represents 20 other funding schemes.

For instance, the guide includes the NEB, Horizon Europe, the Single Market Programme and the Just Transition Fund, as well as less obvious programmes for the live performance sector, such as the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund. It might be interesting to apply for EU programmes which have a higher co-financing rate than the Creative Europe programme and/or a better success rate of applicants.

The guide remains available and covers the current 2021-2027 funding period.

Finding funding at national level

The European Commission set up the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) to bring the European economy back on track after a period of crisis, while also helping to implement the European Green Deal in the Member States, giving priority to green and digital transformation.

In total, more than €700 billion has been made available throughout the EU with loans and grants. Alongside digital transformation, the green transition is one of the pillars of the programme. It helps the EU achieve its target of climate neutrality by 2050.

Good to know

The RRF is a temporary instrument financed through NextGenerationEU, and most national recovery and resilience plans were due to be implemented by August 2026. In other words, **this financing instrument has come to its end**.

A new EU long-term budget – the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034 – is currently being negotiated between the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU, and will determine which instruments pick up where the RRF leaves off. It is worth following this discussion closely over the coming months, as it will reshape the funding landscape described in this chapter.

The European Competitiveness Fund

As part of the proposal for the MFF 2028-2034, presented in July 2025, the European Commission introduced a new, large-scale instrument called the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), intended to support strategic sectors, technologies and sustainability projects across the EU.

The ECF sits within a broader budget heading called "European Competitiveness, Prosperity and Security", alongside Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, and the proposed AgoraEU programme. Culture and creative sector organisations have raised concerns that, unlike AgoraEU, the ECF as currently drafted does not include a dedicated earmarking or budget line for the cultural and creative sectors, even though these sectors could in principle apply to some of its cross-sectoral strands (for instance, on sustainability). Sector associations are advocating for clearer references to culture within the ECF as negotiations continue through 2026 and 2027. This is a fund worth watching, but not yet one to count on.

Remember!

When applying for European-funded projects, sustainability requirements become increasingly important. For instance, the Commission added horizontal requirements to the Creative Europe programme.

Have a look at European funding programmes other than the Creative Europe programme and start drafting different kinds of projects. Thinking about new ways of dissemination and cooperation can help to get involved in the New European Bauhaus initiative.

When thinking about getting a loan, keep in mind that the cultural sector is seen as a solution provider: live performances stimulate relevant debates in society and can increase climate literacy and awareness. So, for a bank, a loan given to a live performance organisation can be labelled as "green investment".

Keep an eye on the negotiations for the EU's next long-term budget (MFF 2028-2034). Agora EU and the European Competitiveness Fund will both reshape the funding landscape described from 2028 onwards, and neither is finalised yet.

Summary

This cookbook should have guided you through the jungle of the EU Green Deal – shedding light on initiatives relevant to your daily work.

Keep your eyes and ears open: all the initiatives that haven't yet been implemented in EU Member States will be put into action by your national, regional or local government in the coming years, and EU legislation itself keeps evolving, as this update illustrates.

The Green Deal provides a good framework to build your internal action plan and to keep track of the progress you make on the sustainability path to a net-zero organisation.

Apart from passing on knowledge about the EU's ideas on how to steer the transition to a sustainable economy and society, we hope that this booklet has sparked interest in greening productions and live performances. We hope it has also given you some starting points to think about how to create a sustainable performance; how to make a production more environmentally friendly, from the materials and textiles you choose to the electronic equipment you buy and eventually retire; what to take into account when renovating a building, heating a venue, or lighting a set; and how to plan more sustainable touring and audience travel.

This updated edition adds a further important part for the live performance sector: how to manage the specific risks and responsibilities that come with festivals and outdoor events, from biodiversity and water use on-site to droughts, heatwaves and wildfires during the summer season.

The booklet has also investigated funding opportunities for the live performance sector at different levels (the European and the national level) and looked at how sustainability reporting obligations under EU law are increasingly shaping what is expected from cultural organisations. Make sure you get into a conversation with political leaders and decision-makers in your country to seize some of these opportunities, secure financial support and keep an eye on the negotiations for the EU's next long-term budget.

The live performance sector has been recognised by the EU as being one of the driving forces to stimulate societal debates and shift our society to a sustainable way of living. This gives an idea of how important the day-to-day work of live performance organisations and performing arts professionals is.

So, as best we can:

Let's move towards a sustainable path and green productions, events, and venues – and make it a greener world!

Green is a process, not a status. We need to think of 'green' as a verb, not as an adjective.

Daniel Goleman

List of relevant Commission's initiatives mentioned in the booklet

The basics of EU Climate Law and the EU Green Deal

- 2030 Climate and Energy Framework
- Communication on the European Green Deal
- Effort Sharing Regulation
- Energy Union Governance Regulation
- EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)
- European Climate Law (Regulation (EU) 2021/1119)
- Fit for 55 package
- Green Deal Investment Plan
- InvestEU Guarantee
- Just Transition Mechanism
- Social Climate Fund

The production of a performance

- Circular Economy Action Plan
- Digital Product Passport (DPP)
- Directive on the restriction of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS)
- Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) (Regulation (EU) 2024/1781)
- Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive (EmpCo)
- EU Batteries Regulation
- EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles
- Green Public Procurement (GPP)
- Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)
- Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE)
- Waste Framework Directive

Buildings: Saving energy

- Directive on the energy performance of buildings (EPBD)
- Directive on the restriction of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS)
- European Emissions Trading System 2 (EU ETS2)
- European Water Resilience Strategy
- Renovation Wave Strategy
- Social Climate Fund

Touring and travelling audiences

- Communication on Urban mobility: Together towards competitive and resource-efficient urban mobility (COM/2013/0913 final)
- EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)
- EU sustainable and smart mobility strategy
- European Emissions Trading System 2 (EU ETS2)
- ReFuelEU Aviation

Outdoor events

- EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
- EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, 'Forging a Climate-Resilient Europe'
- European Water Resilience Strategy
- Nature Restoration Law (Regulation (EU) 2024/1991)

Sustainability reporting and securing funding

- AgoraEU, funding programme proposed for the next MFF (2028-2035)
- Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)
- Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)
- Creative Europe funding programme
- CulturEU Funding Guide
- EU Taxonomy Climate Delegated Act (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2139)
- European Competitiveness Fund (ECF)
- Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034
- New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative and NEB Facility (2025-2027)
- Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and national recovery and resilience plans
- Voluntary Sustainability Reporting Standard (VSME)

Useful addresses and links

Commission website on the EU Green Deal

Commission website on the European Climate Pact

Commission website on the circular economy action plan

Commission website on implementing the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR)

Commission website on the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

Commission website on ETS2 – buildings, road transport and additional sectors

Commission website on the Nature Restoration Law

Commission website on the European Water Resilience Strategy

Commission website on corporate sustainability reporting (CSRD, Omnibus, VSME)

New European Bauhaus website

Delivering the EU Green Deal – Factsheets on key initiatives

European Parliament website on climate change

European Climate Foundation – The Green Deal

Creative Europe funding programme, culture strand

CulturEU Funding Guide

National recovery plans under the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The summaries of national plans lead to the country's website with detailed information about projects and contact details of your government.

European Climate Risk Assessment

Report: CAN Europe (2023) 'Climate Laws in Europe. Essential for achieving climate neutrality'

Organisations and tools helping and inspiring the cultural sector to work sustainably (non-exhaustive list)

Creative Carbon Scotland

Culture for the Planet Alliance – global community of practice co-developing sustainability standards for museums, theatres and opera houses

Eurocities – sustainable culture

Julie's Bicycle

The Theatre Green Book

About EFA

The European Festivals Association (EFA) is a community dedicated to the arts, the artists and the audiences. EFA's main role in the permanently developing world of digitisation and globalisation is to connect festival makers to inform, inspire and enrich the festival landscape. In this perspective, EFA is a festival's service, knowledge and training provider; the oldest cultural network of European festivals set up in 1952.

EFA is a "We" story, linking people and organisations active in the arts management field. The EFA community, including at its core its members as well as cities and regions holding the EFFE Seal, The Festival Academy Alumni, EFFE Labels and more, take the joint responsibility to offer arts to audiences. It is a story that is reaching beyond Europe as it strives to consolidate interaction between continents, countries and cultures so that there can be mutual inspiration, influence and confrontation.

EFA guides the discourse on the value of arts festivals. A sector that is so unique and that shares a myriad of concerns on intellectual, artistic, material and organisational levels deserves a strong umbrella organisation that supports local initiatives and gives arts festivals a unified voice.

The European Festivals Association is a trusted alliance of festival makers including:

— 120+ EFA members; strong and long-standing festivals and national associations of festivals coming from different countries in Europe and beyond,

— An ever-growing group of 3.500 festivals in 45 countries registered on the FestivalFinder.eu website, among which 400 festivals received the EFFE Label 2024-2025,

— 1400 alumni of The Festival Academy, EFA's global peer-to-peer learning and capacity sharing programmes for young festival managers,

— 33 cities and regions have joined the EFFE Seal for Festival Cities and Regions, and more than 80 have taken part in EFA's conversations.

EFA joined Pearle* in 2005.

www.european-festivals.eu

*About Pearle**

Pearle*-Live Performance Europe is the European umbrella association for live music, performing arts and live event industry.

It represents, through its national federations and associate members — leading organisations in their respective countries and European networks — more than 14 000 enterprises, both nonprofit and profit-making. Around 45% are performing arts organisations, more than 30% are music organisations, and about 15% are festivals. The remaining 10% includes a wide range of other organisations, such as visual arts, cinema, providers, technical companies, and more, reflecting the broad spectrum of the performing arts sector.

Pearle*-Live Performance Europe was founded in 1991 and has built a trustworthy relationship with European institutions in a wide range of European policy areas and regulatory affairs.

Pearle*-Live Performance Europe aims to establish a stable environment by supporting sustainability and promotion of the live performance sector across Europe through three main strands:

— As a sector federation – representing the specific interests of the sector at European level and internationally

— As an international network – regrouping the leading federations in the sector in their respective countries and European networks and providing a forum for exchange

— As an employers' association – putting social affairs issues and human capital at the heart of its operations

www.pearle.eu

The Ultimate Cookbook for Cultural Managers

What began as an inside joke soon became the title for this series: *the Ultimate Cookbooks for Cultural Managers*. These booklets aim to present complex topics in a clear, accessible and easy-to-read format. In other words, they offer both the ingredients and the recipe—along with a few helpful tips—for cultural professionals to cook up great performances.

The series started with the aim of providing cultural professionals with information on the legal, administrative and managerial issues that came with cross-border cultural cooperation. A big part of artists, festivals, venues, touring and production companies in the live music and performing arts sector is about working internationally. This means that understanding European legislation and procedures is necessary for the collaboration to take place smoothly.

Under the auspices of legal experts with an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the sector, a first series of booklets was designed as part of the EFA Rise projects (2014-2017 and 2018-2021) to help navigate important procedures.

— Visas for Third-Country National Artists Travelling to the Schengen Area (Original version, 2018 / Updated version, 2020)

— Social Security in an International Context (Original version, 2016 / Updated version, 2021)

— Artist Taxation in an International Context (Original version, 2016 / Updated version, 2021)

— Copyright Clearing for Live Events in an International Context (Original version, 2017 / Updated version, 2021)

— VAT in an International Context (Original version, 2016 / Updated version, 2021)

In a second series of cookbooks, we drew on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis. Four key areas were identified for deeper exploration: sustainability, digital, resilience, and mobility.

The pandemic required cultural actors to become more flexible and acquire a greater range of skills to be able to navigate the new ways of creation, production, and emerging opportunities. Performing arts professionals strived to learn new technical skills, many related to the digital environment, and continued to think critically about long-term issues such as sustainability. The next Cookbooks aimed to steer the sector towards a more sustainable practice and help reduce the impact of a global crisis if it were to hit. As part of the EFA Revealing the Alliance project (2022-2024), three more editions were produced on:

— The EU Green Deal and Live Performance Organisations (March 2023 / Updated version, 2026)

— Connecting the EU Digital strategy with live performance organisations (December 2023)

— Third-Country National Artists Working in the EU (December 2024)

This third series widens its scope and aims to address broader social and societal issues that impact the day-to-day practice of cultural professionals, beginning with a focus on artistic freedom. *This Ultimate Cookbook for Cultural Managers* is part of the EFA Care for and Share the Alliance project (2025-2028).

EFA Care for and Share the Alliance is supported between 2025 and 2028 by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union

The Ultimate Cookbook for Cultural Managers
The EU Green Deal And Live Performance Organisations

(AN UPDATE OF THE 2022 EDITION)

EFA/Pearle* partnership in the context of the EFA RISE, EFA RISE 2, EFA Revealing the Alliance and EFA Care for and Share the Alliance projects. EFA Care for and Share the Alliance is supported between 2025 and 2028 by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

EUROPEAN FESTIVALS ASSOCIATION

PEARLE Live Performance Europe

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