



Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en
Wetenschap
Zijne excellentie de heer H. Zijlstra
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Brussels, 5 January 2011

Dear Sir,

The Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe (PEARLE) representing over 4,500 organisations within the performing arts sector in Europe and the European Arts and Entertainment Alliance (EAEA) representing over 600,000 workers through the trade unions of actors, musicians and technicians affiliated to FIA, FIM and UNI-MEI, wish to convey their concern about the alarming plans for the future funding of the performing arts in the Netherlands, about which they have been informed by their Dutch members and affiliates.

The planned VAT increase from 6% to 19% (to be implemented July 1st 2011), combined with cuts to Government spending on the arts, worth more than 200 mill Euros (of which a great deal would hurt the performing arts) at national level, not mentioning additional cuts at regional and local level, and the ongoing downward pressure on the orchestra sector in the Netherlands are very distressing. In particular the fact that the performing arts are to be more severely hit than any other sector is undeserved, unreasonable and unjust.

In times of financial hardship, such as the ones we are living in today, taking away people's right to culture is a totally counterproductive decision. It is precisely during periods of hardship that people are most keen to seek the solace, inspiration and encouragement that entertainment and, in particular, **live performance** offers. Culture is firmly embedded in society at large and in the personal lives of its citizens. To take it away puts great responsibility on the shoulders of policy makers, with non-predictable consequences, not to speak of the terrible international image that it will convey of what always has been regarded as a highly developed culturally important country both in Europe and in the world.

Obviously, the inevitable unemployment that would result would have most serious consequences for all workers in the cultural sector and for their families, who will face at best an uncertain and precarious future. This will inevitably lead to a higher burden on the social security public budget, offsetting the short term savings in the long term.

We urge you to take these observations into careful consideration and to reverse this damaging policy decision.

Yours sincerely,



Sture Carlsson
President Pearle*



Heinrich Bleicher-Nagelsmann
President EAEA