

# BEHIND THE STAGE

## FINAL REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Behind the Stage* was a project created and managed by Pearle\* - Live Performance Europe in the context of the European Pillar of Social Rights (a set of twenty essential principles and rights proclaimed by the European Parliament to reinforce social rights and lead towards better working and living conditions in the European Union).

*Behind the Stage* ran from December 2017 to October 2020 with the aim of empowering the role and capacity of employers' associations, contributing to the improvement of industrial relations in the EU live performance sector and highlighting the achievements of organisations whose work almost always takes place "behind the stage". The project is supported by the European Union from a budgetline dedicated to support European social partners initiatives.

### INTRODUCTION

The report begins by explaining the nature of the live performance sector in Europe and the role of Pearle\* within that context, particularly in its capacity as representative of the employers' organisations in European sectoral social dialogue.

This is the background against which Pearle\* launched *Behind the Stage*, a project that set out to achieve the following aims:

- Contribute towards the targets set by the European Pillar of Social Rights
- Empower the role and capacity of Employers' Associations
- Strengthen social dialogue in the Live Performance sector
- Raise awareness about the activities undertaken by Employers' Associations
- Produce a Final Report with a Road Map to the Future

In order to obtain the following results:

- Increased knowledge on specific themes in relation to industrial relations
- Increased involvement in European social dialogue
- Visibility and recognition of associations in the live performance sector
- A future Action Plan aimed at ensuring the sustainability of employers' associations

The project hosted four Capacity Building Meetings, composed of Academy Working Groups, Academy Seminar/Workshops, Plenary Presentations and Plenary Discussions, in Tallinn, Estonia (May 2018), Antwerp, Belgium (November 2018), Plovdiv, Bulgaria (May 2019) and Porto, Portugal (November, 2019). It also organised the Pearle\*Live Performance Europe Awards in Brussels, Belgium (November 2018) and a final online conference in September 2020.

**Behind the Stage** was managed from the Pearle\* office with the support of three project partners - **EETEAL** (Estonian Association of Performing Arts Institutions, **Les Forces Musicales** (Association of French opera houses, orchestras and lyric theatres) and **oKo** (Flemish federation of employers in the performing arts and music sector); two associate partners – **BAROK** (Bulgarian Association of employers in Culture) and **PERFORMART** (Portuguese association of performing arts); and one partner on a voluntary basis - **Deutscher Bühnenverein** (German Theatre and Orchestra Association).

The principal beneficiaries of **Behind the Stage** were the representatives of Pearle\* members, most of which are non-profit employers' professional associations, federations or special interest associations in the live performance sector. The project also invited employers' associations from all over the EU not yet members of Pearle\* to participate, as well as reaching out to

individual organisations, informal collectives or individuals who could potentially lead the creation of new employers' organisations in their own countries.

One of the major pillars on which **Behind the Stage** was based was the initial background research it undertook in order to receive feedback from members and in so doing focus on topics which they identified as being of special concern to them. To this end, a first survey followed by a mapping exercise were circulated among Pearle\* members during the first three months of 2018 in order to verify their level of interest in possible themes for the **Behind the Stage** Academy activities, as well as gathering data about the activities they were already undertaking in the areas of: services provided to members, social dialogue and sectoral relationships. Another survey was repeated twice in 2020 (May and September) to obtain a snapshot of the impact the COVID 19 crisis was making at those times on how associations were functioning and on social dialogue.

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## CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS THE TARGETS SET BY THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

**Behind the Stage** undertook this challenge by providing a forum from which to address a selection of issues related to the "new challenges arising from globalization, the digital revolution, changing work patterns and societal and demographic developments" in the EU, as stated in the "Pillar's" Proclamation. The four topics covered in these sessions were:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)
- Skills, training and life-long learning
- Towards a healthy working environment
- EU employment legislation & the Live Performance sector

The format chosen to address each topic included a presentation of the work and activities undertaken by specialist EU related agencies and/or presentations of European or local projects, together with the sharing of knowledge and best practices by Pearle\* members and/or by experts in a specific domain.

## EMPOWERING THE ROLE AND CAPACITY OF EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS

One of the principal aims of **Behind the Stage** was to provide the tools to help members achieve this objective, with special emphasis on supporting small or emerging employers organisations as well as the creation of new associations. The project provided

a series of seminars and workshops focused on capacity building through specialised training in leadership and managerial skills focused on:

- Decisive growth
- Communication for associations
- Skills for negotiating with different stakeholders
- Balanced organisations & work-life balance
- Environmental Sustainability: the big picture

## STRENGTHENING SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN THE LIVE PERFORMANCE SECTOR

This objective was the engine behind many of the activities organised throughout the duration of **Behind the Stage**. The project organized a series of working groups and workshops to provide Pearle\* members with information and tools that would help them implement refreshed practices related to dialogue and communication between social partners, ultimately leading towards improved industrial relations and the strengthened position of employers' organisations as key players in the sector.

The project also took the significant step of facilitating an informal encounter with representatives of the trade union federations at the Capacity Building Meeting in Plovdiv to talk with delegates about some of the most pressing issues that currently concern all social partners in the sector and how to address them collectively. This initial meeting was followed

by a further informal gathering of social partners in Brussels to celebrate the **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee 'Live Performance'** in October 2019, also marked by the signing of a joint declaration at the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee "Live Performance" Plenary meeting underlining the important place of social dialogue in the EU context. In keeping with this ethos of dialogue and cooperation, representatives from the live performance trade union federations also attended the online conference that brought **Behind the Stage** to a close to continue the sequence of informal talks established during the project.

## RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS

Another of the results that **Behind the Stage** hoped to achieve was an increase in the visibility of employers' associations and a greater awareness of what they do, both in their own countries and internationally, in order to strengthen their position as key players in the live performance sector.

With this aim Behind the Stage organised the Pearle\*-Live Performance Europe 2018 Awards, an event designed to highlight and celebrate the role of employers organisations that normally undertake their activities 'behind the stage', as well as to serve as a source of inspiration for other associations and organisations.

It also undertook a series of external and internal communication & dissemination actions throughout the project which included: the production of a presentation leaflet and four newsletters (printed and on-line); six news releases; Pearle\* 2018 Awards promotional materials; presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) and a dedicated website; a "Private corner" for Conference Delegates and finally the initiatives "Spotlight on You!" and "Just a Minute", both designed to highlight initiatives undertaken by Pearle\* members in parallel to the context of the project.

## A ROAD MAP TO THE FUTURE

The purpose of **Behind the Stage** was always to reach beyond its lifespan and provide the inspiration for future actions which will ensure the sustainability of employers' associations and strengthen their position and role in social dialogue. With this in mind at the final capacity building meeting in Porto delegates were presented with the challenge of agreeing collectively on three strategies, together with a proposed action plan for each one, which

would shape future action plans led by Pearle\* and its members. The chosen strategies were:

- Surviving as cultural organisations in a sustainable environment
- Implementing and strengthening membership strategies
- Inspiration: another way of thinking / critical thinking

## CONCLUSIONS

The unprecedented world crisis caused by COVID-19 has brought with it a series of unforeseen difficulties and challenges for the sector, and to overcome them the role of social partners at national and European level is more vital than ever. At the final capacity building meeting Pearle\* members rated the extent to which they thought the project had achieved its goals very highly, and it seems reasonable to presume that the knowledge and skills covered by the **Behind the Stage** programme will remain relevant to them in the context of this new and unexpected panorama.

- In the future both the increase in knowledge and the transnational exchange that took place during the sessions focusing on the challenges outlined in the **"European Pillar of Social Rights"** will help to contribute towards the expansion of common actions where there is European added value to making joint efforts.
- As well as undoubtedly contributing towards deeper knowledge about specific themes related to industrial relations, the focus on **Empowering the role and capacity** of Employers' Associations has paved the way to reinforcing networks; to making use in the future of joint meetings to highlight individual innovative projects and activities; and to strengthen on-going monitoring of initiatives and exchange of good practices between countries on themes and actions of common interest.
- By **Strengthening social dialogue**, communication between social partners at EU level has never been more fluid. This will contribute positively towards developing themes and encouraging actions related to the European social dialogue work programme, as well as establishing a new routine of holding informal exchanges with social partners in parallel to the official European Commission social dialogue committee meetings.
- **Awareness Raising** initiatives throughout the project have contributed towards increasing the visibility and recognition of associations as

key players in the live performance sector, and will also serve to highlight and underline the European dimension of new actions undertaken by employers' associations both collectively (under the umbrella of Pearle\*) and individually.

- The **Road Map to the Future** will serve as the basis for all those future action plans undertaken by Pearle\* and its members aimed at ensuring the relevance and sustainability of employers' associations in the live performance sector.



This executive summary is also available in digital format in Bulgarian, Czech, French, German, Polish and Spanish.

Read the full Behind the Stage report [QR CODE]

Read the four newsletters with reports about the four capacity building -meetings and innovative activities undertaken by employers associations

Access the overview of applicants and winners of the Pearle\*-Live Performance Europe 2018 Awards held on 22 November 2018 at the Bozar Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels

[www.pearle.eu/activity/behind-the-stage](http://www.pearle.eu/activity/behind-the-stage)



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PEARLE\* - Live Performance Europe, is the European employers federation of music and performing arts organisations. Pearle\* represents through its members associations the interests of more than 10,000 live performance organisations across Europe.

PEARLE\* is recognised as the only European employers association to take part in the European sectorial social dialogue committee 'live performance' with on the workers side the EAEA – European arts and entertainment alliance -, regrouping FIA, FIM and Uni-Mei. Facilitated by the European Commission-DG Employment, the European social partners meet about three times per year.

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