

# BEYOND THE PARADOX

## NIGHTS CONFERENCE 2018

Join us for the 4th international  
conference on nighttime economy,  
culture, urban development and health  
issues

NOV 15 — 17  
Brussels

## NOTES & REMARKS

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As partner of NIGHTS CONFERENCE 2018, Live DMA contributed to the event by moderating the panel “pop goes politics”, by speaking and presenting our projects on the panels “la nuit à l'échelle européenne” and “social innovations within music events”, and by proposing expert speakers from the Live DMA network.

The event allowed us to follow panel discussions and presentations about sound emission regulations, including the perspectives from authorities, bottom up solutions, and technical approaches. This input will be useful for the upcoming Live Style Europe working group “Music is no noise”.

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### “The politics of sound & noise”

*Every night venue in the world has for sure this one neighbour complaining about the noise at night. A threat that can lead to a shutdown of the venue. But what are the alternatives besides a pure law enforcement strategy? Examples like the agent of change policy, in London, or the Berlin night noise trust are examples of complementary strategies and this shows how much alternative night noise regulations are needed.*

#### **Marcel Kok – Senior acoustic consultant at dBcontrol**

- He gave a good overview of different existing regulations in Western European countries
- Sound regulation are mainly around 100 dB(A) @ 60 minutes or 99dB(A) @ 30 minutes (France, Germany & Switzerland)
- In the Netherlands, stakeholders signed a consent to respect 103dB(A)@15 minutes. Amsterdam has its own legislation with 100db(A) + 115 dB(C) @ 15 minutes
- In general it is much more precise and easier to measure on a short time period
- World Health Organisation recommends 92dB(A) @ 60 min. Kok's question was if this proposition is really killing the music.
- In general, it is the db(C) that are more problematic, the lower bass frequencies seem most disturbing.

#### **Marie-Noëlle Adnet - Bruxelles environnement**

- Bruxelles environnement is part of the local government and is in charge of sound and noise management (they are like the “environment police”).

- 60% of all complaints they receive are noise complaints.
- They note a general lack of knowledge in regards to the risk of noise exposure by sound professionals as well as by the broad audience.
- She explains that 30% of concert attendees state to have already left an event because of bad or too loud sound (the source of this statement is unclear).
- They revised an existing legislation that they felt was outdated and that nobody respected (it was 100dB(A) @ 60 min).
- They did this in a stakeholder consultation meeting where live music professionals were also invited (she did not say who these stakeholders were).
- The new regulation regarding sound emission is:
  - >> under 85dB(A) @ 60 minutes, you are fine, you don't need to do anything (this sound level is hit in restaurants, cafés, cinemas)
  - >> between 85 and 95 db(A) @ 60 minutes, the responsible of the event or place has to provide ear plugs and has to publicly screen the sound levels
  - >> between 95 and 100 db(A) @ 60 minutes, the same requirements as before + there needs to be a person in charge of sound who has gone through a specific training provided by Bruxelles environnement (not sure if that needs to be a dedicated member of staff)
- They do have a lot of resource on their website  
<https://environnement.brussels/thematiques/bruit-0>
- They also did a sensibilisation campaign called "Happy Ears"

#### **Marc Davyd, Music Venue Trust**

- Mark presented the story of how the Agent of Change was implemented in the UK
- He did not talk about sound levels at all
- For him, sound levels are not the main issue, the discussion of a couple of db(A) more or less won't solve the question of why venues are closing

#### **Raimund Reintjes, Clubcommission Berlin**

- He presented the Berlin noise protection fund
  - He gave the example of a venue called *so36* that was threatened to shut down due to noise complaints
  - Their solution was to build a wall on their own that would cancel the noise between them and their neighbours (the financed this through a crowd-funding campaign), lot's of jokes about bringing the Berlin wall back... a wall is, in any case, a really strong symbol of separation
  - Clubcommission managed to negotiate a budget from the city of Berlin that allows clubs to invest in acoustic isolation
  - This fund is managed by Clubcommission and is based on a co-funding rate (10 – 20% of own funds for a max of 50.000 euros funding).
  - A good tool, however too less money for all the clubs
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## Notes on the “Noise tech” presentations

*Night noise is a political issue. There isn't a city with an attractive nightlife that hasn't heard this discussion before. “Active noise cancelling” has been established in headphone technology, but what about the technical potential when talking about noise emissions in the night? Could the noise be controlled without putting musical enjoyment at risk, and without having to limit the decibel levels? Will there be a sound barrier in the future which will allow neighbours to sleep in peace during the night?*

### **Alexandra Heeb, delegate of neighbourhood security in Zurich**

- Noise is the sound of others, that's why it bothers us.
- Over 2500 complaints in 2017 in Zurich alone on noise.
- She does not believe in sound regulations, as this leads to attitudes like “we can go up to the limit or we can break the sound record” ; that's why they do not display sound measures in public.
- They did a study on how sound progresses through the city on one of the city's mayor squares with a lot of bars, cafés, and clubs together with *Rocket Science*.
- House facades reflect sound and highly contribute to the persistence of a big volume of noise in the cities.
- Interrogation to invest in sound-absorbing insulation in passages and on facades. Sounds good in theory, but how to actually do it? Who pays for it? Do house owners agree?
- In her point of view, conflict management & mediation works well in smaller neighbourhoods, but cannot be the only solution in nightlife hotspots as they cannot solve fundamental urban development issues.

### **Christian Frank, Rocket Science**

- dB(C) (low frequencies emission) disturb more the neighbourhood than dB(A)
- They took venue and club owner outside and measured with them the noise impact of their places at several strategic points (in front of the door, at neighbor's windows). This led to more sensitivity by the club owners.
- His point was that sound needs to be directed to the audience only and not anywhere else.
- They did quite a bit of research and experiments on how to do this. There is a low tech solution that already helps to better direct the sound
- They did a lot of studies for outdoor events taking place in cities during the summer: they measured how far the sound was perceived and at what volume and proposed then an ideal installation with their equipment

### **Michael Kinzel, segment manager at d&b audiotechnik**

- Quite similar discourse than Christian Frank
- Presentation on optimising sound exposure & of their products
- Believes in education, they propose free workshops & seminar on sound engineering and the use of their products

## Night ambassadors meeting

Representatives of the NIGHT from Madrid, Groningen, Vilnius, Brussels, Paris, Budapest, Zurich, Mannheim, Berlin, Prague, Antwerp, Liège, Newcastle, Amsterdam, Tokyo and Geneva attended the Night Ambassador meeting in Brussels City Hall.

Both top-down (from city authorities) and bottom-up (from civil society) night ambassadors were here to share one positive action that recently happened in their city, and share one question to the group. It felt like there is a strong need to gather all these experiences on one platform. Maybe on Live DMA new resource platform?

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## Labo – Pop Goes Politics

*Festivals, clubs, and events are active on a global level. European legislation is influencing their activities. A strong pop-music-lobby is needed, not only to influence European legislation but it's also about the definition of culture, funds, social and youth activities. The focus of this panel will be on European music-networks and on the hot topics at EU level. The following debate will take care of the question of how can we improve the coordination, actions, and communications between the existent networks to create the strongest position possible?*

Which topics can we work on at EU level? How to transfer progress on regulation and policies from local to European authorities and from European to local level? How can we better structure dialogue and exchanges among us?

Different nightlife, music venues, clubs, free parties collectives sat around the same table to share these questions. Participants agreed on the necessity to be pro-active on topics such as drugs awareness and “music is no noise”. Two main perspectives pop up from the discussion:

### 1. Structure the sector – different options

- Gathering the whole sector in one network and 1 platform to be united
- Create several networks and platforms to raise many similar voices and get our cause more visible
- Integrate existing networks from different sectors, to be everywhere.

### 2. Create role models – something we will put in practice with our next working group “music is no noise”.

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