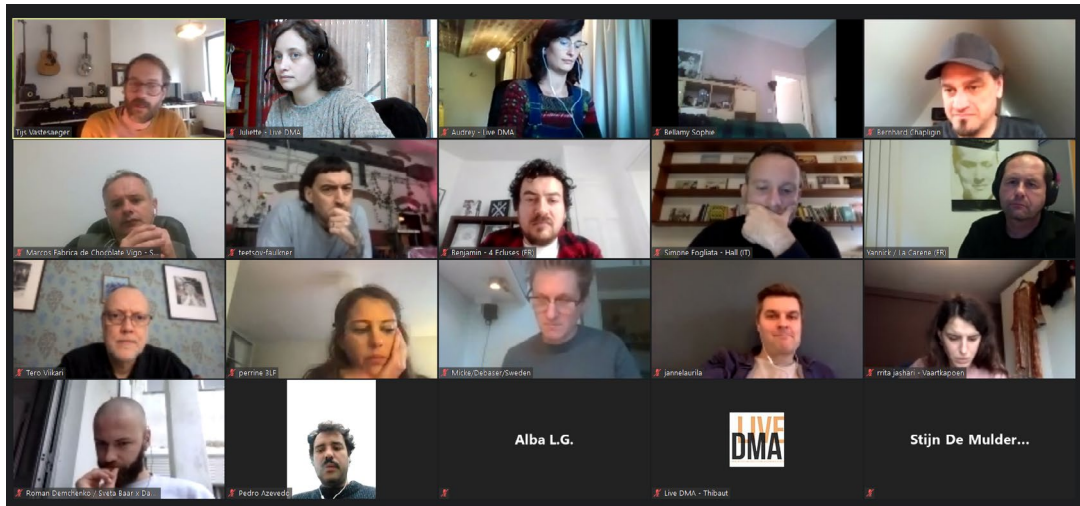


REPORT

LIVE STYLE EUROPE WORKING GROUP

Bookers in live music venues: towards a European Fair Practice Code?

First online session – 28th of January 2021



Participants: Madleen Testov (EE), Micke Lindevall (SE), Bernhard Chaplign (DE), Tero Viikari (FI), Janne Laurila (FI), Simone Fogliata (IT), Rrita Jashari (BE), Sophie Bellamy (FR), Roman Demchenko (EE), Stijn de Mulder (BE), Marcos Vázquez (ES), Pedro Azevedo (PT), Benjamin Mialot (FR), Yannick Martin (FR), Perrine Delteil (FR), Alba López (ES), Audrey Guerre (Live DMA), Juliette Olivares (Live DMA)

Moderation: Tijl Vastesaeger (Doenker)

INTRODUCTION

A Working Group - what for?

Live DMA, as part of its [Live Style Europe](#) project going from 2017 to 2021, organizes each year a Working Group on a thematic chosen by its members, national or regional live music networks. These Working Groups intend to gather live music professionals for sharing their expertise and experience on a certain topic. The information gathered is then formalized into a resource and/or methodology which can be consulted and applied by live music professionals in different contexts (different countries or different typologies of venues, for example). These Working Groups also allow us to create a community of live music professionals and fuel trans-national exchanges and networking.

The Working Group “Bookers in live music venues: towards a European Fair Practice Code?” was supposed to take place in March and April 2020 at Zurich (CH) M4Music and Aarhus (DK) SPOT Festivals, for 10 participants. Given the Covid situation and the impossibility for people to travel and gather, the Working Group was postponed until further notice. Live DMA has waited for the right time to organise this Working Group, as every live music professional was more focused on dealing with the crisis at their local, regional or national level and did not necessarily have the time and mind to focus on European perspectives. Then, it was decided to organise this Working Group in an online format, opening the number of participants to 25, allowing us to gather even more expertise and experience from more countries part of the European continent.

Objectives of the Working Group “Bookers in live music venues: towards a European Fair Practice Code?”

As part of his introductory speech, Tijs introduced himself and the objectives of this Working Group. Our aim in this Working Group is to see how booking topics and challenges are evolving and define what type of strategies could be implemented to follow these evolutions and cope with them. Participants were asked to hand in a one-page homework where they outline what were the most urgent matters in fair music practice in their country and what they thought were the most unpredictable and impactful evolutions in booking practices in the years to come. The answers Tijs gathered were very diverse although some answers overlapped and there was some common ground. Although there are many uncertainties, different and several solutions can be found. Outlining all together these solutions is the objective of this Working Group, in order to agree on what should be in a fair practice code for bookers at European level.

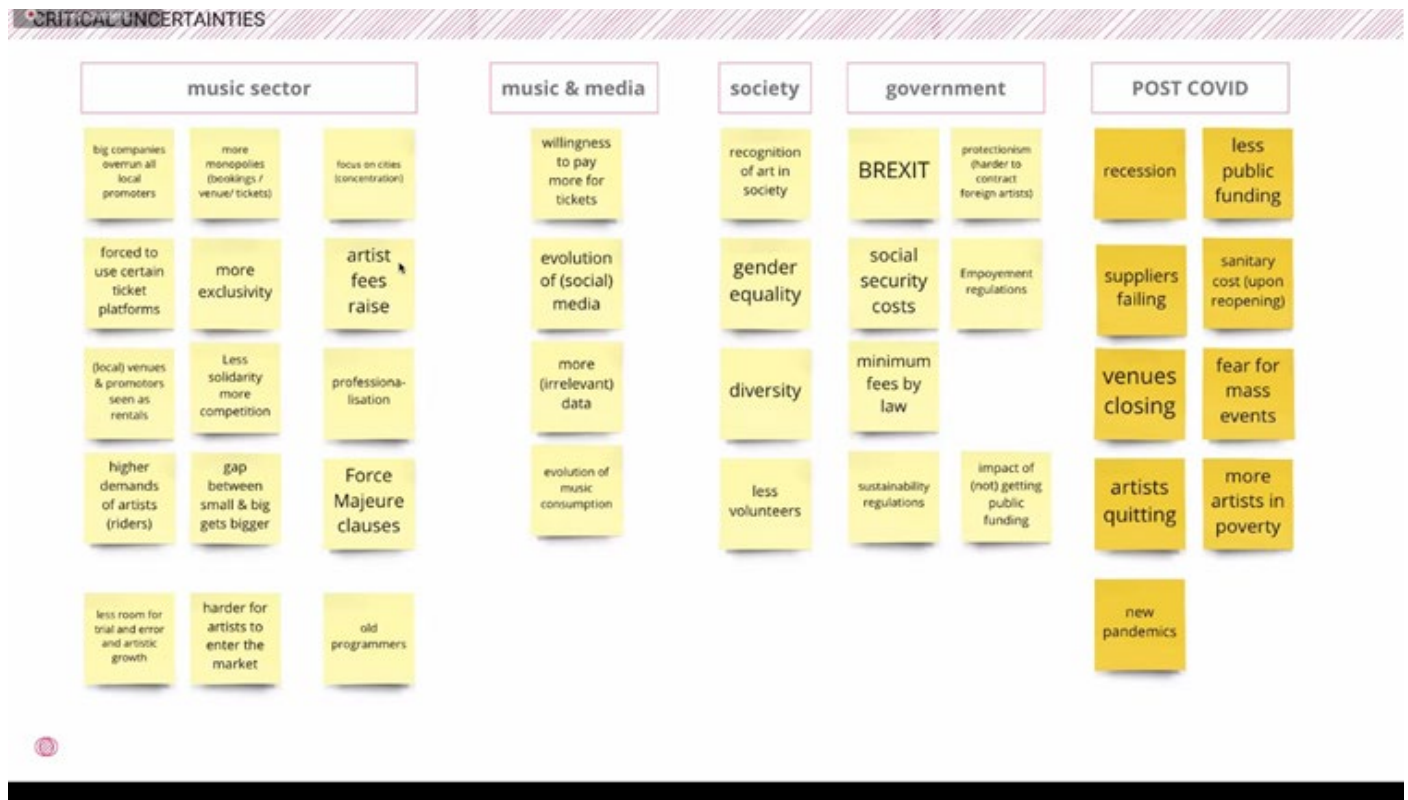
PART 1: WHO'S WHO?

The Working Group session started with a roundtable of each participant, where they could present themselves and the venue they work for, present the state of live music in their country (either pre or post covid) and express what they waited from this Working Group.

NAME	VENUE + CAPACITY	CITY	COUNTRY
Bernhard Chaplignin	HIRSCH & Löwensaal (500-1000)	Nuremberg	Germany
Tero Viikari	Tullikamari (1500)	Tampere	Finland
Simone Fogliata	Hall (1000)	Padova	Italy
Rita Jashari	VK Concerts (400)	Molenbeek	Belgium
Sophie Bellamy	La Péniche (300)	Chalon-sur-Saône	France
Micke Lindevall	Debaser (750+250)	Stockholm	Sweden
Janne Laurila	Tullikamari (1500)	Tampere	Finland
Madleen Testov	Sveta Baar (350)	Tallinn	Estonia
Roman Demenchko	Sveta Baar (350)	Tallinn	Estonia
Stijn de Mulder	Trix	Antwerp	Belgium
Marcos Vázquez	La Fabrica de chocolate (250)	Vigo	Spain
Pedro Azevedo	Music Box (280)	Lisbon	Portugal
Benjamin Mialot	Les 4 Ecluses (300)	Dunkirk	France
Yannick Martin	La Carène (1300+300)	Brest	France
Perrine Delteil	Le 6 par 4 / Festival les 3 éléphants (330)	Laval	France
Alba López	Meteoro	Barcelona	Spain

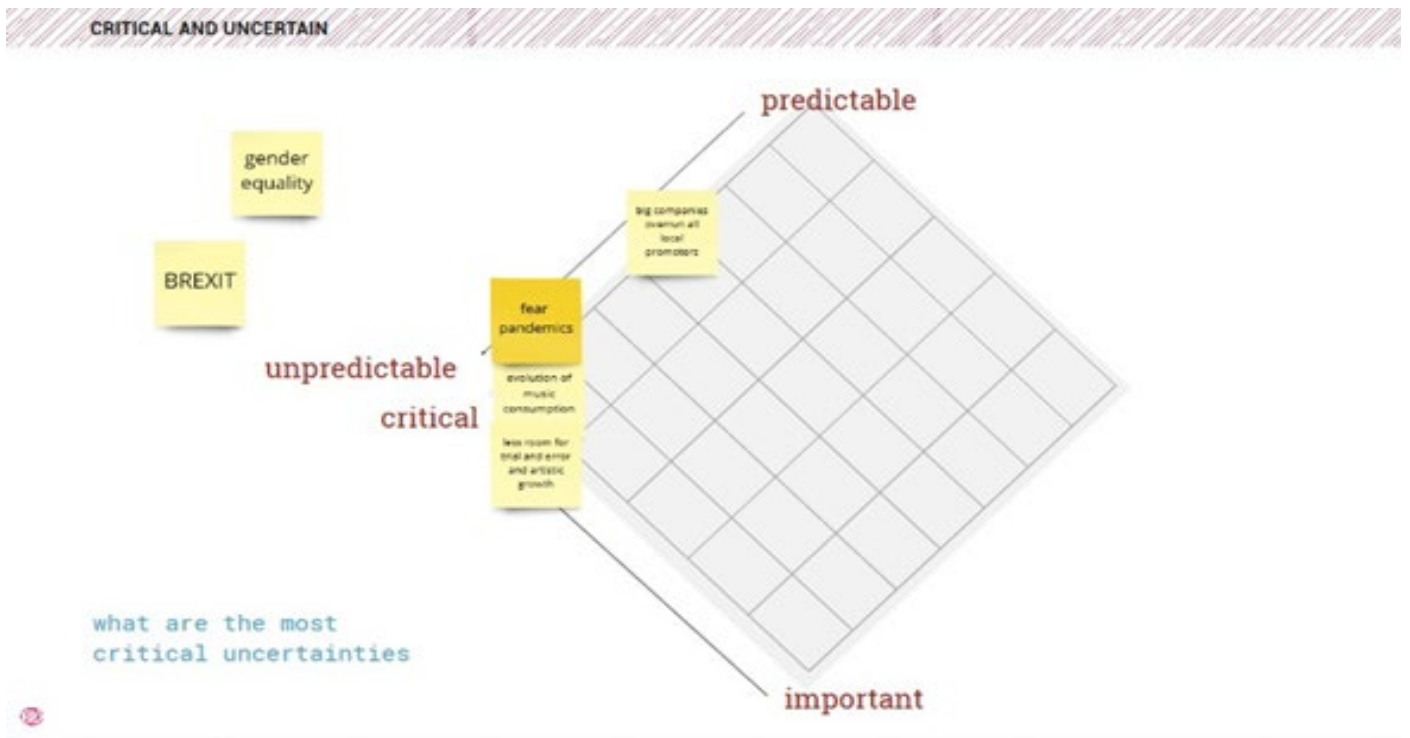
PART 2: CRITICAL UNCERTAINTIES

After the presentations, Tijs showed to participants the “critical uncertainties” that he gathered from their homework. Using the online tool Miro, he displayed all the themes that constituted a challenge and/or an evolution concerning fair practice for bookers. These were labelled “critical uncertainties”: things that cannot be necessarily planned yet are plausible to happen and have an impact on the way bookers work. Every single critical uncertainty was organized under a category (see picture below).

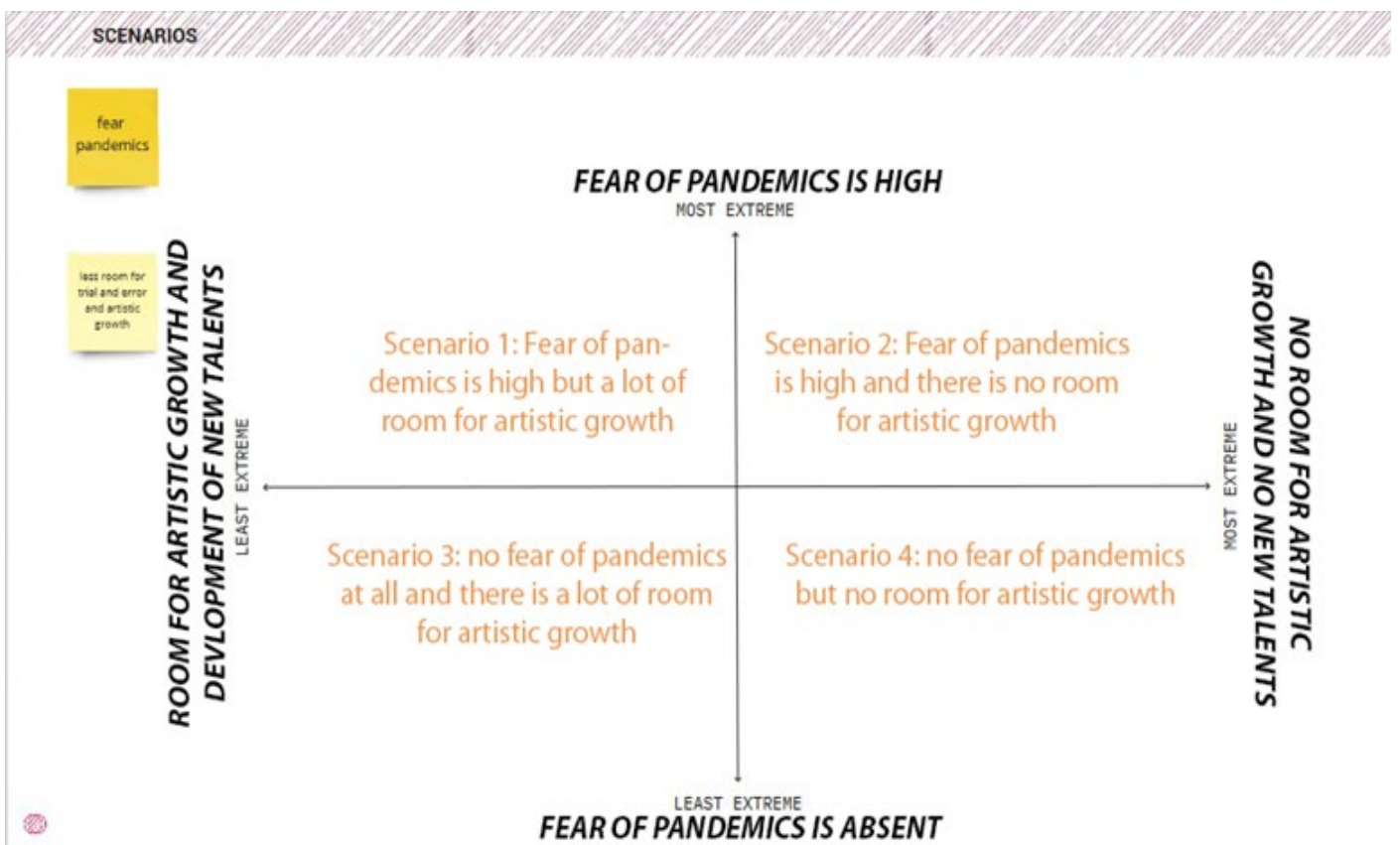


The participants were then asked to vote for 3 of the least predictable themes (*results: evolution of music consumption / fear for mass events and pandemics / big companies overrun local promoters, monopolization / less room for artistic growth*) as well as for the 3 themes that would have the most certain impact on their work in the future (*results: evolution of music consumption / big companies overrun local promoters, monopolization / (un)willingness to pay for more for tickets*).

These themes were then downsized to only 2 that were the most critical and the most uncertain. These items were put on the scheme (see below) to find the things that are least predictable and have most impact.



The 2 themes left (fear of mass events / pandemics and less room for trial & error and artistic development) were then put on a scale graph and extrapolated to their extremes. (see picture below)



n.b.: The writings in bold black and in orange were added by Live DMA for the sake of better understanding this report.

The idea was to imagine 4 different scenarios depending on which extreme parameters the themes chosen were in.

Scenario 1: Fear of pandemics is high but there is a lot of room for artistic growth

Scenario 2: Fear of pandemics is high and there is no room for artistic growth
(most catastrophic scenario)

Scenario 3: No fear of pandemics and there is a lot of room for artistic growth
(best-case scenario)

Scenario 4: No fear of pandemics but no room for artistic growth

In order to imagine these scenarios, participants were divided into 4 groups. Each group was assigned a scenario, and they were asked to describe with facts and concrete example how the live music world would be in this scenario as well as imagining possible solutions to cope with these scenarios. Each group was also asked to give a title to their scenario. Find below what each group have come up with:

SCENARIO 1: Sophie / Marcos / Alba >> permanent pandemic but lot of upcoming talents

Title: (Not) the last show

- Do something with public administration >> free spaces for local venues and money for people to come to them
- Do something with local bands >> support them
- Share resource (facilities, technical...)

SCENARIO 2: Benjamin / Rrita / Tero >> worst case scenario, no artistic thriving + permanent pandemic

Title: Fuck it, I quit

- Organise protests to put pressure on local governments and ask authorities to help
- Convince governments to support smaller actors as well
- Create online platform for all small venues to share management costs. A digital platform where every local venue has its own page with different content. Only rule: venue has to work locally
- Illegal parties, with volunteers (aka "cultural slaves")
- If all goes digital, what are promoters? Controllers? How to get income on a digital platform? Piece of digital merch from artist?
- Indie network of this scenario: vital to build it up

SCENARIO 3: Micke / Janne / Bernhard >> no pandemic and high artistic activity, best-case scenario

Title: UTOPIA

- More regional support, not just agency driven, extra small stage for support act, do best to provide even further support. Either free or raise some fundings.
- Better representation of minorities and different music genres
- Co-production with different cultural organization (smaller, non-professional)
- Find new audiences (people who listen to music but not come to concerts)
- Live music events as new forms of social gatherings >> example of mini-festival of Tullikamari
- People coming to shows on weekdays
- Cross-pollination of scenes: interesting international artists come to venue and supported by local talents >> exchange of ideas
- Sold out show + high evolved streaming = maximum fun
- People drink like in the 1990s

SCENARIO 4: Pedro / Stijn / Perrine / Yannick >> no fear of pandemics but room for artistic growth

Title: Back in 2019

- Need to cooperate with other venues and organisations in your city (young people and players)
- Fame of the venue does not come from artists you book but from the values of the venue >> political stance in society
- Diversity >> awareness to new crowds

Once each group rendered their work in the plenary session, we could find some common ground between all these different scenarios. Although different situations, there was an overlap in the solutions proposed:

- **Need to convince governments about societal values of music venues in order to normalize public funding for culture. Need to do advocacy work from that value proposition.**
- **Importance of local artists and connecting with these local scenes**
- **Opportunity of having a more diverse programming to cope with impact of big companies. Unique proposition >> diverse programming to give alternative**
- **Important to start re-thinking business models and income diversity**

PART 3: WHAT SHOULD BE IN A FAIR PRACTICE CODE?

Although we were lacking some time, this first Working Group session ended with a roundtable where each participant could express the most important thing, for them, that should be present in a Fair Practice Code. The answers were:

- Artist remuneration
- Ecological impact of promoting a show
- Local bands
- Diversity
- Gentrification / having a venue in city center
- Protect local venues
- Less hierarchy between value chain actors and big actors. Fair behavior.
- Interdependency of promoters vs bookers vs 360 degrees companies is more leveled.
- Representation from audience point of view >> safe place, people feel free to be who they are
- Transparency through the whole business
- Respect our value for itself (pricing of tickets, artist fees...)
- Presenting more female models and building up a matrimonial heritage
- Include other live music workers: technicians, security, people who do the cleaning, other staff...

PART 4: NEXT SESSION

During the next session, we will try to get a better view of what participants think is of biggest importance about this Fair Practice Code. What are its ingredients? What are good examples?

Next session will take place online via zoom on Thursday, 18 February from 13:00 to 16:30 CET.



European network for live music associations representing more than 3000 venues, clubs & festivals.

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