

EFA Cares

The Arts Festivals Summit is the annual *rendez-vous* from the European Festivals Association (EFA) gathering 200 participants including EFA Members, Alumni of the Festival Academy, EFFE Festivals and Artists and EFFE Seal Festivals Cities and Regions from 46 countries from around the world. It provides a platform to a diverse group of people to listen to one another and share experiences, ideas, and challenges for 4 days. Curiosity of meeting one another and hear about each others' stories and proposals is the drive for the time we spend together.

EFA'S VALUES

EFA upholds some values in its internal rules that are our guiding principle also in the Summit:

- **Connection** – we bring a broad network of people together and provide a platform for the exchange of information, knowledge, skills and experience.
- **Openness** – we create an environment where all voices can be heard.
- **Discovery** – we want to encourage curiosity and the sharing of new ideas and ways of working.
- **Sustainability** – we strive to be an environmentally sustainable organisation by sharing knowledge on the sustainable operation of festivals with our members and with all professionals in the festival sector and to engage in new collaborations and partnerships, keeping in mind our care for people and the planet.

Caring principles

In 2024, EFA launched the “Count me in” campaign on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Belonging, responding to needs identified from the field. A statement, elaborated collectively by the EFA Team and approved by the EFA Board, was published as a first step. See more about this campaign [here](#).

EFA developed some thoughts on inclusion principles that “by embracing and valuing each person’s unique qualities, we harness the power of diversity. True inclusion means everyone feels respected, participates in decision-making, and can share their ideas. Inclusion promotes well-being and fosters a sense of belonging for individuals. The Summit aims to provide an inclusive space where people feel comfortable being themselves and engaging with others respectfully, even with differing views”.

All of these principles express EFA’s wish and will to facilitate and (co-)organise events where we relate to each other on the basis of care, empathy, listening and understanding. Some tangible thoughts include:

- English is **not the first language** of most of us and **misunderstandings are inevitable: sometimes, we use different words to describe the same things, or the same words to describe different things**. We suggest listening carefully to each other, having an open attitude, asking questions and to aim for understanding.

- We can **agree to disagree**. We encourage **constructive dialogue**, and we **leave space for each other** to speak. When disagreeing, we **criticise and provoke ideas, we don't target people**.
- We shouldn't **make assumptions** and we encourage people to **ask what they want to know**.
- We **do not tolerate** racism, ethnic discrimination, ageism, sexism, queerphobia, transphobia, ableism, class or religion/belief discrimination, comments on people's bodies or **any form of harassment or discrimination**.
- We promote being friendly to each other, open and flexible, respecting other people's boundaries and beliefs. **Every person is responsible for their own un/learning**.

EFA's initiatives and events are spaces to learn and exchange knowledge and we do this **together**. It is a co-learning space. Participants all learn from each other's backgrounds and experiences.

Contact points

If you feel uncomfortable or if you notice an unpleasant situation and you feel the need to address to EFA, please feel invited to contact Audrey Brisack (audrey@efa-aef.eu - +32 472 52 72 32) or Ana Benavides Otero (ana@efa-aef.eu - +32 472 75 26 58), who have been appointed confidential people within the EFA Team. These conversations remain strictly confidential. Audrey and Ana will offer you a friendly ear and, if you wish, try to support in resolving the problem.

This document is a first reflection on how we can build an explicit reminder for a caring and respectful environment in EFA's events. We are here for your suggestions.