

# Gender Equality in European Theatres and Artistic Programmes 2024



A Study

**GENDER EQUALITY IN EUROPEAN  
THEATRES AND ARTISTIC PROGRAMMES  
2024**

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*A Study*

## FOREWORD

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**The pursuit of gender equality** in European theatres remains as critical as ever. Since the publication of our 2021 study 'Gender Equality and Diversity in European Theatres', the first piece of research to take a deep dive into diversity on stage and in staff teams across the continent, the landscape has evolved dramatically. We've lived through the COVID-19 pandemic and a surging cost of living crisis -- with the financial impacts for theatres only beginning to be felt. And as budgets across Europe get cut, and more needs to be done for less, there is the risk that women, who make up the largest proportion of the theatre workforce, bear the brunt of this burden.

These developments have only amplified the need for continued monitoring and analysis. In this context, the new ETC study, "Gender Equality in European Theatres and Artistic Programmes 2024," provides an essential update, offering fresh insights and reinforcing our commitment to addressing gender imbalances in the theatre sector. Put simply, are we able to say that there has been concrete progress on gender equality since we last conducted the study? Is the sector in a good position to further diversify in the coming years?

**Authored once again** by researcher Sarah Sepulchre from UC Louvain, alongside colleagues Jacinthe Mazzocchetti and Justine Vanhaelen, this study offers a comprehensive examination of gender equality within our theatres. Divided into three key sections, it begins with a literature review that highlights the persistent inequalities and the progress made across Europe. It then delves into an in-depth

analysis of data from 13 theatres across 11 countries, offering an evidence-driven picture of where European Theatres stand today, particularly in terms of the profile of artistic leadership teams, boards and senior management, and the gender balance of characters on stage. Finally, the study presents a series of powerful interviews with theatre professionals, shedding light on the personal and systemic challenges faced by individuals within our industry. I am particularly pleased that the research includes numerous voices from Eastern and Southern Europe, completing a picture of a sector in Europe which is marked by large discrepancies in the push for gender equality.

**The findings of this study** are crucial for shaping the future of European theatre. As we strive for a more equitable and inclusive sector, this research serves as both a call to action and a roadmap for meaningful change. Our hope is that this study will inspire continued efforts to ensure that our stages reflect the diverse societies we serve.

**Heidi Wiley**

*ETC Executive Director*

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## Part One

# Introduction

In 2021, an initial study carried out for ETC looked at diversity in the teams of member theatres and in the artistic programmes. This research showed a fairly significant presence of women among the teams. The phenomena of horizontal and vertical segregation (the famous glass ceilings and walls) were not statistically confirmed. However, the questionnaire sent to directors and managers demonstrated that women were more often employed in occupations more traditionally perceived as feminine. Other minorities were under-represented. Members of these minorities held more precarious jobs and less prestigious positions.

The study of the programmes revealed that men were more numerous and held more prestigious positions on and behind the scenes. There was a fairly traditional distribution of roles, with women dominating in the costume and hairdressing departments, while men tended to be authors, directors and worked in technical professions. Organisations led by men were more likely to employ men. When women were in decision-making positions, there was greater equality. One of the major recommendations of the research was to diversify management.

This research is a continuation of the previous one. The aim is still to look at the diversity of the teams working in theatres and on stage. This report will consist of three parts:

- » A non-exhaustive review of the research and studies that have recently been published in Europe on issues of diversity in relation to the cultural sector;
- » A quantitative section on the state of diversity in the teams and within the shows programmed (this section is based on a questionnaire completed by the theatres);
- » A qualitative part focusing on interviews with women who work in theatre management, who discuss their career paths, good practices for improving diversity, obstacles that may still exist, and who share their experiences on the subject.

The methodologies and corpus or field studied will be presented in each section.

## Part Two

# State of the art of available scientific literature resources and reports on gender equality and diversity in the theatre sector in Europe – by country

In this section, you will find some scientific literature resources and reports (mainly written in English) on gender equality and diversity in the theatre sector in Europe, by country. We have also included work on the film industry that might make sense to ETC members. It is not fully exhaustive and extensive, but it gives a good overview of the data available on the topics. In the future, it obviously should be completed with a review of literature in the different European languages.

This section aims to take stock of the work carried out on diversity issues in theatre within the European Union in order to show that it exists and that it is accessible. It is work that can provide arguments (for example, figures) for establishing a policy, that reveals good practice, that highlights areas for progress, etc. They can be of use to ETC itself or to each of its members individually.

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**F(s)** was born from a spontaneous gathering on May 4, 2018 in Brussels, following the non-appointment of a woman, again, at the head of a theatre. F(s) is a group of human beings identifying as women or X from the artistic and cultural sector. An intersectional gathering of plural identities. F(s) is a movement of feminist reflection and action which works for a cultural world free of patriarchal and colonial practices. <https://f-s.collectifs.net/>

**Pouvoirs et dérives**, 2018 –2019–2020–2021, Following the facts of harassment and abuse of power in the cultural sector revealed in November 2017, Jessica Gazon, Isabelle Jans, Mylène Lauzon and Coraline Lefevre created the Powers and Abuses cycle in order to take the time for collective and constructive reflection on the abuses of powers and their abuses within of our professions. The objectives were to identify the specificities of the sector which have led to cases of abuse of power and moral harassment occurring and being perpetuated and to collectively develop possible solutions.

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## Part Three

# Quantitative section

## 3.1. Methodology

The quantitative part of the research aims to give an idea of the gender diversity in the member theatres of the ETC network: in the theatre teams, among the playwrights, characters and actors in the plays programmed (with a focus on premieres).

This section is based on the answers given to a questionnaire by the institutions that wished to participate. This year, in comparison to the comparable ETC study on diversity and gender equality in European Theatres from 2021, therefore, it was the employers (the theatres), rather than the employees who responded to the survey. Naturally, the theatres encoded the gender identities of their staff on the basis of their knowledge of this information. It is possible that the socially-perceived gender does not correspond to people's gender identity if they did not specify it. The figures therefore reflect the reality known to employers. The survey was sent by email by the ETC to its members in winter 2023.

The questionnaire is divided into five sections: information on the theatre's profile, data on each establishment's employees, data on the shows programmed, data on the premieres, information on the political and social context and information on the actions taken to promote diversity within the theatre (see the questionnaire in the appendix).

Only one questionnaire was completed per theatre. This is a major difference from the 2019 research, since then it was the people employed by ETC member theatres themselves who answered the questions for the professional section and a quantitative content analysis was carried out by a researcher on the theatres' programmes for the character and author/actress section. If they have several departments (operations, ballet, drama, etc.), theatres were asked to focus solely on the drama department.

One final comment before developing the quantitative findings. The results of this research should be compared with those of 2019 with caution. Very few theatres took part in both studies. Only five theatres that responded this year are represented in the 2019 professional section, and the programmes of only three theatres that responded this year could be analysed.

Table 1  
Number of participating theatres by country

Country	Number of participating theatres
Germany	1
Greece	1
Italy	1
Latvia	1
Portugal	2
Romania	1
Slovakia	1
Slovenia	1
Spain	1
Ukraine	2
United Kingdom	1

Table 2  
Type of institution

Type of institution	Number of the theatres
National Theatre	5
Regional / State theatre	3
Municipal Theatre	3
Other	2
• Independent Company Resident at Municipal Theatre	
• Independent theatre	

Table 3  
Percentage of public subsidies of annual budget received in 2023

Rate of public funding	Number of theatres
0%	1
40-49%	3
50-59%	3
70-79%	1
80-89%	3
90-99%	1
100%	2

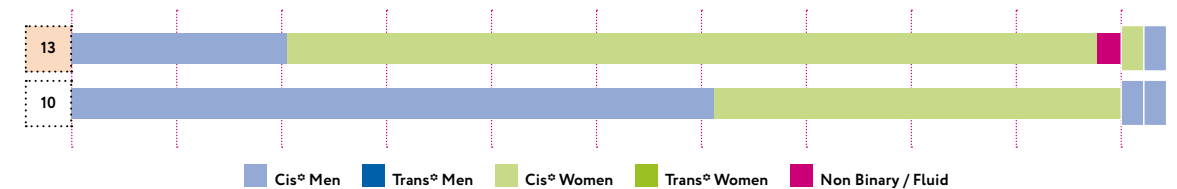
### 3.2. Figures reading guide

All the graphs (including the circles) follow the same legend for presenting the results. Cisgender men are shown in dark blue, transgender men in orange, cisgender women in green, transgender women in light blue and non-binary and fluid people in purple. The legend is published either next to or below the graph.

In the bar charts, a bar represents a theatre. They have been given an arbitrary number from 1 to 13 so that the reader can distinguish them.

The bar itself represents the proportion of cisgender men, transgender men, cisgender women, transgender women and non-binary people in the teams or shows.

*In the example below, theatre 13 employs just over 21% cisgender men, 76% cisgender women and 3% non-binary people. Whereas theatre 10 employs over 60% of cisgender men and just under 40% of cisgender women.*



The data is sorted according to the percentage of cisgender men represented among the people (employees, actors, characters). The bar above the graphs represents the theatre with the most cisgender men and the bar below the graphs represents the theatre with the fewest cisgender men.

Each bar is accompanied by two squares. The one on the left reveals two pieces of information. The type of theatre (municipal, regional, national) is represented by the colour in the centre of the square (yellow, orange, light green and dark green). The number of tickets sold in 2022-2023 is represented by the colour of the frame of the square: red for theatres that sold fewer than 70,000 tickets and blue for theatres that sold more than 100,000.

Table 4  
Number of tickets sold for drama show and average occupancy rate during 2022–2023 season

Number of tickets sold	Average occupancy rate
2,185	90%
8,799	75%
12,000	89%
16,529	85%
20,000	60%
29,715	74%
65,220	74%
118,602	77%
127,662	90%
130,000	74%
131,394	91%
133,054	72%
158,898	83%

Table 5  
Diversity of programming for the 2022–2023 season

Type of productions	Number of theatres programming it
Classical theatre	11/13
New drama	12/13
Performance/experimental theatre	10/13
Youth theatre	8/13
Other • Music, opera, screenings, conferences... • Contemporary dance • Opera, ballet, concert • Musical-drama performances	4/13

Table 6  
Gender in the directing positions of the theatres

Gender of the artistic director		Gender of the managing director	
Male	9 (69%)	Male	6 (46%)
Female	3 (23%)	Female	6 (46%)
Other (= Cis Male / Queer)	1 (8%)	Other (= vacant)	1 (8%)

In the example above, theatre 10 is a municipal theatre (orange) and a major ticket seller (blue frame). Theatre 13 is a national theatre (light green) that sold fewer than 70,000 tickets (red frame).

The square on the right corresponds to the gender of the two directors (managing and artistic). For example, if both parts of the square are blue, this means that both directors are men. If one part is green and the other blue, it means that one of the directors is a man and the other a woman.

In the example above, theatre 10 is directed by two men, theatre 13 by a man and a woman.

Each graph will be accompanied by a legend based on the colour codes.

### 3.3. Corpus description

Only thirteen institutions responded to the survey proposed by ETC. It must therefore be emphasised directly that the corpus is not representative of European theatres or even of theatres that are members of the ETC association. The conclusions we draw from the data must therefore be read as trends that will need to be consolidated by future research. The thirteen responding theatres come from eleven different countries.

→ Table 1 – Number of participating theatres by country

Of these theatres, five are national institutions, three are regional organizations and three are municipal establishments. The other two respondents are an independent company and an independent theatre. →

→ Table 2 – Type of institution

The public subsidies received by theatres cover various percentages of their annual budget. The independent theatre receives no subsidies. For the other institutions, it represents between 40 and 100% of the budget. For a large majority of respondent establishments, public funding accounts for more than half of the annual budget.

→ Table 3 – Percentage of public subsidies of annual budget received in 2023



Figure 1  
Employment rate of people in theatres in 2023

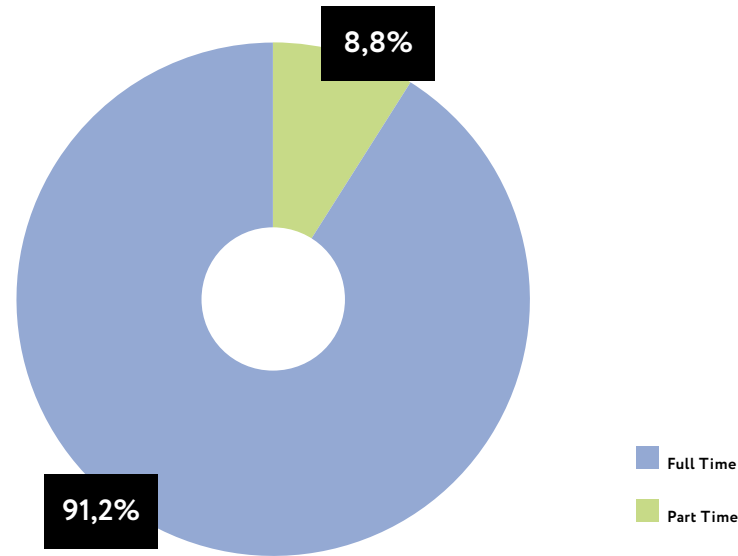
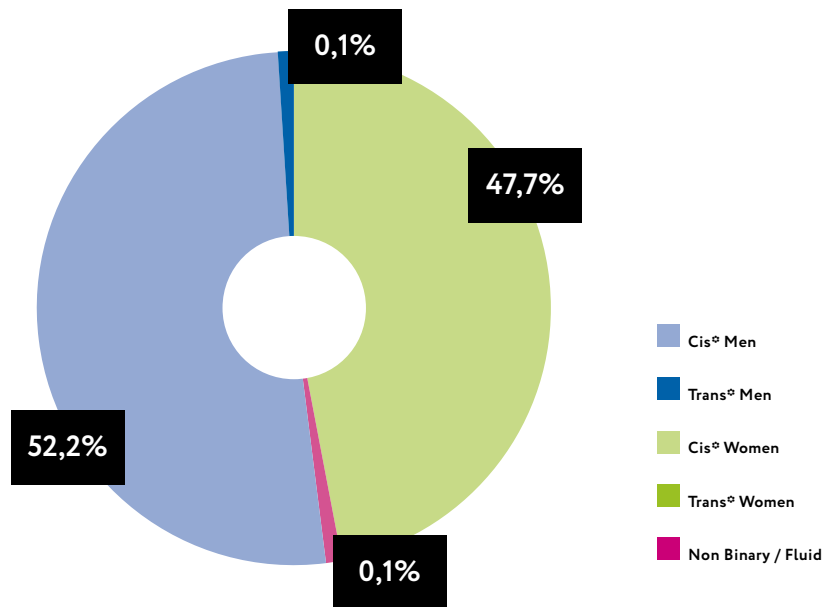


Figure 2  
Gender diversity of employee in theatres in 2023



The theatres that responded to the survey have very different sales figures. There are two groups of establishments: those selling more than 100,000 tickets a year, of which there are six, and those selling fewer than 30,000, of which there are also six. The last theatre stands between the two groups with 65,000 tickets sold. The vast majority of theatres sell between 72% and 91% of tickets: six have an occupancy rate between 70% and 79%, three between 80% and 89% and three over 90%. Only one theatre did less well, with a seat occupancy rate of 60%.

→ Table 4 – Number of tickets sold for drama show and average occupancy rate during 2022-2023 season

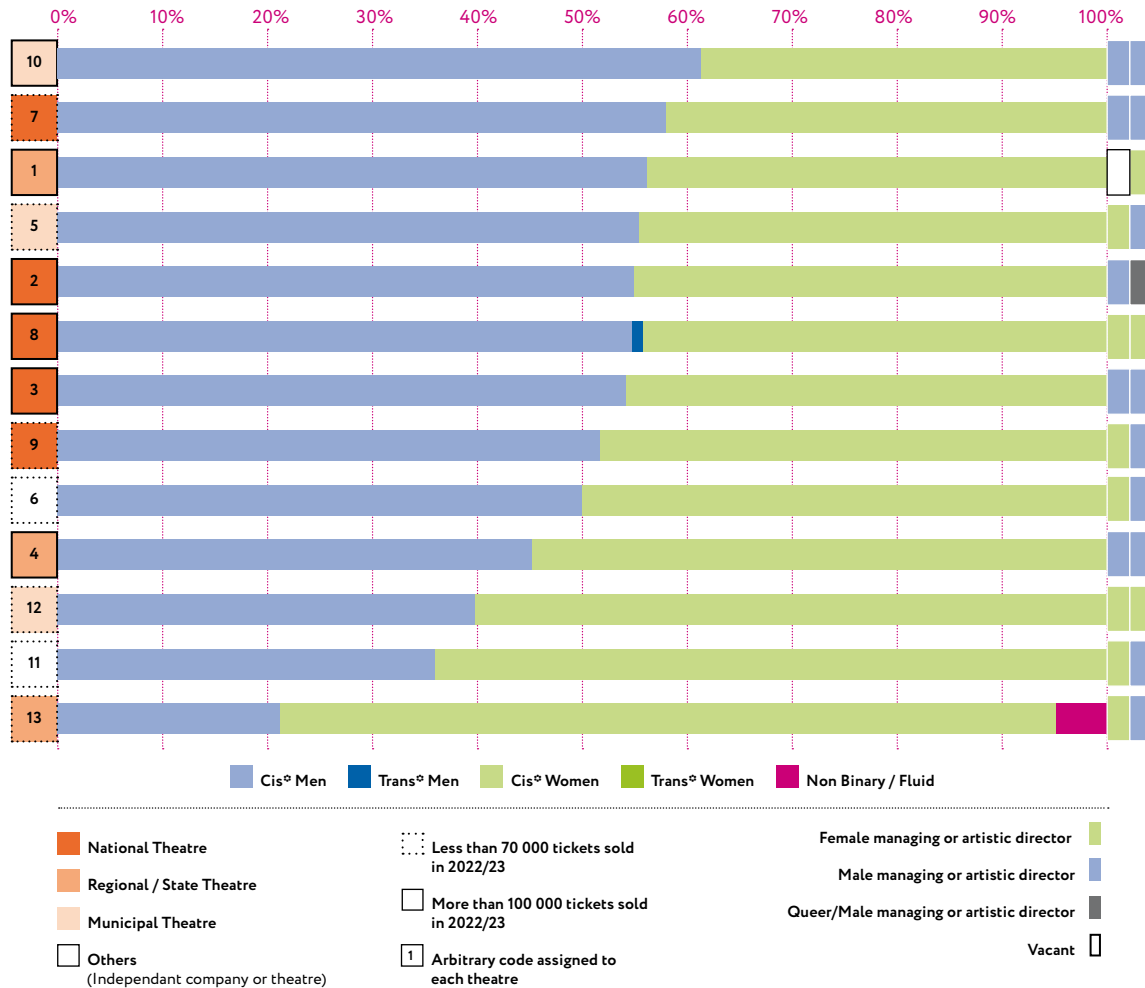
Seven theatres programme all the genres on offer in the questionnaire and three even add others. Two theatres list three genres and three organizations classify two genres. Children’s theatre is the least represented (8 out of 13 theatres programme it).

→ Table 5 – Diversity of programming for the 2022-2023 season

One of the aims of asking these questions about institutions was to be able to distinguish between theatres of different sizes. First of all, it is complicated to construct two categories from the responses: “small” and “large” theatres. In fact, there is no correlation between the various elements. The level of public funding does not correspond to the type of theatre, the number of seats sold or the variety of programming. Certain things can be observed from time to time. For example, there is a correlation between the rate of subsidy and the number of seats sold at the extremes. In fact, the establishment that receives no subsidy is also the one that sells the fewest tickets, and the one that sells the most tickets operates solely on public funds. Secondly, given the low response rate, we cannot statistically verify (for instance with cross-tabulation) whether small and large theatres promote diversity in the same way. It is possible that the small size of the corpus does not even allow us to identify trends.

Another potentially interesting variable is the gender identity of the direction team. Here we have a contrasting landscape (Table 5). The vast majority of **artistic directors** are men. Men are 9 out of 13 (70%), compared with 3 women (23%) and a duo made up of a cisgender man and a queer person (8%). On the other hand, there is parity among the **managing directors**,

Figure 3  
Gender diversity of persons employed by each theatre in 2023



with the institutions headed by 6 men and 6 women. The position was vacant at the time the last theatre responded to the survey.

→ Table 6 – Gender in the directing positions of the theatres

### 3.4. Diversity among theatre staff

As a reminder, the guide to reading the research graphs is available in the methodology section above.

#### 3.4.1. Overall diversity of people employed

The responding theatres employ 1,712 people, the vast majority of whom are full-time workers (91%). Most of this workforce is split between cisgender men (52%) and cisgender women (47.7%). There is only one transgender man and two non-binary persons (0.1% each).

→ Figure 1 – Employment rate of people in theatres in 2023

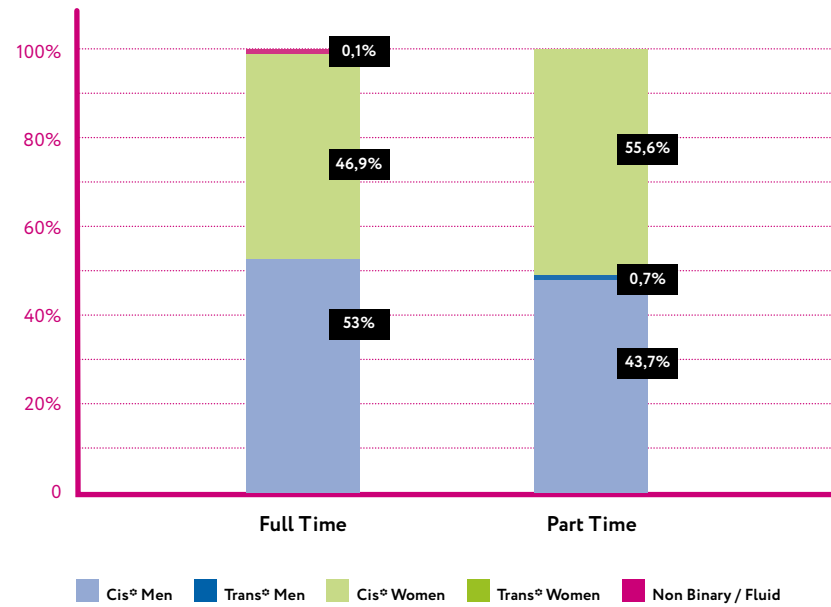
→ Figure 2 – Gender diversity of employee in theatres in 2023

In the theatres that employ the most cisgender men, they represent two-thirds of the teams (Figure 3). Seven institutions employ more cisgender men than cisgender women (from 53% to 61%). The only one transgender person is part of these organizations. Two establishments reach parity, or near (numbers 9 and 6 in Figure 3). Four theatres employ more cisgender women. The institution that employs the most cisgender women (76% of staff) is also the one that offers work to 2 non-binary people.

Given the small size of the corpus, it is impossible to make a statistically reliable cross-reference between these gender diversity figures and the type of theatres or the number of tickets sold. However, we can see that the national institutions (their codes are inscribed in a dark green square) employ more men. On the other hand, the more independent organizations (“other” category, in yellow square) employ more women. Municipal establishments (in orange) seem to employ more men (except the number 12) and regional theatres (in light green) seem to employ more women. We can also see that the institution that sold the most tickets (the square is circled in blue) tend to employ men, while the establishments that are smaller sellers (circled in red) tend to employ more women.

Regarding the influence the gender of the direction team (managing and artistic directors) could have, there is no discernible trend one way or

Figure 4  
Gender diversity of persons employed by each theatre in 2023



the other. We can simply note that the two theatres employing the most cisgender men are directed by men. But, otherwise, we find duos of men, duos of women and mixed duos everywhere in the rankings.

→ Figure 3 – Gender diversity of persons employed by each theatre in 2023

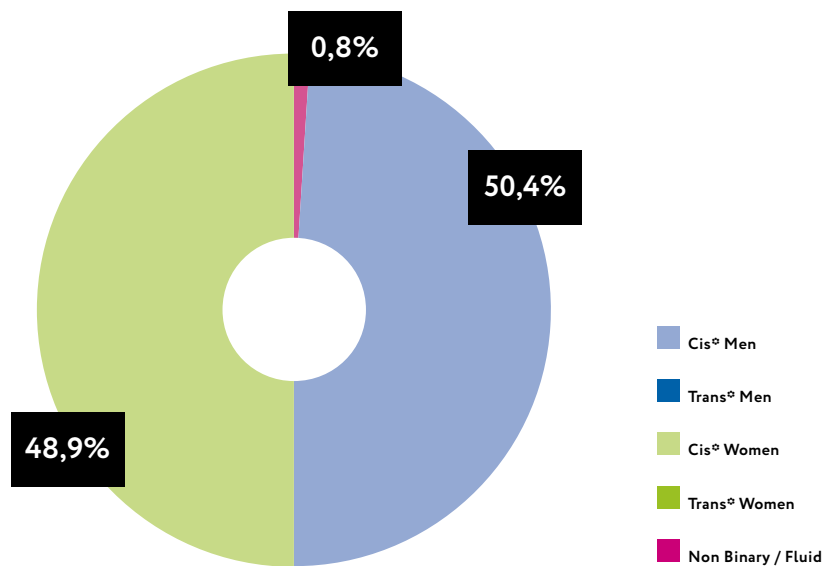
The one transgender staff member works part-time. Non-binary people are employed full-time. Cisgender women work more part-time than cisgender men (9 percentage points difference, see Figure 4).

→ Figure 4 – Employment rate by gender of theatre employees in 2023

### 3.4.2. Diversity among managers

Mid-management is also fairly evenly split between cisgender men and women (Figure 5). However, there are no transgender men or women heading departments. One non-binary person is employed in this type of position.

Figure 5  
Gender diversity among mid-management in theatres in 2023



→ Figure 5 – Gender diversity among mid-management in theatres in 2023

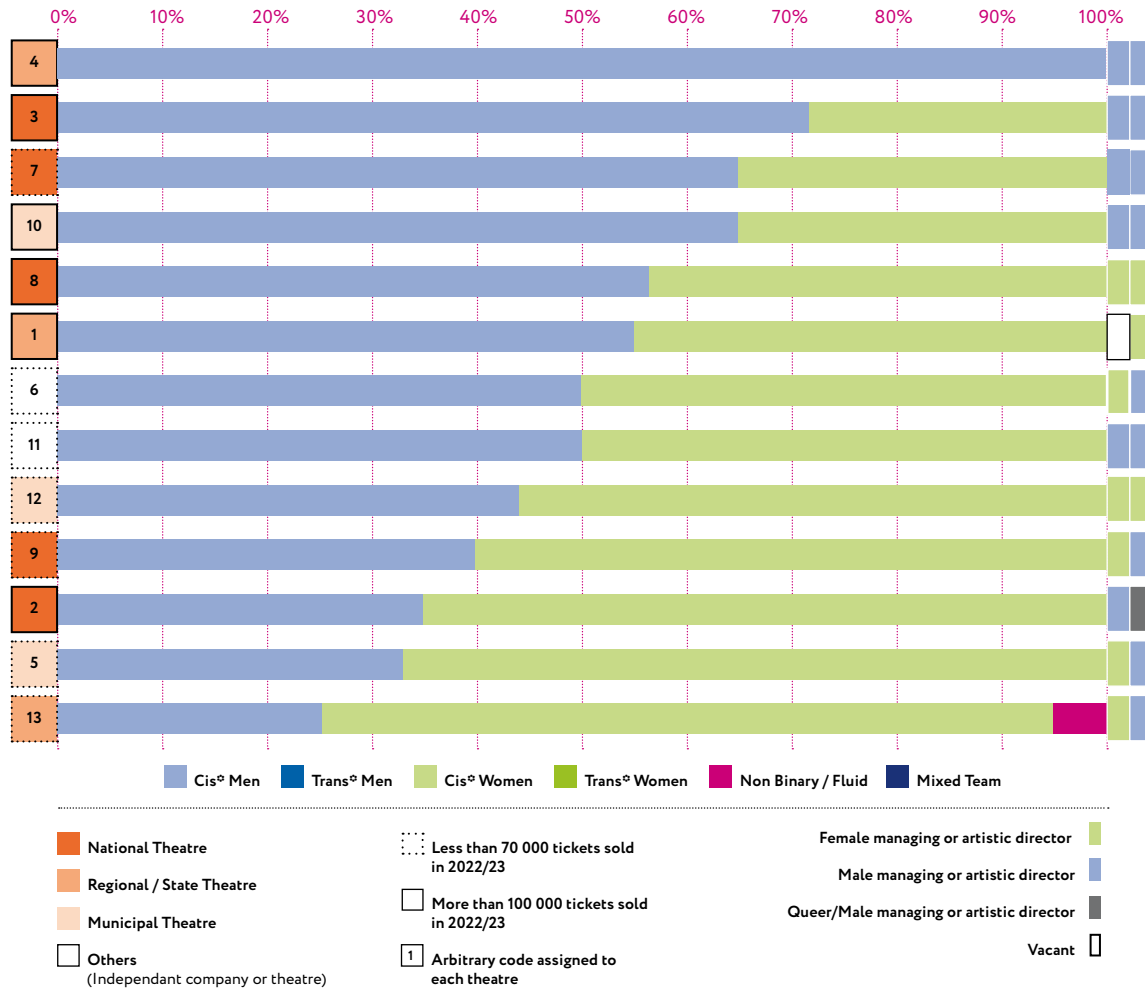
Six theatres have more men than women in management positions (Figure 6). One establishment has no female managers. Two institutions respect a perfect parity. Five organizations have more female than male managers. Once again, we note that the theatre with the fewest men in management positions is also the one that offers a management position to a non-binary person.

There is no relationship between diversity in management and the type of institution. National theatres (dark green), regional (light green) and municipal ones (orange) are spread throughout the ranking. On the other hand, the two independent institutions (yellow) are the ones that strictly respect parity for their managers. The establishments that sold the most tickets (blue frame) had more men in managerial positions, while the theatres that sold fewer tickets (red frame) had more women managers.

Another interesting point to note is that the four organizations with the most male managers are directed by men (the gender identity of the managing and artistic directors are symbolized by the green and blue rectangles on the right of the Figure 6). The four theatres with the most women and the non-binary manager are run by a mixed male/female or male/queer duo of managing and artistic directors.

Figure 6

Gender diversity of managers for each theatre in 2023



→ Figure 6 – Gender diversity of managers for each theatre in 2023

We have listed the titles of the management positions revealed by the theatres. We have grouped together positions that appear to be identical, but this is not always easy to do as the titles are sometimes very varied. It would therefore be risky to analyze this list too closely. Nevertheless, the table 6 shows some trends. Some positions are common to both genders: production, artist management, stage management, finance, communication, administration, artistic director. Others, on the other hand, seem to be reserved for one gender. These are the technical, lighting and sound departments, the video/photo department, security, the cafeteria and the general assembly, which are all male. Women, on the other hand, appear in the youth, design and costumes, legal, human resources and festival departments. Although some of the positions are therefore cross-gender, there is nevertheless a gendered breakdown in the management of certain departments. The non-binary person is Head of Theatre Operations.

→ Table 7 – List of management positions

### 3.4.3. Diversity of the board

Nine of the thirteen theatres have a board of directors. They are all chaired by a man. The majority of members are cisgender men (56%) and the remainder cisgender women (44%). No transgender or non-binary people sit on the board.

→ Figure 7 – Gender diversity of the members of the boards in theatre in 2023

The boards of directors of five theatres count more men than women, including one which is entirely male (Figure 8). Note that this is the same theatre that has only male managers. One institution respects a perfect parity. Note that this institution also respects parity among its employees and managers (see before). Three boards of directors have more women than men. For these, there is no link with management or employees.

→ Figure 8 – Gender diversity of the members of boards for each theatre in 2023

Table 7  
List of management  
positions

Held by a cisgender man	Held by a cisgender woman
Technical Director	Head of Dramaturgy
Head of Technical Department	Dramaturgy
Technical direction	Cast
Technical and stage director	Head of acting department
Head of technical operations	Actor's manager
Technical director, maintenance	Chief Artist (part time)
Technical Stage Manager	Head of Stage Managers Dept
Technical Maintenance Manager	Stage management
Director of Technical and Production	Stage Manager
Production Management	Head of Youth and participatory section
Head of Production Department	Planning and Education Department
Production	Head of Communication/Development
Project manager	Head of Publications Dept
Curator/ project manager	Head of Communication and Public Relations
Head of the production department	Communication direction
Chief Artist (part time)	Communication
Cast	PR
Head of Lighting	Head of PR department
Head of lighting designer's department (for now serving in UAF)	Head of marketing department
Head of Sound and Video	External Relations and Protocol and Hall Manager
Head of Stage Technicians and Workshops	Head of Press and Communications
Head of Sound Technicians	Head of design (set and costumes)
Head of Electricians	Head of wardrobe
Head of the music department	Head of Operations and Facility Management
Head of make-up	Head of Production Dept
Head of props	Production direction
Head of Supplies Dept	Head of Producing
Head of stage management	Associate Producer
Stage manager	Development Director
Stage Manager	Head of Legal and Organization
Head of Sales and Visitor Service	Head of Human Resources
Box Office Manager	Head of People
Financial Director,	Head of Finance and Purchasing
Financial manager.	Head of Account Department
Accounting manager	Accounting
Head of IT Management	Chief Accountant
Chief engineer	Finance Director
Chief Engineer	Audience development
Photo and video	Director of Marketing and Audiences
Head of Communication, Participation and Development Department	Accessibility officer
Press Office Manager	Head of Drama and International Relations Departments
Head of administrative department	Manager of international projects
Head of Administration	Head of Artistic
Security Manager	Head of artistic operations
General Manager	Manager of artistic operations
General manager	Art-manager
Chief Director	Executive and Artistic Director
Artistic Director	Deputy of Executive and Artistic Director
Head of Artistic Development	Associate Artistic Director
Programming Manager	Executive direction
Executive Director	General director
Associate Director	Assistant general director
Administrator	Executive Director
Head of the assembly department	Deputy manager
Cafeteria	Institutional resources director
Warehouse	Organization
	Chief Administrator
	Project manager
	Project manager
	Project coordinator
	Festivals Director
	Film Festival Director
	Operations Director
	Director of Taking Part

## 3.5. Diversity in programming

### 3.5.1. Diversity of directors

Of the 299 shows listed by the theatres, 66% were directed by cisgender men, 25% by cisgender women, 7% by a mixed team and 2% by non-binary people. Only one show directed by a transgender man was programmed by one of the theatres of the corpus and none directed by a transgender woman.

→ Figure 9 – Gender diversity of directors (season 2022-2023)

Eleven of the thirteen theatres programme shows directed by a large majority of cisgender men. It should be noted that the institution programming the most shows by cisgender men is also the one that programmed the show directed by the transgender man. In only two establishments did the number of shows staged by cisgender women reach at least 40% (theatres 1 and 10). In two theatres (7 and 11), less than 10% of shows were directed by cisgender women. In three organizations, shows directed by a mixed team ranked second (theatres 5, 7, 11).

The national theatres (dark green in Figure 10) appear to be among those that programme the most shows directed by cisgender men, while the regional institutions (light green) appear to programme more shows directed by cisgender women. Establishments with lower ticket sales (the red frame on the left in the Figure 10) tend to rank at the top of the graph and therefore programme more shows directed by cisgender men.

If we cross-reference the data concerning the gender identities of the stage directors with those of the theatres' artistic and managerial directors, we can see that the institution that programmes the most shows directed by men has two women in these positions (symbolized by the two green rectangles on the right of Figure 10). The establishments run solely by men (symbolized by the two blue rectangles on the right of Figure 10) seem to programme more shows directed by men. These are also the organizations where non-binary people are fairly well represented among the directors. The theatre that programmed the most shows directed by women was run by two men.

→ Figure 10 – Gender diversity of directors for each theatre (season 2022-2023)

Figure 7  
Gender diversity of the members of the boards in theatre in 2023

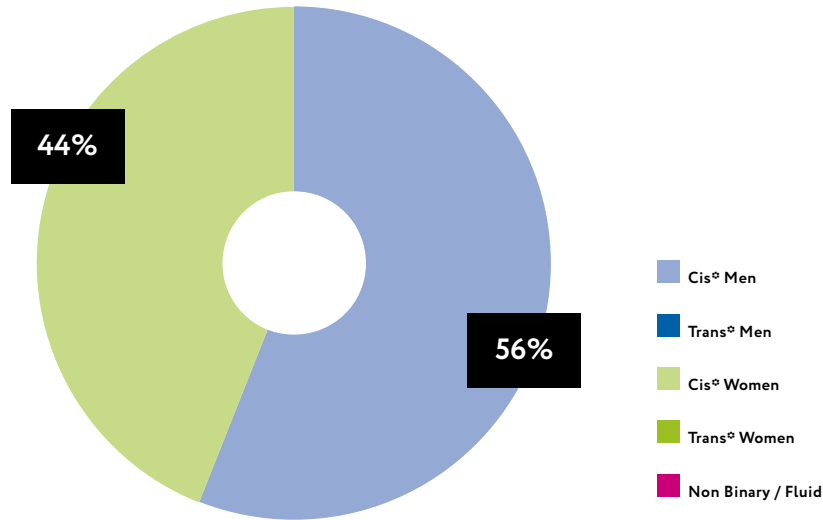
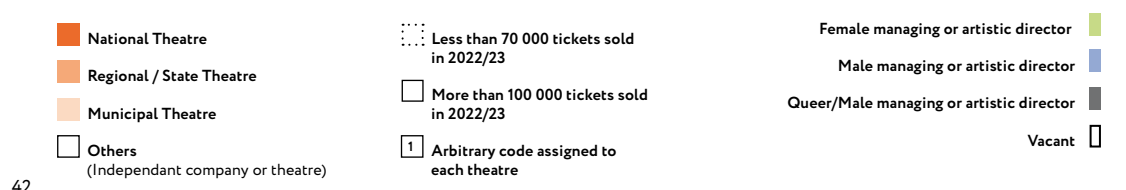
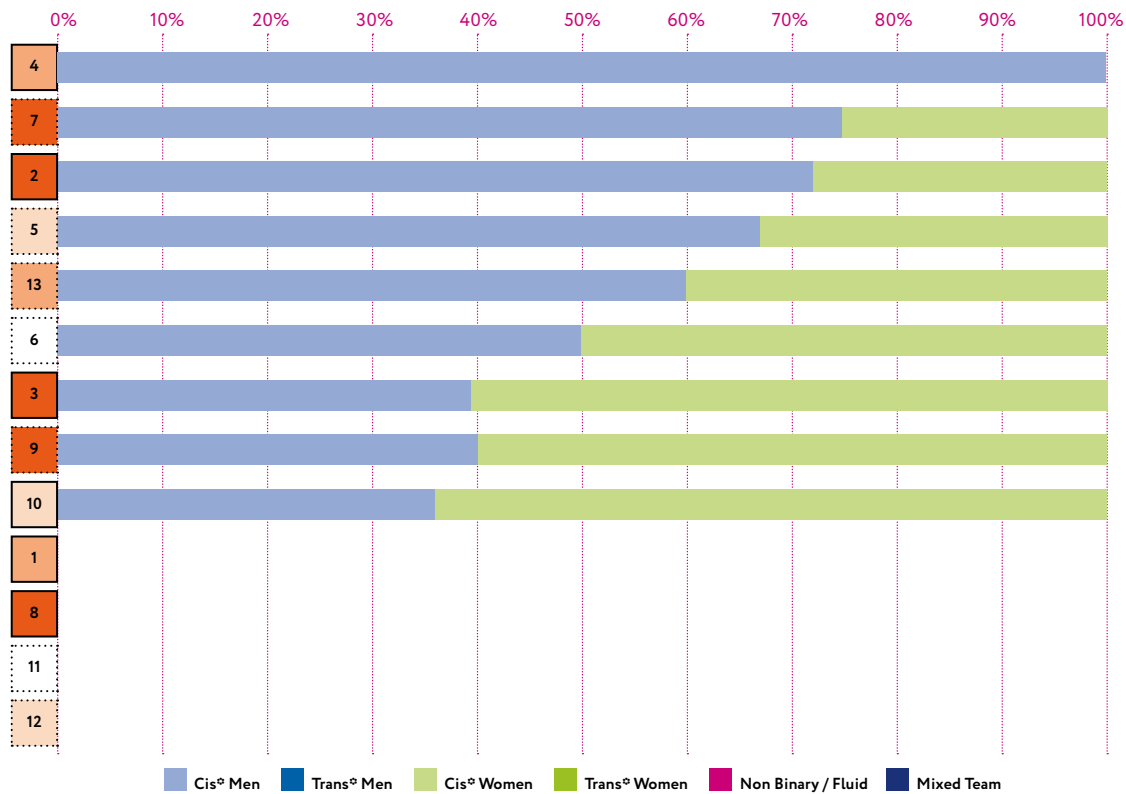


Figure 8  
Gender diversity of the members of boards for each theatre in 2023



### 3.5.2 Diversity of playwrights

Respondents do not list the same number of shows when it comes to playwrights. These are either errors or shows where the playwright is the director. As the figures are not very different (295 instead of 299), we have decided to treat them as if they were identical. Of the 295 shows listed, 67% were written by cisgender men, 20% by cisgender women, 11% by a mixed team and 1% by a non-binary person. No theatre programmed a show written by a transgender man or woman.

→ Figure 11 – Gender diversity of playwrights (season 2022-2023)

One theatre did not list any authors (no. 10). Of the other twelve institutions, ten programme a majority of shows written by cisgender men. In the two remaining establishments, one programmes a third of shows written by cisgender men, a third by cisgender women and a third by mixed teams (no. 13). The last theatre programmes a majority of shows written by cisgender women, then by mixed teams and finally by cisgender men (no. 12). Generally speaking, shows written by cisgender women are in second place, with the exception of theatres 5 and 11, where mixed teams are in second place, and theatre 7, where shows written by cisgender women and mixed teams are equal.

National theatres (dark green in Figure 12) appear to be among those that programme the most shows written by cisgender men, while municipal institutions (orange) appear to programme slightly fewer shows written by cisgender men. The establishments that sold many or fewer tickets were distributed throughout the ranking, which suggests that this variable is not significant for the diversity of the authors of the shows.

The variable of the gendered identities of managing and artistic directors does not seem to have any influence either. On the other hand, we note that the theatres that programmed the most shows written by men had male artistic directors (the rightmost blue rectangle in Figure 12). Theatre no. 8, directed by two women, programmed three quarters of shows written by men.

→ Figure 12 – Gender diversity of playwrights for each theatre (season 2022-2023)

Figure 9  
Gender diversity of directors (season 2022–2023)

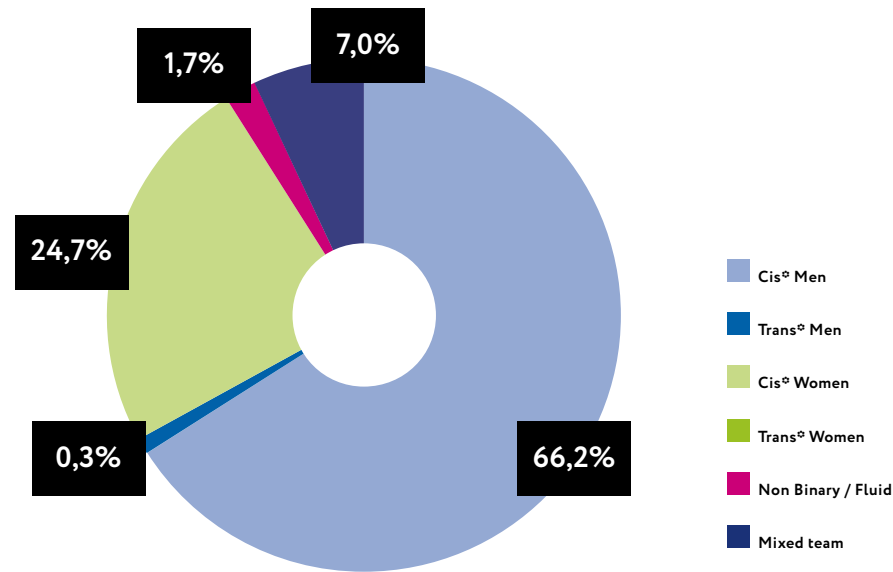
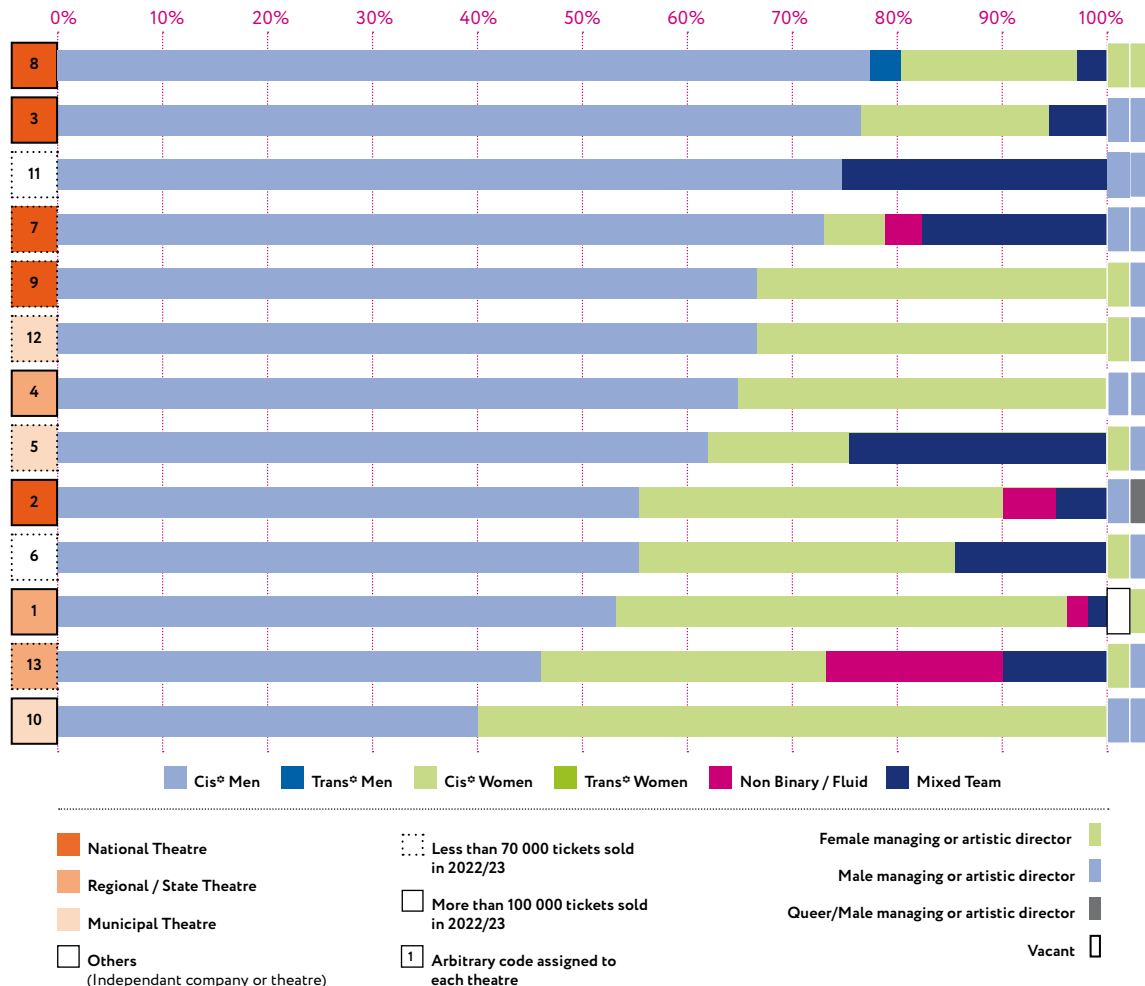


Figure 10  
Gender diversity of directors for each theatre (season 2022–2023)



### 3.5.3. Diversity of lead characters

For this section, we had to exclude the results for four theatres. This was because the number of shows coded was very different from the number coded in the previous two sections. We believe that people coded each main character (the unit of recording was therefore the character) and not all the characters in a show (where the unit of recording would be the show). As the coding principle probably differed from other parts of the research and from other theatres, these results cannot be put on the same footing. On the other hand, we have kept the coding from one theatre or another that differed slightly, because it was clearly an error (for example, the omission of a show) that did not call into question the coding principle and did not bias the overall results.

There is a relatively even split between three categories. The main characters are either groups made up of characters with various gendered identities (39%), cisgender women alone or in a group (31%), then cisgender men alone or in a group (29%). There are no transgender male or female characters in any of the shows presented during the 2022-2023 season.

→ Figure 13 – Gender diversity of the lead characters (season 2022-2023)

For the theatre that features the most cisgender men, the number of shows led by this type of character represents 45.5%. For the institutions featuring the most cisgender female characters, this figure rises to 42.4%. Groups led up to 59% of shows in the establishments that used them the most. Only one theatre featured non-binary characters, 3 in all (representing 27.3% of the protagonists at this institution). Finally, one organization staged only groups.

The latter is the case of an independent theatre (shown in yellow in Figure 14). Apart from this remark, the types of institution do not seem to be oriented towards a particular type of character. The conclusion is identical for small and large ticket sellers (in red and blue in Figure 14). Men run the theatres that feature the most men (in blue on the right of the graph) and women tend to be positioned towards the bottom of the graph where the types of characters are more balanced. But it is men who run the institution that only presents groups.

→ Figure 14 – Gender diversity of lead characters for each theatre (season 2022-2023)



Figure 11  
Gender diversity  
of playwrights  
(season 2022–2023)

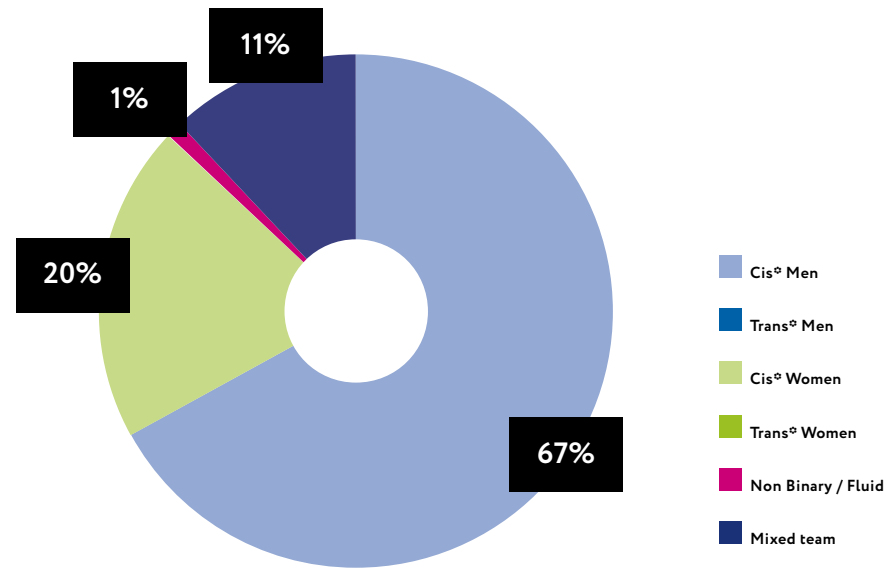
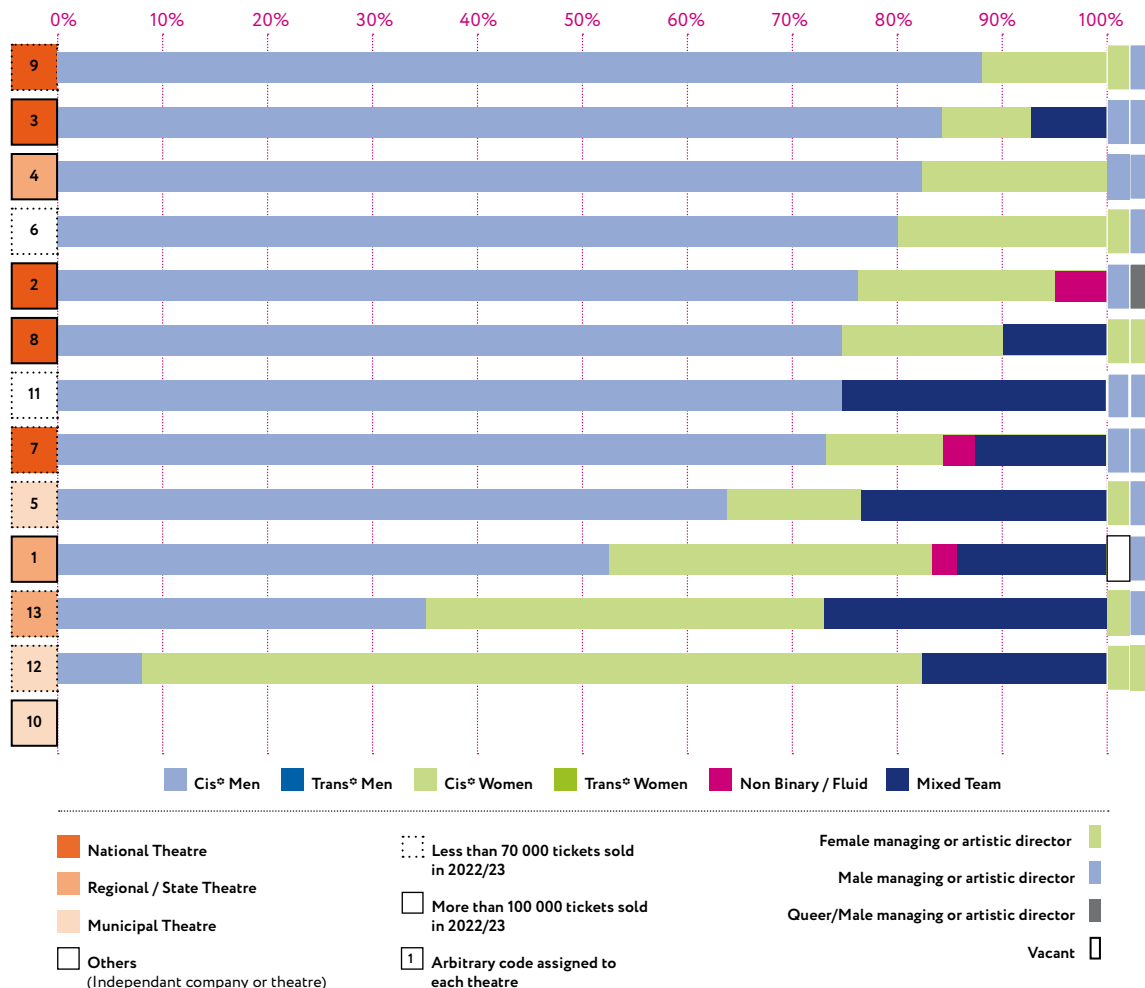


Figure 12  
Gender diversity of playwrights for each theatre (season 2022–2023)



### 3.5.4. Diversity among the actors and actresses

For this section too, we will only consider data from nine of the thirteen theatres, for the same reason as in the previous section.

We don't get quite the same figures as for characters. This is, of course, because an actor or an actress may play a character of a different gender. Overall, however, we find the same breakdown as for the characters: mixed groups, cisgender actresses and cisgender actors among the companies. No transgender comedian played a role during the 2022-2023 season.

→ Figure 15 – Gender diversity of actors (season 2022-2023)

Although the figures are slightly different from the characters, the overall results do not change at all. For the theatre featuring the most cisgender actors, the number of shows led by these actors represents 45.5%. For the institution with the most cisgender actresses, this figure rises to 42.4%. Groups led up to 59% of shows in the establishment that used them the most. Only one theatre offered non-binary actress, 3 in number (who represented 27.3% of the comedian in this institution). Finally, the organization that only stages groups of characters, indicates that one third of the shows are interpreted by cisgender actresses. This is possible if the actresses play several roles, for example.

Regarding the hiring of actors, we can see that the variables of type of theatre, but above all the number of tickets sold and the gender of the management seem to have an influence. Independent institutions and municipal establishments employ the largest number of cisgender actresses and non-binary actors. Regional theatres, on the other hand, employ the more cisgender men. The smallest ticket sellers employ more cisgender women and non-binary actors and the biggest ticket sellers employ more cisgender men. Theatres run solely by men employ more cisgender actors (except for the independent institution) and establishments run solely by women employ the fewest. Organizations run by a mixed management team are in the middle. It is in one of these theatres that non-binary comedians are employed.

→ Figure 16 – Gender diversity of actors for each theatre (season 2022-2023)



Figure 13  
Gender diversity of the lead characters (season 2022–2023)

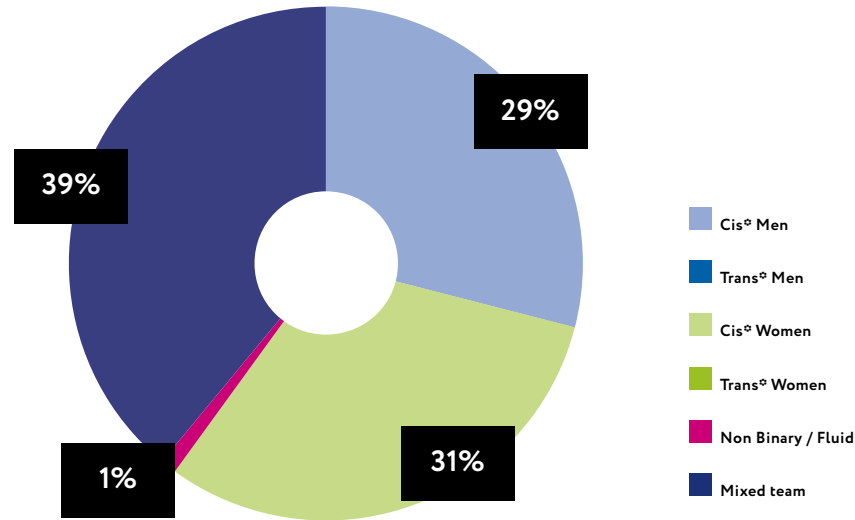
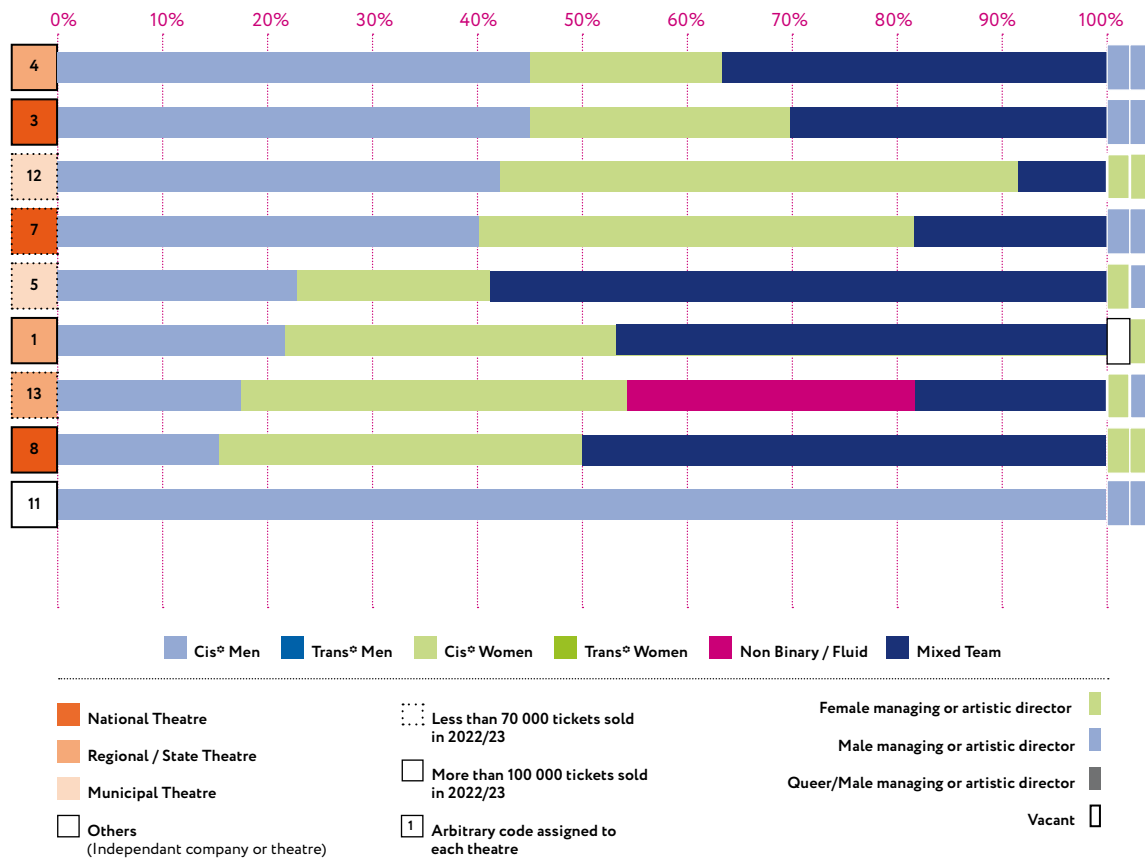


Figure 14  
Gender diversity of lead characters for each theatre (season 2022–2023)



### 3.6. Diversity in the premieres

Of the 299 shows listed by the respondents, 133 are premieres. In this section we will check whether there is greater diversity in the shows over which they have more control. The following figures therefore relate to fewer shows, those created in the theatres in 2022-2023. We will see that premieres are slightly more often directed and written by cisgender women and that mixed groups of characters and actors and actresses are more frequent than in programming in general. But the difference remains insignificant, especially if we remember that the corpus is very small.

#### 3.6.1. Diversity of directors of the premieres

The premieres are more often directed by cisgender women (up from 25% to 30%) and non-binary people (up from 2% to 3%), and less often by cisgender men (down from 66% to 60%) or mixed groups (up from 7% to 6%). The only show directed by a transgender man is a premiere.

→ Figure 17 – Gender diversity of directors of the premieres (season 2022-2023)

Eight theatres programme productions directed mainly by cisgender men. For the two institutions programming the most shows by men, the figures are higher than for all the shows studied in the previous section (90 and 83% compared to 7 and 77% for all shows). Five establishments respect gender parity or give more room to women directors and mixed groups.

Here we see less influence from the type of theatre, the distinction between small and larger box-office sellers or the gender of the directors. The two institutions programming male productions are run by men, but in third and fourth place are theatres run solely by women.

→ Figure 18 – Gender diversity of the directors of premieres for each theatre (season 2022-2023)

#### 3.6.2. Diversity of playwrights of premieres

The theatres list one show more than for the directors. This may be an error or a show that did not have a director (or where the playwright took on both roles).

The results are identical to those for directors. Of the 134 productions listed, slightly more were written by cisgender women (up from 20% to

Figure 15  
Gender diversity of actors  
(season 2022–2023)

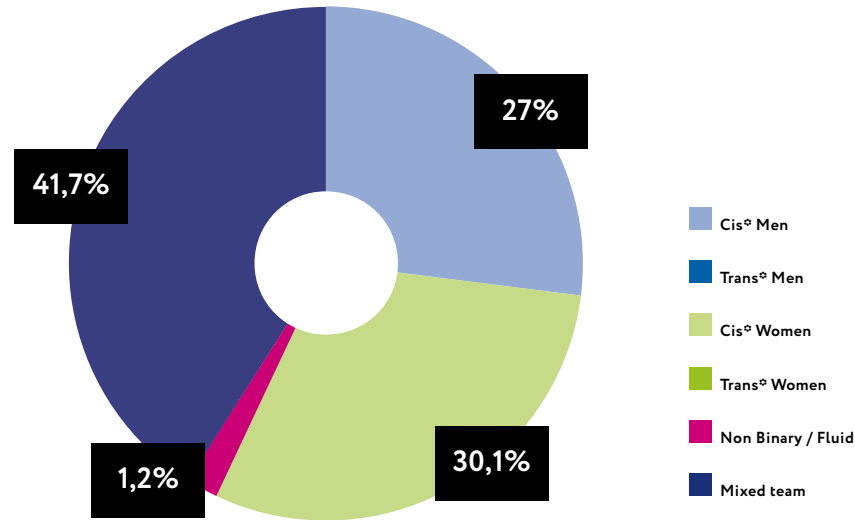
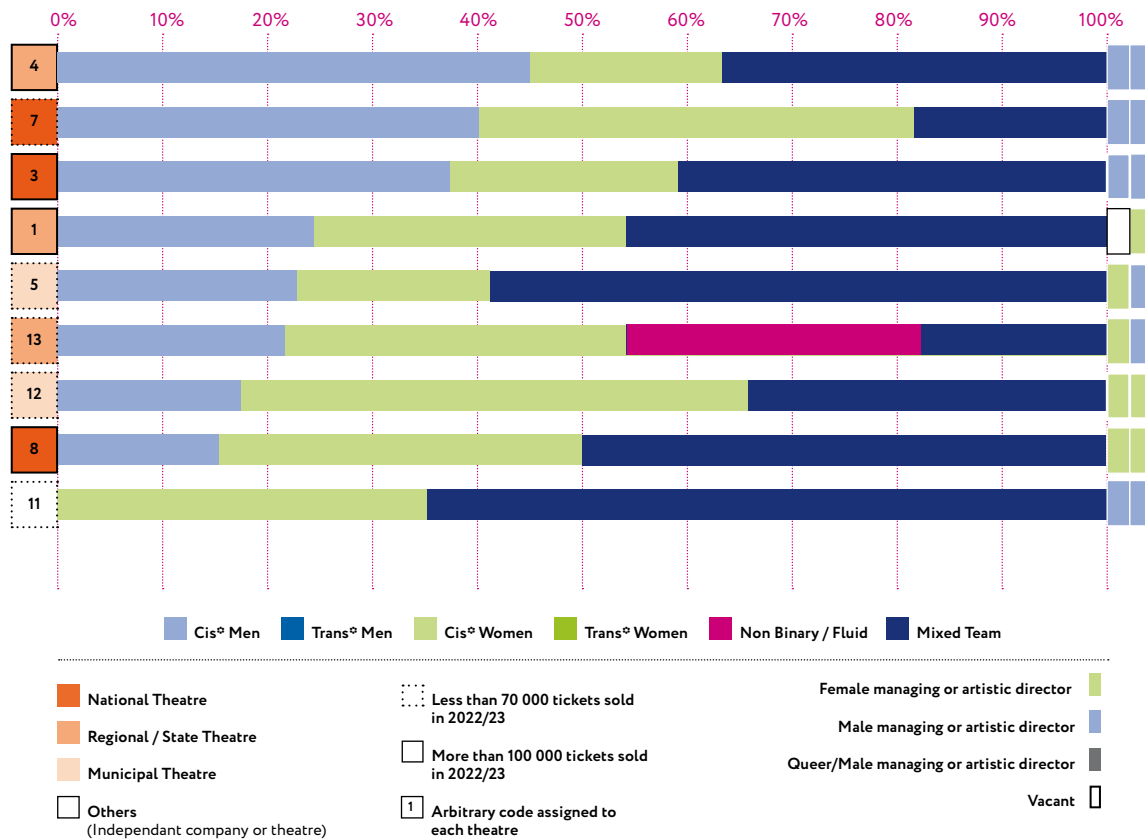


Figure 16  
Gender diversity of actors for each theatre (season 2022–2023)



22%) and non-binary people (up from 1% to 2%) than by cisgender men (up from 67% to 65%). The number of shows written by mixed groups was identical. No theatre programmed a show written by a transgender man or woman.

→ Figure 19 – Gender diversity of playwrights of premieres (season 2022-2023)

The results for premieres are very similar to the overall results for authors.

One theatre did not list any authors (no. 10). Of the other twelve institutions, eight programme a majority of plays written by cisgender men. In the four remaining establishments, one programmes a third of plays written by cisgender men, a third by cisgender women and a third by mixed teams (no. 13). The last theatre programmes a majority of productions written by cisgender women, followed by mixed teams (no. 12). Generally speaking, premieres written by cisgender women are in second place, except for theatres 2, 9 and 11, where mixed teams are in second place, and theatre 6, where productions written by cisgender women and mixed teams are equal.

The national theatres (dark green in Figure 20) seem to be among those that programme the most premieres written by cisgender men, while the municipal theatres (orange) seem to programme slightly fewer productions written by cisgender men. The establishments that sell the most tickets tend to programme premieres written by men, while those that sell the least are at the bottom of the ranking.

The variable of the gendered identities of the managing and artistic directors also seems to have an influence. Theatres run by men programme the most original productions written by men. Whilst institutions run entirely or partly by women are at the bottom of the ranking. Once again, theatre no. 8 is an exception.

→ Figure 20 – Gender diversity of playwrights of the premieres for each theatres (season 2022-2023)

### 3.6.3. Diversity of lead characters in the premieres

As in the previous section, for this part we had to exclude the results for three theatres. This is because the number of shows coded was very different from the number coded in the two previous sections (see point 4.3 for the full explanation).

Figure 17  
Gender diversity of directors of the premieres (season 2022–2023)

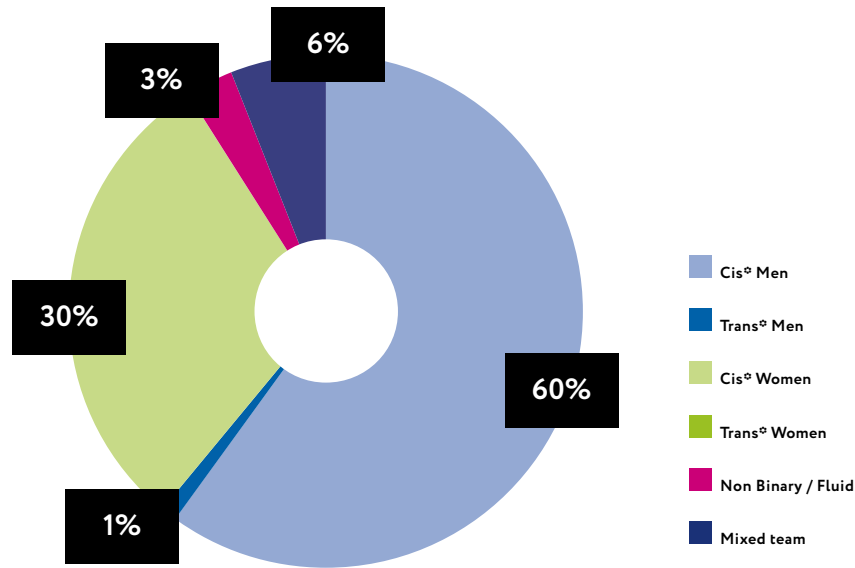
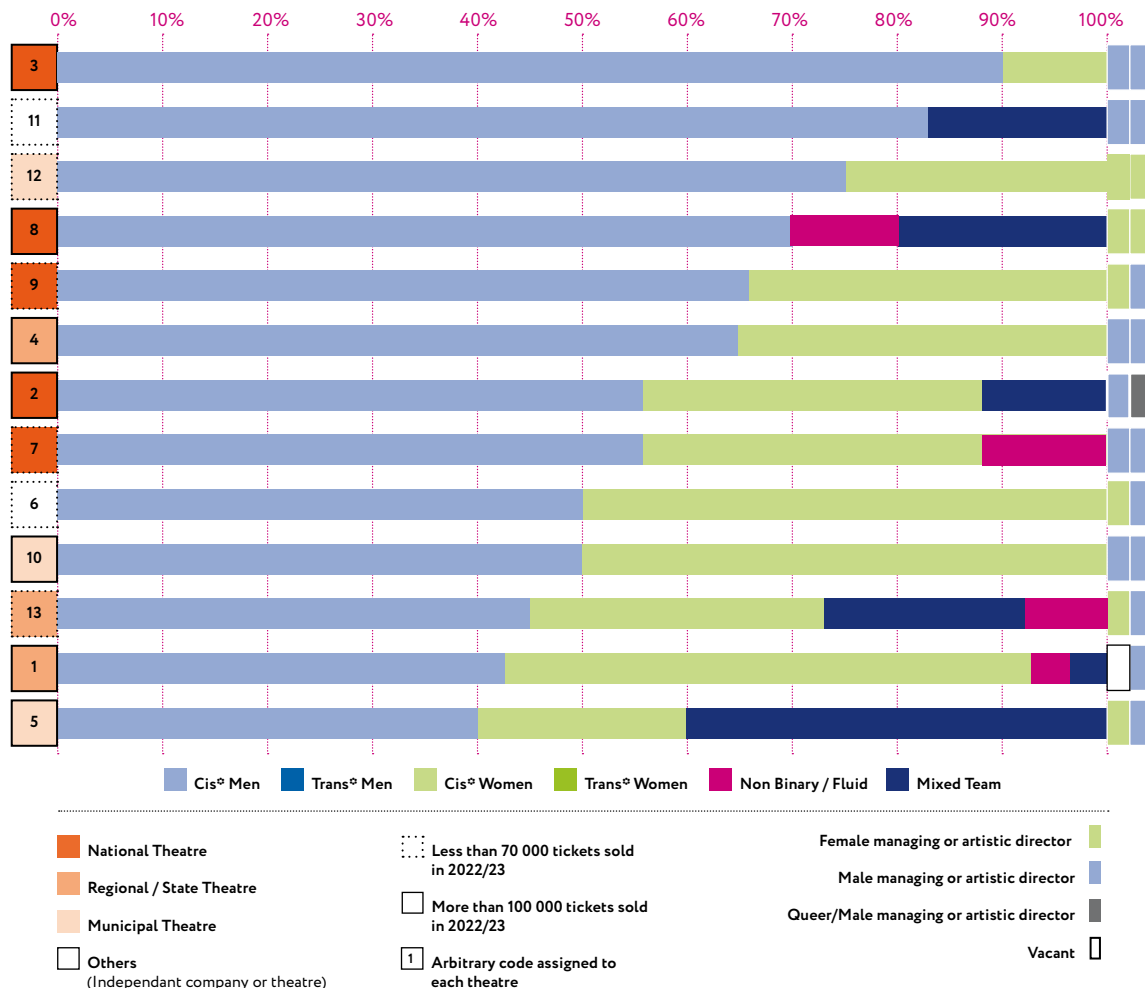


Figure 18  
Gender diversity of the directors of premieres for each theatre (season 2022–2023)



In relation to the overall figures for the shows, we can see that the premieres mainly feature mixed groups as the main characters (up from 39% to 47%). In second place are cisgender women (from 31% to 28%), followed by cisgender men (from 29% to 26%). There are no transgender male or transgender female characters in the 2022-2023 season.

→ Figure 21 – Gender diversity of lead character in the premieres (season 2022-2023)

The results for each theatre are not fundamentally different from those for the shows as a whole.

In the theatre that features the most cisgender men, the number of premieres led by this type of character represents 50%. In the institution that features the most cisgender female characters, this figure rises to 50%. This is the same establishment. Groups account for up to 75% of creations in the theatre that uses them the most. Two institutions feature non-binary characters, 2 and 3 in number (representing 22 and 27% of the protagonists in these establishments). Finally, one theatre did not feature any cisgender male characters in its productions.

Municipal and regional theatres programme fewer productions lead solely by cisgender male character. These establishments also sell the fewest tickets. National institutions are more towards the top of the table. We can see that the establishment that respects perfect parity between cisgender male and female characters is an independent one. Its profile is similar to that of the institutions that stage the fewest cisgender men. Theatres run by men programme more premieres lead by male characters. Institutions that have at least one woman director have a more diverse range of characters.

→ Figure 22 – Gender diversity of lead characters in premieres for each theatre (season 2022-2023)

### 3.6.4. Diversity of the actors and actresses in the premieres

For this section too, we will only take into account data from ten of the thirteen theatres, for the same reason as in the previous section.

We do not obtain quite the same figures as for the characters. Indeed, an actor or and actress may play a character from another genre. Overall,

Figure 19  
Gender diversity of playwrights of premieres (season 2022–2023)

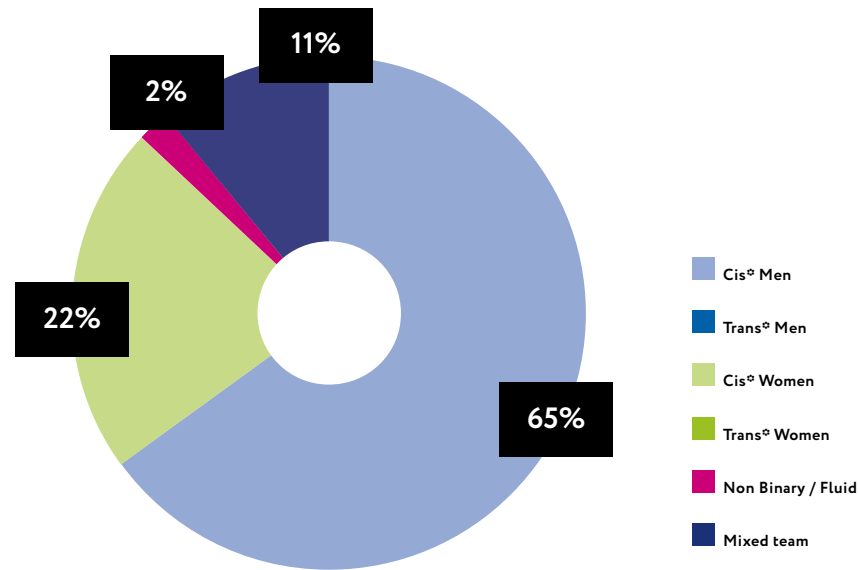
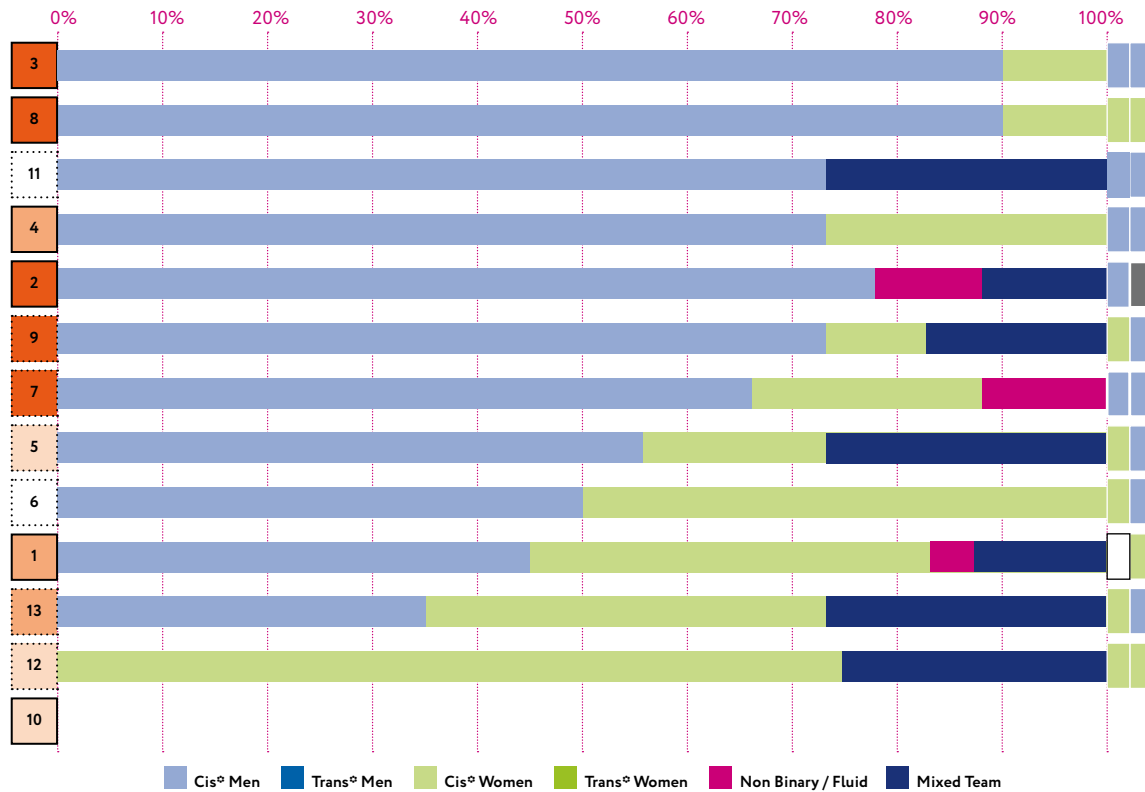


Figure 20  
Gender diversity of playwrights of the premieres for each theatres (season 2022–2023)



■ National Theatre  
■ Regional / State Theatre  
■ Municipal Theatre  
■ Others (Independent company or theatre)

  Less than 70 000 tickets sold in 2022/23  
  More than 100 000 tickets sold in 2022/23  
1 Arbitrary code assigned to each theatre

■ Female managing or artistic director  
■ Male managing or artistic director  
■ Queer/Male managing or artistic director  
■ Vacant

however, we find the same breakdown as for characters. Compared to the shows, the original productions feature more mixed groups (up from 42% to 47%) and non-binary actors (up from 1% to 4%), to the detriment of cisgender actresses (down from 30% to 25%) and cisgender actors (down from 27% to 24%). No transgender actor played a role during the 2022-2023 season.

→ Figure 23 – Gender diversity of actors in premieres (season 2022-2023)

Although the figures are slightly different from the characters, the overall results do not change at all. For the theatre that features the most cisgender actors, the number of premieres lead by this type of actor represents 50%. For the institution with the most cisgender actresses, this figure rises to 50%. This is the same the establishment that respects gender parity between men and women but without having actors of other genders. Groups account for up to 75% of premiere in the theatre that uses them the most, which is much higher than the figure for groups in shows in general. Two institutions included non-binary comedians, 1 and 3 (representing 11 and 27% of actors), in their premieres.

About the gender of the actors and actresses in the premieres, we can see that the comments made for the characters also apply.

Municipal and regional theatres, establishments that sell fewer tickets and institutions run by at least one woman programme premieres featuring a more diverse range of actors and actresses. National theatres, which sell more tickets and are run by men, are at the top of the table, thus employ more cisgender actors.

→ Figure 24 – Gender diversity of actors in the premieres for each theatre (season 2022-2023)

### 3.7. Factors that promote or hinder diversity in the country and in theatres

The final section of the questionnaire contained a number of open questions about the political and social contexts that can influence diversity in theatre teams and programming. It was also an opportunity for

Figure 21  
Gender diversity of lead character in the premieres (season 2022–2023)

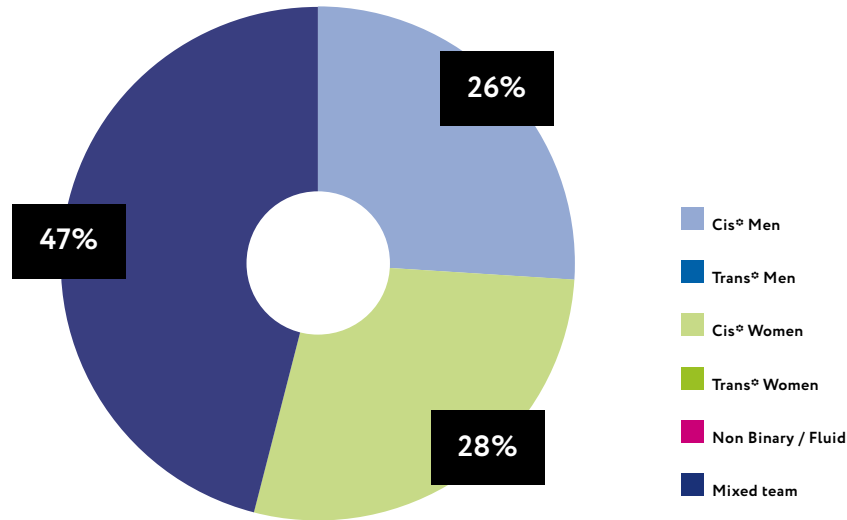
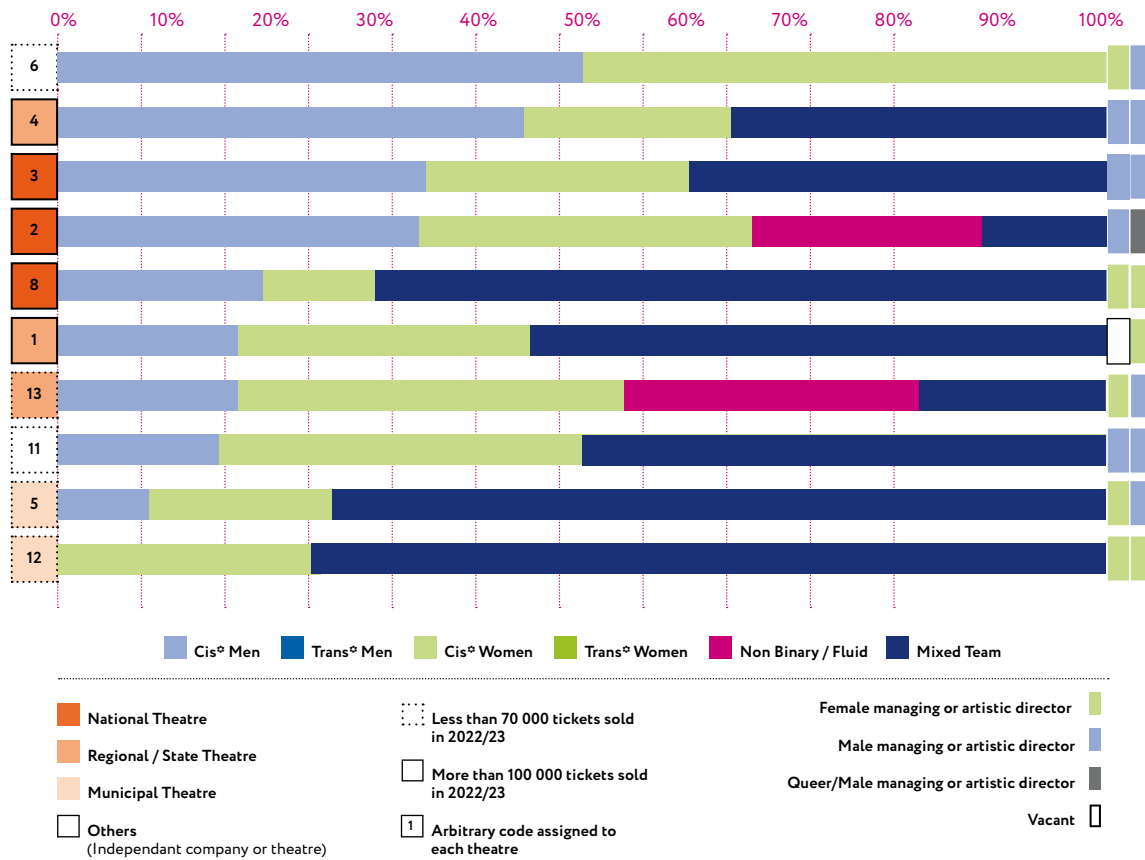


Figure 22  
Gender diversity of lead characters in premieres for each theatre (season 2022–2023)



establishments to list measures and actions developed with a view to increase diversity. The aim of this section was to give readers ideas for good practice to implement internally, external levers that could help them in their diversity policies or unfavourable elements to watch out for in the social context. The small number of responses does not meet the initial ambition. However, these subjects were discussed during the interviews and will therefore be presented in the qualitative section.

### 3.7.1. Elements promoting diversity in the political and social context

Eight participating theatres consider that there have been elements that have promoted gender diversity in their country. These elements can be divided into three groups.

Firstly, some theatres pointed to legislative changes. These were either laws in favour of equity in general, or laws promoting equality in the workplace. They mentioned laws on equal pay or a law changing the way directors of cultural institutions are hired. One respondent also mentioned a court ruling (without specifying which one).

Many respondents cited elements that originated in the theatre or artistic sector itself. Some mentioned codes of conduct that had been created or a general reflection within the sector about the under-representation of gender minorities. Others point out that demands and pressure from artists' unions have borne fruit. Artists' demonstrations have also contributed to change. One respondent mentioned an individual protest that ended up mobilizing a wider audience. In 2023, during a performance of the play *Tudo Sobre Minha Mãe*, a transgender woman invaded the stage to protest because the person playing a transgender woman was not transgender. This was followed by demonstrations across the country calling for transgender characters to be played by transgender actors. The actor was replaced by a transgender actress.

Finally, a number of theatre-goers noted that societies are becoming more aware. One institution shared that a series of rapes and feminicides in the country had raised social awareness and put gender issues on the social agenda. Others mentioned #metoo, demonstrations and flash mobs. One respondent says that the coming-out of several celebrities has shaken things up.

Figure 23  
Gender diversity of actors in premieres (season 2022–2023)

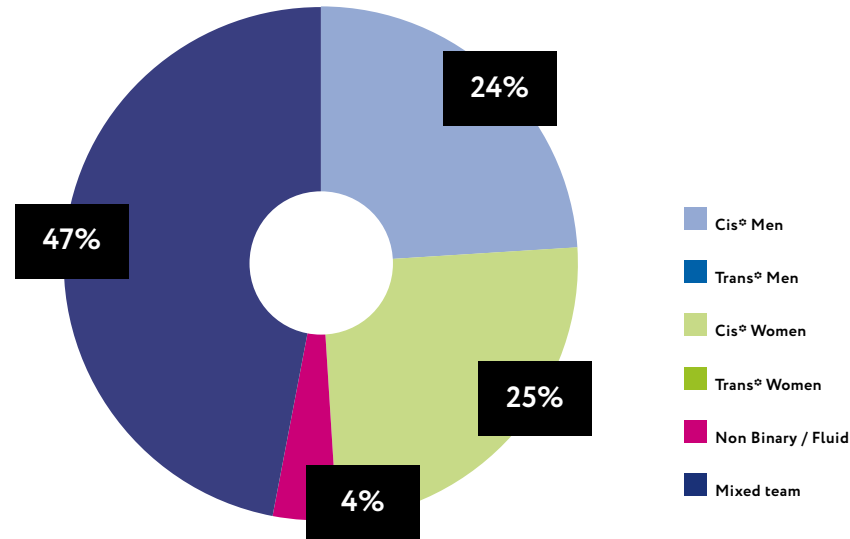
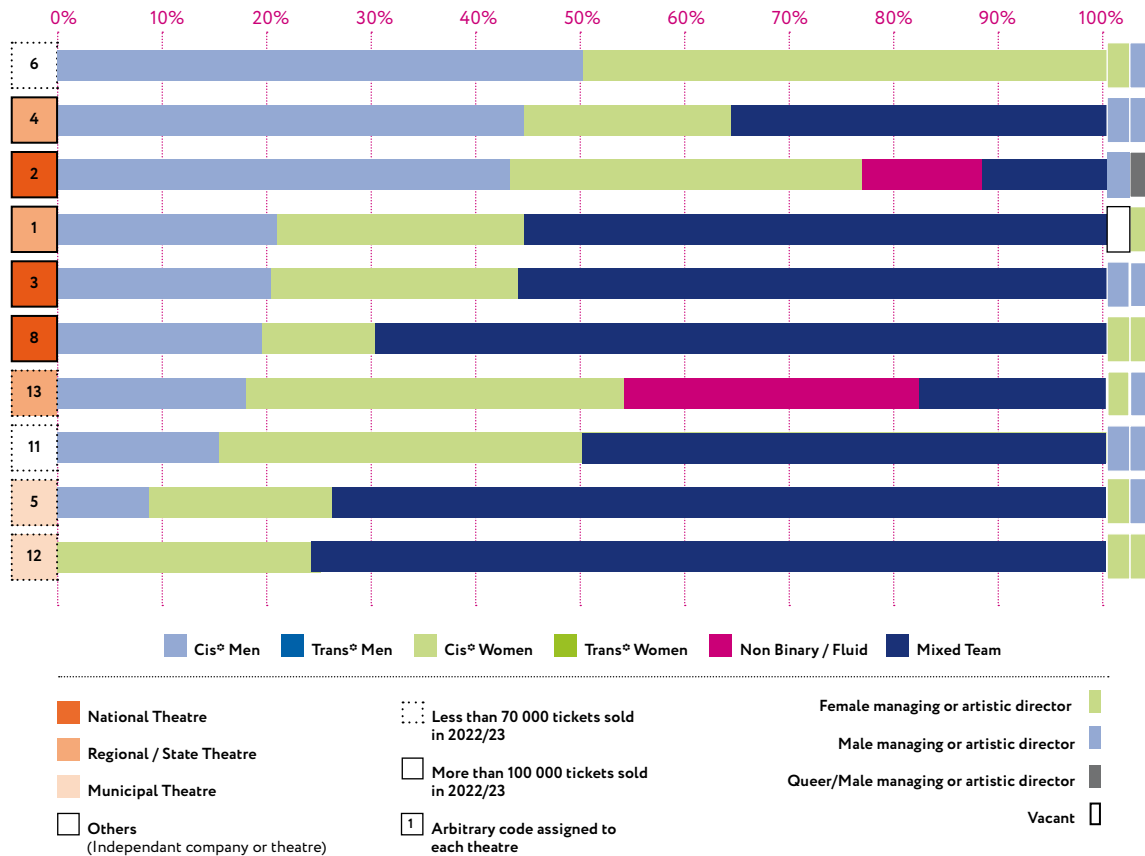


Figure 24  
Gender diversity of actors in the premieres for each theatre (season 2022–2023)



### 3.7.2. Factors hindering diversity in the political and social context

Six participating theatres consider that there have been elements that have disadvantaged gender diversity in their country.

These respondents stress that the traditional structures of society persist. These are historical inequalities (one institution explicitly referred to the Soviet era) that are difficult to change. These traditional structures can also be found in the theatre sector and are just as difficult to change.

A number of respondents also mentioned homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexism on the part of society and political representatives. One respondent felt that these attitudes were also widespread among colleagues over 40 in the theatre sector. Finally, one person mentioned the murder of a drag performer and queer activist as a factor that hindered diversity but did not explain further about the consequences this crime had on the cultural sector. Is it because queer performers censured themselves? Is it because theatres now hesitate to programme queer artists for security matters? Is it because the cultural context is more tense?

Working conditions in the cultural sector also have an impact. For example, one person pointed out that the precarious status of women artists and theatre professionals in general does not encourage equality.

Finally, geopolitical events also have an impact. The war with Russia is reducing the number of men in theatres because they are mobilized in Ukraine. A terrorist attack in 2022 targeting LGBTQIA+ people prompted the Slovak government to tighten laws and establish some form of censorship on the media and cultural organizations.

### 3.7.3. Elements promoting diversity in theatres themselves

Eight theatres have developed initiatives to promote diversity among the people they employ.

Several theatres developed a strategy plan to promote women’s careers. The measures cited include improving hiring processes (sometimes monitored by female observers), setting a quota of at least 33% women in each team within the institution, drafting a code of ethics, and establishing salary scales based on positions rather than gender. Some establishments

go as far as hiring a diversity officer or creating a position of gender adviser for the artistic director.

Training, awareness-raising and/or networking are also part of the measures taken. For example, one theatre mentions the creation of regular meetings or events by and for women and queer people. Another establishment organized discussions on sexism, LGBTQIA+ issues and #metoo, and took part in the pride festival. Another institution has set up conferences and workshops for employees. These training sessions are sometimes organized in collaboration with external organizations such as the German Woman Council or Human Rights Education.

Seven theatres have developed measures to promote diversity in management and executive positions.

For the most part, the measures are identical to those described for employees. Strategic plans, codes of ethics, 33% team quotas and training, for example, also concern management.

One theatre has developed specific workshops for managers, raising their awareness of national laws on diversity and inclusion, such as the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) in Germany. In this institution, women's representatives are regularly consulted, particularly during recruitment. This establishment underlines that it is increasingly interested in and thinking about sustainable development.

In another theatre, the artistic director has come out of the closet in a bid to encourage artists, employees and members of the public to, quote, "experience their authentic selves".

Ten theatres have developed initiatives to promote diversity in their programming.

Several theatres have deliberately programmed shows that address issues of gender, diversity and equality. Sometimes this involves a policy of numbers. For example, two institutions reported that they were making an effort to programme more shows on these themes and more women's shows. One of them even pointed out that the 2022-2023 season was the first to programme more shows directed by women than by men. Two establishments mentioned a show on LGBTQIA+ issues that they had produced and promoted.

Sometimes this is coupled with a focus on diversity among the artists presenting these shows. For one of the shows on LGBTQIA+ issues mentioned above, the theatre invited a non-binary director to produce it. It will be performed by professional and non-professional LGBTQIA+ people.

Sometimes this becomes a real programming strategy. One theatre has recently hired a new artistic director who is introducing a new direction in programming. Another institution says it is developing a plan to better reflect gender diversity in programming.

A number of theatres are developing initiatives for their staff. These include themed events, on days such as International Women's Rights Day. Another institution is trying to set up an internal project to raise employees' awareness of these issues.

Finally, one theatre used inclusive language for the first time in its call for applications, inviting male, female and non-binary directors and artists to apply, and in the promotional material for the programme.

## Qualitative section

### 4.1. Introduction

The aim of the study is to describe gender relations in the performing arts sector in Europe, based on the ETC's network. In this report, we mainly develop the questions raised in the quantitative study about the factors that promote or hinder gender equality, equity and parity in the country and in the theatres. The aim is also to highlight the experiences and concerns of the participants of the study, in order to see both convergences and divergences depending on the context.

In this report, we use the notion of "gender" in the constructivist acceptance given by Judith Butler in her book *Gender trouble*<sup>1</sup>. According to the author, biological sex is itself socially constructed. In other words, sex is understood based on the social dynamics. Although gender and sex are socially constructed, they exist materially and produce norms. According to the author, gender produces discourses that construct sex as something natural. In her book, Butler theorizes the "performativity of gender". By stating the child's sex at birth, a performative statement is created, a situation that produces constraints and performances on the person concerned. In other words, for example, a child who is born and designated by a particular discourse as "male" will have to submit to the norms and performativity of the "male" category.

<sup>1</sup> Butler J., 2006, *Gender trouble*, Routledge (first edition).

Gender, then, is an effect of discourse and power carried by institutions. According to the author's analysis, to be a "man" or a "woman" implies a need to repeat all the time, every day, attitudes considered "masculine" or "feminine", which allows us to describe and analyse gender stereotypes and the way they come to structure, in this case, the performing arts sector. Therefore, in the report we understood "gender" as the product of norms embodied in performative discourses. For examples: "a real man doesn't cry", "a real woman likes having children", etc. Performance is internalized and subjugated. The performance that reproduces gender is therefore always at the same time performative. Butler, inspired by Foucault, makes gender an effect of power.

According to Nicole Claude Mathieu<sup>2</sup> (2014), these categories are social constructions developed to organize and control social relations

<sup>2</sup> Mathieu N-C., 2014, *L'Anatomie politique 2*, Paris, La dispute.



and power relationships. These dynamics of categorization imposed by social structures and cultural institutions maintain and reproduce gender inequalities.

Moreover, in the interviews we conducted, our interlocutors addressed both issues related to feminism and femininity. Those two concepts are not to be confused. Feminism refers to social and cultural political movements that aim to promote equality between people and combat gender-based discrimination; whereas femininity refers to predefined characteristics, behaviours and appearances attributed to people categorized as women.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Sepulchre S., 2021, *Dis c'est quoi le genre?, La renaissance du Livre.*

## 4.2. Methodology

The qualitative part of the research, based on 22 biographical interviews<sup>4</sup> (19 women and 3 men; based on gender self-declarations), aims to delve deeper into questions of gender diversity in the performing arts sector from the perspective of lived experience. Based on the testimonies gathered, the aim is to highlight crosscutting issues and important questions. More specifically, these in-depth interviews enabled us to:

- » Examine the careers of women artists at the crossroads of power relations, and to identify the difficulties and resources encountered.
- » Describe and understand how, through their discourse and practices, institutions play a part in reproducing and/or transforming social relations of power.
- » Identify some actual transformations of the sector about inclusivity and some levers for change.
- » Place an emphasis on experiences from people working in theatre in countries or roles that have typically been overlooked.

The discussions were facilitated in English by Visio conference, based on an interview guide that had to be adapted to each profile, which were very different, and to each context (institutions, country...). Our rigour criteria were based mainly on the cross-referencing of data, the plurality of viewpoints gathered, and the collaborative dynamic of our study. We made the choice of anonymity in consultation with the interviewees, in an environment where, on the one hand, everyone knows each other from near and far, and where, on the other hand, networks and reputations play a key role in careers. For this reason, we will not mention people's names, but rather their function and/or the part of Europe (sometimes the country)

<sup>4</sup> All the interviewees are members of ETC who gave us their contact and the authorisation to contact them.

from which they share their experience and expertise. Most interlocutors were mid-career, in their forties. A few were in their early thirties and a few over fifty.

The interview guide included the following themes and questions:

### a) What is your professional trajectory (from the choice of studies to the positions you currently hold) in the performing arts sector?

- » What opportunities/supports have you encountered during your professional trajectory?
- » What obstacles have hindered your trajectory and goals?
- » Concrete examples of the opportunities/supports and obstacles.

If the term "discrimination" is mentioned, explore this aspect further.

As a woman in theatre, how do you experience gender (in)equality?

- » How do you experience discrimination/inequality in your daily life?
- » Have you experienced discrimination in your professional career?
- » Have you done anything (during your career) to fight gender inequality?
- » Has this had any impact on your career?

Some studies have shown that women having positions of responsibility are not always considered (by society, the board of directors, the political) as legitimate (or even competent) in that position. As a director, have you ever had to face up this kind of questioning?

- » Do you think gender equality/inequality issues influence artistic creation?
- » Does being a woman/man/non-binary (etc.) influence your art? And/or your perception of art?
- » Concrete examples?
- » Do you have any project that you consider to be innovative or on the edge? Which one?
- » What are the projects that you would like to share as part of this study?
- » Which projects have been the most difficult to set up?

Managing private and professional:

- » How do you manage your private and professional life?
- » If relevant, parenthood/maternity issues

**b) If director position/stage director position:**

- » Can you share your experience in the field of directing?
- » Can you share your experience in the field of stage directing?
- » As a female director or stage director, do you feel a responsibility to advocate for solutions against gender inequalities in the sector of the performing arts?
- » What kind of funding do you have access to (private, public, details - ongoing, project-based)?
- » How has the accessibility to funding been? Glass ceiling?

**c) What management and team animation methods have you implemented?**

- » Heritage versus changes
- » How does decision-making take place within the theatre/the institution?
- » As a director/stage director, how do you envision the daily management of your team?
- » How would you describe the hierarchical relationships within the team?
- » Have you encountered challenges as a director/stage director within your team?

**d) Gender equality:**

- » How do you perceive the issue of equality between men and women in a general sense?
- » ! Be mindful of non-binary considerations

**Bias and stereotypes:**

- » Can you describe how gender stereotypes can influence professional opportunities at different levels, whether as actress or as director, etc. depending on your background?
- » Concrete examples

**Then specifically in the Theatre World?**

- » Do you believe that gender equality should be a central concern in the performing arts? Yes or no, and why?
- » Is it one of your main concerns as director?
- » Link with personal trajectories

**e) How would you describe the current landscape of artistic direction in European theatres? (Focus on gender-related issues)**

- » What specific actions do you think should be implemented?
- » What potential barriers exist against concrete actions to address gender inequalities?
- » Are you aware of initiatives or public policies aimed at promoting equality in your country/region? How do you perceive them?
- » What are the obstacles to overcome to achieve a greater equality between men and women in the theatre sector?

## 4.3. Study participants

→ Table 8 – Country and Institution

→ Table 9 – Functions in the theatre (in brackets: people who have several functions)

→ Table 10 – Number of people from the country who participated

## 4.4. Historical and contextual dimensions

Our research took place in various European countries. We interviewed 22 people from 12 different countries, all members of ETC. Each interview revealed different contexts, experiences and priorities, influenced by the specific history of each country. This makes it difficult to formulate uniform recommendations.

The relationship with public policies, in particular, is necessarily historically situated. In certain contexts, fear is expressed about the possibility of state intrusion into management methods (imposing, for example, gender equality quotas in certain positions). Concretely, that this kind “state intrusion”, as named by the interlocutors, would open the door to control over content and commitments, and to a loss of freedom already experienced in the past. We were able to observe a still vivid memory of certain events in the interviews with our interlocutors.

### 4.4.1. National roots and relationship with Europe

All our interviewees were keen to situate their comments in relation to the specific history of their country in terms of gender relations (patriarchy, influence of religious referents, political regimes...). These specific roots have also guided our reflections on the relationship between public

Table 8  
Country and Institution

Country	Name of the institution
Croatia	Not mentioned
Serbia	National Theatre Belgrade
Slovakia	Slovak National Theatre
Austria	Freelance
Cyprus	Independent director
Romania	Marin Sorescu, National theatre of Craiova
Romania	Independent director
Germany	Deusches Theater
Italy	Teatro Stabile di Torino
Latvia	Dailes Theater
Greece	National Theatre of Greece
Ukraine	Lesia Ukrainka Theatre
Portugal	Teatro Stabile di Torino, National Theatre

Table 9  
Functions in the theatre (in brackets: people who have several functions)

Function	Number of people with several functions
Theatre director	4
Artistic director	2
Stage director	(1)
Program director / Programming	4
Playwright	2 (2)
Dramaturgy assistant	4
Actress/Actor	1 (1)
Project manager	1
International relations manager	1 (1)
Audience mediator	1
Responsible for women's representative body	1 (1)
Communication manager	1
Total	22 (Adding = 28)

policy and the regulation of issues of inclusion and parity in the performing arts sector. Reflections on the question of freedoms (of expression, creation, management, etc.) in particular are rooted in past and/or relatively contemporary experiences, such as communism, wars and dictatorships. European history must therefore be written in the plural.

For example, when it comes to concerns about contemporary theatre in Ukraine, war is immediately a given. Despite the conflict, life in the theatre goes on, but **the war has multiple impacts**, as our interlocutor from this country explained to us:

*“Our theatre worked as a shelter for internally displaced people and also, we organized buses which people used to come to the Polish border from Lviv. Because Lviv was a big humanitarian centre, when the full-scale invasion started, people from the eastern part of Ukraine came here, and we needed to find a way for them to stay, or to go on to the West. (...) Also, we continue doing a lot of voluntary work to support our defenders, our army and people who lost their homes because of Russian aggression. Four of my colleagues and our colleagues became Ukrainian defenders; it is 12 of our actors, one of our lighting designers and one of our sound engineers. They joined the Ukrainian Armed Forces and now defend us on the front line. (...) Very often, we need to stop our performances when the alarm goes off. Every time we need to go to a bomb shelter with all our people. So, of course, the situation changed our work”.*

– Interlocutor from Ukraine

Our interlocutors also shared with us stories of historical events that have shaped, and continue to shape, specific practices in their theatres. An interlocutor from the East of Europe explains:

*“Obviously, my country is very close to Russia, and we have very difficult relationship with Russia, especially, I mean, we were occupied by them twice, and this kind of machismo of this very strong masculine figure, (...) was especially dominant during the Soviet times. (...) It's a kind of quasi-traditional family structure, in which the male is the breadwinner, and there is always action, direction, and the woman is always more inert, or she's preserving, you know, all the stereotypes. In our societies, this is still present. (...) or the method, or the tradition, about this kind of genius who came, who tortured, but did and made good art. (...) The artistic genius who can shout and demand and be possibly physically abusive, and it's fine, because it's part of the process”.*

Table 10  
Number of people from the country who participated

Country	Participating people
Croatia	1
Serbia	1
Slovakia	3
Austria	1
Cyprus	1
Romania	2
Germany	4
Italy	3
Latvia	1
Greece	3
Ukraine	1
Portugal	1
Total	A total of 22 people took part in the study

On his side, an interlocutor from the South of Europe explained:

*“After the dictatorship, one of the heritages was silence. They say it a lot here. They have this cultural thing of ‘Don’t talk about things and be quiet’, because it was the silent dictatorship. You never knew if your neighbour was a spy”.*

Those extracts illustrate how **history and national traumas** have shaped attitudes, notably, in Southern and Eastern Europe. These experiences, though past, continue to influence the way societies think and live today reflecting the complex dynamics of collective memory. These experiences have left their mark on the basic needs that our interviewees claim. One of them, who works in a Theatre in Eastern Europe, expresses her fear of state interference in Theatre programming:

*“We have artistic integrity. We are also strongly against any kind of institution that gives us money to determine what kind of things we should say. However, we support European values, but I think that especially for artistic institutions, your actions, your programming, everything that you say..., it shouldn’t be affected or determined by specific institutions that are giving you money”.*

The choice of vocabulary used by our interviewee is important to note. She doesn’t use the term artistic freedom, but rather integrity. The word “integrity” is in itself charged with history. Integrity refers to the moral and ethical quality of an individual. Whereas freedom refers to the ability to act, think and express opinions without external constraints.

Moreover, depending on the context, issues of gender discrimination may not appear to be a priority. In Cyprus, for example, the most pressing issue for our interlocutor seems to be the recognition of the status of artist for both men and women. It would enable them to work in a less precarious daily life:

*“I listen to all the Scandinavians and Germans, and I laugh sometimes, because for us, gender is like the least of our problems. I mean, I don’t want to downgrade it, because it’s obviously important, but first, we need to be able to make theatre and to be funded. (...) There are major structural issues, major identity issues for artists, because it’s like, we’re all considered to not really be doing anything important. So, this is the first thing in our agenda, to be visible as artists and as working in art”.*

The **relationships with Europe**, situated in specific historical and contemporary contexts, also influence the national dynamics in terms of political orientations about gender. Both self-perceptions as Europeans and concerns about self-image within Europe seem to have impact on decision-making, as one of our interlocutors from the East of Europe said:

*“From our generation, we have this perspective about being actually in between these two worlds, in between these two empires, always having to adapt as people, as nation. (...) We are **second-rank citizens**, (...) sometimes it’s our fault; sometimes it’s the society that’s not going as fast as we should be. So, this is kind of a struggle about who we are in this bigger frame”.*

Another interlocutor from the South of Europe explains: **“We have to show that we are progressive”**, insisting on this staging aimed at European partners and more broadly in terms of image on the European political scene.

#### 4. 4. 2. #Me-too and the impact of feminist struggles

Our research took place following the singular space-time of liberation and visibility of women’s and minorities speech on issues of ordinary sexism, sexual harassment and assault via the #Me-too movement<sup>5</sup> as well as the various movements of claims, creations and critical thoughts in the associative, artistic and academic fields on racial and decolonial issues. This momentum had a strong influence on the discourses and practices of protest in the performing arts sector. The new visibility and scope of these movements, notably via social networks, but also new collectives of struggles formed, are part of the context of our survey. Of course, depending on the country, the movement has not had the same scale in terms of mobilization and impact. In several countries, however, studies have been carried out, changes have taken place within cultural institutions and in some cases, public policies on gender equality issues have been put in place (or reinforced if they already existed).

All the interviewees highlighted the **correlated impact of #Me-too movements, social mobilisations, research** as factors of awareness and change. For example, several interviewees pointed out that answering the ETC questionnaire (the quantitative part of our study) and going through the interview process had given them food for thought and, in some cases, made them aware of how far they still had to go in terms of equality and non-discrimination.

*“Yes, I definitely think that the exposure of the studies, the Me-too movement, all of these things, that there is just a very, more of a keen awareness”*  
– Interlocutor from Austria

*“We’ve been talking about gender equality at our artistic councils, which are taking place weekly. Obviously, we are noticing, if we’re thinking about certain artists, directors, set designers, or choreographers, that they are predominantly male. Then we start to trigger ourselves and the same applies in terms of the selection of dramaturgy. **After this survey, very obviously we don’t have very good statistics...** I know, but we now try to have a more nuanced way: what are the characters that are represented, what kind of problems, what kind of demographics they’re representing. **We are more aware and there is a shift in terms of our composition of people that are in the decision-making at the artistic council; our agenda and ideas are a bit more nuanced.**”*

– Interlocutor from Latvia

The #Me-too movement is also presented as part of **generational issues**, which we’ll come back to later, in the meaning of age (the “younger generations” having a heightened awareness of inequalities and, for the most part, a thirst for change) and of **momentum** (international convergences on the subject).

*“The beginning was the Me-too debate: concerning sexual situations, **creating visibility for women, for victims of abused**. This created movements that are more progressive. And obviously, it led to a questioning of the status quo. How are we living at the moment? And I think there is also maybe a generation thing. There are new people who are in charge now”*

– Interlocutors from Germany

This “momentum”, in line with what was set out in the previous point, is also driven by the need for the sector to appear “modern” and “progressive”. The idea is to show a great image, particularly towards partners on the international scene, with a relative consensus, despite divergences, on the need to take the issues made visible by the #Me-too movement seriously.

*“And that also meant that more and more people were demanding change and starting to debate. Also, like a debate about culture in organizations. What is having a modern culture in an organization?”*

– Interlocutor from Germany

<sup>5</sup> Tarana Burke launched the movement in 2006. She was working with disadvantaged people in New York. She wanted to show victims that they were not alone (<https://metoomvmt.org/get-to-know-us/tarana-burke-founder/>). A few years later, the movement gained international momentum following the #Me-too hashtag launched by actress Alyssa Milano in connection with the Weinstein affair, inviting victims of harassment, sexual assault and rape to free their word. On the historicity of these movements and the invisibilisation of Afro-descendant women in struggle, read in particular Onwuachi-Willig A., 2018, “What about #UsToo? The Invisibility of Race in the #MeToo Movement”, 128, Yale Law Journal Forum, 105-120.



The visibility of violence has an impact on **the reputation** of individuals, teams and, more broadly, institutions, which then becomes a potential tool in support of change.

*“And also, it’s important to say that theatres also talk to each other and people who work at the theatre are talking to other people working in other institutions. So, in the last years, there have been a lot of situations that got public where things got wrong in theatres. And there was also a lot of public outrage. It was a **wave of outrage**, and the problems were suddenly discussed openly. And that meant that the Senate, as the higher level of power responsible for these institutions, didn’t have a choice. They had to think about how to deal with these problems”.*

*— Interlocutor from Germany*

Of course, our interlocutors have emphasized the fact that societies are plural, made up of positions that are sometimes widely opposed, traversed by **power relations**. It’s all about struggle.

*“Of course, there are still conservative forces, conservative people who want to get back to how the situation was before. **But in the end, the voice of the people who protest or who are even victims of the systems, they get louder.**”*

*— Interlocutor from Latvia*

*“Of course, before Me-too, there had already been discussions: why does this woman have to be naked on stage, what does it bring to the performance, and so on. But with the first Me Too, **scandals suddenly start to be louder**, and it was about misuse of power. Suddenly the links between the different cases became obvious. It was all over the social media, the friendship groups, all over the society and people who thought that no one would ever believe them suddenly felt that it was possible to be believed. And on the other hand, in your friendship groups, or in your social groups, you suddenly realize that everyone has an opinion. And that some opinions were maybe surprising. And this already led to a larger debate in society with people disagreeing with each other. Because suddenly you are noticing that maybe your friend doesn’t particularly find it terrible when a woman is being touched inappropriately at work. And then, so your annoyance or your rage about it grows and grows. And then you start talking more about it. And you start seeing the links between the different topics, between **power, between sex, between money, between art**. And so suddenly, it*

*becomes something that is much more visible in the general society. And obviously there are still the voices that are maybe more traditional or more conservative, but the voices of the people who are touched by the topics have become louder”*

*— Interlocutors from Germany*

This reflexive awareness not only supports the transformation processes underway, but also makes us aware of **the impact of inequality, discrimination and violence on people and their careers**. Violence, particularly sexual and moral violence, leaves no one untouched (whether people are reproducing the system or, on the contrary, trying to do things differently or at least to do something about the violence experienced). These consequences are both individual and collective, in terms of their scale and awareness of structural dysfunctions.

Finally, several of our interviewees also express concern about **the fragility of current victories** and the many battles still to be fought, drawing our attention to the **deep cultural roots of patriarchy** as well as to changes on the surface, particularly in relation to self-image and reputation. The notion of **“purple washing”** sums up the tensions between the need to appear progressive, and the work that has to be done for long-term and structural change.

*“Mansplaining is deeply embedded across society, even in my family, you know? I don’t know if it’s the correct word in English, but these kind of gender problems are very deep because of our cultural roots. (...) In cultural work, for example, with men leading organisations, they choose women, like female directors or female actresses, or young as well, **just to have a tick**. Okay, I have a female on my list, because they must do it. It’s like purple washing sometimes.”*

*— Interlocutor from the South of Europe*

Moreover, the ongoing transformations focusing on visibility and accountability were above all described to us on several occasions as driven by fear and not by a genuine desire for change within the sector.

*“There’s awareness gained for the fact that it’s very white and male. I hope it’s structural. I’m not sure. Like, oh, we can’t show up with 10 male directors. That’s just not possible. I hope it’s a structural change, but at the moment, **it sometimes feels a little bit, yeah, driven by fear.**”*

*— Interlocutor from Austria*

## 4.5. Looking at sector through gender lens

Before going deeper into gender issues, it is worth noticing that although the initial request for this report focused on gender issues, and even more specifically on parity between men and women, most of our interlocutors immediately insist on including **class issues** in their observations. Several women in positions of responsibility put forward a non-discriminatory experience, although they did express the view that the situation was quite different for women in more subordinate positions. Moreover, interlocutors highlight that gender inequalities are closely linked to **cultural issues and roots**, as well as to the precariousness of the performing arts sector.

**LGBTQIA+** issues were also discussed on numerous occasions. In particular, to highlight the enormous amount of work that remains to be done in this area, towards both institutions and the audience.

Lastly, issues relating to **racial discrimination and the whiteness of stages** and, more broadly, of institutions, were also raised on several occasions as one of the battles of the future.

### 4.5.1. Gendered trajectories

As one of our female interlocutors said: “My trajectory started when I was a teenager and I fell in love with theatre. Of course, **I wanted to be an actress in the first moment, because those are the people that you see the most.** Because all the other people, especially women, are invisible”. Trajectories are shaped by elements specific to singular histories (family histories, experiences, encounters...), but also **gender stereotypes** (“too fat to be an actress”, “not a job for women”...) and visibility of women and minorities on public stages (which brings us back to the issue of **representation**). Our interlocutors clearly expressed their desire for women and minorities to take their place, to **make their voices heard**, notably through writing, dramaturgy and directing, to tell other stories, or to tell the stories of classical theatre in a different way.

As reported in the quantitative section entitled “Factors that promote or hinder diversity in the country and in theatres”, all our interlocutors highlighted the contextual elements relating to the traditional structures of society that persist, notably the deep roots of patriarchy, the dynamics of homophobia and class relations. The performing arts sector was presented to us as a **reflection of societies and the power relationships within them.**

*“So, as a woman, I have a very long-distance stories with discrimination. You know, all over the country, in my opinion, we have to take a lot of steps to have equality in all kinds of jobs. So, for us, we are lucky to work in a cultural field, with the power to discuss everything. But sometimes, you know, the structure has a hierarchy. In our board, there is only one woman. This kind of fact is all over in the teaching world, in the university world, etc.”*

*– Interlocutor from the South of Europe*

*“It’s not that we feel that we are on the margins. **You can see that there is a patriarchy and there is always an extra effort that a woman has to do.** It’s not necessarily that somebody talks badly, or that there is sexual abuse or something. I haven’t experienced something like that. I’m very honest. But there are a lot of things that are happening below. And there’s a long way to go to leave all this prejudice of the past behind, all these things that we were used to accepting because we were women”.*

*– Interlocutor from the South of Europe*

**Asserting oneself as a woman** – particularly as a young woman – in a male-dominated world remains a major preoccupation for many, with numerous obstacles, whether in terms of legitimacy, credibility and recognition, or in day-to-day work.

*“When I encounter, I’d say, men over 35 in the rehearsal room, there is a high chance that there is a grand scepticism, so like a scepticism about what I’m going to do here, which I partially understand, right? (...) But I’ve encountered this scepticism, or also a sort of like a testing. It’s just sometimes a little bit annoying or like just a bit of a waste of our time. Then I’m like, okay, first I have to work over your scepticism then to be able to work with you. It’s a generalization because not all of them were like that, for example between men over 35, and then men my age... I would also say I’m quite a serious person and I sort of used my intellect very much to prove that I’m worthy of the job, but that I know what I’m talking about. For myself, I definitely need to come across as someone that you take seriously and knows what she is. And then I think also with the **technical staff**, I definitely feel I have to..., like **you must have a certain level of authority to show that no one can walk over you** in some sense. I think it’s also like a bodily presence, right, like in a certain way instead of being attentive, and maybe, again, these things happen anyway. **They might not take you as a partner in conversation as quickly.**”*

*– Young stage director*

Female interviewees in management positions express the difficulties they encounter in their day-to-day dealings with teams, particularly with older white men and with technical teams, who often find it hard to take them seriously and adopt **postures of defiance and resistance** to change. This daily gymnastics is made of tricks, compromises and patience, and causes a lot of fatigue and wasted time.

*“Every day you encounter this kind of effort that you have to put into, for example, **about the way you communicate with your collaborators**. If you want to employ your own female gaze, it’s a different type of work. It’s not just like, okay, now we’re going to work in a total harmony. It’s like resistance. And then you must go through the resistance to get to the safe place to work. So it’s more like abstract. It’s not like I had a man who told me ‘You will not do it’. It’s more about the way of thinking. The higher you go in the power struggle, the more obstacles you have. You go through a lot of resistance, if you want to change the model”*

—Female artistic director

Moreover, **women often find themselves trapped in** highly stereotyped **expectations** about their supposed gender. They are expected both to perform their assigned gender (through feminist positions, so-called feminine attitudes, particularly in relation to care...) and to distance themselves from it by demonstrating a certain assertiveness and reproducing the system identically in its modus operandi.

*“They are expected to somehow produce feminist work. Or their work must relate to their experiences as women. It’s a bit limiting because... Ok, I’m going to put it in a simplistic way, **because men can do what they want, whereas women have to behave well because they’re women and they’ve faced so much discrimination that they should somehow have learned something out of this. And also, be more progressive. They’re expected to be more progressive feminist”***

—Interlocutor from the South of Europe

Several of our interviewees also highlighted the fact that women are not given the opportunity to work **in high value jobs** and are even discouraged from trying to find a place in them. In addition, if they do get them, they explained that they must work twice as hard to disprove the preconceived notions.

*“Because even at the university, we were 60 people studying theatre as dramaturges and 55 we were women. Because men were about to become directors or something more important than dramaturges who are by the side of the male director. When I came to the National Theatre there wasn’t really a drama department. And there were a lot of men working as stage directors. And I always remember **one of them that told me, what are you doing in theatre, you are not a director, you are not an actress, you are not a stage designer, you are not even an assistant, and plus you are a girl. And he said that he told me this to protect me, to inform me that this is not a nice field for a young girl to play on.**”*

—Female dramaturge

*“I also worked a lot in the independent sector and of course there are a lot of female directors there, because **we were pushed out from the money**. The places that actually have money, like large national institutions, you can’t find women there.”*

—Female director in public theatre

*“If you are a woman, and you want to be a director, it’s not so easy, because the idea that directing is a **men’s profession** is very popular.*

—Female director in public theatre

In addition, the various struggles within the sector and the feminist movements in the countries concerned are both creating new opportunities for women (the question of parity is now often a formal or informal preoccupation within cultural institutions), but at the same time raising new questions about the legitimacy of women’s presence and skills. On the one hand, they say that they are suspected of having obtained their position “only because they are women”, and therefore of having to prove themselves even more, and, on the other hand, of being trapped in highly stereotyped expectations.

*“There have been theatres who actively have said, we are looking for female directors, like who clearly are trying to..., who probably have a very male-dominated pool, and now it’s this theme, and they’re like, oh, God. They say we want you because you make feminist sort of queer themed theatre, those themes are interesting, or are important to you, and we want that. So I definitely think it’s actually mainly at the moment, at least, has been to my advantage. But I think that’s a very specific point in time. I think if you had asked someone 10 years ago, or even five years ago, that*



*was a different thing, in my experience. I think they even said we wanted a young female director to open the season, or the first season which is a double-edged sword, right, because I also would like people to like my work, and not just because I'm female, but on the other hand, I mean, it's also helpful"*

*—Artistic director*

#### **4.5.2. Intersection between gender and generational issues**

Our interlocutors described, in a relatively transversal way, **strong generational tensions**. These generational tensions highlight important cross-cutting issues: power relationships, conservatism, visions of what culture should be... Beyond the ages as such, a changing cultural context is taking shape, where worldviews - and, within that, pedagogies, working methods and gender relations - collide. On a day-to-day basis, conceptions that are difficult to reconcile clash, particularly regarding interpersonal relations, language, body and intimacy, work and teaching content and methods, etc.

These generational tensions have often been illustrated to us by the figure of the white man, perceived as an "art genius" occupying de facto positions of responsibility, with women, especially young women, as potential troublemakers of an established order, less legitimate in their presence and in the functions occupied:

*"As a woman, you are supposed to nurture the other person's genius. And usually, you have the male genius and the female nurture. Of course it's a social thing"*

*—Female dramaturge*

*"So, for example, the older generation didn't know how to work with women. It's not their fault. They didn't know how to use us. And there is also this idea that the director has the answers for everything and that they know everything". "Our director, when she debuted, was only 27 years old. All the headlines in the press were something like how this young and tiny woman will run the theatre"*

*—Female dramaturge*

Although studies show that there are more women in art schools, the sector is described as a world of middle-class white men of a certain age whose habits are disturbed by the relatively new presence of women in positions of responsibility. As this female theatre director explains:

*"Those men are 50. They have some problems, because they are used in their tasks to work only with men. And when you're a woman, and you direct, it can be very difficult to do it".*

*—Female director*

At the same time, many of our interviewees have expressed their desire to change, or have already changed, old ways of doing things. However, their desire to transform theatrical practices and management methods, particularly in terms of gender equality, encounter lots of resistance:

*"The director sits at the top and sometimes there is this blueprint of the hierarchy of professions. And the patriarchy. And things coincide. And it's a bit off-putting when you realize how you are expected to do so many things"*

*—Female dramaturgy assistant*

We also see the perpetuation of dynamics in which women are relegated to support roles, **locked up into the figure of "care" and subordinate positions**:

*"I was the youngest one and maybe the only girl or there were a few, but I was the only girl of my structure who was hosting the meeting. So, one of my colleagues asked for water and everyone started to look at me, why me?"*

*—Female international relation manager*

In addition to having to deal with a limiting structure, several of our interviewees describe the **daily burden of paternalistic attitudes**, particularly from colleagues in positions of authority. Their skills, due to the intertwining of gender and age relations, are perpetually questioned, and they must redouble their efforts to prove the legitimacy of their presence:

*"Concerning the authority of your point of view and the possibility to express it in freedom. When you're both young and a woman, it is very difficult"*

*—Female communication manager*

*"There's always someone older than you that must explain to you how things should be done. Of course, now, this is better because I'm older"*

*—Female international relation manager*

*“I’ve definitely encountered this scepticism, like a testing”*

*—Young female theatre director*

### 4.5.3. Gender shaped narratives

The question of narratives – what is told, by whom, for whom, with whom and how – was presented to us as a key lever for transforming the sector towards greater inclusivity, but also for transforming society by working on representations. On the one hand, many insisted on the responsibility they have from the positions they occupy (**they have a voice**, they can make things happen, even if it is small things). On the other hand, they insisted on the impact that theatre can have on society. All the interlocutors believe that there is room for manoeuvre, and that **working on representations is important:**

*“I have power because I’m an author. Because I have a world. Because I invite you in my world”*

*—Female playwright*

In concrete terms, this means **supporting women’s creative potential** –

*“I feel it’s important to work with young female playwrights and to help them express themselves and communicate and share their work”*

*—Theatre director*

– as well as tackling sensitive issues with the necessary finesse, such as violence against women, and revisiting the classics from a critical gender perspective.

*“Another thing is the representation of violence and rape on the stage, which is also very important, and especially now, because of course, in Serbia and Balkans, and Italy, for example, as I know, the femicide rates are crazy, and there is a lot of violence against women, domestic violence, and it’s becoming more visible. I feel like it was always like that, but now it’s just more visible, so it’s a responsibility in how you do it on stage. I mean, you have to represent it, I think it’s very important to talk about it, but how do we use our bodies to represent without re-dramatize, do another aggression. It’s important to show something. This is a very tricky question, **how do you represent violence, so I feel that’s a problem in European theatre too.** It it’s also very political, it’s very political”*

*— Artistic director*

*“So for the first show I did, it was initially written for a man and a woman, as a couple, and I decided to cast it with two women. The third project I did was a play about the themes of racism and also sexism and religion. And I work quite a lot with Shakespeare. And if there is a female role, where I think, oh, **that’s a problematic view of women, then I need to contextualize it so that the audience understands that problematic, or I change it.** I personally still want to go to Shakespeare, and have these themes, but still have a good time so that it remains a comedy and we can still laugh at it and then maybe at the same time learn a few things along the way”*

*—Theatre director*

*“I mean, already our first evening we had a kind of science-fiction production dealing with gender roles and it didn’t have one main character. It was the very first thing we showed here, the opening of the theatre, and we had a group, a **big group of actors of different genders standing together on stage**, rather than the traditional male lead actor that you usually have in traditional theatre. I think that also sends a message, if you open with something like that. For me, from my perspective, that is something that I really admire at the moment”*

*— Dramaturgy assistant*

Many of our interviewees also shared with us their concern, through storytelling, of tackling issues such as feminism, racism and LGBTQIA+ issues in a subtle way, to be accessible to as many people as possible and not cut off those in the audience who are not already committed to the cause. For example, telling stories where women are at the forefront can be done without the word “feminist” being mentioned in the show’s presentation.

*“**Feminist” here is specifically considered a very controversial word.** But when I look back on my choices, what did I work on? I did a play about a woman who cannot have children and is condemned by society. I also focused a lot on female-female relationships, and on the relationship between daughters and mothers in the plays. So when I look back, I was like, okay, in every performance I had some kind of feminist influence, but it was just emotional for me, it was not a deliberate choice.”*

*— Interlocutor from East of Europe*

*“With aggressive attitudes, you add to the fire, you make the fire bigger. Everybody says that women are hysterical, emotional... We have this*

*preconception that women are hysterical. So being on-the-nose, I don't know if it helps to fight for gender equality"*

*– Interlocutor from the South of Europe*

#### 4.5.4. LGBTQIA+

Many of our interviews testify to a genuine interest in LGBTQIA+ issues. The majority of our interviewees explored gender issues beyond traditional binary representations of the sexes, paying particular attention to **intersectional aspects**. However, it is essential to place questions of LGBTQIA+ representations in their historical and political context to fully understand specific national issues. For example, in several countries such as Greece, Romania, etc., homosexuality has only recently been decriminalized. As one Eastern European interviewee explains:

*"My country is one of the very last countries in the EU that doesn't have any legal support for families when the members are of the same sex".*

Although in many places there is more and more visibility, it is not the same everywhere, in all contexts, and in all countries. A director in Southern Europe confides,

*"We don't have visibility in the arts with LGBTQIA+ community... Here's open an audition, it will be either male or female, in a binary way, for example, there is no sensitivity yet."*

Despite these challenges, **the visibility of the LGBTQIA+ community is increasing**. Theatres and cinemas begin to explore **queer representations**, with a multiplication of shows addressing queer representations:

*"Now with more and more pressure made by more and more actors and actresses who come out, this visibility is multiplied by theatre directors creating shows that bring different kinds of queer representations" (Actor).*

The representation of LGBTQIA+ people on stage is a central concern in our interviews. Our interviewees questioned **how to embody these bodies, raising the case of transfake actors** on several occasions: The term "transfake" refers to a cisgender actor or actress who plays the role of a transgender person, which is often the subject of debate and controversy.

*"In my theatre, for one piece, we had a transfake actor. And a trans actress entered the stage and stopped the show. It was a very strong situation, with strong discourse and with all the trans community. (...) We really have this issue to work on." (Interlocutor from the South of Europe).*

These cases surrounding "transfake" actors overlap with other observations, raising essential questions about how to embody on stage bodies that escape binary gender categories, like who is legitimate to represent them, and how? We were told of a growing militancy in favour of visibility and a more adequate representation of queer people on stage, as well as lively reactions from the public. Part of the audience is in support of a fairer representation of queer identities. But our interlocutors also describe strong resistance to change with very conservative visions of family institutions and gender identities.

All our interlocutors express an urgent need for inclusivity and sensitivity towards LGBTQIA+ communities in the theatre. This includes the recognition and respectful representation of non-binary and transgender bodies, as well as the visibility of queer minorities and the fight against hierarchical structures and discriminatory attitudes.

## 4.6. Women's bodies, stereotypes and discriminations

### 4.6.1. Mental health, mental load and tiredness

The interviews we conducted reveal a reality shared by many women in contemporary European theatrical sector: **an increased mental burden and pressure, particularly felt by young women** evolving in a predominantly male environment that struggles to recognize them and give them a real place.

An artistic director in Eastern Europe confides:

*"I'm very aware of the fact that I'm a young female director. I'm very organized, I'm very structured, and I prep a lot and I work really hard. (...) I do this for people to immediately feel like, okay, she knows what she's talking about. I read a lot of books, and I quote a lot of books to show that I've done my reading, and when someone then questions me on something, I already have my answer prepped to be able to throw it back at them and say, no, I actually know my shit".*

This constant quest for validation and recognition weighs heavily on the daily lives of most of our interviewees. The constant need to prove their skills is exhausting. A playwright in Eastern Europe explains her situation:

*“This is something that I’ve experienced in my skin myself, **that women should do more** or be, let’s say, impeccable multitasking-wise. They should be experts in many fields. They have to do a lot of things, especially if you’re in a higher position”.*

*– Playwright in Eastern Europe*

This is due not only to the need to constantly demonstrate their professional skills, but also to the wider social and cultural pressure on women to take on multiple roles, resulting in mental burdens and fatigue. Several coping strategies are put in place in work environments where qualities and behaviours traditionally associated with the male gender are valued and considered necessary to gain respect and recognition:

*“I wasn’t like that from the beginning because I thought I have to be... like bossy and strict... I don’t know what is the ideal, but now with experience, I’m sure it’s not the dictatorial one. But I’m searching”*

*– A theatre director in Eastern Europe*

Testimonies also underline the need, as a woman, to work twice as hard to gain the same recognition as a man. An international relations agent in Southern Europe explains:

*“There is a lot of discrimination under cover, so the truth is that women in theatre, and not only in theatre as it was mentioned before, **must work twice or even more than a man in order to say ‘Ok, I can do that, I’m here’**”.*

*–International relations agent in Southern Europe*

These pressures generate palpable tensions in work teams, where women often take on the responsibility for care and unvalued, unpaid work. As one of our interviewees, an assistant director in Eastern Europe, explains:

*“I think as an assistant director, **people expect women to be more nurturing and more pleasant**. And they don’t really understand my job. (...) They ask us to be in these rehearsals, be present or work for them. If we do that*

*we have to be paid again, but we’re not. It’s already difficult financially...»*

*–Assistant director in Eastern Europe*

This situation generates **considerable stress and pressure**. Most of our interviewees mention problems with mental workload, fatigue and even burnout.

*“I think that we’re always having that in mind, that we have to be correct, that we have to take care of what we say, what we do, how do we present ourselves, that we are always ready to defend our work too”*

*–Female dramaturgy assistant*

An assistant director working in the independent sector shares a similar experience:

*“You’re underpaid, you have to be excellent, especially as a young woman, and then you have to apply another thing, another thing, another thing, and it goes on, like, I don’t know, until you burn out”.*

*–Assistant Director in the independent sector*

The interviews reveal a complex dynamic in which women, especially younger ones, have to navigate high expectations and multiple pressures to succeed in the European Theatre sector. It should be noted that **reproducing traditional gendered behaviours could be a survival strategy** in an environment where male models of leadership and success remain dominant. This reality calls for reflection on how to create theatrical environments that are more alert to the mental burdens borne by women. Considered part of their “nature”, women are more likely to be called upon to mother the rest of the staff, without any consideration for the work or financial compensation.

#### 4.6.2. Maternity issues

Motherhood appears to be a central challenge for women in the theatre sector and a major obstacle in their career development. One of our interviewees, a programmer in Eastern Europe, explains how she feels:

*“When you have a child, it is always different for women than for men. But I mean, it’s not different from other professions. (...) Most of the male theatre directors, they don’t have to take the responsibility of the child. They’re mainly patriarchal models. Their wife, they have children, and then*

*the husbands usually don't help in this case".*

*—Programmer in Eastern Europe*

This disparity is exacerbated by professional requirements, for example in roles such as assistant director or costume designer. A communications manager in Eastern Europe explains:

*"In our theatre, for example, it's always deadline, it's always too late. Or for colleagues it's always like too many costumes, you have to stay late, you have to do this, it's very physical, practical job".*

*—Communications Manager in Eastern Europe*

The pressure about maternity starts as early as job interviews. One of our interviewees, in charge of public relations in Southern Europe, explains:

*"I was asked: are you planning to have a child? Are you in a relationship right now? Those were ones of my first questions in my first job interview".*

*—Public relations manager in Southern Europe*

This practice reveals **the implicit discrimination that affects women's career paths**, sometimes forcing them to lie to get a job. This discrimination focuses on women's gendered bodies, their ability to bear children being a tangible obstacle to their careers and employment opportunities.

Several of our interviewees expressed concern about the impact maternity in their career. A female director from Eastern Europe explains:

*"I'm very aware of the fact that I am 29 now, and I don't have kids. But if I want to have kids, I mean, this is also a personal thing, but I don't see myself, like, I don't see a very good compatibility between having kids and this profession".*

*—Female director from Eastern Europe*

This tension is recurrent among women in the sector, who have to juggle professional challenges with the social expectations of motherhood.

A telling example comes from a director in Eastern Europe:

*"There was this actress, she was pregnant during the rehearsals, and she had to tell me, she didn't tell anybody else in the cast. But at some point,*

*she was very sick and vulnerable because of the pregnancy, so she had to tell the director. It was a male director, one of the old ones, he's in his 60s, and she got really upset. **She got fired without any compensation, but because we have no representation, like union-wise or whatever".***

*— Director in Eastern Europe*

This story highlights the systemic challenges women face when contemplating motherhood while pursuing their theatrical careers. Motherhood is a real brake on any kind of professional career in the theatre world.

*"The most difficult thing is this glass ceiling that many women talk about when they want to climb up the hierarchy in the workplace. And this is a hidden problem. **It's also a problem when a woman is leaving on maternity leave and when she comes back; she has to re-establish her position. But we are not discussing it publicly. And I think there is a generation of male professionals that they are from older generations, they keep that way of working"***

*—One of our interviewees, communications manager in Southern Europe*

Maternity-related issues are clearly part of the glass ceiling for women's career advancement. As this woman – in charge of the representative body for women in her theatre – explains:

*"Especially in theatre, that's a big, big problem because of the working hours we have, a lot of like working in the evenings, for example. In addition, especially as a single mom, there are still a lot of problems in the sector in general. So that means that a lot of time, if women become mothers, they have to either step back at the top to take care of the children, or they actually have to invest money for childcare. **And the problem is that here, the laws that we have here actually don't really help much with that problem".***

*—Interlocutor in charge of the representative body for women in her theatre*

These discriminations crystallize in the production and direction of plays. One interviewee, a theatre director in Eastern Europe, describes the inconsistency she experiences as a professional and as a mother:

*"Everywhere I go, I'm carrying my children with myself. I always did that. 10 years ago, I was pregnant, and I have a small baby and I said to the*



*producer, okay, you chose me, you want me to direct, but you know that I have family and my children have to come with me. (...) So it's also ironic, because we've done a big feministic performance, and I didn't have the minimum to feel at ease as I was pregnant and with a baby. I said, wait a minute, guys, is this fucking normal? I almost quit. I almost cancelled the whole project".*

*—Director in Eastern Europe*

Motherhood was uniformly presented to us as a point of tension in the theatre sector. Our interlocutors express a consensus in terms of expected public policy related to parenthood and, in particular, motherhood. Current laws in different theatres and countries fail to address the challenges faced by mothers. In particular, single mothers and those with unconventional working hours find themselves in difficult and stressful situations.

While imposing parity is not unanimous, and state interference in the management of cultural institutions is frightening in some places, **support for issues of parenthood and motherhood in particular was consistently named by the interviewees as an explicit expectation** (in terms of rights, in financial terms...), along with the need for a more radical transformation of mentalities. We see an urgent need for policies and cultural changes to support women in the theatre, recognizing and valuing their role as mothers while facilitating their professional advancement.

#### 4.6.3. The aesthetics of the female body

The testimonials gathered reveal deeply rooted perceptions around aesthetics and the female body in the theatre sector. These perceptions shape not only professional opportunities but also stage representations, creating invisible and often discriminatory barriers: "The question of sexualisation of the female body"; "The roles: 'It's always about having no roles for women', which is connected to female playwrights, which is connected to the money", etc. These remarks **reveal a system in which sexualisation and the availability of roles for women are intrinsically linked to often unequal power and funding structures.**

Most of our interviewees were given the same talk about beauty and their careers in the theatre. One of the female theatre director we met began the interview with:

*"The main reason I decided to be a director is because I was fat. I was quite talented, but not enough for my environment to... Not enough to cover my fat problem."*

*—Female theatre director*

Social and aesthetic pressures influence women's career choices in the theatre. Beauty and body perception, especially as they age, as well as the fear of being judged on their physical appearance, are constant challenges.

Ageism came up again and again in the interviews.

*"I definitely think there are still a lot of things that are very ingrained. Like for example, that almost all actresses I know between 20 and 30, they always perform alongside men that are 10, 20, 30 years older than them. And there's a huge gap in terms of, like, when you look at women in ensembles. I think you barely find anyone between 40 and 60. It's a structural problem, which I see in all theatres again and again."*

This observation highlights the persistence of gender stereotypes and beauty standards in the theatre industry, affecting not only career opportunities, but also the representation of society on stage. It addresses the issue of **old age**, particularly for women, but also the type of bodies on stage, which are predominantly white.

*"In my experience, women that are older, in theatre, have a lot of complexes around the way they look and the way they present themselves. (...) The difference between when women turn 30, 35, and then men, is huge. It's a huge difference in how they are perceived, how they are perceived as desirable, and how they're cast according to that. Yeah, I find that this is a really big problem. But that is, I think, a problem that is, of course, structural, but it's a problem that is very much a director's problem".*

*—Female dramaturge*

**Ageism**, much like maternity, **interrelated with gender issues**, raises a number of questions at the crossroads of issues related to body, beauty, temporality and opportunity. **Age is an inescapable process.** Its gendered impact on career reveals how the sector remains highly structured by gendered stereotypes and a **very specific body aesthetic.**

*“But of course, it has something to do with beauty within our industry. And that sometimes the way you look being more important than the way you can act. And that when we talk about representing society, that we’re far away from that”*

*–Female Theatre director*

Beyond questions of gendered beauty, our interviewees addressed the **crucial issue of diversity in stage performances**. They stressed the importance of reflecting ethnic, cultural and bodily diversity on stage. Several insisted on the lack of representation of people of colour in theatrical ensembles, noting that this under-representation not only marginalises but also limits the creative perspectives and narratives that can be explored.

## 4.7. Theatre management and gender issues regulations modality

### 4.7.1. Working and management arrangements

Working methods (in team management, or communications etc.) are described as highly gendered and stereotyped, with some ways of doing things said to be very “masculine”, others very “feminine”. In this conception, a man can be devalued by personality traits or work methods considered “feminine”, and many women reproduce the patriarchal system by embodying attitudes and values associated with mainstream masculinity (authoritarian, vertical management logic, devaluation of emotions...). The performing arts sector is described as not only highly marked by patriarchal and paternalistic dynamics, but also capitalist and virile, **valuing competition and the law of the strongest over collaborative values**:

*“I really think that me and other colleagues that are on the market, we are not more talented than others, we are just strongest. So, for me, the problem of the system, in fact... is the jungle model. We are in the jungle. And in the jungle, we have to survive. And that’s all. But this is something stupid. And it’s such a pity that we have this jungle in an art world. Because art is about sensibility. About not being in the jungle. Art is for people that couldn’t be in the jungle of corporations and other fields, right? This is the biggest paradox for me”*

*–Female Theatre director*

The behaviours and expectations in terms of attitudes and working methods associated with the director’s role are described as highly gendered.

A female director who started out recently explains:

*“Since the beginning of my studies, there always was this idea that the director has to be the one who lays down the law. You have to do it, you are the one who has to do it (...) **It was always this authoritarian idea**”.*

*–Emerging female director*

A female theatre director in Eastern Europe confides:

*“I can feel that the aggressive system of patriarchy still dominates, where in terms of directing, it’s connected to that domestic violence and the wild man”.*

*–Female theatre director in Eastern Europe*

Working outside these gendered stereotypes is not easy, and even less valued. As this female assistant director explained:

*“What I really noticed, also working with women who direct and men that direct, is that **it’s easier for men to ask people to do things. It’s very hard for women** and it’s very easy for them to be accused by the actors or by the lighting designer or by the technicians... **They easily get accused that oh she’s being a bitch. Oh, she doesn’t know what she wants. If a female director asks for something calmly and she doesn’t give her direction as an order, then the actors might start asking questions (...)** Gradually if she’s not providing the right answers then they might be aggressive towards her. Whereas I’ve noticed that a man might simply come into the rehearsal and say: okay so this is what I want you to do. This is the end of the discussion”.*

*–Female assistant director*

Between discrimination and a gender “habitus<sup>6</sup>” which, through the socialisation they have received, has prepared them little for the position they occupy, several of our interlocutors explain that it is not easy to impose the legitimacy of their presence. They tell us that more credit is given to men, and this is sometimes also true within their own teams, where not everyone necessarily welcomes the fact of being managed by a woman, and where authority and recognition are not taken for granted. In fact, occupying a position of leadership, a place of power - contingent and relative, of course, but nonetheless effective - does not necessarily mean being in a position of authority. The position of authority is intimately linked to questions of legitimacy and recognition. Holding a position of

<sup>6</sup> See in particular Sanchez-Mazas, M. and Casini, A., 2007, “Femmes au pouvoir... mais quel pouvoir ? Le plafond de verre en question”, in Stoffel, S. (ed.), Femmes et pouvoir, Brussels, Women’s University, pp. 91-98.



“power” is not enough. This distinction enables us to consider not only the obstacles that make access to these places of power more difficult, but also the **effects of discrediting discourses and practices on women’s success trajectories**. The fact of not being taken seriously is as much a hindrance as it is a source of fatigue, preventing women from fully and serenely unfolding their potential.

The women directors and stage managers we met express a desire to change things, which they see as being **at the crossroads of gendered and generational issues**, reflecting some more general transformations in society. Occupying positions of power, they actively seek to innovate and explore new approaches. Communication, the way they express themselves, seems to be paramount for our interlocutors in search of other ways of doing things. As one young female director explained: “

*I tried to escape this model of one man who is extremely strong, who has all the power, you know, classical director, authoritarian type. (...) I went like totally to the opposite. I went to devising, collective creation, collective responsibility... I mean, the responsibility is always taken by the director, that’s not the question, but it’s more about the mode of communication, how you communicate with people”.*

—Young female director

Even in large structures, we were told about the importance of setting up **forms of horizontality** and dialogue, and of establishing working frameworks that enable changes:

*“I really think that somehow we have this very horizontal approach. This is even though we are quite a big state-funded theatre, and so, obviously, we are aware that the person who takes financial and political responsibilities is the general manager. Nevertheless, he always invites us, and we have this weekly meeting and artistic council where we take a lot of decisions together”*

—Female Dramaturge

A number of **practices designed to improve day-to-day life and to prevent abuse** were shared with us, such as **group discussions**, a **safe place** to file complaints (outside the hierarchy), reference persons, **charters**, etc. Generally speaking, all of the interlocutors emphasize communication methods, the climate that is established in the team, the attention to

discriminations and opportunities, the possibility to talk to each other and to be heard in case of problems:

*“I always want people to feel like they can talk to me about certain things, and I will definitely call someone out on it if I feel that they are behaving in a certain way”*

—Female director

*“I would say that the emotional climate is quite good, because what we have at the theatre, we have a lot of weekly meetings also with actors. We have the Actors Council, where they’re voted for their representatives, you know, just to push their ideas, to pitch their ideas, and reflect how they feel”*

—Female programme director

More specifically, as “touch” is fundamental to the performing arts, paying attention to each other’s limits, working with respect, listening and **considering questions of consent**, are described as major necessity:

*“In theatre in general, you know, there is physical, there is touch, there is working with body. Everything is just art. But now, after some time, I can see the manipulative part of it. So when I’m working with these tools, which is, I feel, different from men, is it’s always before doing some workshop, some exercise, some voodoo thing, I explain to the people that I’m working with, what we will do, how is it going to look. So I always try to explain it, because usually all these men that I met were like, believe me, trust me, I know, and I’m leading you through the unknown, and it’s a process...»*

—Female artistic director

Finally, the question of **“sensitive readers” and experts**, resource people trained in gender and more broadly intersectional issues, to accompany projects was presented to us as a very important issue to work more respectfully:

*“There are always things you would not expect, and you are not really prepared, so it is very important I think, to have experts around, but it’s expensive”*

—Female director

*“I made mistakes sometimes because I’m not aware every time of how to represent the woman in a feminist way. But for this, I have a very good*

*friend, which is like, you know, the concept of sensitive writer...*

—Female director

#### 4.7.2. Impact of regulations (parity, sexual harassment...)

On the question of parity, we received a wide variety of responses, depending on the context. In some countries, laws, or at least regulations, have enabled significant progress to be made. For example, in Germany, in Berlin to be precise, there is a regulatory body called the “Women’s Council”, which according to our interlocutors is a real resource, a real guarantor.

*“The **Women’s Council** here at the House is actually elected. It’s like a council for all women employees here at the theatre. And the member of the Women Council of our theatre, she could be the one reporting to the Senate if we’re not behaving according to this law. If something is not going into the law, at first, she would obviously talk to the director of the theatre. So, that would be the artistic director and the managing director. And there will be an exchange, and they will talk about what can be done differently. And in the theoretical case that they say, no, we won’t change anything about this, then she has the opportunity to actually talk to the Senate. (...) The positive aspect actually in Berlin is that the Senate has gotten more sensitive to these matters and is more aware that it’s often important, especially when it comes to discrimination, to have an open ear and that people can actually contact them if there are things going wrong in the institutions that belong to the states.”*

—Interlocutor from Germany

*“And what is also important is that there is a group, like an association of all women’s representative bodies in all areas of Berlin. So all the women representative bodies in Berlin are in this network and this is also a really important support. I think it’s good to say that all the women representatives can exchange ideas. They can network. They are in constant contact. So there is actually talk between the different institutions. They share recommendations with each other, share their status quo. How is it going in my house? How is it going in your house? How would you deal with this certain situation, for example? And that is also legally okay”*

—Another interlocutor from Germany

Our German interviewees also highlighted the creation of a law promoting gender equality in the performing arts<sup>7</sup> and a public institution on the issue of sexual violence<sup>8</sup>:

*“This law is created especially to have more gender equality at theatres. The goal of this law is that you should have in all theatre jobs, you should have gender equality and there shouldn’t be any discrimination against women who work in this field. So, the goal would be 50-50 percentages, the percentage of women and men in all departments here at the House. (...) There’s also an institution that has been created to work against sexual violence in the cultural field in Germany and it’s maybe the first institution you go to when you’re a victim, because they work with a lot of lawyers, are publicly funded and can really support you”.*

—Interlocutor from Germany

It is worth noting that, as already stated, state regulation, particularly of gender issues, is not favoured by everyone and in all contexts, particularly in light of recent memories of authoritarian regimes and the fear of interference. Thus, while in some cases, public policies encourage these transformative logics, **in other contexts, change is more a matter of individuality.** Some “spontaneous” regulatory practices were shared with us:

*“For me and for my team, it’s very important to count; **we are counting all the time.** For us it’s normal and something we are used to... For us it’s very important that women are directing on the big stage. Also, that our ensemble has equality between female and male, and also queer, and is also diverse in many ways, in bodies. Also we have a lot of contemporary drama, and also there we are checking if we have women”.*

We were also repeatedly told that changes in equality and inclusion, support and direction are strongly linked to the people in office within the ministries of culture. **The conservative or progressive positions of ministers, beyond gender issues, have a very marked influence.**

*“We have a ministry of culture, and we have a really good minister. She’s a woman, which is funny, because all of the previous ones were men. **She’s very open to hearing things, to hearing opinions, and she opens it up to public communication with artists.** And we can put in our suggestions, and they really do take account of these. So we are in a very good place in terms of communication.”*

—Interlocutor from the South of Europe

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.berlin.de/sen/frauen/recht/landesgleichstellungsgesetz/frauenvertreterinnen/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://themis-vertrauensstelle.de/>

*“For the past 10 years, 12 years, we had the same Minister of Culture - a man. After a long period, now we have a woman in this position. So there is still a long journey to gender equality in political leadership. But the Minister of Culture we have now is not so high quality. So it’s kind of a regression, rather than progression. On the one hand we can be glad that a woman is in the power, but, for example, I cannot be glad when it is somebody who is full of conspiracy. Also, for women, the kind of representations we get – really **this woman with fascist values - is, a problem.** She had very open hate speech about the queer people and LGBT community”.*

*–Interlocutor from Eastern Europe*

It is worth noticing that all our interlocutors share the view that **much remains to be done in terms of equal pay and, more broadly, workers’ rights in the sector.** In Italy and Cyprus, particularly, the situations described reflect a very precarious situation. But even in Berlin, where, as we have seen, many advances have been made in terms of gender relations, the question of wage equality (and transparency) remains a key issue:

*“In a lot of Nordic countries, they have equal pay for all genders, which is also part of the law. We don’t have that, for example. Because often you just need law in the beginning to really create a kind of change or mentality. Because, as you know, we have artistic salaries that are individually negotiated as well. Especially in these kinds of situations, it would be useful to have a basic structure. To make everything more equal. So that is something that would be useful, having more structure, and that is also something that the state unions are actually working on, to create more of a system for salaries”.*

*–Interlocutor from Germany*

#### **4.7.3. Type of institutions, relationship with the audience and structural changes**

Whether in terms of working conditions or creative freedom, our interviewees pointed to both advantages and disadvantages of **working in public/national theatres or in the independent theatre sector.** While the public sector offers job security, this can be accompanied by constraints, whereas the independent sector is presented to us as freer in terms of possible experimentation and therefore of dynamics of change, at the cost, however, of a very precarious day-to-day existence.

*“And maybe the notion of boundaries, that they might be blurrier. I was burned out, because I was working at some point for 17, 18 hours per day. I was very stressed out, to be frank, and a lot of tasks varied in importance. I was underpaid. I had this very precarious situation. I had to take other work, obviously, in order to compensate for what I received, which I think at that time was the minimum wage in my country.*

*–Programmer looking back on her time working in the independent sector*

*“I mean, you lose something, you win something. You win this kind of social protection, you are not concerned about paying your retirement, paying for social security, for the health system, so on, but you are at the disposal of the theatre”*

*–Actor, public theatre*

The question of the **audience**, whether as a brake, a screen or a support for change, was discussed on numerous occasions. Our interviewees pointed out that the audience itself is diverse, with **many different expectations, and for some young people in particular, a thirst for change.** We were told that there are plenty of ways of taking the diversity of the existing and potential audience into account. For example, having several theatre rooms offers a range of possibilities, in terms of opening up to a new audience.

*“I think the chance of this house is also that we have three different stages, like a small stage and a big stage. So it’s possible to have a really mixed and diverse programme and to find plays that are maybe more interesting to a traditional theatre crowd and more interesting for younger people who are looking for a more diverse programming as well”*

*–Programme director, National Theatre*

*“We are dependent as a theatre on the box office, obviously. So we try to, let’s say, give each segment of our audience something that might be valuable to them, which also doesn’t degrade our artistic values and ideas, our excellence. So we aim for this excellence always”*

*–Theatre director, National Theatre*

Our interviewees from the public theatres emphasized the fact that being state-funded commits them to serve the public, with the willingness, however, to **gradually offer different things.**

*“I agree on not scaring the old audience but rather still offering them what they want, but then once in a while giving them something a bit surprising. So having the variety or diversity of topics is really interesting. It makes people change their mind also”*  
—Dramaturge, National Theatre

*“The state theatre is public service. It’s very important when you have money from the state to be in the service of the audience. In independent theatre, I don’t give a shit about the audience”*  
—Stage director, working in both Public and Independent Theatre

Lastly, several of the people we spoke to explained that, particularly following the mobilizations of recent years, there have been changes on the visible stages (female actors, female authors, even female directors). However, in sectors such as technical and in the power places (boards, ministries, big budgets, etc.), decisions remain largely in the hands of white men of a certain generation.

*“Representation is a really big topic and really important. So, there are more women on stage, there are more diverse ensembles and actors, actresses on stage, and that has actually really changed. And new topics that are shown on stage, new selection of plays. **But what happens backstage, so not on stage, is a different thing.** There are really old structures, especially in the technical departments, which are still really male-dominated still. There are a lot of technician jobs that are seen as typical man-jobs, which is also a question of socialization, how people are socialized, and how accepting they are of change, in terms of gender equality in those departments. And of course, this also has to do with generational conflicts”*  
—Interlocutor from Eastern Europe

Furthermore, outside the places where new laws or regulative structures have been established, **the changes are mainly due to individuals**, their progressive or conservative positions, their desire for change, and therefore, they are not structural.

*“Here, we don’t have any national strategy for culture approved, so that’s why I think that this cultural policy is made actually from bottom to top, and I think **it’s only like personal initiatives**, actually, rather than a systematic approach.”*  
—Interlocutor from Eastern Europe

*“Our theatre is not publicly-funded, so there is no state obligation to be inclusive. So, if our theatre were to include more trans people or women, it would require action from the directors”*  
—Interlocutor from the South of Europe

*“It depends on the strategy of the director board of the theatre and the director board of the municipality. So it’s a work that changes a lot”*  
—Another interlocutor from the South of Europe

*“(…) It depends on, actually, it depends on the general director (…) and the majority of the theatre directors and general directors of the theatre are men. So they don’t take care about gender”*  
—Another Interlocutor from Eastern Europe

*“I don’t think that gender can have a kind of influence on the budget but maybe it depends how strong is this general director. When he is or she is a good fighter for the money, they will get it. And it’s necessary to have also a good minister of culture”*  
—Another Interlocutor from Eastern Europe

## 4.8. Areas for further research

Our interlocutors also drew our attention to blind spots in the studies and transformations underway within the sector. Firstly, we were repeatedly told that gender should be studied in a broader sense including **queer issues** and that, in addition to gender, issues relating to **diversity in a broader sense (age, disability…)**, as well as **racism and decoloniality**, needed to be studied and reflected upon in greater depth.

*“Diversity also, I mean, that’s a bigger theme that, that it’s just not there. In our team, everyone is white. I mean, it’s difficult. Like when I did the play about racism, we had three guests because obviously we had only one person of colour in the ensemble and, and it was a big theme and I was like, I need more actors. The question is how much of that is actually going to structurally change. (…) I’m very much for ensemble structures as a model, because I think they offer more security for actors. But in terms of casting and diversity, it’s very difficult”*  
—Artistic director

Similarly, in terms of perspective, we were told on several occasions that interviewing directors and stage managers is of course important, but that **the voice of costume designers, technicians, etc., people who are not in the decision-making process**, with an attention to **the correlated class and gender discriminations**, is often missing, even though it is necessary to understand the complexity of gender and diversity issues in the sector.

*“In the technical sector, I think we now have one girl who is working in the sound design. I think there is no female light designer, it doesn't exist here”  
— Theatre director*

*“But important is to say that obviously the debates are different from country to country. And obviously, we are a privileged country. And, for example, the discussions are about women in leadership positions. However, it's important not to forget that there are also women in more precarious situations who have to think about how to have enough money to survive. And these are all kinds of different factors. And in the end, it's all a criticism of capitalism and the question of how we can create a better human society”  
— Dramaturgy assistant*

Finally, research, particularly but not exclusively carried out by ETC, was repeatedly presented to us as a means of action in its own right. In our case, taking stock of the positions held in theatres, reflecting on one's own history and the working conditions of one's institution, are seen as means of bringing about change.

## General conclusions

Following on from the research published in 2021 by ETC, the main aim of this study is twofold. Firstly, to provide a new assessment of the diversity of the teams and shows programmed by the members. A quantitative survey sent to the theatres forms the basis of this first part. The second goal is to provide theatres with tools to develop appropriate diversity strategies. A review of the resources (scientific and reports) available in Europe is the first tool to be made available. This bibliography will enable members to find relevant information on gender and diversity issues. The results of qualitative research based on interviews with women managers provide a second type of tool. The participants in this part of the study share their backgrounds and experiences. They also talk about the good practices that have helped their careers, and the challenges that still need to be addressed in the theatre sector.

The **quantitative research** was informed by responses from 13 theatres member of ETC, from 11 different countries. The participating theatres employ 1,712 people who are predominantly cisgender men (52%) and cisgender women (47.7%). Only one transgender man and two non-binary people are part of the theatre teams (0.1%). A similar breakdown can be found in management: respectively 50% cisgender men, 49% cisgender women and 0.8% non-binary people. While some departments are run equally by men and women, certain positions appear to be more gendered: the technical, sound, lighting, video, security, cafeteria and general assembly departments for men; the youth, design, costume, legal and human resources departments for women. As for the people who run the establishments, they tend to be men: 9 out of 13 artistic directors are men (compared with 3 women and 1 queer person<sup>1</sup>); general management is more evenly split: 6 men, 6 women (the 13th theatre was hiring at the moment of the survey). All the boards are headed by men. These boards are made up of 56% cisgender men and 44% women. **Gender parity has been achieved in the participating theatres at the level of staff, managers and general management.**

The participating theatres programmed 299 shows. Two-thirds of them were directed by cisgender men, a quarter by cisgender women, 7% by a mixed team and 2% by a non-binary person. The proportions are similar



for playwrights: two-thirds of the shows were written by cisgender men, one-fifth by cisgender women, 11% by mixed teams and 1% by a non-binary person. The main characters in these shows fall into three relatively similar categories: 29% cisgender men, 31% cisgender women and 39% mixed groups of heroes. Only 1% of the main characters are non-binary. We find roughly the same proportions among the people who play these characters: 27% are cisgender men, 30% are cisgender women, 42% are mixed groups and 1% are non-binary people. **Two-thirds of directors and playwrights are men, compared with one-quarter to one-fifth women and just 1% non-binary people. Characters and actors are more evenly split between men and women (one third men, one third women and one third mixed groups). Here too there are only one percent non-binary people.**

Of the shows programmed, 133 were premieres. These premieres gave more space to women directors (up from 25% to 30%) and to non-binary people (up from 2% to 3%). They were also written by slightly more women (up from 20% to 22%) and non-binary people (up from 1% to 2%). Original productions are mainly directed by mixed groups (47%) of characters, then by women, then by men. This is also true of the people who play the characters: there are more mixed groups (47%), then cisgender women, then cisgender men. **Premieres are slightly more often directed and written by women or non-binary people. One in two features a group of mixed characters and a group of mixed actors.**

It is more difficult to ascertain whether the type of establishment, the number of tickets sold or the gender of the directors has an impact on the diversity of the teams and shows, as the figures vary widely. However, national theatres, which are bigger sellers and run by men, tend to favour men in their teams, as managers, directors and playwrights. Independent and regional theatres employ the most women. Municipal theatres are less likely to favour first-time productions written and performed by men.

It is complicated to compare the figures from this research with the survey conducted in 2021 because the methodologies differ. However, it seems that the parity already observed in theatre teams is being confirmed. While there are still very few non-binary people in theatres, they were completely absent from the figures in 2021. On the programming side, the number of cisgender women is often slightly down (from 29 to 20% among playwrights, from 38 to 25% among directors, from 43 to 30% among actors). This is due to the fact that mixed groups did not appear

in the figures last time. They represent 11% of playwrights, 7% of directors and 41% of actors. Women are therefore more present in the shows presented. Men are decreasing among playwrights (from 71% to 67%) and among characters (from 57% to 27%). The appearance of non-binary people should be highlighted. Although they account for only 1 or 2% of playwrights, directors and actors, they were completely absent in 2021.

The **qualitative research** was based on 22 biographical interviews (19 women and 3 men - self-gender declarations) from 12 countries and 14 institutions. It looked at the questions of gender diversity in the performing arts sector from the perspective of lived experience. In the first section, our interlocutors insist on **linking policies making and the specific context of each country**. If transversal dynamics such as the #Me-too movement and more broadly the impact of feminist struggles were uninformally described a strong influence on the discourses and practices about parity, equality and diversity, each interview also revealed different experiences and priorities, influenced by the specific history of each country. This makes it difficult to formulate uniform European recommendations. The relationship with public policies is necessarily historically situated. In certain contexts, fear was expressed about the possibility of state intrusion into management methods (imposing, for example, gender equality quotas in certain positions). In other contexts, at the opposite, our interlocutors insist on the fundamental role of public policies in favour of parity and diversity, describing great change related to laws and public encouragement. The notion of freedom, for example, has not the same symbolic charge in the different historical contexts and appears to be as related to the memories of political government types, as dictatorial ones. **If all our interlocutors are in favour of greater gender equality, the means to achieve this goal remain very situated depending on the specific contexts.**

In the second section, we looked at **the sector through a gender lens**, discussing mainly the gendered trajectories, the intersection between gender and generation both in discriminations encountered and desire to change, and, finally, the fact that the narratives (texts and stagings) are gendered. Much like in the quantitative research, all our interlocutors highlighted the contextual elements relating to the traditional structures of society that persist, notably **the deep roots of patriarchy, the dynamics of homophobia and class relations**. Asserting oneself as a woman – particularly as a young woman – in a male-dominated world remains a



major preoccupation for many, with **numerous obstacles, whether in terms of legitimacy, credibility and recognition, or in day-to-day work.** The various struggles within the sector and the feminist movements in the countries concerned are both creating new opportunities for women and at the same time raising new questions about the legitimacy of women's presence and skills. Moreover, all our interlocutors confide in an **urgent need for inclusivity and sensitivity towards LGBTQIA+ communities** in the theatre. This includes the recognition and respectful representation of non-binary and transgender bodies, as well as the visibility of queer minorities and the fight against hierarchical structures and discriminatory attitudes.

The third section focused on women's bodies, stereotypes and discriminations. The interviews revealed that if there are more and more women at all levels of management, the other side of the coin is **an increased mental burden and pressure, particularly felt by young women evolving in a still predominantly male environment** (in decision-making positions, political positions and financial decision-makers) that struggles to recognize them and to give them a real place. They expressed that the constant need to prove their skills is exhausting. Testimonies also underline **the need, as a woman, to work twice as hard to gain the same recognition as a man.** In this section, we also raised question about the sexualisation of the female body and the age discriminations women specifically encountered and their impact on the career. Moreover, we discussed **maternity-related issues that are clearly part of the glass ceiling for women's career advancement.** There is, throughout our interviews, consensus about expected public policy related to parenthood and particular, motherhood. According to our interlocutors, current laws in different theatres and countries fail to address the challenges faced by mothers. In particular, single mothers and those with unconventional working hours find themselves in difficult and stressful situations. While, as said before, state interference in the management of cultural institutions is frightening in some places, **support related to issues of parenthood and motherhood, is named as an explicit expectation** (in terms of rights, in financial terms...), along with the need for a more radical transformation of mentalities.

In the fourth and final section, we looked at theatre management and at the impact of regulations about gendered issues (parity, sexual harassment...). The performing arts sector is described as not only highly marked by patriarchal and paternalistic dynamics, but also capitalist and

virile, **valuing competition and the law of the strongest over collaborative values.** Nevertheless, the women directors and stage managers we met, occupying positions of power, actively seek to innovate and to explore new approaches. Even in large structures, we were told of the importance of setting up **forms of horizontality** and dialogue, and establishing working frameworks that enable exchanges. Several **practices designed to improve day-to-day life and to prevent abuse** were shared with us, such as **group's discussions, safe place** to file complaint (outside the hierarchy), **charters**, etc. All the interlocutors emphasize the **importance of communication methods**, the climate that is established in the team, the attention to discriminations and opportunities, the possibility to talk to each other and to be heard in case of problems. More specifically, as "touch" is fundamental to the performing arts, paying attention to each other's limits, working with respect, listening and **considering questions of consent**, are described as major necessity. Finally, the question of **"sensitive readers" and experts**, trained in gender and more broadly intersectional issues, to accompany projects was presented to us as a very important issue to work more respectfully. It is worth noting that, as already stated, state regulation, particularly about gender issues, is not favoured by everyone and in all contexts, particularly considering recent memories of authoritarian regimes and the fear of interference. Thus, **while in some cases, public policies encourage these transformative logics, in other contexts, change is more a matter of individuality, which make them more precarious.** We were also repeatedly told that changes in equality and inclusion, support and direction are strongly linked to the people in office within the ministries of culture. **The conservative or progressive positions of ministers** have a very marked influence. Finally, it worth noticing that all our interlocutors share the view that **much remains to be done in terms of equal pay** and, more broadly, workers' rights in the sector.

# Quantitative Questionnaire

## Questionnaire – ETC 2024

The questionnaire below aims to gather general data about gender diversity and gender equality in the staff and programme of ETC Member Theatres. It will feed into the research we are currently carrying out for ETC on gender diversity and gender equality in European theatres. A first edition (Gender Equality & Diversity in European Theatres: A Study) has been published by ETC in March 2021 and can be read here:

<https://www.europantheatre.eu/news/six-men-for-every-four-women-gender-inequalities-in-theatre-programming-revealed-in-new-cross-europe-study>

This new research aims at updating and expanding the findings from the first edition. In addition to this questionnaire, this research will include an overview of European research and reports on gender equality and diversity in the theatre sector, a qualitative survey based on interviews and policy recommendations.

Only **one questionnaire should be completed per theatre**. If your theatre has several departments (opera, ballet, drama...), **please focus only on the drama department**.

The questionnaire is in English, but you are welcome to use an online translation service (DeepL, Google Translate) to answer it.

The data collected will be anonymised and will remain the property of ETC.

**Note that it is not possible to save the answers and to come back to finish the survey later. It is then probably better to prepare the answers by checking the questions before going through the survey online.**

## 1. Institutional Data (as of 31 December 2023)

- 1.1. **Country:** *(list of countries)*
- 1.2. **Name of your theatre:** *(list of theatres)*
- 1.3. **Type of institution:**
  - National Theatre
  - Regional / State theatre
  - Municipal Theatre
  - Other: please specify
- 1.4. **Percentage of public subsidies of annual budget received in 2023:**
- 1.5. **Number of tickets sold for drama shows during the 2022-2023 season:**
- 1.6. **Average occupancy rate per show during the 2022-2023 season:**
- 1.7. **What kind of productions are you programming in your institution?**
  - Classical theatre
  - New drama
  - Performance/experimental theatre
  - Youth theatre
  - Other: please specify

## 2. Data on theatre staff (as of 31 December 2023)

- 2.1. **Gender of employees across all functions and employment status**
  - Number of cisgender men employed full-time :
  - Number of cisgender men employed part-time :
  - Number of transgender men employed full-time :
  - Number of transgender men employed part-time :
  - Number of cisgender women employed full-time :
  - Number of cisgender women employed part-time :
  - Number of transgender women employed full-time :
  - Number of transgender women employed part-time :

- Number of non-binary or fluid persons employed full-time :
- Number of non-binary or fluid persons employed part-time :

## 2.2. Gender of managers/directors/department heads

- Gender of the artistic director of the theatre:  
*Male / female / other*
- Gender of the managing director of the theatre:  
*Male / female / other / same person as the artistic director*
- List of management positions held by a cisgender man  
(enter the exact title of the position):
- List of management positions held by a transgender man  
(enter the exact title of the position):
- List of management positions held by a cisgender woman  
(enter the exact title of the position):
- List of management positions held by a transgender woman  
(enter the exact title of the position):
- List of management positions held by a non-binary or fluid person (enter the exact job title):

## 2.3. Do you have a Board or similar external governance body?

*Yes / no*

If yes: Board members

- Gender of the person chairing the Board  
*Male / female / other*
- Number of cisgender male board members :
- Number of transgender male board members :
- Number of cisgender female board members
- Number of transgender female board members
- Number of non-binary or fluid board members

## 3. Data on theatre programme (for the 2023-2024 season)

### 3.1. Gender of Stage Directors:

- Number of shows directed by one or several cisgender men

- Number of shows directed by one or several transgender men
- Number of shows directed by one or several cisgender women
- Number of shows directed by one or several transgender women
- Number of shows directed by non-binary or fluid person(s)
- Number of shows directed by a mixed team

### 3.2. Gender of Playwrights:

- Number of shows written by one or several cisgender men
- Number of shows written by one or several transgender men
- Number of shows written by one or several cisgender women
- Number of shows written by one or several transgender women
- Number of shows written by non-binary or fluid person(s)
- Number of shows written by a mixed team

### 3.3. Gender of Lead characters:

- Number of shows in which the lead character is a cisgender man or a group of cisgender men
- Number of shows in which the lead character is a transgender man or a group of transgender men
- Number of shows in which the lead character is a cisgender woman or a group of cisgender women
- Number of shows in which the lead character is a transgender woman or a group of transgender women
- Number of shows where the lead character is a non-binary or fluid person, or group of persons, or their gender is not mentioned
- Number of shows in which the lead character is a mixed group

### 3.4. Gender of Lead actors:

- Number of shows in which the lead actor is a cisgender man or a group of cisgender men
- Number of shows in which the lead actor is a transgender man or a group of transgender men
- Number of shows in which the lead actor is a cisgender woman or a group of cisgender women
- Number of shows in which the lead actor is a transgender woman or a group of transgender women
- Number of shows where the lead actor is a non-binary or fluid person, or group of persons,

- or their gender is not mentioned
- Number of shows in which the lead actor is a mixed group

**Of these:**

**3.5. Premieres: Gender of Stage Directors:**

- Number of premieres directed by one or several cisgender men
- Number of premieres directed by one or several transgender men
- Number of premieres directed by one or several cisgender women
- Number of premieres directed by one or several transgender women
- Number of premieres directed by non-binary or fluid person(s)
- Number of premieres directed by a mixed team

**3.6. Premieres: Gender of Playwrights:**

- Number of premieres written by one or several cisgender men
- Number of premieres written by one or several transgender men
- Number of premieres written by one or several cisgender women
- Number of premieres written by one or several transgender women
- Number of premieres written by non-binary or fluid person(s)
- Number of premieres written by a mixed team

**3.7. Premieres: Gender of Lead characters:**

- Number of premieres in which the lead character is a cisgender man or a group of cisgender men
- Number of premieres in which the lead character is a transgender man or a group of transgender men
- Number of premieres in which the lead character is a cisgender woman or a group of cisgender women
- Number of premieres in which the lead character is a transgender woman or a group of transgender women

- Number of premieres where the lead character is a non-binary or fluid person, or group of persons, or their gender is not mentioned
- Number of premieres in which the lead character is a mixed group

**3.8. Gender of Lead actors:**

- Number of premieres in which the lead actor is a cisgender man or a group of cisgender men
- Number of premieres in which the lead actor is a transgender man or a group of transgender men
- Number of premieres in which the lead actor is a cisgender woman or a group of cisgender women
- Number of premieres in which the lead actor is a transgender woman or a group of transgender women
- Number of premieres where the lead actor is a non-binary or fluid person, or group of persons, or their gender is not mentioned
- Number of premieres in which the lead actor is a mixed group

**4. Political and social context influencing diversity**

4.1. **Have there been any factors in your country that have encouraged gender equality and gender diversity in your theatre? For example, a change of law(s), a particular policy in your country, a particular event (e.g. #metoo or artists' demonstrations), etc.**

*Yes - No*

**If yes, can you name and explain these events (maximum 3)?**

4.2. **Have there been any factors in your country that have hindered gender diversity in your theatre? For example, a change of law(s), a particular policy in your country, a particular event, etc.**

*Yes - No*

**If yes, can you name and explain these events (maximum 3)?**

## **5. Actions to promote gender equality and gender diversity in your institution:**

**5.1. Over the past three years, have you taken steps to promote gender diversity among your employees?**

*Yes - No*

**If yes, can you name and explain these actions (maximum 3)?**

**5.2. Over the past three years, have you taken steps to promote gender diversity among your directors/managers/department heads?**

*Yes - No*

**If yes, can you name and explain these actions (maximum 3)?**

**5.3. Over the past three years, have you taken steps to promote gender diversity in your programming (shows directed and written by cisgender women, transgender people, non-binary or fluid people; increased presence of cisgender female, transgender, non-binary or fluid characters)?**

*Yes - No*

**If yes, can you name and explain these actions (maximum 3)?**

**5.4. The researchers will conduct a qualitative survey (case studies) on efforts in ETC Member Theatres to increase gender equality and diversity in their institutions over the past three years. Would you agree to be contacted to discuss these actions mentioned above?**

*Yes - No*

**If yes, can you provide the name and email address of the person we can contact?**

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**Jacinthe Mazzocchetti** is professor at the University of Louvain (Belgium). As an anthropologist, her research and teaching focus mainly on exile and migration, precariousness, and inequalities (socio-political, ethno-racial and gender), with specific attention to imagination and narratives. Through methods of research and transmission at the interface of the arts and anthropology, she is also interested in the methodological, political, ethical, and poetic issues of production and transmission of knowledge. In 2023, she has produced the first report about inequalities and the presence of women in the performing arts sector in Belgium through a qualitative and intersectional approach for Ecarlate La compagnie, La deuxième scène/Acte 4. She is the co-author of *PluriElles. Femmes de la diaspora africaine* (2016, Karthala with Marie-Pierre Nyatanyi Biyiha). She co-edited the book *Exils au féminin. Conditions singulières et détermination* (2021, Academia, with Xavier Briké).

**Sarah Sepulchre** is a professor at the School of Communication at the University of Louvain (Belgium). Her research and teaching focus mainly on television fiction, the construction of television and transmedia characters, gender studies applied to series and reception studies. She edited the book *Décoder les séries télévisées* (De Boeck, 2017). She is the author of *C'est quoi le genre?* (La Renaissance du Livre, 2021). For the Association of Professional Journalists, she directed the first study on the mediation of violence against women in the Belgian press. Since 2018, she has produced the report on diversity in Belgian cinema for the Centre du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel. She is co-coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Research Group on Cultures and Arts in Movement (Gircam, UCLouvain), a member of the Gender Studies Research Group (GREG, UCLouvain) and Sophia, the Belgian gender studies network [www.sophia.be](http://www.sophia.be).

**Justine Vanhaelen** is a PhD student in Anthropology at UCLouvain University in Belgium, supported by an ERC doctoral fellowship. Her research focuses on the relationships between humans and non-humans in Taiwan, particularly within matrilineal and matrilocal indigenous communities. Her current work examines the local knowledge of these communities regarding bats, as well as governmental management of these animals on the island. Her previous research explored migration narratives between Taipei (Taiwan) and Western countries. She pays particular attention to gender issues in her work, considering this area a central focus of her research.

## ABOUT ETC

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As the largest network of public theatres in Europe, ETC has 63 members from 31 countries, reflecting the diversity of Europe's vibrant cultural sector.

Founded in 1988, ETC promotes European theatre as a vital platform for dialogue, democracy and interaction that responds to, reflects and engages with today's diverse audiences and changing societies.

ETC fosters an inclusive notion of theatre that brings Europe's social, linguistic and cultural heritage to audiences and communities in Europe and beyond. Powerful and professional ETC governance ensures that the network will thrive and grow, taking into consideration the latest trends and developments.

The ETC's current three-year programme of activities, "TRANSFORMATIONS – Recharging European Theatres and Audiences in a Post-Covid World", offers Member Theatres many opportunities and project possibilities. This comprehensive, groundbreaking programme is supported by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

## ETC MEMBERS\*

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*Honorary Members:* Ola E. Bo (Norway), Christa Müller (Germany)

*\*Membership as of June 2024*



## ETC PUBLICATIONS

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### Journal

Annual ETC magazine since 2017

### Casebooks

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Participatory Theatre – A Casebook (2020)

Digital Theatre – A Casebook (2018)

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Performing Arts Recordings and Broadcasts: A practical manual on author's and related rights (2022)

Gender Equality & Diversity in European Theatres – A Study (2021)

The Art of Ageing – Bringing the Burning Issue of Global Demographic Change on Europe's Stages. Creative Research – a Documentary by the European Theatre Convention (2015)

Audiences for European Theatres. Study on Audience Development and Research in the ETC (2015)

### European Drama

*Upcoming: Our Stories of Change Vol. 3 (2024)*

Our Stories of Change Vol. 2 (2023)

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Theatre is Dialogue – Awakening. New Horizons in the Independent Theatre Scene in Ukraine (2017)

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## PARTNERS

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In 2024, can we truly say that gender equality has been achieved on stage and in the workforces of European theatres? And have European theatres made any progress since 2021, when the last major research was conducted?

The new ETC study, *Gender Equality in European Theatres and Artistic Programmes 2024*, authored by researchers Sarah Sepulchre, Jacinthe Mazzocchetti, and Justine Vanhaelen from UC Louvain, asks these critical questions. The study is divided into three key sections: a literature review examining reports and research on gender equality and diversity across Europe, a detailed analysis of data from 13 theatres in 11 countries, and a series of anonymous, powerful interviews with theatre professionals at various stages in their career on equality - or lack of it - in the theatre sector.