

ETC Vision 2030

Vision-led strategy for ETC

In recent years, ETC grew to become the leading European theatre network for publicly funded venues.

Since the creation of its German association in 2017, various statutory documents and programmes set out its mission and defined specific goals. ETC's multi-annual EU-funded network programmes ENGAGE and TRANSFORMATIONS identified a wide range of key focus areas in order to develop the organisation, in line with the funding objectives.

ETC's board of directors now agreed to stipulate for the coming years a clear vision for ETC, both enabling the organisation to grow continuously building upon the success of the previous years while opening it for new opportunities to shape the future.

In June 2023, the ETC theatre advisory council and ETC's team organised an ETC Visionary Strategic Workshop, formulating ETC's vision with a strategic plan for the next 7 years, until 2030, identifying and determining key priorities and action areas. Based on the workshop results in the form of a thorough SWOT analysis, ETC's executive director elaborated in consultation with the director a.d. of the German human resource association, ETC's Vision 2030.

The following proposal is the outcome of a consolidated consideration of the workshop results and all existing endorsed ETC's guiding principles and governing foundations, along with sectorial positions, enabling ETC to continuously be the leading voice for European theatres, acting in a strategic goal-oriented way:

- ETC's statutes
- ETC's charta of values
- ETC's diversity in action code
- ETC's sustainable action code
- Dresden Declaration
- Opole Recommendations
- SWOT of visionary strategic workshop

The laid out ETC Vision 2030 is based on the overarching goal to create a sustainability for the organisation and the sector, devised into 9 strategic goals, and incorporates 17+8 operative goals enabling the organisation to choose and develop clear and target-oriented activities.

Following a prioritisation of the goals, the Vision 2030 will be presented to be endorsed by the General Assembly in Timisoara and serve also concretely as base for the next EU-funding applications.

Our mission and our mandate

ETC's statutes

"The founding of the association shall facilitate the joint promotion, creation and dissemination of contemporary dramatic arts and linguistic diversity within Europe and beyond. As a transnational theatre network, the association shall support collaborations that foster cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue and serve as a platform for the professional exchange, training and capacity building of theatre-makers in an international context".

Our vision

ETC's statutes

"The objective of the association's activities is to promote and strengthen 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. The association's activities shall foster a socially-engaged, inclusive notion of theatre that brings Europe's social, linguistic and cultural heritage to as large an audience and communities as possible both locally and internationally".

ETC's vision 2030

ETC is the leading and largest theatre network in the EU. It is characterised by a shared commitment to sustainability, a spirit of cooperation without competition, openness to different perspectives and mutual respect. This allows access to knowledge about different theatres and practices in the EU. The diversity of the houses/people/professions involved, creates dynamic networks and also personal relationships that pool competences. Our mission is to increase the visibility and accessibility of the theatre of Europe and to bring the relevant discourses to life with the inclusion of new voices – artists, works and audiences alike. A central focus is on integration.

In order to realise this vision 2030, we are working together on the social relevance of the theatres and a corresponding quality, content and audience development. We are professionalising our networking, expanding our digital competences and working on raising the profile of ETC, guided by our striving for diversity. To achieve this, we are optimising our processes as well as our strategies in terms of environmental sustainability and ETC financial security.

Our strategic goals and operational goals / strategies

a.)

Sustainability as an overarching goal

Sustainability is our overarching goal, all strategic goals carry the sustainability idea. In devising our goals, we refer to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the EU Green Deal and the widely known definition: "Development is sustainable when it "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Hauff & Brundtland, 1987)".

Important guiding pillars of sustainability true to ETC's work are:

- Ecological sustainability: Using natural resources only to the extent that they can regenerate. This means using resources sparingly, sensibly and carefully, enabling regenerative capacity and preventively avoiding environmental pollution.
- Economic sustainability: A way of doing business that can be operated without harming future generations.
- Social sustainability: Taking into account different actors and dealing with social tensions peacefully. This means in particular paying attention to good quality, respectful, trusting and appreciative cooperation.
- Content sustainability: Addressing issues of innovation versus preservation, balancing the interests and needs of audiences and theatre practitioners as well as their own strategic goals when developing plays, and ensuring that content is high quality/ artistically challenging and effective with audiences).

ETC's sustainability goals for 2030 are further aligned with the objectives of the European Theatre Forum 2023. With our work we strive to:

- Address the geopolitical and climate-related crises and their implications for the sector
- Address sustainable, digital and social challenges and practices in the sector
- Develop and adopt a comparable sustainability assessment tool for the whole sector to measure and reduce its carbon footprint".

In addition, ETC remains committed to implement the ETC sustainable action code for theatres with its three key strategies to strive to bring progress in:

- Sustainable processes in theatre organisations
- Sustainable theatre buildings
- Sustainable theatre productions

b.)

Vision 2030: Goals and strategies

Target definitions of strategic goals

Diversity

In our theatres, we reflect the diversity of society in terms of gender, sexual identity, age, disability, religion/belief, ethnic origin and skin colour, as well as social status, personality and other dimensions. Because we know that these dimensions can cause social differences, as they are connected with evaluations that can lead to individual as well as structural unequal treatment, we act in a discrimination-sensitive manner.

Networking

ETC is the platform for strong international cooperation between theatre professionals and other partners within and outside the theatres. We cooperate in an open and goal-oriented way, establish new contacts and seek cross-theatre team development to optimise our joint knowledge management.

Green deal for theatre

The theatres take responsibility in the EU Green deal. All buildings, processes, productions, etc. are continuously checked for their ecological impact and corresponding strategies such as air-conditioning technology, waste avoidance, separation/recycling, mobility calculation for resource conservation are developed, implemented and evaluated. This also includes a green narrative towards and with the audience.

Relevance & high quality of European theatre

We take our social mission seriously and set sustainable accents for the theatre of the future. Our member theatres create framework conditions that lead to the free development of artistic work and its content. The goals are to expand the aesthetic scope, new forms of experimental work and diverse programmes with different directorial styles supported by strong ensembles.

Efficient processes

We constantly optimise our communication and adhere to the agreed organisational and committee structures. We work on the basis of agreed goals, measures and tasks according to consensual prioritisation. Decision-making competences and processes are transparent. We shape digital transformation processes sustainably and responsibly.

Audience development

Audiences and artists form an inclusive, lively, cosmopolitan theatre culture. The ETC theatres reflect the diversity of society in their audiences, are inviting houses, offer a good quality of stay for all audience groups and create a high occupancy rate. For the future-proof and sustainable development of the theatres, we emphasise in particular the work with young audiences.

Working climate & mental health

The basis for social sustainability is an appreciative, mutually supportive cooperation in the theatres that places the emphasis on togetherness and sees diversity of opinion as an asset. This is also reflected in an enabling management culture with management staff who responsibly recognise, take seriously and reduce psychological stress factors in the theatre. The ETC theatres are employers with social responsibility, offer identification potential, individual development and a motivating promotion of young talent.

Financial and planning security

By planning costs and investments in advance and adjusting the budget annually to the rate of inflation, we ensure that we can use the available funds to implement the development of ETC in terms of content and infrastructure. This refers to both personnel and material resources.

Reputation, awareness and external impact

ETC has a high profile. This is also the result of lobbying for theatres at European level and a corresponding localisation in EU bodies, a good image in regional and national media and a broad public. The aim is also to attract more theatres and, in the long term, to establish a global presence for European theatres with locations on other continents.

TO DO – Identify Our Priorities:

The priorities that have been developed so far are only time-related to the operational goals or measures, but it would also be important to have priorities on the importance of the strategic goals. Or are all strategic goals equally important? That would also have to be decided.

It may be useful to decide on priorities on an annual basis, e.g. say for 2024 the goals diversity, networking and efficient processes are the highest prioritised goals and for 2025 e.g. diversity, audience development and reputation or similar

Resources:

Ambitious goals require reliable financial, human, spatial and time resources (see also goal Financial security/plannability).

Note: Resources never feel enough! It is especially difficult in growth processes. The rule is: If the resources are not enough for everything, you have to set priorities!

c.)

Operational goals & strategies to define activities

The following table has been created based on the results of the June 2023 workshop (see in chapter d). Hence 17 operational goals were created using the information provide in the workshop documentation. Additional 8 operational goals were included, deriving from ETC's sustainable action code.

Sustainability									
Strategic goals	Diversity	Networking	Green deal for theatre	Relevance & High Quality of E.Theatre	Efficient Processes	Audience Development	Working Climate & Mental Health	Financial & Planning security	Reputation, Awareness, External Impact
Operational goals/strategies									
Sustainability strategy ...	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+
ecological footprint									
Knowledge transfer ...	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	-
Trainings for theatre professionals...	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	-
Artistic visions for a greener and more just future...	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	+
Fair collaboration and touring models	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
Public debate between artists, scientists and stakeholders ...	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+
Visibility and communication to present our achievements	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+
Legislative documentation	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+
Improvement of decision processes 4	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-

Involvement of politics, people, staff 4	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	-
More useful, relevant discussions and meetings 1	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
Definition of expertise of members (also artistic), defining process 1	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
Creating and following the change /living the culture / quality of life 1-4	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-
Opening towards outside of Europe and young new voices 7	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buddies for new members - facilitators 1	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
Discussion of current issues, creativity and life discussion / round tables, peer to peer, collegial groups / ETC provides structure to members for self organisation 1	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	-
Access to projects, awareness of processes and democratisation of decisions, transparency 1-4	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-

Inspiring speakers 1	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Listening to story and character of less known theatres of EU / strengthens diversity voices and topics 1-4	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Simplification of reports (increasing visibility, doing what we want to do) 4	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
Providing ways of leadership 1-4	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
Opening discussion of ideal theatre (needs and expectations) continuous	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-
How to reinvent the theatre experience for the audience (cultural experience) 7	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-
Training people, passing knowledge continuously	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-
Visibility (artists, staff, politicians) and communication of benefit 4	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+

d.)

Results from June 2023 Workshop

OUR TOP MISSIONS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement and interest• Bridging the gap between what we have and the future• Including new voices• Who do we represent in our organisation• Communication and visibility "theatre of Europe"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to theatre• Shaping of discourse• Connecting• Discussing the real life• Thinking ahead instead of reacting

Our conditions (SWOT analysis)	
External	
Opportunities (OUR TOP CHANCES) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attracting new members, growth needs inclusion• Introducing new potentials in the international context• Hub of expertise• Aligning decisions with our vision• Place and time for the needs of its members	Risks (OUR BIGGEST THREATS) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disconnection of members• Political climate of the members influences the network (international work) and fundings• Clarity / not easy to describe our work• Lack of information and knowledge
Internal	
Strengths (OUR TOP SKILLS) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We know how to do international theatre• Connecting huge range of EU theatres• Theatre and cultural advocacy• Training / methodical approach• Sharing information of theatre practice• Knowledge, skills, project management• Access to specific practice• Trust, respect, collaboration	Weaknesses (OUR BIGGEST WEAKNESSES) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Money and financing• Work overload• Focus on relevant information and action needed• Clarity of vision