

Government of Romania
Romanian Prime Minister
Mr Marcel Ciolacu
Romanian Minister of Culture
Mrs Natalia-Elena Intotero

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Berlin, 16 April 2025

Subject:

Request for the rejection of the legislative proposal to amend and supplement Government Emergency Ordinance no. 189/2008 on the management of public cultural institutions, with subsequent amendments and completions

Esteemed Prime Minister, esteemed Minister of Culture,

The European Theatre Convention (ETC) is Europe's largest network of publicly funded theatres, with 79 Member Theatres in 33 countries. With six theatres from Romania, it includes an important number of representative cultural institutions of your country. Their managing directors shared with us their deep concern about the process and purpose of the matter related to the amendment and supplement on the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 189/2008 on the management of public cultural institutions, especially in light of the speed on how the new law shall be implemented.

We share their concern and find it questionable that the proposed new recruitment requirements for general managers of public cultural institutions no longer foresee a sectoral professional expertise. We strongly believe that such expertise is essential due to the specific nature of cultural organisations and their public mission, which is per se not comparable to organisations with a purely commercial or legal purpose.

Public cultural organisations are the beacon for democracy enabling access to cultural works, cultural goods and to critical thinking for all people. If decisions on programming and managing these organisations are made by purely commercial rentability or legal frameworks without any sound judgement on the actual content due to a lack of expertise and artistic skill, we are alarmed about the future role of public cultural organisations in Romania. Across Europe we observe a current trend of destabilizing cultural organisations in various countries, whether due to funding cuts or political interference restricting the autonomy of cultural organisations.

We recommend instead that you do everything within your capacities to strengthen the cultural organisations in Romania and open a dialogue with the experienced and European-wide renowned managers of the Romanian public cultural institutions, including the six general managers of the theatres, who are active members of the European Theatre Convention. We pledge to develop necessary reforms enabling progress and change management processes within Romanian cultural public organisations meeting European standards and in consultation with the stakeholders, the appointed directors, who know best their sector and the specifications, in order for the Romanian public to receive the best possible cultural offers.

Thank you for receiving our concerns and for considering to cancel the introduction of the new law following an in-depth dialogue about the challenges and opportunities to reform the public cultural sector with the relevant stakeholders.

On behalf of the directors of the board of the European Theatre Convention,

Sincerely yours



Heidi Wiley
Executive Director

About the European Theatre Convention:

ETC is the largest network of publicly-funded theatres in Europe, with 79 members in 33 countries. We organise a wide range of activities to create brilliant new theatre, support and develop people working in theatre, and fight for the European theatre sector in a political context.