

YOUROPE - The European Festival Association

Restructuring of the organization and move to Bonn

YOUROPE - The European Festival Association has a new home. Since April 2021, the organisation is based in Bonn and the association is also expanding in terms of personnel and thus becoming more powerful.

In 1998 YOUROPE was founded in London, shortly afterwards registered as an association in Roskilde/Denmark and since 2003 administered from St.Gallen/Switzerland. During this time, the organisation has developed into the most important and influential association of European festivals. Today YOUROPE represents 108 festivals and associated members from 26 European countries. Among them are some of the most popular and relevant events worldwide such as Roskilde Festival (DK), Sziget Festival (HUN), Wacken Open Air (D) or Primavera Sound (E), to name just a few.

The overall aim of the association is to strengthen and improve the European festival scene as a whole. *"The importance of our organisation became more obvious than ever last year, because especially in times when major events are impossible due to the pandemic, the need of the actors in this cultural field for exchange, international cooperation and speaking with a common voice grew once again,"* reports YOUROPE's chairman **Christof Huber**. *"And despite these challenging times we succeeded in restructuring our organisation, expanding the network and securing even closer relationships with valued associates."*

Christof Huber, Director Festivals at the Swiss Gadget ABC Entertainment Group and responsible for YOUROPE member festivals OpenAir St.Gallen and SummerDays, will chair YOUROPE's executive board as "Working Chairman" in future and thus continue to actively steer the Association's fortunes from the top. *"It is YOUROPE's self-understanding to work across national and industry borders to shape the future for festivals and to set up our industry in a healthy way. I look forward to continuing to use my strength and experience for this purpose - together with our members and the new YOUROPE team,"* says Huber.

Huber is gaining freedom for this work, as from now on his tasks as General Secretary will be taken over by **Holger Jan Schmidt**. Schmidt was previously anchor man and coordinator of YOUROPE's sustainability-related working group GO GROUP (Green Operations Europe) and TAKE A STAND, the association's social engagement initiative. Schmidt is now also in charge of the new office in Bonn, where YOUROPE is registered now. YOUROPE thus becomes part of the office community of the Bonn-based Competence Network around Schmidt's Bonn Promotion Dept. (BN*PD) and the IBIT (International Training Centre for Event Safety), which has been a key contributor of expertise to the Steering Committee of the YES GROUP (Yourope Event Safety Group) for years.

"We have been a member of YOUROPE for almost twenty years - first with our festival, RhEINKULTUR, and for ten years as an associated member with the Competence Network here in Bonn. I have identified with this institution from the beginning and travelled all over Europe with and for YOUROPE. To talk about festivals, to give festivals the opportunity to exchange, and above all to get to know and experience festivals and their philosophy," says Schmidt. *"I couldn't be prouder and happier to be trusted to take on this new role for YOUROPE and to continue to work on those issues that are close to my heart. And to do so from my hometown, which means a lot to me."*

YOUROPE's move to Bonn is warmly welcomed in this historically important city for music history - Beethoven is most certainly the best-known Bonner - and a strong network of internationally active cultural institutions.

*"It is a great pleasure that YOUROPE has chosen Bonn as its new location - especially in these challenging times for the event industry," says Bonn's **Mayor Katja Dörner**. "The Association is a great and coherent addition to the ranks of important and influential international music and cultural organisations that operate from here in the centre of Europe. Bonn is a traditional music and festival city with a multitude of great events of various kinds. At the same time, Bonn is also an international sustainability hub with strong institutions where one can excellently work on new ways for the future. I believe YOUROPE and its members are in the best possible hands here and will certainly make a valuable contribution to further raising Bonn's profile and making it even more colourful and diverse and will in turn benefit from Bonn's numerous competences. A warm welcome."*

YOUROPE is grateful for this friendly reception at its new domicile.

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