

# Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 14 September 2021

## Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe Seal for Festival Cities and Regions

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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee approve Edinburgh's founding membership of the new 'Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe' (EFFE) Seal for Festival Cities.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

Contact: David Waddell, Senior Culture and Events Officer

E-mail: [david.waddell@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:david.waddell@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 4929

# Report

## Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe Seal for Festival Cities and Regions

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The 'Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe' (EFFE) Seal for Festival Cities is an initiative by the [European Festivals Association](#) developed in partnership with several European festival communities. This report sets out the principles of the Seal and seeks approval from Committee for Edinburgh to become a founding member.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The European Festivals Association (EFA) was established in 1951 to bring together festivals to create dialogue, trust, friendship and collaborations across borders. Its founding and continuing mission is to foster intercultural understanding and international co-operation through exchange of art, ideas and experience. Today it connects about 100 festivals and festival associations in 40 countries.
- 3.2 In 2015, the Association created EFFE - Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe - an initiative co-financed by the European Union as a quality label for festivals, offering international recognition for excellence in their daily work across Europe, with one of the initial recipients being the Edinburgh International Festival.
- 3.3 Building on this initiative, the Association has been exploring how to enhance and recognise the importance of co-operation between cities and regions with their arts festivals in the spirit of responsibility towards the shared values and goals of Europe.
- 3.4 Consequently, the EFFE Seal for Festival Cities has been developed by several festival communities - Bergen, Belgrade, Edinburgh, Gent, Krakow, Ljubljana, and Rotterdam – and the Association is now asking these cities to become the founding members and recipients of the Seal.

### 4. Main report

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- 4.1 The EFFE Seal will mean that:
- 4.1.1 Cities and their festivals will be joint recipients of the EFFE Seal in recognition of their common achievements; and

- 4.1.2 At the same time, subscribing to the EFFE Seal is a commitment to the continued engagement with its aims and values and indicates a willingness to engage and share experiences with other festivals and festival cities.
- 4.2 Subscribing to the EFFE Seal is not a competitive process but a commitment to a range of principles, values and requirements that a city applies in its strategy and its daily work. When a city subscribes to the EFFE Seal, it takes a pledge:
  - 4.2.1 Firstly, to observe certain principles, such as applying a comprehensive approach to the festival community, maintaining standards and providing assistance - no numerical or other 'objective' measures will be associated with these requirements;
  - 4.2.2 Secondly, to adhere to specific values, confirming a commitment that the festivals will endeavour to enhance fundamental values of inclusion, tolerance, justice and solidarity, and the conditions of freedom, democracy, equality, human rights and dignity, and conform as much as possible to ten features (listed in Appendix 1) including access, internationalism and inclusion; and
  - 4.2.3 Thirdly, to commit to certain requirements such as keeping festival profiles updated on FestivalFinder.eu and to actively promote Edinburgh's designation as a holder of the "EFFE Seal for Festival Cities" in any relevant communications.
- 4.3 Full details on the principles, values and requirements are contained within Appendix 1.
- 4.4 It is hoped that the EFFE Seal will lead to the establishment of a community of cities and their festivals that share these ambitions and features and will stimulate others to join. It will also develop an action programme on topics which the festival community wants to work and exchange, such as community development and environmental sustainability.
- 4.5 The European Festivals Association is now asking seven cities - Bergen, Belgrade, Edinburgh, Gent, Krakow, Ljubljana, and Rotterdam – for formal agreement to become the founding members of the EFFE Seal.
- 4.6 Agreement to become founding members of the Seal will be attested in a Memorandum of Agreement signed by the city (or region), the EFA, and Mariya Gabriel, EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth.
- 4.7 Although another such 'designation' from an international organisation might seem like an added burden to Edinburgh at this time, the 'Seal' aligns with the city's world leading festival proposition and would bring additional benefits to the city.
- 4.8 The EFFE Seal provides an opportunity to maintain and enhance cultural links with cities across the continent after Brexit. A number of the proposed 'founder' festival cities have existing cultural links with Edinburgh and are engaged in cultural programmes with the city: Krakow is twinned with Edinburgh; Ljubljana is a fellow UNESCO City of Literature and part of the [Story Valley](#) ERASMUS+ project with Edinburgh; officers in Culture also have strong links with their counterparts in Gent.

- 4.9 The values and principles of the EFFE Seal align closely to the values of the City of Edinburgh Council.
- 4.10 As a complement to other programmes, the EFFE Seal provides an opportunity to engage festivals and events beyond those in the membership of Festivals Edinburgh and will thus bring benefits to the wider community in the city – as noted during the recent presentation by City of Edinburgh Council officials to EFA about the [Culture United](#) project.
- 4.11 The EFFE Seal also provides an opportunity for the city’s smaller festivals and its community of producers to access a European network of similar festivals to collaborate, develop partnerships and to share expertise and ideas
- 4.12 Although not overtly stated, there is the possibility that such a Seal, when signed by the European Commission, might usefully position Edinburgh for future EU cultural funding programmes as an ‘aligned’ third party city/country.
- 4.13 Festivals Edinburgh is a member of the EFA, has participated in the development of the Festival Cities Seal concept, and is keen to support the city’s membership if Committee agrees to the city becoming a founding member.
- 4.14 The EFFE Seal comes with no financial obligations although there may be a minor administrative burden – primarily in updating the digital platform [festivalfinder.eu](#). Festivals Edinburgh has offered support in carrying out this function.
- 4.15 In advance of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Edinburgh’s Festivals in 2022 – International, Fringe and Film – the EFFE Seal provides a useful mechanism for international positioning and longer-term cultural recovery.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Upon agreement to become a ‘founder’, a formal invitation to attend the Memorandum signing ceremony will be sent to the Mayor or Lord Provost of each founding city in September.
- 5.2 The ceremony will take place at the EFA’s Arts Festivals Summit 2021 (22 to 24 November) in Galway, Ireland - which will be organised around a central topic of Festivals and Cities; and will also mark the formal launch of the EFFE Seal.
- 5.3 This Summit will also be the occasion for an exclusive meeting between Mariya Gabriel, EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth and the civic leaders of the European Capitals of Culture and Innovation, as well as the founding Festival Cities and cities linked to [A Soul for Europe](#).

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 There is no financial impact associated with adoption of the EFFE Seal.
- 6.2 The EFFE Seal may usefully position Edinburgh for future EU funding programmes as an ‘aligned’ third party city/country.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 It is hoped that the EFFE Seal will lead to the establishment of a community of cities and their festivals that may develop an action programme on topics which the community wants to work and exchange, such as environmental sustainability.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 European Festivals Association – see <https://www.efa-aef.eu/en/about/>

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Explanatory Toolkit for the EFFE Seal for Festival Cities.



# EFFE SEAL

## for Festival Cities and Regions

**The EFFE Seal for Festival Cities is a recognition and an invitation to cities that wish to associate and integrate their development and image with a strong festival, cultural – and European – commitment.**

**The initiative aims to develop exchanges between different layers including cities, audiences, artists, and other involved players, based on a joint action plan and a common set of values.**

**The EFFE Seal for Festival Cities is a proposal developed by seven cities and their stakeholders: Bergen, Belgrade, Edinburgh, Gent, Ljubljana, Krakow and Rotterdam.**

### **In detail**

Festivals are some of the most present and effective cultural platforms serving the ambition to use the arts as a vehicle to realise all sorts of social results in a community. They have an impact on tourism, urban development, economy, well-being and education, amongst others.

The EFFE Seal has a twofold character:

- 1.** Cities and their festivals will be joint recipients of the EFFE Seal in **recognition** of their common achievements.
- 2.** At the same time, subscribing to the EFFE Seal is a **commitment** to the continued engagement with its aims and values and signals a readiness of sharing experiences with peers.

Receiving the EFFE Seal will be authenticated in a Memorandum of Agreement, signed by the city and by EFA. It is not a competitive process but a commitment to a range of principles, values and requirements that a city applies in its strategy and its daily work.

The EFFE Seal leads to the establishment of a community of cities and their festivals that share these ambitions and features and stimulate others to join. It develops an action programme on topics on which the community wants to work and exchange.

The EFFE Seal is part of the ongoing ambition of EFA to bring arts to audiences worldwide. A communication campaign on FestivalFinder.eu itself and promotional and media platforms will contribute to the visibility of the EFFE Seal.

### **A broader scope: “festival regions”**

The EFFE Seal has been designed to include all sorts of local and territorial entities (like cities, towns, villages, rural areas, districts, regions, islands, valleys, or others) that define and administer themselves and which feel attracted by the values and want to use the benefits of the EFFE Seal.

With this broad scope in mind the word city stands for the variety of entities listed above. We call them “festival regions”. In specific circumstances the Memorandum of Agreement will be signed by one of the entities (as a festival region).



## Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe

Festivals and cities are twins. They facilitate the need to experience the arts and culture together, to assemble, motivate societies – urban and regional communities alike – to join in celebrating life and creativity: celebration in our cities.

The European Festivals Association (EFA) is convinced of the importance of **the relationship and collaboration between a city and its arts festivals**. We also assume, in our long-standing collaboration with 'A Soul for Europe', that a city together with its festivals has a responsibility towards Europe. We believe in the creative power of art and culture to strengthen the possibilities for and willingness of citizens to become active in the future development of Europe.

There is a necessity for festivals and cities to connect with each other to give communities a temper, a spirit, a face, a soul.

The wealth of suggestions, of perspectives from artists, festival makers, curators, mayors, city representatives and thinkers originating from all parts of Europe is the basis on which EFA and 'A Soul for Europe' has launched **the Festival Cities Initiative**.

The website **FestivalFinder.eu** was launched in 2019 as an online search tool to discover arts festivals, from music to theatre, streets arts to dance, literature and more, in 45 countries in Europe.

Its main purpose is to guide audiences, festival makers and lovers, artists, travellers, academics, journalists, bloggers, policy makers, city developers and all stakeholders through the world of Europe's diverse cultural space. It is rooted in and steered by the festivals community with the support of the European Union.

Today FestivalFinder.eu is extending to become a platform that facilitates and stimulates stronger collaboration between festivals and their municipalities, regions and tourism offices.

The proposal for an EFFE Seal for Festival Cities and Regions builds on the goals and the achievements of **the EFFE programme**: Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe. The EFFE acronym has become a symbol of European co-operation between cultural festivals: a recognised brand. This is why the current proposal has the word EFFE in its name.



## EFFE SEAL

for Festival Cities  
and Regions

### The EFFE Seal

When a city subscribes to the EFFE Seal, it takes a pledge

Pro Primo	to observe certain <b>principles</b> ,
Pro Secundo	to adhere to specific <b>values</b> , and
Pro Tertio	to follow particular <b>requirements</b> of conduct.

#### PRO PRIMO

**The principles** to establish and maintain a spirit of organic conviviality with festivals. In this spirit the city:

- 1 applies a comprehensive approach to the festival community, sharing a balance between
  - commercial, non-profit initiatives, as well as the city's own festivals,
  - attracting visitors from outside and catering for residents,
  - the hard spinoff in terms of jobs and revenue, and the soft benefits to liveability and harmony
- 2 takes the potential of festivals into consideration in all policy decisions (including especially tourism, communication, education, environment, health and social issues) and develops a decision-making process including cultural stakeholders in the city.
- 3 helps festivals to maintain and improve their quality standards without interfering but remaining attentive to feedback from professionals and inhabitants.
- 4 arranges for mentoring when existing or would-be festivals are deficient in the quality standards.
- 5 acknowledges the inherent flexibility of the festival scene (festivals emerge, transform and sometimes expire)
- 6 provides the necessary financial and other assistance to the operation and advancement of festivals.

No numerical or other 'objective' measures will be associated with these requirements. Stakeholders – such as the festival communities of the respective cities – will informally monitor these principles. Unless serious breaches are reported, the status of the EFFE Seal will be re-confirmed every three years.

#### PRO SECUNDO

There are **two classes of values** to be respected.

- 1 On a general level, subscribing to the EFFE Seal confirms a will that the festivals will endeavour to enhance the fundamental European values of inclusion, tolerance, justice and solidarity, and the conditions of freedom, democracy, equality, human rights and dignity. From this broad pool of overarching concepts the partners in this proposal have distilled the following key values: creativity, sustainability, internationalism, and resilience to toxic ideas.
- 2 On a specific level the festivals should conform as much as possible to the ten features listed in the EFFE Label application.





**A festival with an EFFE Label is embedded in the European artistic, cultural and social ideal and:**

- 1** presents a coherent, curated artistic programme including international artists.
- 2** supports on-going artistic development.
- 3** provides opportunities for emerging or innovative artists to create or to be presented in the programme.
- 4** is rooted in its local community, fostering local connections in the programme and among the performers and performances.
- 5** helps to increase access to culture and attract a diverse audience through, for example, the use of new technologies.
- 6** takes measures to make the festival more sustainable by developing new business models through innovative approaches to funding, production and management.
- 7** helps to shape, encourage and promote intercultural experience for audiences and artists.
- 8** embraces inclusivity as a core principle and practice.
- 9** invests in innovation and capacity building.
- 10** engages with the audience through educational programmes.

**PRO TERTIO**

**The requirements** from affiliated cities to the EFFE Seal:

- 1** A decisive share of the festivals in the city needs to be registered on FestivalFinder.eu.
- 2** Festivals are encouraged to keep their profiles updated on FestivalFinder.eu, which is recommended as the single point of information.
- 3** Festivals are encouraged to be ambitious when using the EFFE Label and to upgrade their performance for an EFFE Award.
- 4** The city should endeavour to craft a collective presence at the Festival-Finder.eu portal (a Lounge that goes with the name of the city, see below), the content of which should be kept updated at all times.
- 5** Representatives of the city's administration and festivals should follow the affairs of the EFFE Seal and take an active part whenever possible (among other ways, by participating in the annual Arts Festivals Summit, including a festival cities' working platform),
- 6** Feel invited to undertake 'EFFE Seal' actions locally and share them with the community in regular online meetings.
- 7** Brand themselves as "EFFE Seal for Festival Cities" holders in all their communications.



## Benefits

### EFFE Seal Lounge

Cities with an EFFE Seal will be entitled to chapters of their own on FestivalFinder.eu – an EFFE Seal Lounge with the name of the city (or festival region).

- The city and FestivalFinder.eu are co-owners and co-editors of this digital space.
- The Lounge defines and shows the festival offer of the city on FestivalFinder.eu in a continuously updated manner.
- Beyond the current concrete opportunities, the Lounge will display the general potential that the city provides to festival organisers and visitors.
- The content of the Lounge is mirrored on the website of the city (and/or its tourism sites), using the variety of technical interfaces that the FestivalFinder.eu will offer.

### Benefits for cities

- The EFFE Seal offers an additional dimension to the city brand, aligning with other facets and projects of city branding,
- Intercity and international relations can be carried out on wider interfaces by the involvement of festival stakeholders, including businesses and civil society,
- On the conceptual level, familiarity with peers in the network helps to define the city's own festival strategy,
- On a short term practical level, festival schedules, logistics and marketing can be adjusted better,
- The common data pool provides statistical benchmarks for the quantifying of festival strategy,
- The EFFE Seal is one more anchor from the city to the common European project.

### Benefits for festivals

- Festivals – individually and together – become more embedded in the social and cultural ecosystem of the city,
- The national and international exposure increases the relevance of the festivals in the city, adding to their inherent assets,
- Belonging to a broader project boosts festivals' self-reflection,
- Festivals can capitalise on the structured relationship with peers in the network in terms of programming, marketing, logistics, and even in administrative and legal issues,
- Contributing to and learning from the common data pool facilitates the proficiency of festivals' self-improvement.

### Benefits for artists

- Artists – residents in the city and "outsiders" alike – on the festival programme get increased visibility and chances to access other cities' festivals,
- The common pool of information adds to artists' familiarity with all aspects and conditions of being involved in festivals in Europe.

### Benefits for residents

- A common perception of the city's festivals offers more chances for residents to feel or factually become their stakeholders,
- Collectively, and in an international perspective, issues of festivals' effects on local life – including negative challenges – can be identified and handled better.



## EFFE SEAL for Festival Cities and Regions

### Benefits for audiences

- Information on festivals presented in harmonised, standardised fashion makes orientation and choice easier,
- The EFFE Seal provides a quality pledge for the audience.

### Benefits for tourism

- The EFFE Seal is of great help to municipal tourism boards as well as business agencies in tourism.
- International tourism operators can rely on festivals with solid reputations and can consider cities as destinations on a broader scale in terms of content, timeframe and possibly space.

### Benefits for other businesses

- Joint perception of the festivals in the city provides synergy for businesses in accommodation, traffic, catering, crafts and souvenirs, event security, ticketing etc.
- They also profit from the increased number of visitors that adherence to the Seal creates.

### Benefits for media

- When covering a city, the attention of media will be attracted to festivals thanks to their more systematic and fuller exposure,
- Local and wider media will be inspired to communicate the full scale of festivals.

### Benefits for academia

- The harmonised ways of presenting festivals – and their self-presentation – will enable and prompt researchers to apply a variety of comparative approaches to analysing festivals in Europe,
- Festivals will win greater prominence in urban studies.

### Benefits for politics

- The EFFE Seal will help politicians – incumbent and prospective alike – to identify and exploit the potential in festivals in the areas of city branding, social cohesion, economic prosperity and external relations.

### Benefits for Europe

- Arts and culture became a field within European policies that showed positive results in pursuing the Union's aim for peace and integration. The EFFE Seal helps to make Europe 'tangible' for people and make an emotional and personal connection: It helps to allow citizens' active participation: Europe is alive and lives in festivals' communities.
- The EFFE Seal is a tool for Europe to involve the thousands of arts festivals and their cities to be active contributors in promoting Europe's cultural diversity and artistically vibrant space towards Europe's citizens and audiences worldwide

The EFFE Seal is an initiative of the European Festivals Association, in collaboration with a Steering group of 7 cities and stakeholders from the cities of Bergen, Belgrade, Edinburgh, Ghent, Ljubljana, Krakow and Rotterdam and the participation of the Budapest Observatory of Summa Artium in the framework of FestivalFinder.eu (a)Live Now.

FestivalFinder.eu (a)Live Now is a project implemented by the European Festivals Association in partnership with the City of Bergen, Italiafestival, Summa Artium, EURACTIV Media Network and publiq, and co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.