



**Statement adopted by the Executive Committee
of the International Federation of Musicians
at its 102nd meeting (Rome, June 11-12, 2014)**

At its 102nd meeting (Rome, June 11-12, 2014), the Executive Committee of the International Federation of Musicians (FIM) adopted a statement in support of the right of Bulgarian musicians and dancers to fair labour conditions and decent remunerations.

Over the past few years, the reforms imposed by the Bulgarian Government to the cultural sector – in particular in the field of live performance – have had dreadful results. The FIM Executive Committee expresses its deepest concern in that respect and believes that the cultural policy of the Bulgarian Government should be brought to the knowledge of the Committee for Education and Culture of the European Parliament for consideration.

A large number of Bulgarian municipalities are drastically reducing their support to culture and close down philharmonic orchestras and ballets, thus depriving citizens from a legitimate access to core components of cultural life. Many musicians are threatened with losing their jobs and may, as a result, either give up their musical career or leave the country in order to pursue a professional activity in a more welcoming place. Moreover, the Bulgarian authorities, whether local or national, do not provide any form of assistance to the artists that are being deprived from their job. Nothing is being done either to prevent the disappearance of key cultural institutions.

The system of “delegated budgets” in the field of music and dance is a total failure and has a disastrous impact on artistic quality and working conditions. According to that system – implemented a few years ago –, public subsidies are exclusively allocated in proportion of the box office revenues, thus creating a growing competition between cultural institutions to attract the largest possible audience. As a result, professional standards have been tremendously lowered, with a systematic recourse to unpaid overtime and a repertoire that is now limited to a very narrow range of mainstream works and productions.

In the context of a political and economical crisis, the Bulgarian Government is progressively reducing its cultural budget and has now reached an unprecedented low level. In 2013, the total of annual cultural subsidies in Bulgaria was as low as BGN 123 millions (EUR 62 millions), which is equivalent to the subsidies received by 1 Opera Theatre in Western Europe.

The lack of a national strategy for the development of music, unfair labour conditions and extremely low wages¹ discourage young musicians from undertaking a national career in Bulgarian orchestras and inevitably leads to the closing down of longstanding orchestras and irrecoverable damages to the Bulgarian cultural landscape.

This catastrophic situation is a disgrace for Bulgaria.

The International Federation of Musicians therefore fully supports Bulgarian performers in their campaign for decent jobs and adequate public subsidies, in order to safeguard live music and dance in the Republic of Bulgaria.

*The **International Federation of Musicians (FIM)**, founded in 1948, is the only body representing musicians' unions, guilds and associations worldwide. FIM counts members in about 70 countries covering all regions of the world. It is recognised as a NGO by diverse international authorities, in particular WIPO, Unesco, the ILO, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe.*

¹ According to investigations and analyses published by the Bulgarian Trade-unions – wages in “Music Arts Performances” branch ranks last position in Bulgaria; a full time musician position in a local professional orchestra earns between EUR 200 and 300 per month