

MUSIC  
CITIES  
NETWORK

**EMBTf**  
EUROPEAN MUSIC BUSINESS TASK FORCE

**EUROPEAN  
MUSIC BUSINESS  
TASK FORCE  
FINDINGS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**



# A. Executive Summary

In 2021/2022 the Music Cities Network convened the first European Music Business Task Force (EMBTf) to develop new insights, skills and knowledge resulting in tools and proposals for developing a strong, sustainable, transnational market for European music within Europe, post-Brexit as well as in pandemic times.

The 12-person group met a number of times, both online and in person, working with a team from the Kaospilots in order to research, explore and build a series of recommendations and networks which might meet the initial brief of this Creative Europe funded project.

**The group ultimately focussed on pathways and opportunities for early career professionals looking to build sustainable employment in the European music industry.** Following a period of research and investigation, the first EMBTF has made a series of direct recommendations to be explored, further aimed at three distinct groups:

- Governments / public funders looking to stimulate the music industry in their purview;
- Existing music industry professionals keen to ensure a thriving talent development pipeline;
- Individuals seeking to build a career in the music industry.

Recommendations are centered around thematic links from a series of interviews carried out by the EMBTF with a number of music industry professionals from across Europe. The group looked at consistencies and similarities in career paths across the sector in what can often seem a disparate or non-standardised journey for many.

These recommendations therefore sit broadly under the following headings:

- Professional international networks
- Enabling risk taking
- Publicly funded opportunities
- Individual support from a professional mentor
- Co-creation / cooperation as an essential catalyst for opportunity

It is envisaged that this is the first European Music Business Task Force cohort and that there will be future groups that build on and enhance this work.

**This report will be presented to the European Commission, music industry representatives and Music Cities Network partners.**

# Table of Contents

Page	
03	<u>A. Executive Summary</u>
05	<u>1. EMBTF Recommendations</u>
08	<u>2. About the European Music Business Task Force</u>
10	<u>3. The first EMBTF cohort</u>
	3.1 Astrid Storm Thorsen
	3.2 Colm O'Herlihy
	3.3 Freddie Aitken
	3.4 Hildur Maral
	3.5 Jens Uhre Karlsson
	3.6 Jørgen S. Avsnes
	3.7 Maria Riedel Borg
	3.8 Oskar Pullinen
	3.9 Sandra Perens
	3.10 Sjoerd Vriesema
	3.11 Tom Besford
	3.12 Victoria Bröker
15	<u>4. Kaospilot and the Training Programme</u>
16	<u>5. Narrowing the Focus</u>
16	<u>6. The Method</u>
17	<u>7. About the Findings</u>
19	<u>8. The Recommendations in Detail</u>
	<u>8.1 Government / Public funding bodies</u>
	8.1.1 Being able to take risks
	8.1.2 International networks
	8.1.3 The impact of a professional mentor

Page	
	8.1.4 Co-creation / partnership working as a catalyst for opportunity
	8.1.5 Publicly funded initiatives
	<u>8.2 Existing Music Industry</u>
	8.2.1 Being able to take risks
	8.2.2 International networks
	8.2.3 The impact of a professional mentor
	8.2.4 Co-creation / partnership working as a catalyst for opportunity
	8.2.5 Publicly funded initiatives
	<u>8.3 Individuals Seeking to Build a Career</u>
	8.3.1 Being able to take risks
	8.3.2 International networks
	8.3.3 The impact of a professional mentor
	8.3.4 Co-creation / partnership working as a catalyst for opportunity
	8.3.5 Publicly funded initiatives
26	<u>9. Conclusions</u>
27	<u>10. Appendix</u>

# 1. EMBTF Recommendations

Below is a table listing the headline recommendations from the group. These recommendations are further detailed with accompanying notes at [section 8](#).

	Government / Public funding bodies	Existing music industry	Individuals seeking to build a career
<b>Being able to take risks</b>	<p>Create an entrepreneurial European music loan scheme.</p> <p>Information about the commercial structures of the music industry should be readily available and promoted in both formal and informal settings.</p> <p>Prioritise promoting independent entrepreneurial leadership qualities through educational structures as part of building a music career.</p>	<p>Industry should work with government and/or funders to publish information about the careers which are available.</p> <p>Industry should actively promote their work to educational institutions as a viable career pathway.</p> <p>Organisations should create resources about the roles they have, what they do and what skills they are seeking from potential recruits.</p> <p>Organisations should commit to open recruitment rather than simply offering jobs to their existing networks.</p> <p>Established organisations should offer paid internships, traineeships and mentorships.</p>	<p>Individuals should research, plan and learn about the music industry's structures.</p> <p>Continuing professional development is an essential element for career growth, including both formal and informal training and learning opportunities.</p> <p>Make yourself visible to the industry and shape your own career.</p>
<b>International networks</b>	<p>Funders should prioritise programmes which provide financial and professional support and mentoring for first-time attendees to international industry events.</p> <p>Create a tax incentive for music organisations that provide cross-border internships / mentoring.</p> <p>Each country should have a music export office to support international networking opportunities.</p>	<p>Existing international events should develop opportunities to engage early career professionals.</p>	<p>People starting their career in the industry should attend international networking events.</p> <p>Actively look for international networking, co-partnership opportunities supported by local or national institutions/associations.</p> <p>Check with your personal contacts if and how they attended international networks.</p>

<b>The impact of a professional mentor</b>	<p>Music export offices should actively seek to network experienced professionals with new starters.</p> <p>Governments should fund internship / traineeships in small independent music organisations.</p> <p>Funders should have formal mentoring programmes where they actively seek more experienced professionals to work with early career individuals.</p>	<p>Leaders should enlist or offer their time on official mentoring programmes.</p> <p>Organisations of all sizes should actively offer internships / traineeships.</p>	<p>Early career professionals should actively seek out mentoring opportunities within their own network.</p> <p>Actively look for publicly funded mentoring programmes.</p>
<b>Co-creation / partnership working as a catalyst for opportunity</b>	<p>Funders should prioritise supporting applicants who demonstrate they are taking a chance on new ideas and partnerships.</p> <p>Public funders should prioritise / encourage pan-European cooperation when funding employment initiatives.</p> <p>There should be a publicly funded organisation for independent music across Europe which actively considers growth strategies for music across the continent.</p>	<p>Organisations should be open minded to collaboration and new opportunities and should be willing to take measured risks.</p>	<p>All networking events are an opportunity for career progression, so be active in attending these – every contact can be valuable.</p> <p>Be open minded, be curious, and be willing to listen and learn from others.</p>
<b>Publicly funded initiatives</b>	<p>Specific focus should be given to schemes and initiatives which promote networking, career development and international relationship building.</p> <p>Public funding schemes should be more accessible and clearly advertised to a broader base.</p> <p>Invest in research to highlight the social, economic and societal benefits of the European music industry to further make the case for support for continued investment.</p>	<p>Organisations should actively direct work experience / new starters towards funding programmes.</p> <p>Companies should support funding bodies to share their opportunities more widely.</p>	<p>Actively search for initiatives by subscribing and reading newsletters / channels / platforms from relevant institutions and associations.</p>



## 2. About the European Music Business Task Force

The Music Cities Network announced an open call for applications for **the first European Music Business Task Force programme** in early 2021. From August 2021 until the end of January 2022, 12 upcoming European music business professionals embarked on a transnational European expedition **searching for answers to the question: How can we boost European music within Europe?**

The programme is organised by the transnationally acting Music Cities Network in partnership with Promus Aarhus and in collaboration with four key northern European music festivals and conventions: SPOT Festival, DK; Reeperbahn Festival, DE; Iceland Airwaves, IS; Eurosonic, NL.

The aim of the programme is to **develop new insights, skills and knowledge resulting in tools and proposals for developing a strong sustainable transnational market for European music within Europe**, post-Brexit as well as in pandemic times. The European Music Business Task Force programme is co-funded by the Music Moves Europe Programme of the European Commission.

The European Music Business Task Force actively participated in the following music business festivals as part of our learning process:

- The SPOT Festival and the SPOT+ Festival conference in Aarhus, Denmark (16th – 17th September 2021).
- The Reeperbahn Festival and the Reeperbahn Festival Conference in Hamburg, Germany (22th – 25th September 2021).
- The Iceland Airwaves and the Airwaves Pro conference in Reykjavik, Iceland (3rd – 6th November 2021). [*This event did not go ahead in full*]
- The Eurosonic Noorderslag (ESNS) and the ESNS Conference in Groningen, Netherlands (19th – 22nd January 2022). [*Virtual*]

During each of the four festivals, as well as during in-between sessions, the Task Force facilitated workshop sessions working through different problems and industry areas based on current industry challenges.



## 3. The first EMBTF cohort

### 3.1 Astrid Storm Thorsen

Astrid started as a Spinnup Scout in 2017 and quickly became a full time project manager and A&R at Universal Music Denmark, working with names such as Tessa and Emil Kruse. Since then, she occasionally appears as a guest expert on radio and podcasts, as well as being the Scandinavian ambassador for COLORS.

Last year she was awarded the prize of one of Nordic Music Biz's '20 under 30' and in 2020 Astrid was offered an A&R position at Universal's label Copenhagen Records.

### 3.2 Colm O'Herlihy

Colm O'Herlihy is founder of INNI, which is an independent music company based in Iceland that represents a diverse roster of producers, composers, and songwriters.


Based between Reykjavik and Los Angeles, INNI – the first Icelandic publishing company to be established in the country – was formed by Colm and film composer Atli Örvarsson in 2019. As well as offering publishing services, INNI also works as an independent record label and music production house.

Colm got his start in music when The Smiths' frontman, Morrissey, signed his band to his own signature label, Attack Records. Since then, Colm has toured the globe as a guitarist for artists such as Joan Shelley, Grant Hart (Hüsker Dü), and more. In 2014, he moved from Ireland to Reykjavik and managed two labels, Bedroom Community and Mengi Records. There he saw a niche for a specialised music publishing company in the heart of the music scene of Iceland. In 2019, he launched the company with film composer, Atli Örvarsson.

### 3.3 Freddie Aitken

As the Membership Officer at London Youth Choirs, Trustee and F&A member at The National Foundation for Youth Music, and co-founder of Manchester-based electronic music collective, Traffic, Freddie's career in music has grown to focus on empowering and supporting the next generation of music makers to develop a passion for music that will hopefully be a source of joy and fulfilment throughout their lives.

After missing his first year studying Social Anthropology at university through illness, he returned to the city of Manchester (UK) and developed a love for the wonderful techno scene. This led to him running a DIY record label and club night focussed on supporting and highlighting local emerging talent, Traffic. Seeing an opportunity to develop his knowledge in how to do this more effectively, Freddie began volunteering at Brighter Sound, a music charity that (among other things) provides music-making and music career education opportunities to emerging industry



professionals and young people. This led to him being appointed as a full-time member of the team, working on trans-European projects and playing a key role in Manchester's membership in the Music Cities Network. It was through this work that he learned the potential for positive change that European collaboration could bring about in the music industry.

### 3.4 Hildur Maral

Hildur is Marketing Coordinator for booking agency and concert promoter smash!bang!pow! (DK). Starting her career in her teens as a music radio show host, she has since held various positions within artist-, event-, PR- and label management. Hildur studied creative leadership, business, process and project management at the Kaospilots and holds a MA in Global Entertainment and Music Business from Berklee College of Music.

It was through Hildur's job with Iceland Music Export over a decade ago at The Great Escape showcase festival that she came across a man who she would later form a management firm with. This chance encounter was one of many such events that would clearly show her that if one was open to new opportunities, having the support of music export offices or similar institutions was fundamental in building a career in music. Many other such events would later occur, be it touring in Japan via a cross-country collaborative grant, or attending showcase festivals around the world which would lead to record deals and more collaborations. One thing is for sure – that each event played a massive role in Hildur's career.

### 3.5 Jens Uhre Karlsson

Jens has been managing the death metal band BAEST since the beginning of October 2015. He started out as a helping hand, taking care of the essentials for an upcoming band: communications, marketing and the early steps in terms of touring. He finished his Bachelor's degree in Information Science and worked as a social media manager for a local ad agency up until he was hired full time for the local booking agency, Skandinavian, in 2018. Since 2018, he has represented a small handful of bands in different genres on the booking and touring side, while managing BAEST and upcoming projects. In January 2020, he started his own booking agency, Backbeat Music, and joined forces with Heartbeat Management, strengthening his setup for global growth. Working with BAEST and other signings has given him the opportunity to learn more about the music industry, from the very upcoming, underground to the more mainstream. He has learned from some of the best people in the industry and has taken great inspiration from the ideas of sustainability and integrity – features he admires and hopes to enforce in the projects in which he is involved. He believes in cooperation and always seeks new inspiration.

### 3.6 Jørgen S. Avsnes

Jørgen works as a manager at Made Management in Bergen, Norway. Made represents some of Norway's biggest artists and producers, among them AURORA and Sigrid. He's had an unlikely road into the music industry, at least at first: working as a carpenter building houses in his hometown of Bergen, volunteering at festivals, as well as working in

the bar on the biggest concerts in the city, starting with Metallica.

While this was at this point just a hobby, he's always thought about how people started to work with music, and at one point planned to promote concerts with his friend, but quickly aborted the idea as the rights involved and tasks seemed daunting for the pair.

Chance would have it that Jørgen's girlfriend was moving to London to finish her Bachelor's in Film and TV, and he decided to join her, where he finished a Bachelor of Science and Arts in Music and Entertainment Industry Management at the University of Hertfordshire. He then went on to work at Decca Records, pitching AURORA to the label, which in turn led to him working at Made Management, via Brak, a non-profit organisation for the music industry in western Norway, and as a CEO of Buzz, an investment fund owned by Bergen County focussed on investing in local music companies.

### 3.7 Maria Riedel Borg

Maria is Digital Partners and Export Manager for disco:wax, No3 and One Seven Music based in Copenhagen, Denmark. Her passion for music developed alongside her education in Musicology and Modern Culture from Copenhagen University, where she specialised in music management and female representation in culture. Concurrently with her studies, she started her career in the music business as a Scout and later as an A&R Coordinator.

After a short time, Maria expanded her network within the music industry and realised her motivation for working with music in international markets. In continuation of this, the company and Maria created a new position with a focus on export and international relations, which has been developing rapidly. Now she is focussing on streaming and international marketing strategies and has the overall responsibility for presenting and pitching music projects to internal and external partners.

### 3.8 Oskar Pullinen

Oskar works as a publishing A&R at Elements Music. Elements Music is Finland's leading independent music publishing company and Oskar is running the international creative activity of the company. As an A&R, he represents songwriters and producers, organises songwriting sessions, and pitches songs to record labels, artists, and managers. Oskar holds an MA in Musicology from Åbo Akademi University and he has minored in Music Production and International Marketing.

Even though Oskar had been a musician his whole life, his actual journey into the music industry started with an internship at Music Finland, the music export office of Finland. Music Finland has a very central role in the Finnish music industry and it works closely with all Finnish labels, publishers, and management companies. During the internship, Oskar got to know a lot of key people in the industry. As Music Finland works with music export, the internship created a good base for Oskar to start creating an international network and he quickly grew accustomed to handling international affairs on a daily basis. Through these networks, Oskar gained mentors and these people play an important role in how Oskar works today.

### 3.9 Sandra Perens

Sandra works as an A&R Manager for Tier Music Publishing, a company in Tallinn, Estonia and as an Event Coordinator at the Arvo Pärt Centre. She studied cultural management at the University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy and has an MBA in International Business Management from Estonian Business School. The start of her career in the music industry can be traced to 2011, when she first met the head of Tallinn Music Week (TMW) through one of her teachers in Viljandi. First starting out as an assistant, she soon progressed to the head of programme for the festival.

While still working for TMW, Sandra was able to finish her studies, have two internships abroad, start her MBA studies and also start working for the newly formed music export office as the first international project manager. The internships abroad and career opportunities that have followed have all been possible thanks to the connections made while working at TMW. After leaving the festival, she has been the Executive Assistant and Ticket Sales Manager at the largest dance music festival in the Baltic countries, Weekend Festival Baltics, and a Marketing Manager for the Baltic Region at Sony Music Entertainment, before settling into her current positions.

### 3.10 Sjoerd Vriesema

Sjoerd Vriesema, from Groningen, The Netherlands started coaching emerging artists as a creative manager so that he could develop his own artistic career. As 'Stuart Mavis', he released an EP on Sony Music Entertainment Benelux and played more than 300 shows, including at Eurosonic Noorderslag. Today, he uses the experience gained from his years as an artist to help grassroots artists with their careers, but also to make connections between municipalities, education programs, organisations and talents in the Northern Netherlands. Sjoerd is the lead in multilingual co-creation projects, Wurdspøken and Wisselstroom, two projects that aim to develop artists through co-creation. He is also co-organiser of the official talent programme of ESNS, Hit the North and LEC, an international co-creation and exchange for hip-hop acts from four European cities. Sjoerd is also co-owner of the Lake Woozoo music studios in Leeuwarden, where he and his colleagues host artists-in-residencies and writing camps.

His first international experience as a project manager was when he travelled to Denmark in 2018 to support hip-hop artists from his city during an international writing camp in Aarhus. The connections and experiences these artists had gained through co-creation sparked a flame in his own motivation to work within the European periphery and seek more collaborations. He found a strong connection to the Music Cities Network (MCN) when, in the year of the pandemic, Lena Ingwersen invited him to contribute to an application to the European Commission for the Link Up Euro Connection, the first edition of which has just taken place successfully online in cooperation with Noordstaat. Sjoerd learned about the EMBTF through the MCN. His selection allowed him to increase his international network and opportunities in international exchange, which will benefit both the city of Groningen and the Northern region of the Netherlands. Sjoerd believes that sharing experiences and learning from other European professionals is an opportunity that you don't get very often. Let's work on that!



### 3.11 Tom Besford

Tom runs English Folk Expo (EFEx), which supports the English folk, roots and acoustic music sector. EFEx delivers showcases, live events, artist mentoring, industry training, audience development, runs Manchester Folk Festival, hosts online learning platforms and produces the Official Folk Albums Chart. Tom is a member of the Greater Manchester Music Commission and is on the Steering Group of Manchester Music City. He is also an elected politician.

Tom was heavily involved in the Folk Society at Durham University, becoming President and overseeing the running of many folk events including IVFDF in 2010. On leaving university, he got a job in the Folkworks team at Sage Gateshead supporting the delivery of folk programmes for the organisation. During this time, he met Booking Agent Terry O'Brien who invited him to work on a newly created showcase, English Folk Expo. Tom continued to work part time on the showcase whilst building his full time career with roles in the Programming Team at the Royal Northern College of Music, as Head of Artist Liaison at Manchester International Festival and eventually as Head of Culture for the Rochdale Boroughwide Cultural Trust. When English Folk Expo joined Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisation in 2018, Tom left his full time role to become its first Chief Executive. Since then, Tom has overseen the expansion of the organisation from a singular annual showcase to the broad music charity it is today, creating new programmes, building a board and fundraising to quadruple the size of the organisation. Tom has consistently worked for charities supported through Arts Council England, Local Authorities and Trusts and Foundations. In 2019, Tom was elected to Rochdale Council as the Labour Councillor for Littleborough Lakeside.

### 3.12 Victoria Bröker

Victoria Bröker (M.A.) is a booking agent, artist, and project manager of Hamburg-based music agency OHA! Music. She started wandering down the path of pop culture and music during her studies of media and philosophy in Bochum (DE), Antwerp (BE), and Hamburg (DE). After collecting professional and international experiences in film, she worked as a PR and social media manager at OHA! Music, as a project manager at RockCity Hamburg e.V., and has now returned to OHA! Music's artist department. She continues to represent RockCity Hamburg e.V. as a board member of the Federal Association of Popular Music (BV Pop).

A chance encounter as a visitor of the Reeperbahn Festival led to her first job in the music business where she found her passion for the industry through mentoring and trust. After having worked on a European level in film, Victoria realised that she wanted to expand her network internationally in music as well to develop valuable exchange and drive change. This mindset led to an awareness of international programmes, to the application for the EMBTF, and eventually to the first important steps towards a European career by making meaningful connections and creating a network of like-minded people.

## 4. Kaospilot and the Training Programme

We met at four specific events with dedicated sessions led by Kaospilots, plus a series of online meetings and workshops throughout the programme.

**Kaospilot is an education platform based in Aarhus, Denmark founded in 1991. It is a three-year programme focussing on Enterprising Leadership. People are educated to drive results and to create transformation as changemakers, entrepreneurs, and leaders.**

Kaospilot offers a wide range of programmes for professionals in Denmark and abroad, too. The school has been a partner in the programme, Music Management, run by the Royal Academy of Music in Aarhus.

### *Overall schedule for the course*

#### **Workshop 1 – Discover: SPOT Festival, Aarhus (DK)**

The aim is to introduce the Task Force candidates in the programme, share expectations, and start research projects across countries and disciplines. Problems shall be defined, experts can be consulted.

- Build learning community, gather information, exchange knowledge
- Clarify expectations and needs
- Define areas of work

#### **Workshop 2 – Define: Reeperbahn Festival, Hamburg (DE)**

Observations will be analysed and synthesised in order to define the core problems which have been identified up to this point. The purpose is to interpret and reframe the research and map it across activities.

- Share collected information and work results
- Test ideas and define projects based on the research, formulate questions
- Relevant from invited keynote speakers

#### **Workshop 3 – Design: Iceland Airwaves, Reykjavik (IS)**

With a solid background, the Task Force can start to 'think outside the box' to identify new solutions to the identified problems. We can start to look for alternative ways of viewing the problems. The purpose is to develop and design a final project which should be implemented before the last module.

- Designing of concept for the project
- Planning the management of the project
- Relevant input from invited keynote speakers

#### **Workshop 4 – Deliver: Eurosonic, Groningen (NL)**

The final workshop will deliver and present some of the findings in a workshop held by the participants in the Masterclass at the SPOT Festival in Aarhus.

- Test of the project in a real world setting
- Learn from the feedback

## 5. Narrowing the Focus

Given the breadth and scale of the overarching project, we felt it **important to narrow the scope of our research** in order to fully understand and explore key elements of the European music industry.

To this end, **we decided to focus on opportunities and barriers to building sustainable careers** in the European music industry. Because of the short research time and the breadth of the group, one commonality we all shared was the journey from taking first tentative steps towards our current roles. **We wanted to explore what could be learnt from each other and our wider network.** By its nature there are few clear pathways into music with many industry professionals taking very different and seemingly unrelated or sporadic paths to get to their current roles. This can make the music industry appear intimidating or overwhelming, and the first steps towards a viable career obscure.

Increasingly, jobs in the music industry are entrepreneurial in nature, grassroots and comprising multiple skill sets to build a portfolio career. Innovation and creativity are key drivers of success, but in enabling this environment to thrive, transparency and openness will be a key factor when introducing new people to the sector.

**We believe that if career pathways in the European music industry were more visible and open, we could create a new generation of thought leaders and innovators for the sector which would drive change in a system which, we believe, is in part failing or broken.** We also recognise that the music industry's economic growth is **driven by people**; it's not a finite resource. Therefore, more people forging careers in music means more economic activity for the sector.

We agreed that our lived experiences and existing networks might form a strong evidence base from which to draw initial recommendations and conclusions as part of this first EMBTF programme. We believe that in supporting more independent younger people into the European music market, and recognising the collegiate and cooperative nature of the sector, we may be able to strengthen and diversify the base of industry professionals whilst retaining a set of common values.

## 6. The Method

**EMBTF members had conversations with different music industry professionals based across Europe.** We recognised that our own group was not a diverse representation of European communities and, through these wider interviews, we aimed to broaden our pool of experience. There is far more which could be done in this area, and we would encourage future researchers or task forces to actively prioritise diverse representation.

The interviews were structured as follows:

- 1) Tell us about you and your career today. What is your job?
- 2) Talk us through your professional journey to arrive here today:
  - a) Family background
  - b) Education
  - c) Getting into the music industry
  - d) Career progression
  - e) First steps internationally
- 3) What, if any, additional help would have supported your career progression? This could be governmental, educational, network based or something else.
- 4) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your role and your work?

Following these questions, we had a general conversation about any key thematic links and moments based on our findings to date. For example, was there a key person who gave the interviewee an opportunity? Or did they receive a government grant or tax incentive? Was there a moment when the person took a major chance or gamble?

At the end of the interview, we were able to narrow down between two and ten bullet points of key moments in this person's career.

These interviews were then collated, key points analysed and consolidated into a comprehensive dataset.

Common recurring themes from these interviews were extracted and considered by the group.

## 7. About the Findings

Over half of the interviews identified the following thematic elements as integral to the development of their international music career:

### ***Being able to take risks***

Much of the music industry is founded on small organisations, sole traders and freelancers. Inevitably, there is a significant amount of risk involved in striking out for a new opportunity without the support of an umbrella organisation or financial safety net. We determined that risk taking almost always involved an element of financial risk; a significant amount of research to inform the level of risk, and entrepreneurial personality traits. Our recommendations therefore seek to mitigate these elements. When people are less concerned about taking risks, they are more open to taking a



chance on new opportunities.

### ***International networks***

Personal relationships are key to success in the music industry, and, as such, many jobs never reach the open recruitment market, with many jobs never reaching the open recruitment market. Building professional networks regionally, nationally and internationally enables professionals to understand what opportunities are coming up, promote professional relationships and grow organisations. This is especially important at international music industry events such as conferences and showcases. Our recommendations focus on supporting people to build the networks which might lead to employment opportunities, but also encouraging culture change in organisations when recruiting.

### ***The impact of a professional mentor***

Having an experienced professional as a mentor, promoting or supporting early stage career professionals, has given both confidence and enhanced professional networks to many. We therefore felt it was essential to enable more people to work with an experienced mentor who could support them in these vital areas.

### ***Co-creation / partnership working as a catalyst for opportunity***

Working together in all aspects of organisational growth has created opportunities, alleviated cost pressures and expanded professional networks, and being open to cooperative working is a major catalyst for professional growth. Our recommendations therefore focussed on the interventions and organisational shift away from seeing others as competitors and towards a more cooperative framework.

### ***Publicly funded initiatives***

Especially in the early stages of a career, financial support for training, networking and skills development including work experience are an essential part of most music professionals' early career. This may include supported work placements, active intervention from export offices, loan or grant programmes, and financing education.

Based on the understanding of these five themes, the EMBTF members considered what recommendations could be made to individuals, existing industry and government / public funders in order to encourage more early career professionals to benefit from these.

These recommendations and methods are not infallible.

We conducted 30 interviews over two months, shared between the full task force. There were almost certainly inconsistencies in the interview process and technique and the sample size is small.

The interviews themselves focussed on opportunities rather than barriers to engagement.

These recommendations are based on successful pathways already taken; they do not explore options for new routes into the industry, although do take in a comprehensive cross section of Europe. They are deliberately high level and will need further investigation and research to consider how they might be implemented, if at all.

# 8. The Recommendations in Detail

## 8.1 Government / Public funding bodies

### 8.1.1 Being able to take risks

#### **Create an entrepreneurial European music loan scheme**

Mitigating financial risk for startups in the music industry would enable more people to pursue grassroots organisations, generating wealth and jobs in the sector. A loan which is only paid back (with interest) once agreed thresholds, such as profitability or turnover, are reached would provide a clear pathway for innovators to set up new projects. There is a scheme in Bergen, Norway called BUZZ which already has a similar model.

#### **Information about the commercial structures of the music industry should be readily available, promoted in both formal and informal settings**

How the music industry works, the most common roles and responsibilities, and information about pathways towards employment should be readily available through export offices or culture departments in government. Specifically, this should be tailored towards formal educational institutions enabling a career in the music industry to be a visible and viable prospect on the cusp of leaving full time education.

#### **Prioritise promoting independent entrepreneurial leadership qualities through educational structures as part of building a music career**

Few roles in the music industry require formal qualifications, but many do require a great deal of confidence, innovation and self motivation. In order to cross socio-economic boundaries, these skills should be actively promoted and taught in all schools in order to support the next wave of entrepreneurs.

### 8.1.2 International networks

#### **Funders should prioritise programmes which provide financial and professional support and mentoring for first-time attendees to international industry events**

Many funding programmes are available which support artists to perform at international music industry events. However, we believe of equal importance is the facilitation of industry professionals to attend their first international events. This should also include support for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs. Equally, export organisations or their equivalent should actively build programmes to support the networking opportunities of first-time conference attendees to international music events.



### **Create a tax incentive for music organisations that provide cross-border internships / mentoring**

Music organisations that are able to properly support internship programmes or mentoring should be incentivised through tax rebates or other financial support. This should only be eligible where those organisations are providing appropriate remuneration for participants, as well as meeting predetermined criteria related to diversity or other local priorities. Programmes should be available for public applications.

### **Each country should have a music export office supporting international networking opportunities**

Not every European country has its own music export office (MEO), creating a lottery of geographic disparity of opportunity for the music industry across Europe. Of the MEOs which exist across the continent, there is an array of different scales, priorities and funding. For smaller countries, a vibrant MEO is an essential part of a thriving music industry because international territories are a necessary part of the economic model. For larger countries, an equally vibrant MEO can similarly enable a larger music industry utilising the opportunities of international markets. Existing MEOs should prioritise music industry networking at an international level.

## **8.1.3 The impact of a professional mentor**

### **Music export offices should actively seek to network experienced professionals with new starters**

This could be through a formal mentoring programme or via informal routes, but those organisations with responsibility for developing the music industry should actively link early career professionals with their more senior counterparts.

### **Governments should fund internships / traineeships in small independent music organisations**

Government-supported employment schemes should be of a scale where small, grassroots organisations can offer single placements or part time roles to suit the needs of a smaller organisation. It can sometimes be the case that the scale of government employment or apprenticeships schemes mean that SMEs are unable to fully participate because there is a high threshold minimum number of places needing to be offered or the fund doesn't fully cover the costs of a placement.

### **Funders should have formal mentoring programmes where they actively seek more experienced professionals to work with early career individuals**

Government funded bodies who have an interest in building the economic impact of the music industry should facilitate formal mentoring programmes with appropriate training and support to connect industry professionals at different career stages. For example, in the UK, Help Musicians UK and The Ivors Academy have built a 'mentoring bank' programme with online resources to deliver this and has resulted in a large number of pairings to support artists. We believe that something similar for the music industry would be welcome and impactful.

## 8.1.4 Co-creation / partnership working as a catalyst for opportunity

### **Funders should prioritise supporting applicants that demonstrate they are taking a chance on new ideas and partnerships**

Our research suggests that innovation and risk taking in partnership with organisations or individuals is a key driver of success and career progression. Therefore, additional priority is given by creative funders to those projects building new partnerships or developing new ideas and initiatives.

### **Public funders should prioritise and/or encourage pan-European cooperation when funding employment initiatives**

Similarly, when cultural bodies are considering applications for projects or programmes which create pan European job opportunities, this should be championed and prioritised.

### **There should be a publicly funded organisation for independent music across Europe which actively considers growth strategies for music across the continent**

We considered the creation of a pan-European music development office. This might act like an internal export office supporting professional development, partnership opportunities, funding initiatives and more. The role of such a body would be to stimulate the music economy across Europe and lobby on behalf of the European music sector.

## 8.1.5 Publicly funded initiatives

### **Specific focus should be given to schemes and initiatives which promote networking, career development, and international relationship building**

When building funding programmes which drive engagement and economic growth for the music sector, special priority should be given to the key themes in this report. Specifically, financial support should be offered where innovation, professional development, industry networking and cross-border partnership working are prevalent.

### **Public funding schemes should be more accessible and clearly advertised to a broader base**

Many funding applications are only accessible to those who know where to look. Similarly, the complexity of some of the processes to apply mean that it's unlikely early career professionals or individuals taking their first steps in the industry will be able to apply. Public funders should consider the routes to their funds for those individuals who might not be experienced fundraisers, ensuring that access and promotion play an important role in any funding programme.

### **Invest in research to highlight the social, economic and societal benefits of the European music industry to further make the case for support for continued investment**

There is a perception that the music industry is not valued as an essential economic force or large employer. We would recommend investment into researching the scale and opportunity of the European music industry in order to promote the value and viability of careers in the sector.



## 8.2 Existing Music Industry

### 8.2.1 Being able to take risks

**Industry should work with government and/or funders to publish information about available careers**

Music organisations should actively engage with export offices or other government bodies to support the creation of educational resources which might enable people to choose a career in the music industry.

**Industry should actively promote their work to educational institutions as a viable career pathway**

This might include professionals allocating resources to speak about career opportunities to young people and employment organisations.

**Organisations should create resources detailing the roles they have, what they do and what skills they are seeking from potential recruits**

This could be made available on organisation websites about the team that work in the organisation and potentially more about individual career journeys and job roles. We would also encourage using learnings from other sectors, such as recruitment events and industry hosted evenings.

**Organisations should commit to open recruitment rather than simply offering jobs to their existing networks**

Moving out of the safe space of known networks will lead to positive change in the music industry through diversifying skills, experience and knowledge, and boosting the European music ecosystem.

**Established organisations should offer paid internships, traineeships and mentorships**

Not only opening spaces for early career professionals etc but also training people who are more established in the industry (managers, CEOs etc) to value, support and build the next generation of industry workers.

### 8.2.2 International networks

**Existing international events should develop opportunities to engage early career professionals in their events**

People who organise showcases and conferences should create initiatives to encourage more early career professionals to attend, and support them when present. This might be facilitated networking sessions, discounted access or specific programmes for first-time attendees.

### 8.2.3 The impact of a professional mentor

#### **Leaders should enlist or offer their time on official mentoring programmes**

This could follow the corporate volunteering model where organisations allocate a few days a year for all staff to participate in charity work. This would then enable professionals to guarantee a fixed number of hours for professional development and can potentially be written off as charitable contributions if done through a formal music charity.

#### **Organisations of all sizes should actively offer internships / traineeships**

This will give emerging music industry professionals the opportunity to work with and learn from industry leaders.

### 8.2.4 Co-creation / partnership working as a catalyst for opportunity

#### **Organisations should be open minded to collaboration and new opportunities, and should be willing to take measured risks**

Innovation is at the heart of success within the music industry. An attitudinal shift amongst organisations to see colleagues as partners rather than rivals can lead to combined opportunities which are greater than the options available for individual organisations. Company executives should actively seek out new partnership opportunities which drive growth for the sector.

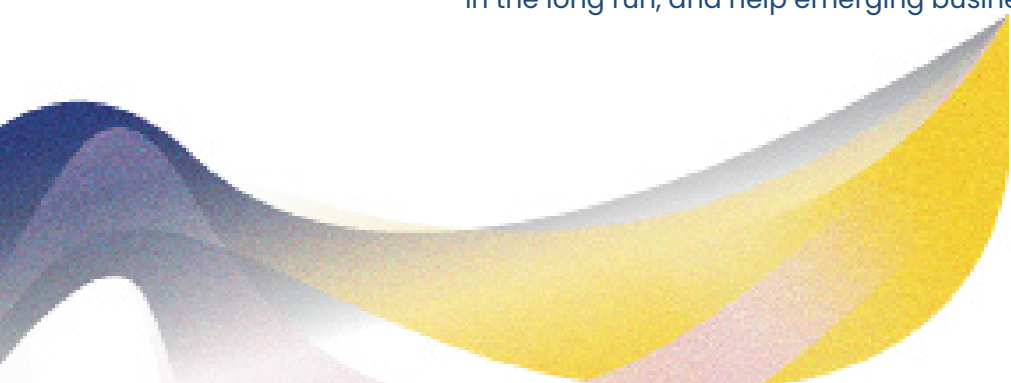
### 8.2.5 Publicly funded initiatives

#### **Organisations should actively direct work experience / new starters towards funding programmes**

Not all organisations can offer employment following an internship or placement. Therefore, when a company offers these opportunities, they should include an element of discussing funding programmes with new starters as part of the experience. This would encourage those who have begun to build a professional network through work experience to apply for funding which might kickstart a career.

#### **Companies should support funding bodies to share their opportunities more widely**

Existing music industry should share opportunities between each other and more generally through their external communications. Organisations should recognise that this mentality will support a stronger European music ecosystem in the long run, and help emerging businesses and people.





## 8.3 Individuals Seeking to Build a Career

### 8.3.1 Being able to take risks

#### **Individuals should research, plan and learn about the music industry structures**

Understanding the structures helps navigate the path into the industry, focussing career development whilst building opportunities.

#### **Continuing professional development is an essential element for career growth, including both formal and informal training and learning opportunities**

This means continuing to make time for individual professional development, including qualifications and research. It is never too late to develop new skills.

#### **Make individuals visible to the industry, shaping careers**

Individuals should not be afraid if they don't have a traditional education. Instead, they should give themselves permission to call themselves a creative or a professional working in the creative industry, acknowledging that this is a professional industry and they have the power to shape their own careers. The music industry values innovation and entrepreneurship more than direct education or qualifications and there are endless ways into the business.

### 8.3.2 International networks

#### **People starting their career in the industry should attend international networking events**

This is a great way to expand networks, find like-minded people, learn about new markets and international networks. We suggest individuals find any means to prioritise this: looking for grants, self funding, attending online, accessing export programme funds, and so on.

#### **Actively look for international networking, co-partnership opportunities supported by local or national institutions/associations**

Engage with export offices and music charities to find these opportunities. Sign up to mailing lists and social media channels of those organisations in which individuals are interested.

#### **Check with personal contacts if and how they attended international networks**

Personal contacts are a great source of knowledge so don't be afraid to reach out and learn from the experience of peers.

### 8.3.3 The impact of a professional mentor

#### **Early career professionals should actively seek out mentoring opportunities within their own network**

In our experience, most people are happy to offer their time to support people in their existing networks with learning experience and knowledge about their work and career paths. It might feel strange to reach out to someone for support, but is usually welcomed if done appropriately.

#### **Actively look for publicly funded mentoring programmes**

There are many pan-European networks and mentoring programmes available, such as Keychange. These groups and forums are great ways to expand networks and find mentors.

### 8.3.4 Co-creation / partnership working as a catalyst for opportunity

#### **All networking events are an opportunity for career progression so be active in attending these – every contact can be valuable**

Mentors and partnerships do not always need to be with people who have more experience in their careers. Anyone working in the music industry can be a possible business partner or co-creator. It's also worth noting that in an industry built on networks, it is extremely likely that individuals will continue to meet and work with the same people throughout their career, so keep in mind the importance of positive relationships with as many people as possible.

#### **Be open minded, be curious, and be willing to listen and learn from others**

Everyone has something valid and important to share. Because the industry is built on innovation, being open to new ideas and meeting new people is an essential part of being involved in new projects and opportunities.

### 8.3.5 Publicly funded initiatives

#### **Search for initiatives actively by subscribing and reading newsletters / channels / platforms from institutions / associations**

There are many chances to engage with groups able to support careers, including both private and public funders. Seek them out and engage with their content. There might also be organisations delivering in similar areas, so check websites to see which funds supported their activities.

## 9. Conclusions

The process of developing a series of recommendations to influence and improve the European music industry is a complicated and challenging one, increased by the fact that the EMBTF is not a group of researchers, academics or policy specialists. However, it is our lived and direct experiences which have equipped us with the skillset, networks and knowledge to make the recommendations in this report.

Of the recurring themes explored here, **it is impossible to overestimate the importance of networks, innovation and entrepreneurship.** In the creation of these recommendations, the first EMBTF has brought these tools together into one place and is already experiencing professional opportunities from this new network. To some extent, the very creation of such a group enhances the music industry in Europe.

To this end, **we have collectively committed to continue to work together and champion the values of openness and cooperation which has served us so well in our careers to date.** We hope that the Music Cities Network and the European Commission will recognise that even without this report, there is significant and intrinsic value in the creation of a European Music Business Task Force. Indeed we hope that we are the first of many European Music Business Task Forces and, as alumni of the programme, the network continues to thrive and generate further professional opportunities for those involved.

**The recommendations in this report are wide in scope.** Some are simple changes in attitude or outlook, others are wholesale policy considerations which would require significant investment. They **are not a panacea for the European music industry, but we hope that they form the basis to encourage the next generation of music professionals to build thriving careers, generating economic activity and jobs for the sector, and enabling the music industry to thrive across Europe.**

# 10. Appendix

Interview responses came from the following countries:

Austria  
Belgium  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Luxemburg  
Macedonia  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Portugal  
Romania  
Serbia  
Slovenia  
Spain  
UK

*[www.musiccitiesnetwork.com](http://www.musiccitiesnetwork.com)*  
*[www.embtf.com](http://www.embtf.com)*



MUSIC  
CITIES  
NETWORK

ESNS

REEPER  
BAHN  
FESTIVAL

ICELAND  
AIRWAVES

promus<sup>®</sup>

SPOT

KAOSPILOT



Co-funded by the  
European Union