



Statement on the Cultural Crisis in Slovakia

Trans Europe Halles stands in full solidarity with Slovakia's cultural sector as it faces one of its most critical challenges under the populist Government and Minister of Culture Martina Šimkovičová. Our members in Slovakia have shared deeply concerning updates with us. The actions of the Ministry—marked by ideological purges, the dismantling of key cultural institutions, and the centralization of decision-making power—are a direct threat to the democratic values and cultural freedoms that are the backbone of our society.

The Ministry's exclusionary rhetoric, which rejects transculturalism and targets marginalized communities, is deeply alarming. The taking control over the Slovak Arts Council and other cultural bodies, now dominated by political appointees, not only endangers the freedom and independence of the arts but also risks stifling the creative energy and diversity that has long defined Slovakia's cultural landscape.

At this critical juncture, the "Cultural Strike" movement, led by the **Open Culture! Platform**, represents a beacon of resistance and hope. Their demands for professional governance, an end to censorship, and financial stabilization resonate across the cultural community and beyond. Scheduled protests on **September 19, 2024**, in Bratislava, Košice, Nitra, Žilina, and 10 other cities, mark a crucial moment for Slovakia's cultural sector as it fights to defend its autonomy against political interference.

Trans Europe Halles calls European and international cultural institutions to amplify the voices of those standing up for artistic freedom and cultural diversity in Slovakia. It is vital that we support the "Cultural Strike" and all those defending the rights of artists and cultural workers, as their struggle is a fight for the very future of Slovakia's cultural and democratic identity.

We will continue to support the independent cultural spaces that foster creativity, dialogue, and innovation across Europe, and we call on others to stand with us in solidarity during this critical time. Together, we can safeguard the freedoms that make our cultures vibrant and diverse.

The time to act is now.