

Press Release

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Arena Resilience Alliance Launch Manifesto for the Safe Return of Live Music and Sport

The Arena Resilience Alliance (ARA) - a special purpose initiative, created by members of the European Arenas Association (EAA) has launched its manifesto, outlining the next steps required for the safe return of live events across Europe. ARA unveiled its four-point action plan at the end of its second virtual conference, #AGameofTwoHalves: The Return Leg on Thursday 18 February.

The manifesto entitled '**Rationale for a Resilient Return**' centres on four core concepts:

1. Creation of an advisory body

The ARA is proposing the creation of an advisory body that will work in tandem with European political interest groups to guide and instruct on the workings of the live events ecosystem and maximise resource for an effective return.

2. A hub for return and for change

The ARA, through its extensive network of large-capacity arenas across Europe can offer its venues as a hub for the renewal of the music and sporting industries. The ARA believes its members' venues can provide the physical space the live events ecosystem needs to build towards a safe return: a space for practice, for collaboration, for communities, and for medically conditioned tests that will measure the feasibility and act as a catalyst for the return of fan-attended events.

3. Adapting for the future of live events

The ARA is ready to lead the discussion on the need for arenas to provide the physical space for the development of new environmentally sustainable and digital practices within the context of the provision of community-based and fan-based group gatherings.

4. A safe and sustainable post-COVID 19 Ecosystem

The 'Rationale for a Resilient Return' manifesto has been prepared to face a critical moment for the events industry. The ARA believes we must embrace the opportunity to get arenas back to working for our communities. We must preserve the key elements of Europe's cultural identity by bringing back live music and sporting events. We must bring the different parts of the ecosystem together to create safer, greener and more efficient environments where European citizens can meet to relax, socialise and enjoy themselves.

Robert Fitzpatrick, CEO, The Odyssey Trust, owners of The SSE Arena, Belfast, EAA Member and co-founder of the ARA said: *"As the advocacy platform for European arenas, the ARA's manifesto will be an important tool as we prepare for a return to live events, whilst working to protect the health and wellbeing of our communities and the sustainability of our industry."*

Top names from the worlds of live music and sport came together with key EU decision-makers for the second ARA virtual conference. The event followed an ambitious live music experiment organised by the Rockhal arena in Luxembourg last week.

A series of five live shows took place between 10-14 February as part of the Because Music Matters showcase. Audiences were limited in capacity to 100 people each night. Allocated seats were set up around a central stage to ensure a certain level of proximity to the action, whilst ensuring social distancing controls were in place throughout the venue. Attendees had to wear masks at all times inside the venue and every participant and audience member was tested before and after each show. Other safety precautions included contactless audience security screening and access control and guidance inside the venue. Full results from the experiment are expected in around two weeks.

A short behind the scenes video from the Rockhal test concerts were screened as part of the conference, following an introductory keynote from Sam Tanson, Minister of Culture, Luxembourg Parliament.

Speaking at the conference, the Luxembourg Culture Minister praised the efforts of the Rockhal Arena and Luxembourg's health authority, saying she felt these tests were 'very important', showing the potential for live events to return with the 'appropriate measures' in place.

The minister also said that government support for the industry will be important moving forward: *"Culture, music and of course also sports are key components of our community's well-being. I was very pleased to read that the European Parliament has adopted on February 10 a joint resolution stating under point 33 that it 'considers that arenas and stadiums are at the core of the social fabric of sport and cultural ecosystems in our societies' and that it 'recognises that enabling venues to reopen is essential for the health and well-being of our citizens and for economic recovery, both now and in the future'. I believe that the support that we give to initiatives that will enable the return of live events is crucial."*

Olivier Toth, CEO, Rockhal in Luxembourg, EAA Board Member and co-founder of the ARA said: *"After almost a year without live events, experiments like our Because Music Matters showcase and other test events that have been taking place across Europe, are an important and positive step forward in testing the safety measures we can employ to support our back to business strategies. Building confidence amongst all our stakeholders that live events are a safe environment is so important. We were pleased to share initial feedback from the experiment at the ARA conference and we look forward to reviewing the findings fully, with a view to building towards a model that can be scaled as the industry continues to work towards the safe and sustainable return of live events."*

The ARA's #AGameofTwoHalves: The Return Leg virtual conference was delivered in partnership with IQ Magazine.

The live virtual event featured contributions from a range of speakers including John Langford, COO, AEG Europe and EAA President; Sam Tanson, Minister of Culture, Luxembourg; and Alex Jäger, Sport Director, Champions Hockey League. A range of keynotes and two lively panel discussions preceded the launch of the ARA Manifesto.

The event is available to watch again via the EAA [You Tube Channel](#) and [Facebook page](#).

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Notes to editors:

#AGameofTwoHalves: The Return Leg

- The event was organised by the Arena Resilience Alliance (ARA), a special purpose initiative, created by members of the European Arenas Association (EAA) to demonstrate solidarity and the need for concerted action.
- The ARA is fully supported by Euroleague Basketball, the European Hockey Clubs Alliance, the members of the European Arenas Association and other European large capacity multi-event venues.
- The event is available to watch again via the EAA [You Tube Channel](#) and [Facebook page](#).

About the EAA:

- The EAA represents 33 arenas in 20 European countries that operate some of the world's most cutting-edge venues, hosting unrivalled programs with outstanding artists, productions, sports and corporate events. The association's member arenas host over 2,900 annual events attracting a total audience of 19 million people.

- Over the last years, the EAA has strengthened relationships with the EU governing bodies to ensure the inclusion of arenas as part of the policy-making decisions. EAA has been involved in a number of activities and projects in three key areas: live music, sports and education, training & research.

About the ARA:

- The ARA was conceived by EAA Members, Olivier Toth (CEO, Rockhal, Luxembourg) and Robert Fitzpatrick (CEO, The Odyssey Trust in Northern Ireland, owners of The SSE Arena, Belfast), who both recognised the urgent need for arenas to unite and to raise awareness on the current difficulties of these venues and what impact their definitive closure would have on communities.
- The ARA is actively lobbying the EU to advance awareness of the importance of the physical infrastructure of arenas and their contribution to the wellness of every European citizen.