

Press Release
11 February 2021

ARA Set to Launch Manifesto for the Safe Return of Live Music and Sport

The Arena Resilience Alliance (ARA) - a special purpose initiative, created by the European Arenas Association (EAA) - will launch a manifesto next week, outlining the next steps required to build towards the safe return of live events across Europe. The industry body will unveil its action plan at the end of its second virtual conference, #AGameofTwoHalves: The Return Leg on Thursday 18 February.

Top names from the worlds of live music and sport will come together with key EU decision-makers for the event, which will follow an ambitious live music experiment organised by the Rockhal arena which takes place in Luxembourg this week. Behind the scenes content and insights from the Rockhal test concerts will be screened as part of the conference, offering an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned and next steps and helping to frame the discussion around what still needs to be done.

The virtual conference will explore how arenas and large capacity venues across Europe are preparing for a safe and sustainable reopening. The event will also explore what support the live events sector needs from policymakers on both a national and EU level to enable long-term resilience and future growth. The discussion will bring together high-level speakers representing EU institutions, national governments as well as the sports and live music sectors.

The live virtual event will feature 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 will precede the ARA Manifesto launch in the closing session.

The ARA's #AGameofTwoHalves: The Return Leg virtual conference is the second of two online events, delivered in partnership with the European Arenas Association and IQ Magazine.

Olivier Toth, CEO, Rockhal in Luxembourg, EAA Board Member and co-founder of the ARA said: *"We are looking forward to our forthcoming virtual conference, which will build on the success of our first #AGameofTwoHalves webinar in December, and explore how we are working towards the safe return of live music and sport. Our Because Music Matters project at Rockhal is an important step forward in testing the safety measures we can employ to support our back to business strategies. I look forward to sharing our experience and insights from these events."*

Robert Fitzpatrick, CEO, The Odyssey Trust, owners of The SSE Arena, Belfast, EAA Member and co-founder of the ARA added: *"As the advocacy platform for European arenas, the ARA has developed a manifesto, which 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. This event provides a further opportunity for industry and key EU decision makers to come together and discuss the regional and national frameworks that will help us get back to business."*

The conference will be streamed live from 1pm GMT / 2pm CET on Thursday 18th February 2021 via the EAA [YouTube Channel](#) or [Facebook page](#).

A Game of Two Halves: The Return Leg - The Line-Up

Opening addresses:

- Rita Brasil de Brito, Chair of the Cultural Affairs Committee, Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU;
- Viviane Hoffmann, Deputy Director General at the European Commission Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture;

Session 1: 'Ready to Rock and Play'

The first panel session entitled, **'Ready to Rock and Play'** will feature John Langford, COO, AEG Europe and President of the EAA; Luca Scafati, Director of Business Operations, Euroleague; Adam Goodyer, CEO & Founder of experience automation platform, Realife Tech; Alex Jäger, Sport Director, Champions Hockey League; Coralie Berael, Venue Manager, Forest National arena in Belgium; and MEP, Domènec Ruiz Devesa.

Keynote Speech & Presentation of Rockhal Test Events

Sam Tanson, Minister of Culture, Luxembourg Parliament will present behind-the-scenes footage from the Rockhal 'Because Music Matters' test events, which take place in Luxembourg, 10-14 February.

Session 2: 'Working our Way Back To You'

The second panel discussion will explore 'Working our Way Back To You' with speakers, Timo Hoppen, Semmel Concerts, Hamburg; Lotta Nibel, CEO, Scandinavium arena, Gothenburg; Dr Anne Vergison, Division Head, Health Inspection, Luxembourg Health Directorate; and MEP, Laurence Farreng.

Closing Session: ARA Manifesto Launch

Closing the event, ARA co-founders, Olivier Toth, CEO, Rockhal in Luxembourg, Robert Fitzpatrick, CEO, The Odyssey Trust, owners of The SSE Arena, Belfast and EAA President, John Langford will outline the next steps towards the return of live events.

ENDS

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Notes to editors:

#AGameofTwoHalves: The Return Leg

- The event is being organised by the Arena Resilience Alliance (ARA), a special purpose initiative, created by 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.
- For further information, the full line-up and to tune in to the conference live, visit the EAA [You Tube Channel](#) or [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.