

## Conference Programme

5 December 2025, online

### 10:00 CET | Opening Words

EDN Co-Presidents: **Laurent Meheust**, director, Le Gymnase CDCN (France) & **Louise Costelloe**, programme producer, Dance Ireland (Ireland)

**Normunds Popens**, Deputy Director General, European Commission  
Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

Moderator **Bertha Bermúdez**, EDN board member and Co-director Dantzaz – Dantzagunea

### 10:15 CET | Advocating Fair Structures and Stronger Working Conditions in Dance

Example of the Austrian Fairness Codex by **Ulrike Kuner**, General Manager EAIPA - European Association of Independent Performing Arts

### 10:25 CET | From Practice to Policy: Exploring Social Value through Dance

Conversation with dance artist and choreographer **Boris Charmatz**, focused on dance practice as a catalyst for civic and social transformation.

### 10:50 CET | Break

### 10:55 CET | Reimagining Artistic Infrastructures Through Advocacy

Case study presentations by artists **Idoia Zabaleta** and **Viktorija Ilioska**.

### 11:25 CET | Break

### 11:30 CET | **Dance for Equity and Societal Renewal**

**“With Love Dancing on the Parliament”** - conversation with choreographer Efva Lilja on active advocacy from and within artistic practice.

### 11:55 CET | **Practical Pathways for Meaningful Dance Data**

A simple, hands-on exercise for all participants on how to collect impactful dance data, guided by **Amy Fee**, General Manager, Danscentrum Sweden.

### 12:15 CET | **Imagining the Future of Dance - Participatory Laboratory**

The lab invites all participants: artists, administrators, and audience members, to collaboratively **envision the future of dance** in Europe, addressing the three core themes of the conference:

- **Democratic Infrastructure** – How can dance institutions and structures be more inclusive, participatory, and sustainable?
- **Working Conditions** – How can we improve the conditions for artists to thrive, including freelance and institutional contexts?
- **Societal Value & Cross-Sectoral Integration** – How does dance contribute to society and collaborate across disciplines?

### 12:55 CET | **Closing remarks** by moderator **Bertha Bermúdez**

#### **Speakers**

*In order of appearance*

**Bertha Bermúdez** (EDN Board Member) is co-director of Dantzaz - Dantzagunea, coordinating international projects, residencies, and documentation of Basque artists' creative processes. Formerly a dancer with leading European choreographers, she now co-leads programs with Adriana Pous focused on sustainable working conditions, professionalisation, mediation, and mentoring. She has advised on the Navarre Music and Performing Arts Archive and contributes to dance curricula across Europe. Bertha also creates interactive installations and has published widely on dance documentation.

**Laurent Meheust** (EDN Co-President) is the director of Le Gymnase / CDCN (Roubaix / France) and develops international projects connecting to the residencies program and annual festivals. He previously took part in the construction of KLAP Maison pour la danse in Marseille and worked as a guest lecturer at the Université de Provence for the License and Master's in Cultural Mediation and in the Art and Cultural Heritage programmes.

**Louise Costelloe** (EDN Co-President) is currently Programme Producer at Dance Ireland, where she works with the Dance Ireland team and membership to create opportunities for dance artists and the art form of dance to flourish. Her work in arts and dance management encompasses engagement with young people and communities, artist development, and programming performances and participatory experiences in dance. She is interested in dance dramaturgy, socially engaged practice and choreographic thinking.

**Normunds Popen** has served as Deputy Director-General in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture since January 2024. From 2011, he was Deputy Director-General for Implementation in DG Regional and Urban Policy, overseeing EU structural and cohesion funds. Before joining the Commission, he held senior roles in Latvia's diplomatic service, including Permanent Representative to the EU, Undersecretary of State, and ambassadorial posts in Norway, Iceland, and the United States.

**Ulrike Kuner** has extensive experience in production and project management for major international festivals and theatre institutions. She led EU-funded initiatives, including modul-dance (2010–2014) and the European Dancehouse Network (2014–2017). Since 2017, she has served as managing director of IG Freie Theaterarbeit, supporting freelance artists and collaborating with policymakers on advocacy and funding. She became president of the European Association of Independent Performing Arts in 2018 and co-founded the Contact Point against abuses of power in 2021.

**Boris Charmatz**, a leading figure in French contemporary dance since his 1993 breakthrough *À bras-le-corps*, is a dancer, choreographer, and creator of experimental projects. As director of the CCN de Rennes (2009–2018), he transformed it into the Musée de la danse to explore new relationships with audiences. His acclaimed works, including *Aatt enen tionon* (1996), *enfant* (2011), and *10000 gestes* (2017), have toured globally and inspired retrospectives at MoMA (New York), Tate Modern (London), and Festival d'Automne (Paris). Since 2019 he has explored dance's foundations with his company Terrain, and from 2022 to 2025 he directed Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch.

**Idoia Zabaleta** is an artist, choreographer, and biologist whose work focuses on rural artistic practice and situated research. She co-founded Azala, a residency space in Lasierra (Basque Country), dedicated to supporting experimentation, artistic processes, and critical thinking. Her practice foregrounds attention, interdependence, and ways of making that emerge from rural environments, offering distinct perspectives on how dance ecosystems can evolve.

**Viktorija Ilioska** is a North Macedonia–born choreographer and performer whose work unfolds between contemporary dance, social research, and collaborative creation. Based in Europe, she develops projects exploring embodiment, identity, and collective movement practices. Active in international residencies and platforms, she works across choreographic experimentation and community-based processes. Her practice reflects a commitment to rethinking artistic infrastructures, fostering shared authorship, and engaging participants in new forms of presence, agency, and artistic citizenship.

**Efva Lilja** is a Swedish choreographer with a global reach. Her choreographed events challenge and offer new visions for creating a reality in which political activities and everyday actions can be questioned and reformulated. Her award-winning works have been presented in forty countries, often seen as controversial and trailblazing. She is also highly recognised for her work promoting artistic research, as well as her activism and art-political engagement.

**Amy Fee** is the General Manager of Danscentrum Sverige, the national organisation for independent choreographers and dancers in Sweden. She has a background as a producer and project leader in the performing arts and expertise in EU and Nordic cultural funding, collaborative projects, and sector development. Amy is also an experienced board member, a former IT project manager, and a certified Scrum Master. She is interested in democracy, community organisation, and evaluation methods for "soft" values.