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## Is artistic freedom coming under attack in Europe? A statement by IETM

Artistic freedom, a fundamental value, faces growing threats across Europe, with concerning examples of censorship and restrictions on the arts, according to the IETM. The international performing arts network, calls on the cultural community to defend this core democratic principle.

The IETM (International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts) is raising concerns regarding the erosion of artistic freedom in Europe, particularly due to increasing political intervention in cultural organisations. Citing three distinct cases, the network is calling on the community to defend the basic democratic principle of free expression in the arts.

The most prominent of the three cases is the German parliament's resolution aimed at combating antisemitism, despite opposition from legal experts, civil society groups, and Jewish intellectuals. The resolution links public funding to adherence to a controversial definition of antisemitism, raising concerns over free speech and criticism of Israel's policies. In Slovakia, the National Gallery's director, Alexandra Kusá was fired amid a wider crackdown on culture and media by the nationalist government. Kusá says the dismissals are politically motivated, not based on merit, and part of a broader "destruction" of the country's institutions. Protests have followed the firings, seen as a threat to free expression. Nationalist protesters disrupted the opening night of John Malkovich's production of George Bernard Shaw's play "Arms and the Man" in Sofia, Bulgaria. The protesters denounced the play as "anti-Bulgarian" and demanded Malkovich's expulsion. Police were unable to control the unruly crowd, leading to the play being performed to journalists only.

