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Press Release – For Immediate Release

***European Theatre-makers call for new forms in the face of globalization and digital shift.
ETC annual meeting, Zagreb 24 – 27 October 2013***

Berlin, October 2013: Upon the invitation of the Zagreb Youth Theatre, z/k/m, the annual European Theatre Convention (ETC) meeting took place in Zagreb, Europe's 28th capital, from October 24-27, 2013. Over 60 theatre makers from more than 30 public theatres, theatre companies, cultural institutions and culture ministries representing 16 countries gathered to explore new forms for theatre in the face of globalization and the digital shift.

With the desire to create a European Theatre Laboratory, the ETC brought together **artists from the ETC Spring Theatre Tour Ensemble** to continue discussions and further explore ideas that were initiated during the ETC Spring Theatre Tour earlier this year enabling the direct exchange of independent artists with representatives of public theatre institutions. The exchange not just encouraged the debates but also increased a better understanding of how public theatre structures function. The debates were then further enhanced with guest panelists **Stefan Kaegi, Rimini Protokoll**, theatre director **Bobo Jelčić** and **Ivića Buljan** and **Bailey Lock, Lyric Hammersmith**. Panel moderator Tobi Müller pointed out, that despite their different working structures, all share the ambition to set themselves the task to change universals, which always implies a thoroughly research phase that often goes beyond time periods of existing practices. As a result not just actors are challenged, but also the spectator in often becoming an actor itself and pushing own boundaries.

The role of theatre institutions, its restraints but also its strong capacities in shaping new forms was debated not just by the panelists and delegates. Also Karel Bartak, head of the Culture programme of the European Commission stressed the need for strong organisations that represent the interests of a culture sector. This need for a good partnership and long-term dialogue with the culture sector and the European Commission has been recognized and will be reflected in the new Creative Europe funding programme.

As a result during the two day conference, new major artistic projects were developed focusing on new theatrical forms, audience development and theatre work for young audiences. ETC delegates agreed and emphasized the importance of personal encounters, networking opportunities and the exchange of best practices for European theatre makers to better know each other and to develop jointly new work. In addition, a new ETC board of directors has been elected for the next two years, reaffirming **Dubravka Vrgoc, z/km (HR)** as ETC president. Dubravka said: *"While the new European Culture Programme 2014-2020 stresses the need to redefine cultural institutions, meaning theatres as well, we in the ETC want to emphasize the need for a courageous search for new artistic forms – the kind of search that is not averse to make mistakes, yet calls for a different age of art through radical changes."* Three new member theatres joined the ETC in Zagreb: Théâtre de la Manufacture – CDN Nancy-Lorraine (FR), Schauspiel Leipzig (DE) and Teatro Cargo (IT).

The next annual ETC meeting will take place at Théâtre de Liège (BE) from March 13 -16, 2014.

Note for editors: The European Theatre Convention (ETC) is the biggest European network with about 40 member theatres in over 20 countries. Since its foundation in 1988 the ETC supports and initiates staff exchanges, theatre production exchanges, the mobility of theatre audience, the development of contemporary drama and is working as an advocacy for theatres in the dialogue with EU institutions.

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