

Brussels, June 30th 2011

Mr Halbe Zijlstra
Staatssecretaris voor Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap
Rijnstraat 50
2515 XP Den Haag
The Netherlands

Dear Mr Zijlstra,

I am contacting you on behalf of the European Composer & Songwriter Alliance (ESCA), an umbrella organisation representing approximately 12 000 music writers (including such outstanding composers as Ennio Morricone, Lorenzo Ferrero, Benny Andersson, Paul McCartney, Elton John) in 29 European countries,

ECSA would like to express its deep concern about about the latest changes related to the cultural sphere and announced in the memorandum entitled "More than Quality".

First of all, I would like to point out that the reduction of the budget in the fields of art and culture by 20% (in comparison with 5% in other sectors), in particular, jeopardizes the work of performing artists. In practice, it means that several orchestras, opera companies, numerous ensembles and festivals will simply not survive.

Furthermore, the blacklisting of the Music Centre the Netherlands (MCN) and the Netherlands Music Institute (NMI) will entail serious consequences. For the avoidance of doubt ESCA understands that NMI is a central institution for the preservation of the Dutch musical heritage and the Music Centre the Netherlands is the resource and promotion centre for the professional music world. Their mission is to propagate and to enhance the position of Dutch musical life, both nationally and internationally. In event of the planned changes happening:

- the compositions of most modern and old Dutch composers will not be available anymore: the digitized catalogue of Donemus, which contains 12.000 titles, 1.4 Million pages will be endangered; thousands of scores will not be sold and performed worldwide by both amateurs and top professionals;
- the access to the Jazz Archives and Libraries will be endangered;
- the promotion of music activities on national and international level will stop;
- publications, conferences and workshops on music and music related subjects will not be held anymore;

Taking in account the significance of the issue and the irreversibility of damage that the mentioned changes will bring about, ESCA calls for the serious re-examination of the proposal.



Alfons Karabuda
ECSA Executive Chairman