

In search of fair systems

Examining social security for artists in
Europe

Discussion paper

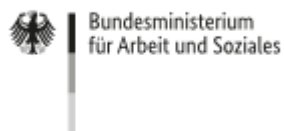
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Systemcheck is a project of the Bun-
desverband Freie Darstellende
Künste e. V. in cooperation with



Gefördert durch:



aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages

About “Systemcheck”

Between 2021 and 2023, the “Systemcheck” research project of the Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste e.V. (BFDK, German Association of Independent Performing Arts) will be exploring the working situation and social security of self-employed and hybrid workers in the performing arts.

Through a participatory research approach, actors from the field of practice, politics and science have come together to exchange and enable a resilient status report and analysis of the current situation. At the core of this process are a quantitative survey and qualitative study that allow conclusions to be drawn about the effectiveness of the social security systems and any additional requirements.

Thus, “Systemcheck” aims to develop the necessary proposals for improvement and the corresponding recommendations for action for dynamic, socio-political and fair instruments that are adapted to the working and living realities of self-employed or hybrid working artists.

About the “Systemcheck” discussion papers

In the context of the “Systemcheck” research project, three discussion papers as well as up to 12 essay-like dossiers will be published online.

The three discussion papers are based on the following studies:

- A qualitative interview study on working and employment conditions as well as on the social security and needs and coping strategies of practitioners in the performing arts.
- A qualitative study of European social security systems for actors in the performing arts.
- A quantitative survey in which performing arts practitioners are asked about their social security status, income, past employment situations, prospects and socio-demographic characteristics.

The results of these studies form the basis of the policy recommendations for a system change towards greater accuracy and fairness.

Abstract

The working and living realities of performing arts professionals can be rather challenging. Their work requires not only a high degree of flexibility and organisational skills but also a willingness to self-exploit. Performing arts professionals are constantly taking on different roles in their work: they are artists, producers, managers, accountants, publicists and so much more. At the same time, their work constellations are atypical, oscillating between self-employment, part-time work, temporary work, seasonal work and hybrid work. A major challenge here is the fact that many working activities are not remunerated or even recognised as work at all, such as networking, conceptualising new projects, writing funding proposals, finalising a project or simply maintaining correspondence. There is no social security net to catch performing arts professionals in these situations. Thus, performing arts professionals must rely on their private networks and develop their own coping strategies. These precarious working realities create many uncertainties. The existing insurance systems in Germany are insufficient for professionals in the performing arts and therefore need to be revised.

To determine and develop proposals for improvements and solutions for the social security system for performing arts professionals in Germany, a glimpse at other European countries is also helpful. Therefore, a European study was conducted as part of the “Systemcheck” research project. This exploratory study, “In search of fair systems: Examining social security for artists in Europe”, examines existing social security systems in five European countries to derive possible solutions for improvements in Germany. This has three parts:

1. An exploratory and comparative study of social security systems specifically for the performing arts in selected European countries, by Melisa Bel Adasme.
2. An interview study with representatives from national associations for the performing arts, by Yana Prinsloo and Jonathan Roth.
3. An online workshop in which the findings from the first two parts were discussed with experts and performing arts professionals from Germany and Europe.

In the first part, Melisa Bel Adasme takes stock of insurance conditions and benefits for old age provision, unemployment and parenthood in five European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France and Portugal. The second part summarises interviews with experts who were asked for their assessment of these insurance systems. The third part is the documentation and evaluation of the workshop, with recommendations for action on how the German social security system for professionals in the performing arts can be improved based on the two preceding parts.

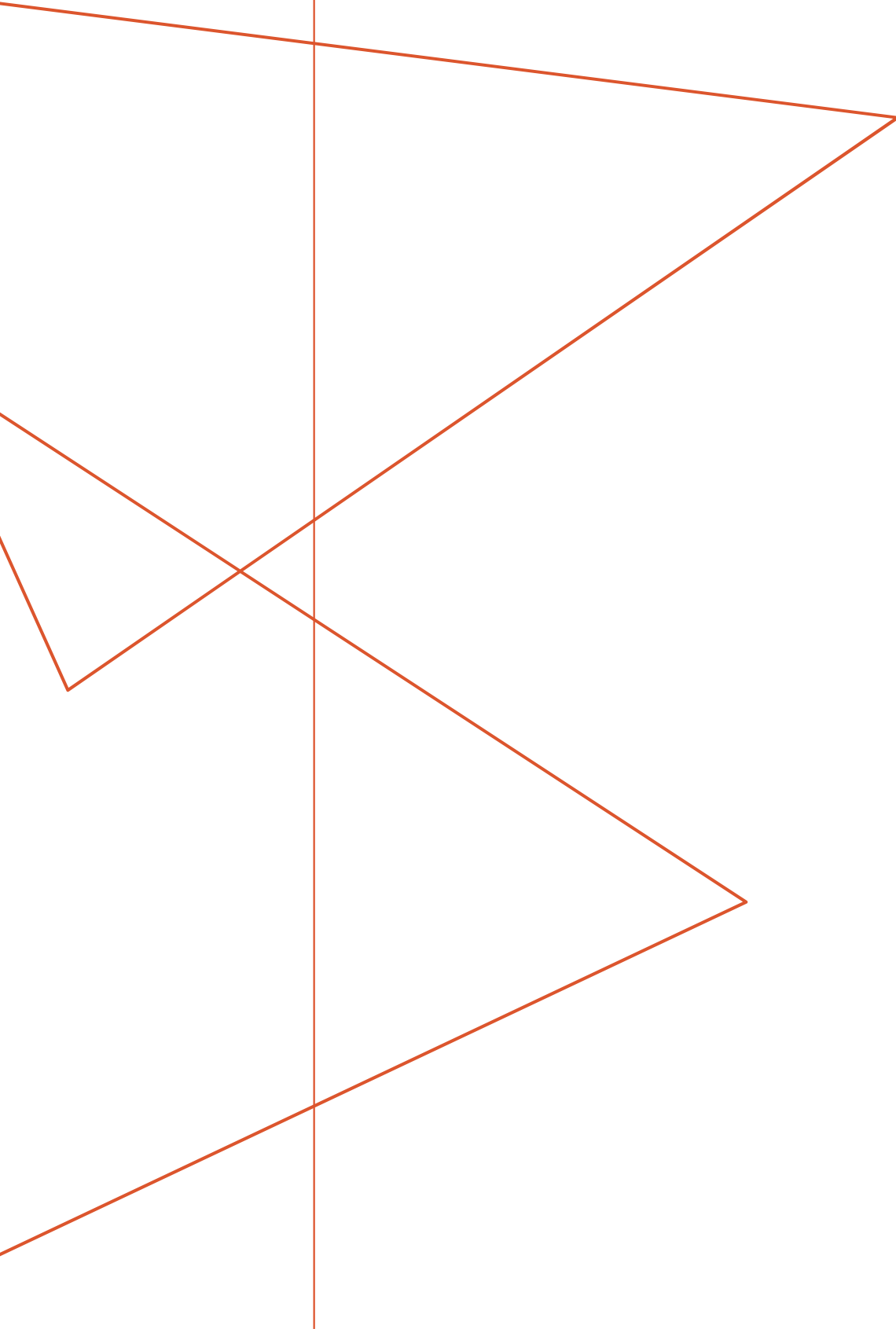
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Introduction



¹ According to the definition provided in the second thematic dossier from “Systemcheck”, hybrid workers are those workers who have temporary contracts as guest performers at theatres and are also self-employed and/or have another temporary artistic (guest performance) contract (Auerbach et al., 2022, pp. 38–39).

² The workshop took place on 31 August 2022 and was organised by the **Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste** (German Association of Independent Performing Arts) in the framework of the “Systemcheck” project.

Working as an artist often means being able to work freely and independently. But what may be a dream come true for many people also has a downside. For the majority of workers in the arts and cultural industries, the freedom to work independently also means precarious working and living conditions as well as a lack of social security, for example, in cases of illness, unemployment or old age. This affects self-employed artists as well as hybrid workers.¹

Although the lack of social security for artists in Germany has been a topic of discussion for decades, it has not yet been systematically researched. This is where the “→ **Systemcheck**” research project of the Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste comes into play. By examining the labour realities in the independent structures of the performing arts, it aims to improve social security and develop socio-political and fair instruments that are fitted to the working and living realities of self-employed artists and hybrid workers. In order to achieve this objective, the research project follows a mixed-method approach, conducting three main studies to collect data from which the recommendations for action will be based. These studies are complemented, on the one hand, by thematic essay-like dossiers that focus on specific issues and topics in this wider research field. On the other hand, in workshops and conferences, professionals from the performing arts, experts, politicians, researchers and representatives from unions, associations and administrations discuss the situation and challenges of the living and working conditions of artists as well as possible solutions. These components will be taken into account for the formulation of recommendations.

One way for improving the German system is by looking at what others are already doing in this area and learning from them. For this, a European study on different social security systems and approaches was conducted. Following the mixed-method approach of “Systemcheck”, the study consists of three parts:

1. An exploratory study of the social security systems in Europe.
2. A series of expert interviews with representatives from national associations for the performing arts.
3. An online workshop, “Social Security for the Performing Arts in Europe”,² where the results of the first two parts are discussed together with performing arts workers from Germany and Europe.

This three-part European study seeks to identify social security solutions for self-employed and hybrid workers in the (performing) arts, to assess and to identify strengths and weaknesses in these systems, to develop optimisation proposals as well as to deduct good practice examples for Germany.

The study comprised three steps. First, sociologist Melisa Bel Adasme conducted an exploratory and comparative study on social security approaches specifically designed for (performing) artists in selected European countries. In a second step, and based on Bel Adasme’s findings, theatre scientist Yana Prinsloo and anthropologist Jonathan Roth de-

veloped a written questionnaire that was sent to representatives from national associations in selected European countries. The aim was to gain further insights into the functioning of the social security systems identified in the exploratory study and to describe possible good practice examples. Finally, the findings on good practice examples from the qualitative interview study were discussed in an online workshop. Together with experts from different European countries, professionals from Germany discussed and formulated possible adjustments and proposals to improve the German social security situation for the performing arts.

Throughout this study, different questions were explored and discussed. In the exploratory and comparative study, Melisa Bel Adasme focuses on the questions: “What social security systems exist for performing arts professionals in other European countries?” and “How do these systems work?” Yana Prinsloo and Jonathan Roth ask in their interview study: “Do these systems address the challenging working and living conditions of those in the performing arts?” Ultimately, the workshop asks the question: “What can we learn in this context from our neighbours to deduct possible solutions for Germany?”

Finally, the concluding remarks offer an insight into what needs to be addressed in the further process of improving the situation for performing arts professionals in Germany.

Chapter 1: European social security systems for the performing arts

**By Melisa Bel
Adasme**

An exploratory and comparative study of approaches and good practice examples in selected countries

Introduction

This paper focuses on the research process and findings of the first part of this European study: the exploratory study. The aim was to obtain a comparative overview of different approaches and regulations in terms of social security systems in five selected European countries. The main research question sought to determine which solutions other European countries are already implementing for performing artists and which of these solutions could be interesting for the German system. The exploratory study included a literature review and a document analysis, identifying specific solutions for social security that favour professionals in the (performing) arts and mapping out different approaches and regulations that could serve as good practice examples specific to the performing arts. The results of the exploratory study also served as the basis for developing the second part of the overall European study, namely the expert interviews with representatives from national associations for the performing arts in the five chosen European countries. This is then used to assess and deepen the findings.

The paper is divided into four sections. It begins by describing the approach of the research process as well as the methodological approach, including the gathering, processing and analysing of the collected information. It then goes on to present the findings from the exploratory study of the five chosen European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France and Portugal. The comparative review of the different approaches and regulations are described along the three selected components of social security: unemployment, old age and parenthood. The third section draws upon the different approaches and regulations in the five European countries in contrast to the current German social security system for professionals in the performing arts. Finally, the conclusion provides a summary of the work and an outlook.

Research process and methodological approach

Finding the three most relevant components of social security

The three components of social security that this paper focuses on are unemployment, old age and parenthood. The selection of these three components for investigation in the exploratory study is based on the close collaboration with the independent performing arts scene within the framework of the “Systemcheck” research project.

³ The findings of the workshop were compiled in the thematic dossier “**Die große Freiheit? Solo-Selbstständige in den darstellenden Künsten und ein Check ihrer sozialen Absicherungssysteme**” (The great freedom? Self-employed in the independent performing arts and a review of its social security systems) (Kislinger, Schieck, 2022). The dossier collected questions and requirements for optimisation based on a practical assessment of social security systems in the performing arts, contextualised by experts from different fields.

⁴ Here, participants could choose between old age, unemployment, sick pay, KSK (**Künstlersozialkasse**, the German Artists' Social Security Fund), parenthood and legally secure status.

⁵ According to preliminary results of the survey.

⁶ According to preliminary results of the survey.

As part of “Systemcheck”, various events are being held to examine and discuss the most important issues surrounding the question of social security for artists. These are being documented and further elaborated in scientific discussion papers and thematic dossiers. The publications provide a comprehensive insight into the working realities in the performing arts and the respective challenges involved. One of these events was the “**Sozial abgesichert? Solo-Selbstständige in den freien darstellenden Künsten**” (Socially secure? Self-employed in the independent performing arts) workshop that took place on 24 November 2021. Here, the working conditions and social security for self-employed professionals in the independent performing arts were examined. Among the participants were experts and professionals from the independent performing arts.³ On 7 and 8 December 2021, the first conference as part of “Systemcheck” was held, where professionals in the performing arts and representatives from politics, science and administration exchanged ideas on specific problem areas of gainful employment in the performing arts. According to the documentation and assessment of these first two events, old age and unemployment were the most relevant and urgent issues.

The importance of these identified issues was reinforced through the results of the registration for a quantitative survey on social security in the performing arts in Germany, conducted in the spring and summer of 2022 by the **Institut für empirische Sozial- und Wirtschaftsforschung** (INES Berlin) and the German Association of Independent Performing Arts (BFDK) as a part of “Systemcheck”. The survey sought to determine the status quo of German social security for self-employed and hybrid workers in the performing arts as well as gain scientifically sound and reliable data on the inadequacies of this system. Registration for this survey included a question requesting the most urgent concerns of the participants.⁴ The two most frequently selected topics were old age and unemployment: of 1,688 registrants, approximately 48 per cent selected the topic of old age, while 18 per cent selected unemployment.⁵ This also thus suggested that these two topics are of great relevance and should be analysed within the review.

The third component of social security, parenthood, was defined together with the partner consortium at the beginning of the research process for the exploratory study. This topic was also identified as very important during the above-mentioned workshops as well as within the registration for the quantitative survey, and approximately seven per cent of the registered participants indicated this as a concern.⁶ Together with the project partners, the partner consortium chose this topic as it concerns many actors in Germany as well as the other European countries.

While other components of social security, such as health and occupational accident insurance, were also discussed and addressed during the “Systemcheck” events and selected as urgent topics within the registration for the quantitative survey, the three above-mentioned issues emerged as the most relevant for professionals in the performing arts. In this sense, the approach of this exploratory study is based on the problems of performing artists and experts from the field, identified

through the data collected during the project and, therefore, does not claim to be an exhaustive analysis of all social security systems in Europe. Moreover, such an examination would exceed the scope of this European study.

Selecting the five European countries

The five European countries to be analysed – Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France and Portugal – were also selected at the beginning of the exploratory study in collaboration with the partner consortium. The selection of these five countries was primarily based on whether there was a specific social security system in place for professionals in the (performing) arts or not. Another significant eligibility criterion was accessibility. It was important to choose countries with systems that are accessible to a wide range of professionals in the (performing) arts. Originally, geographical representativeness (Northern, Western, Southern and Eastern Europe) was to be a core eligibility criterion for the selection of the final sample; however, during the selection process it was not possible to identify an Eastern European country that met the first two eligibility criteria. Since the aim of the exploratory study was to identify solutions that other European countries were already implementing in terms of social security for performing artists that could be interesting for the German system, the existence of a specific social security system for professionals in the (performing) arts and accessibility were prioritised among the main selection criteria.

The process began with 15 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland) that could be considered for an in-depth exploratory study. This initial selection was based on several eligibility criteria, such as geographical representativeness, countries with member associations in the → **European Association of Independent Performing Arts** (EAIPA) as well as countries not represented within EAIPA, and accessibility. As the scope of this survey did not allow the assessment of all 15 European countries, it was necessary to narrow down the selection of countries for the in-depth exploratory study to only five, while still aiming to take into account the eligibility criteria mentioned above – with a focus on the existence of a specific social security system for professionals in the (performing) arts.

Among the listed countries were some that were already known to have established social security systems for (performing) artists or a new system that was just being implemented, such as France or Portugal, respectively, which were included in the in-depth exploratory study from the start. In some countries, like Ireland and Italy, projects for the social security of artists are planned; however, these will only be implemented after the research period of the exploratory study,⁷ and, therefore, were not taken into account for the final selection.

It is also known that in Switzerland, self-employed artists are integrated into the general unemployment insurance system. There is a special regulation for these artists regarding the calculation of entitle-

⁷ In Ireland, there is a planned pilot project on a basic income for artists, but this will not start until the fall of 2022 (McQuaid, 2022). Italy has developed a social security system for unemployed artists in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, but will not be able to implement this until 2023 because no funds are available (EAIPA, 2022, time: 4:07:00).

ment periods, but otherwise the same conditions apply as for employees, i.e., the system is not geared to the special needs and circumstances of artists (Adler et al., 2022, p. 40). In Austria, there is an explicit social security system for artists in terms of old age that also offers accessible admission requirements. Since the aim of the exploratory study was to identify and compare countries with specific and accessible social security systems for (performing) artists, Austria was consequently chosen for examination in greater detail within the study.

Little was known about other countries like Denmark, Finland, Norway, Iceland, the Netherlands and Belgium. Therefore, it was necessary to conduct initial general research to find out more about these systems for the further working process. Associations for (performing) arts from these countries served as a starting point. This initial exploration showed that even though all these countries have somewhat interesting aspects regarding overall social security solutions, there were only a few that actually have special systems for (performing) artists, although not for every chosen component.

The Nordic countries constitute a particular case in point. These countries provide extensive overall social security for all citizens (NOSOSCO, 2017). Although it would be very worthwhile to investigate these systems, and good practice examples could certainly be provided, most, except Sweden and Denmark, do not provide a specific solution for artists. In Sweden, there are so-called artist alliances, whose members are entitled to benefits in cases of unemployment. Unfortunately, access to these alliances is difficult and many professionals do not benefit from the advantages (Baio, 2022b, Slide 12; EAIPA, 2022, time 4:10:00). For this reason, Sweden was not included in the exploratory study. In Denmark, on the other hand, there is a specific social security system for artists in the case of unemployment, and this is far more accessible. Therefore, Denmark was included in the final selection.

In the case of the Netherlands, initial research showed that there is no specific social security system for artists. Consequently, it was not considered for the exploratory study. Belgium, on the other hand, does have a specific scheme for artists, but was initially excluded from the selection because it has many similarities with the French system. Nevertheless, Belgium was ultimately included in the sample following information that the existing social security system had been reformed to include a special status that artists can apply for and which provides unemployment benefits.

The situation was different for Poland and Slovenia. Although there were some indications that there might be a special social security arrangement for artists in these countries,⁸ further research showed that neither of these countries were suitable for the exploratory study. Poland did not have a specific social security system for artists. Slovenia does indeed have one, however, access to it is difficult, the benefits are below the poverty line and, given that the system is administered by the Ministry of Culture, it is subject to the political climate and the current tendency is to reduce the number of recipients (Baio, 2022a, Slide 6; EAIPA, 2022b, time 4:00:00). Since the focus of the exploratory study was to identify approaches and regulations that could serve

⁸ The information for Slovenia was obtained during the EAIPA conference at the end of March 2022 (Keller, 2022).

as examples of good practice that can be used for further developing and improving the German social security system for performing artists, Slovenia was thus not included in the final selection, even though this unfortunately meant not having any Eastern European country included in the sample.

Gathering, systematising and analysing information

An exploratory study is a methodological research approach that focuses on research areas or questions that have not been addressed before and/or are not clearly defined. It is intended to provide an initial overview and better understanding of the object being studied and its context, rather than providing final conclusive results. An exploratory study is mostly conducted using qualitative methods since it generally starts with an overall idea and seeks to identify issues that could be the focus of future investigations by answering questions of “what”, “why” and “how” (Dudovskiy, n. d.; QuestionPro, n. d.; George, 2021).

This exploratory study was conducted in three steps by gathering and analysing information from previously published primary sources (secondary research) through: 1) a literature review, 2) Internet research and 3) a systematic qualitative document analysis.

First, a literature review was conducted to understand the current state of the research. A literature review is “a more or less systematic way of collecting and synthesising previous research” (Snyder, 2019, p. 333). Literature reviews are useful for providing an overview of a particular topic in order to discuss and evaluate the current state of knowledge (ibid., p. 334).

In terms of the necessary information for the exploratory study regarding social security systems, this usually includes data that is available online that is continually being updated and supplemented. This is why further Internet research was necessary to supplement the literature research. Internet research is a rapid way of gathering data on any topic. The number of websites on the world wide web is vast and is growing all the time, which is both the strength and the weakness of the Internet: it offers a great amount of information, but at the same time it can be confusing and difficult to keep track of. Therefore, it is important to know where and how to conduct Internet research in order to find reputable sources. Along these lines, the Internet was used as a medium to facilitate a literature and document search, i.e., it is not information itself that was sought on the Internet, but rather through/by means of the Internet (Mohr, 2022). Based on this approach, the Internet research began with the associations for (performing) artists in each of the five countries that were known to the project consortium, since these associations usually present themselves and provide most content over a website, and continued through further websites and online documents regarding social security for each of the five European countries.

To systematically collect, assess and analyse the data, a qualitative document analysis was used. A qualitative document analysis is a data collection method for the systematic review and evaluation of documents that are available in written or electronic form (Bowen, 2009).

The analysis process includes “finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesising data contained in documents”, and provides data “that are then organised into major themes, categories, and case examples specifically through content analysis” (ibid., p. 28). For this exploratory study, the content analysis according to Bowen (2009) was applied. Bowen (2009) suggests a more qualitative approach to the analysis through a first-pass document review, “in which meaningful and relevant passages of text or other data are identified” (ibid., p. 32).

For this purpose, over 50 electronic sources (mostly websites) were collected, saved, systematised and analysed. Although a few of the web pages had some summarised information in English, most of the essential content was in the respective national languages, and thus had to be translated. For this, the web page translator embedded in Google Chrome allowed a quick and mostly accurate understanding of the content displayed. The online translator DeepL was also consulted if needed. The identified and mostly translated data was excerpted, documented, structured and systematised in an Excel spreadsheet using the following guiding questions for each of the five selected countries and all of the three social security components:

- In which form of employment are artists classified in the social security system?
- What are the requirements for access?
- Who is covered?
- What is covered?
- How long is one insured for?
- How much remuneration does one receive?
- How much does the social insurance system cost?
- What are the weak points of the systems? What are the points of criticism?

This provided a fast and comparative overview of the five countries and the three components of social security. The above-mentioned guiding questions were developed by the partner consortium and adapted or supplemented as needed during the research. Later, these questions evolved into the following categories of analysis:

- Classification regarding employment status (employee, self-employed, hybrid)
- Requirements for access
- Coverage of the insurance/eligibility criteria
- Duration of the entitlement/length of leave
- Amount of the subsidy/allowance and nature of the benefit
- Funding
- Weak points and/or points of criticism⁹

The next step was to review the data and provide quotes¹⁰ with their corresponding sources. The sorted text segments were then comparatively analysed along the categories of analysis.

⁹ The weak points and/or points of criticism will be discussed in the third section, “Examples of good practice: Learning from other countries”.

¹⁰ Most of the collected text passages are direct quotes from the national language and translated into English. For this reason, the abbreviation “cf.” (Latin: *confer/conferatur*, meaning “compare”) was added after each translated quotation to indicate that the translation is variable and that, in any case, the original in the national language should be consulted.

This section has described the research process and included defining the three components of social protection to be investigated, selecting the five European countries to be explored, establishing the research and methodological design of the exploratory study and systematising and comparatively analysing the data collected in order to identify different approaches and regulations in terms of social security systems for professionals in the (performing) arts that could serve as good practice examples for Germany. The results of this exploratory comparative study are presented and discussed in the next section.

Presentation and discussion of the findings: A comparison of European social security systems

This section presents the findings from the exploratory comparative study of the five selected European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France and Portugal. It is structured along the three chosen components of social security: old age, unemployment and parenthood.

Although a social protection system for (performing) artists was identified in all five countries, there was no system that included all three selected components. For this reason, one key aspect of the analysis of every component was to differentiate between the countries that have specific social security system solutions that favour professionals in the (performing) arts from those who only have an overall social security system. Another major consideration when analysing the data was the classification of the artists regarding their employment status. Since there are a high number of professionals in the (performing) arts working either as self-employed or with a succession of short contracts, or doing both at the same time (and are thus considered “hybrid workers”) (Kislinger, Schieck, 2022; Auerbach et al., 2022), it was important to look at how the social security systems accommodate this kind of employment and, if they do, to also consider the differences with salaried work.

Before presenting the comparative analysis in detail, some general observations are summarised as follows:

- All five countries analysed have a specific social security solution for (performing) artists regarding at least one of the three components (in France, there are special systems for two of the components).
- Although old age appears to be the most urgent issue for performing artists, only two countries (Austria and France) have a specific system for professionals in the (performing) arts.
- Four of the five countries have special solutions for the case of unemployment (Belgium, Denmark, France and Portugal); health and accident insurance are often provided in addition.
- The remaining components of social security for which there are no special arrangements for professionals in the (performing) arts are

- covered in all countries by the general social insurance or by the general social security system of the respective country.
- In all five countries, the “special” situation of artists in terms of working conditions and contracts (salaried, self-employed, hybrid, succession of short contracts, etc.) serves as the basis for the development of the special social security systems.
 - All five countries somehow acknowledge that artists usually have several jobs in different forms of employment (i.e., are hybrid workers); nevertheless, in general, the distinction between salaried and self-employed work, which entails different benefits, is the basis for the security systems, and hybrid employment often remains marginal, and does not seem to play a major role in the development of social security arrangements for artists, thus indicating a gap in these systems.
 - For the parenthood component, there are no special regulations for (performing) artists in any of the five countries; benefits are regulated by the general social security system in all cases.

The results of the analysis are presented below and are discussed comparatively for all three components of social security. In order to provide a structured overview of the results, summary tables were created containing the most important data regarding the analysis categories mentioned above. These provide a simple and rapid comparison of the different social security systems for (performing) artists and serve as a starting point for the in-depth comparative analysis.

Old age

When it comes to retirement planning for artists, the true art often means being able to make a living from art in the first place. Old age includes all arrangements undertaken by people in their working age to adequately cover their future living costs after retirement (cf. Bundesministerium der Finanzen, n. d.). However, the precarious work situation of self-employed artists and hybrid workers usually leaves them with little room to actively manage their pension provision and financial security in old age. Moreover, many artists often lack the financial means to build up reserves whilst they are still working (Kislinger, Schieck, 2022). This results in a certain compulsion to remain creatively active in old age, as in most cases retirement provisions are very low and therefore insufficient to secure an adequate living in retirement. This was proven by a quantitative study on the situation of Berlin artists in 2018, which showed that the expected pension among the respondents was, on average, € 357 per month, with the median value being € 280. This indicates that half of the artists involved in the survey can expect an old age pension of less than € 280 monthly (cf. IFSE 2018).

Furthermore, according to preliminary results of the “Systemcheck” quantitative survey on social security in the performing arts in Germany mentioned in the first section of this paper, old age represents the most urgent concern for the participants (nearly half of them chose this topic¹¹). Dealing with the topic of old age is therefore extremely important for self-employed professionals and hybrid workers in the (performing) arts.

¹¹As mentioned in the first section of this paper, “Research process and methodical approach. Finding the three components of social security”.

¹² “The change is part of a more general plan by the government to simplify the social security system in France, by abolition of the various professional social insurance agencies that exist for the self-employed and other special groups” (French-Property, 2019). Both AGESEA and the MDA have limited functions, mainly as professional associations controlling access to the professions.

Although old age provision for artists seems to be the most urgent issue to be addressed, only two of the five countries analysed within the exploratory study have developed specific social security solutions for (performing) artists regarding old age: the **Künstler-Sozialversicherungsfonds** (Artists' Social Insurance Fund, KSVF) in Austria and **La Sécurité sociale des artistes-auteurs** (Social Security for Artists and Authors) in France. Until 2009, the social security system for artists and authors in France was divided into two schemes coordinated by different agencies: the **Maison des artistes** (House of Artists, MDA) and the **Association pour la Gestion de la Sécurité Sociale des Auteurs** (Association for the Management of Authors' Social Security, AGESEA). Since 1 January 2019, the social security contributions due on artistic earnings have been collected by the **Union de recouvrement des cotisations de sécurité sociale et d'allocations familiales** (General Social Security Collections Agency, URSSAF)¹² (cf. French-Property, 2019).

French artists-authors contribute to their own specific social security scheme, which is attached to the general French social security scheme. This was created in 1964 to provide them with social protection (health, retirement, family, maternity, etc.) while taking into account their specific situation as creators of intellectual works. The Austrian KSVF provides subsidies for the social insurance contributions of self-employed artists, can pay subsidies in special emergencies and collects the levies to provide the funds required for this purpose.

The Austrian KSVF insures artists working in the fields of the visual arts, the performing arts, music, literature, cinematography or in one of the contemporary manifestations of the fields of art (cf. KSVF(a), n. d.). In contrast to this, the French social security system for artists differentiates between five main branches of artistic activity: graphic and plastic arts, book writers and illustrators, music songwriters, authors of cinematographic and audio-visual works as well as authors of photographic works (cf. **La Sécurité sociale des artistes-auteurs**, 2022b). Performing artists (intermittent workers such as actors, singers, comedians, etc.) are salaried employees and are thus not eligible for the social security system for artists and authors. Merely choreographic works and pantomimes are mentioned as an eligible activity under the branch of music songwriters, since only activities involving the original creation of an intellectual work, in the sense of intellectual property law, are eligible for the social security scheme for artists-authors (cf. **La Sécurité sociale des artistes-auteurs**, 2022c).

As the main eligibility criterion, the KSVF verifies whether the activity of the applicants is artistic within the definition in the Austrian **Künstler-Sozialversicherungsgesetzes** (Artists' Social Insurance Fund Act, KSVFG). According to this act, an artist is anyone who: a) creates works of art b) within the framework of an artistic activity in the above-mentioned fields. Both requirements must be fulfilled to be eligible. Furthermore, the artists must work as self-employed artists and consequently be insured with the **Sozialversicherungsanstalt der Selbständigen** (Social Insurance Institution for the Self-Employed, SVS(a), n. d.), earn an annual minimum income limit of € 5,830.20 and not exceed an annual maximum limit of € 31,580.25 with all their in-

¹³ All amounts quoted apply for the year 2022.

¹⁴ Only royalties paid by distributors can be declared as wages and salaries.

come (cf. KSVF(b), n. d.).¹³ While the old French scheme also stipulated a minimum annual income of € 8,784 as an eligibility criterion and affiliates had to pay 17 per cent in social security contributions on net earnings, artists-authors are now registered with the reformed social security system as soon as they declare the beginning of an artistic activity to the URSSAF or after a third party, also known as a “distributor” (publisher, producer, collective management organisation), has paid them an artistic remuneration. To be eligible for affiliation, artists must work independently, without the subordination that characterises salaried employment, carry out activities involving the original creation of a work of the mind in the sense of intellectual property, as well as work within one of the five main branches mentioned above. They will then have to choose the most suitable tax system for themselves. There are two options for this: declare their income either as non-commercial profits or as wages and salaries.¹⁴ In the first case, social security contributions will be paid by the artists every three months to the URSSAF, and in the second case by the distributors, who deduct the social security contributions at the time of remuneration and pay the sum directly to the URSSAF (cf. La Sécurité sociale des artistes-auteurs, 2022d). After this, AGESEA and the MDA will verify that the declared income falls within the scope of the artists-authors regime and will send a letter confirming (or denying) membership (cf. Entreprendre.service-public.fr, 2022).

	Austria	France
Name	Der Künstler-Sozialversicherungsfonds – KSVF (Artists' Social Insurance Fund)	La Sécurité sociale des artistes-auteurs (Social Security for Artists and Authors)
Classification regarding employment status	Self-employed artists	Self-employed artists-authors
Requirements for access	Self-employment and be insured with the SVS (Social Insurance Institution for the Self-Employed); minimum annual income limit: € 5,830.20; maximum annual income limit: € 31,580.25; be “artistically active” by definition of the KSVF.	Work independently; produce an original intellectual creation; work in one of the five main branches of artistic activity (see “Insurance coverage” below); choose the most suitable tax regime (wages and salaries or non-commercial benefits); affiliation to the social system takes place after the control of the activity; reside in France.
Insurance coverage (who/what)	Anyone who creates works of art within the framework of an artistic activity in the fields of the visual arts, the performing arts, music, literature, cinematography or in one of the contemporary manifestations of the fields of art. Subsidies for pension, health and accident insurance contributions.	Five main branches of artistic activity: graphic and plastic arts, book writers and illustrators, music songwriters, authors of cinematographic and audiovisual works, authors of photographic works. Health care, family benefits, retirement pension, daily allowances for sick leave and for maternity, paternity or adoption, a disability pension and a lump-sum death payment depending on income amount.
Duration of entitlement	Application can be submitted for one or more calendar years or for an unlimited period as well as retroactively for four calendar years.	Artists must validate, correct or complete a declaration of income and activities for the year; alternatively URSSAF calculates the contributions provisionally based on the income of the two previous years.
Nature of benefit	Subsidy is paid to the SVA (Social Insurance for Trade and Industry), which charges artists the contributions after deducting the subsidy; maximum annual contribution subsidy: € 158 monthly with a max. of € 1,896 yearly.	Personal rights and contributions calculation based on social security base (declared income depending on tax status); after registration artists are immediately entitled to health care and benefits from the Family Allowance Fund (CAF); depending on the amount of their earnings, they can validate 1 to 4 quarters of contributions for their basic retirement pension.
Funding	Resources provided primarily by dues in accordance with the Arts Grants Contribution Act and contributions from the federal government; fee amount is approximately 26.83% of the annual profit from the freelance/self-employment activity and includes health insurance (6.8%), pension/retirement insurance (18.50%), self-employed provision (1.53%) and accident/casualty insurance of € 10.64/month; minimum fees at SVS for an annual income of € 5,830.20 are € 140.99/month.	Funded by contributions from artists-authors, contributions from distributors and voluntary sales companies that circulate or exploit their art works, solidarity between social security schemes, taxes; self-employed artists contributions: social security: 0.40%, capped old-age insurance: 6.90%, generalised social contribution: 9.20%, contribution to the reimbursement of the social debt: 0.50%, contribution to continuing vocational training: 0.35%; fee paid by the users of artistic services: 1% on all license fees (copyright royalties) per year.

Table 1: Overview of results for European social security systems regarding old age for (performing) artists

¹⁵ The old version of the website from 2019 stated that artists must validate, correct or complete a declaration of income and activities each year. If they failed to do so, URSSAF would calculate their contributions provisionally and on a flat rate based on the average artistic income declared for the two previous years, increased by 25 per cent from the first year and for each consecutive year not declared.

¹⁶ For the capped old age insurance contribution, the social base is limited to € 41,136 (annual social security ceiling).

Another aspect that distinguishes the two systems is the duration of the entitlement. Austrian artists can submit a subsidy application for one or more calendar years or for an unlimited period, as well as retroactively for four calendar years (cf. Wöllick, 2014), whereas French artists must declare their artistic income to URSSAF each year (cf. La Sécurité sociale des artistes-auteurs, 2022c).¹⁵

The most significant difference between the two systems is, however, the nature of the benefits. The Austrian system provides subsidies for old age, health and accident insurance, which are then set off against the contributions to be paid by the artists. The contribution subsidy (annual maximum: € 158 monthly and € 1,896 annually) is transferred by the KSVF directly to the **Sozialversicherung der gewerblichen Wirtschaft** (Social Insurance for Trade and Industry, SVA) and set off against the pension, health and accident insurance contributions to be paid by the artists. The SVA only charges the artist the social security contributions after the subsidy has been deducted (cf. Wöllick, 2014). French artists-authors, on the other hand, gain personal rights that cover the major risks of social protection based on their social security base (**assiette sociale**), which represents their declared income depending on the artist's tax status and serves as the basis for calculating their social security contributions. After registration with the social security system, French artists are immediately entitled to health care and benefits from the **Caisse d'allocation familiale** (Family Allowance Fund, CAF); and depending on the amount of their earnings, they can validate up to four quarters of contributions for their basic retirement pension as well as further benefits (cf. La Sécurité sociale des artistes-auteurs, 2022a).

There are also significant differences in terms of the funding for these social security schemes. The Austrian system is a fund whose resources are primarily provided by dues in accordance with the **Künstler-Sozialversicherungsfondsgesetz** (KSVFG, Artists' Social Insurance Fund Act) as well as contributions from the federal government. In contrast, the French social security scheme is funded by contributions from artists-authors, contributions from distributors and voluntary sales companies that circulate or exploit their art works. These different financing structures also influence the contribution rates due. While Austrian artists must pay approximately 26.83 per cent of their annual profit from the freelance/self-employed activity – including health insurance (6.8 per cent), pension/retirement insurance (18.50 per cent), self-employed provision (1.53 per cent) and accident/casualty insurance (€ 10.64/month) (IG Freie Theaterarbeit, 2022, p. 3) – the amount of contributions to be paid by French artists is calculated based on the social security base according to the following rates: social security (0.4 per cent, fully covered by the state), capped old age insurance¹⁶ (6.90 per cent, of which 0.75 per cent is paid by the state), generalised social contribution (9.20 per cent, of which 6.80 per cent is tax deductible), contribution to the reimbursement of the social debt (0.50 per cent) and contribution to continuing vocational training (0.35 per cent) (cf. La Sécurité sociale des artistes-auteurs, 2022e).

Finally, the French social scheme for artists also stipulates regulations for cases of multiple employment, so-called “pluriactivity”. Artists can simultaneously carry out an artistic activity covered by the social security scheme for artists and authors and another activity under a different scheme, e.g., being an employee and a painter. The artist will have to fulfil the social security obligations for each of the activities. In cases of the cumulation of artistic activity with a salaried activity under the general scheme, the calculation of pension benefits takes into account the combination of artistic earnings and salaried earnings up to the annual social security ceiling (€ 41,136) and up to a limit of four quarters per year (cf. La Sécurité sociale des artistes-auteurs, 2022f). In order to reach the minimum income threshold, the Austrian system takes into account, in part, income from salaried artistic activity, provided that no contribution periods are gained in the statutory pension insurance due to this activity or this income is not subject to the statutory pension insurance (i.e., in principle income from a marginal activity).

Even though Belgium does not have a specific old age scheme for performing artists, the **Kunstenaarsstatuut** (Artist Status) offers an “employee status” for self-employed artists, which means that “they are usually entitled to unemployment benefits, and this ensures that Brussels-based artists are likely to build up pension even in periods when they are not under contract but receiving unemployment benefits” (Van Assche, 2020, p. 104). Otherwise, the amount of the pension for both employees and self-employed persons is calculated based on three parameters: length of the professional career, remuneration received during the career and family circumstances (European Commission(b), n. d.). However, those who are self-employed have additional legal obligations: they must pay social contributions, join a social insurance fund and a health insurance fund before starting self-employed activity as well as communicate changes in their professional or family situation to the social security fund (cf. NASTI, 2022).

In Denmark, there is a statutory pension that most of the Danish population receive in addition to the public old age pension. This is compulsory by law for citizens who have been employed in the private or public labour market. However, it is voluntary for self-employed persons, who must register to participate in the scheme (cf. Virk, 2022; European Commission(d), n. d.). For Portuguese self-employed people, the mandatory social security system only gives entitlement to benefits in the following cases: maternity, paternity, adoption, unemployment, occupational diseases, invalidity, old age and death (survivorship and supplementary support for dependants). In order to receive support in the event of illness, they must choose a broader protection scheme based on higher-rate deductions (Maunder, 2022).

Unemployment

Unemployment refers to the “state of being unemployed”, meaning “the situation of not having a job that provides money” (Cambridge Dictionary Online).¹⁷ It also implies that unemployed people are available to work and actively seek new employment. What this term fails to consider is the diverse work and life realities of professionals in the (per-

¹⁷ → <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/unemployment>.

forming) arts. These people often work as self-employed or hybrid workers, which could have great advantages for personal growth, but at the same time involves many challenges, including social security in cases of unemployment, among other things (Kislinger, Schieck, 2022).

Self-employed artists are often dependent on funding for obtaining remunerated work. They invest a lot of time acquiring funding and completing applications in order to receive work contracts. At the same time, they continue to work artistically in phases without funding (cf. *ibid.*). Hybrid workers are artists who are self-employed as well as have salaried employment (often with short-term contracts), either in succession or simultaneously. They go through periods of employment and unemployment with and without social benefit entitlement, which alternate with phases of conceiving of and seeking funding for new projects as well as holding multiple jobs within and outside the cultural sector (Auerbach et al., 2022). Hence, in both cases, there are periods when artists are officially unemployed (i.e., have no work contracts or employment), yet continue to work, albeit without receiving payment (Van Assche, 2020).

Four of the five countries analysed have acknowledged this special situation that (performing) artists must deal with in cases of unemployment, and have developed specific systems for professionals in the (performing) arts in order to close this gap. These are the **Kunstenaaarsstatuut/statute d'artiste** (Dutch/French) (Artist Status) in Belgium, the **Artisternes A-kasse** (Artists' Unemployment Insurance Fund) in Denmark, the **Régime des salaires intermittents du spectacle** (Scheme for Intermittent Workers in the Performing Arts) in France and the **Subsídio de suspensão da atividade cultural** (Subsidy for Suspension of the Cultural Activity) in Portugal.

While Belgium and Portugal have a more general system for artists, technicians and support positions in the artistic sector, as well as professionals in the cultural sector, Denmark and France have developed specific solutions for professionals in the performing arts. The systems in Belgium and France constitute a status that artists can apply for (and maintain under certain conditions), which allows them to have a stable income (unemployment benefit) in periods between contracts and also regulates the minimum wages employers are obliged to pay when contracting them (Van Assche, 2018; cf. Unédic, 2022). Denmark's and Portugal's systems, on the other hand, only offer a benefit for artists in cases of unemployment, but provide entitlement for further insurance, such as accident insurance, sickness benefits and parental leave, among others, while receiving unemployment benefits.

In terms of the classification of the artists regarding their employment status, there are a few similarities between the Belgian **Kunstenaaarsstatuut** and the French intermittent workers system, the **Régime des salaires intermittents du spectacle**. Both these systems offer an "employee status" for self-employed artists. The **Kunstenaaarsstatuut** in Belgium is "not a separate category within the social security regime, but it rather aligns the artist with the existing employee status in a work regime of multiple jobholding and flexible contracts" (Van Assche, 2020, p. 133). In France, artists, technicians and workers in

the performing arts are often hired over defined periods of time, which leads to a succession of fixed-term contracts and of alternating periods of employment and unemployment. This particular situation has led to the development of an intermittent status, which allows artists to “operate as self-employed, but with the status of an employed person” (Casse, 2020, p. 40). Portugal, on the other hand, offers an allowance or “subsidy” in cases of suspension of cultural activity (similar to the unemployment benefit) for all professionals with very short-term contracts and self-employed professionals in the field of culture, but the system does not align them with salaried employees. In contrast to these three countries, the Danish system covers both employees and self-employed artists.

	Belgium	Denmark	France	Portugal
Name	Kunstenaarsstatuut / statute d'artiste (Artist Status)	Artisternes a-kasse (Artists' Unemployment Insurance Fund)	Régime des salariés intermittents du spectacle (Scheme for Intermittent Workers in the Performing Arts)	Subsídio de suspensão da atividade cultural (Subsidy for Suspension of the Cultural Activity)
Classification regarding employment status	Aligns the freelance artist with the existing employee status.	Employed and self-employed artists.	Artists operate as self-employed persons, but with the status of an employed person.	Cultural professionals with very short-term contracts and self-employed cultural professionals.
Requirements for access	For all: 624 days worked in 42 months; additionally, from age 36, 468 days worked in 33 months; additionally, up to age 35, 312 days worked in 21 months; must actively look for artistic work.	Must have worked 1,924 hours and have earned DKK 223,428 (€ 30,042.79) within three years; entitlement after one year of membership; live in Denmark; work professionally or have relevant education.	Must have worked 507 hours during the 12 months preceding the last end of contract.	a) Legal residence Portugal; b) fulfilment of the guarantee period of 180 days (6 months) of activity provision; c) involuntary suspension of artistic activity; d) availability to exercise an activity in the cultural area; e) regularised social security contributions.
Insurance coverage (who/what)	Artists/technicians/support positions in the artistic sector. Coverage of periods of non-employment through steady unemployment allowances.	Artists, soloists and entertainers who work professionally in music, performing arts and the entertainment industry. Unemployment benefit plus accident insurance, group life and critical illness are included; entitlement to holiday pay, sickness benefits and maternity leave while receiving unemployment benefits.	Professional artists or technicians who work in performing arts, cinema and audio-visual companies. Unemployment benefits in periods between contracts for eight months.	All professionals in the cultural area, i.e., performing arts, audio-visual, visual arts and literary creation or who carry out authorial, artistic, technical-artistic activity or cultural mediation. Subsidies in cases of unemployment plus social protection for suspension, parenthood, illness and professional illness allowance.
Duration of entitlement	156 days worked during the 18 months before the end of the first compensation period to remain in the first reimbursement period for one year.	Two years (3,848 hours) within a period of three years.	Valid for one year.	Registration valid for at least 36 months with continuous contributions to social security.
Amount of subsidy/ allowance	65% of gross salary received during the last employment of at least four consecutive weeks with the same employer (for the first three months, decreasing with further unemployment).	Calculation of the allowance is income-based and monthly-based; rate is based on the 12 months of highest income in the last 24 months; max. rate: DKK 18,403 (€ 2,474.52)	Unemployment benefits represent on average 42% of income received (salary + compensation) with income ceiling (€ 4,045.04 in 2021); calculation depends on the reference salary, the number of hours worked and the respective Annex no.; daily allowance not less than a minimum amount of € 38 for Annex 8 (workers and show technicians), € 44 for Annex 10 (performing artists) .	65% of the total income of the last 12 months; daily amount is 65% of the reference remuneration and is calculated on the basis of 30 days per month; min. value: 1 IAS (€ 438.81), max. value: 2.5 IAS (€ 1,097.03); provided only once in each calendar year.
Funding		Membership in the DAF + unemployment insurance fund cost DKK 1,171 per month (€ 157.46).	6.4% distributed at a rate of 4% payable by employers and 2.4% payable by employees.	Contribution rate for professionals with short-term employment contracts: 37.1%, with 26.1% payable by employers and 11% by employees; contribution rate for self-employed: 30.3%, with 25.2% by the self-employed and 5.1% by beneficiary entity.

Table 2: Overview of results for European social security systems regarding unemployment for (performing) artists

To be entitled to these unemployment allowances, all four systems require a specific amount of working time. The Belgian and Portuguese systems require a certain number of days worked in a given period of months. The former differentiates between three age categories, each with different conditions: while older artists (age 50+) can only claim their entitlement over a longer time frame (624 worked days in 42 months), younger professionals (up to age 35) can do so in half of this time (312 worked days in 21 months) (cf. Cultuurloket, 2022). If the contract does not specify how many hours the artist must work for a given wage, then they can submit the eligibility requirements using the so-called “salary per task”. In this calculation, a working day is equal to € 70.86 (indexation May 2022), so 312 worked days is equal to € 22,108.32 (cf. Artist United, n. d.). In contrast to this, the Portuguese *Subsídio de suspensão da atividade cultural* only requires a guarantee period of 180 days (six months) of activity, but applicants also need to have regularised social security contributions to be entitled. The guarantee period is calculated by converting the value of the receipt/bill into days of activity performed, where each 30 days corresponds to 2.5 IAS (*Indexante de Apoios Sociais*, the Social Support Index), which corresponds to € 1,097.03 (cf. Republica Portuguesa, Gabinete da Ministra da Cultura, n. d., p. 1).

The required working time of the remaining two systems (Denmark and France) is calculated in hours. To receive unemployment insurance compensation from the French intermittent workers system, the *Régime des salaires intermittents du spectacle*, applicants must have worked 507 hours over a period of 12 months of work preceding their last end of contract. Despite being entitled, most intermittent workers work every month and combine their income with part of their allowance. Thus, in a normal year, 95 per cent of intermittent workers receive both wages and compensation (cf. Unédic, 2022). On the other hand, to benefit from the Danish *Artisternes A-kasse's* allowance, artists must meet even stricter criteria: they must have worked 1,924 hours, earned DKK 223,428 (€ 30,042.79¹⁸) within a period of three years and, moreover, have been a member of the fund for at least one year (cf. Dansk Artist Forbund, 2017, A-kasse).

Although all the calculations for the benefits are based on income received over a given period of time, three of the four schemes make payments on a monthly basis. The Belgian *Kunstenaarsstatuut* offers a percentage of the gross salary received during the last employment of at least four consecutive weeks with the same employer. Artists having this status receive 65 per cent of the reference wage for the first three months, which then becomes 60 per cent, and later the benefit (in principle) decreases further the longer the recipient is unemployed. For artists that have not worked for four consecutive weeks for the same employer, the benefit is calculated on the basis of the gross wage received in the three-month period (quarter) prior to the submission of the application divided by three. There is also a maximum benefit limit of € 3,014.78 and a minimum of € 1,841.28 (cf. Cultuurloket, 2022). The Danish *A-kasse* for artists calculates the benefit rate monthly, based on the 12 months having the highest income, spread over the last 24 months. The maximum monthly rate is DKK 18,403 (€ 2,474.52) (cf. Dansk Artist Forbund, 2017, A-kasse). The unemploy-

¹⁸ All conversions of the currency Danish krone (DKK) in this section were undertaken on 15 August 2022, using: → <https://www.umrechner-euro.de/umrechnung-daenische-krone>.

ment benefits of French intermittent workers represent on average 42 per cent of their income received in a year (salary plus compensation) with an income ceiling of € 4,045.04. The calculation of the daily allowance depends on the reference salary, the number of hours worked and the schedule, and cannot be less than a minimum amount of € 38 for workers and show technicians (regulated by Annex 8) and € 44 for performing artists (regulated by Annex 10). To determine the compensation amount per month, the daily allowance is multiplied by the number of days not worked (cf. Unédic, 2022).

Portugal, on the contrary, offers a payment of 65 per cent of the total income of the last 12 months only once per calendar year. The daily amount of the subsidy is 65 per cent of the reference remuneration and is calculated on the basis of 30 days per month. For example, for an average income of € 900 per month the reference remuneration will be € 30, and the daily amount of the allowance will therefore be € 19.50, resulting in a monthly subsidy of € 585, with a minimum value of 1 IAS (€ 438.81) and a maximum value of 2.5 IAS (€ 1,097.03) (cf. GDA – Gestão dos Direitos dos Artistas, 2022, p. 5).

As far as the duration of the entitlement to allowances is concerned, all countries have different regulations. The French intermittent status can be granted for 12 months (cf. Unédic, 2022). To prevent the benefit from declining over time and to remain in the first reimbursement period of the Belgian *Kunstenaarsstatuut* for one year, applicants must have worked 156 days during the previous 18 months before the end of the first compensation period. The benefit can only be renewed for one year at a time, provided that the recipient can demonstrate at least three work performances corresponding to at least three working days for artistic or technical-artistic performances or supporting activities in the artistic sector in the past year (cf. Cultuurloket, 2022). Members of the Danish *Artisternes A-kasse* are entitled to unemployment benefits for two years (3,848 hours) within a period of three years. To renew the entitlement, applicants must meet the work requirement of 1,924 new working hours within three years and the income requirement of DKK 246,924 (€ 33,202.13). The French intermittent status is valid for one year (cf. Unédic, 2022), and Portuguese cultural professionals can maintain their registration as such, valid for at least 36 months, but must pay continuous contributions to social security (cf. Republica Portuguesa, n. d.).

Regarding the funding of these unemployment systems, the Danish *A-kasse* system is funded by the membership of the *Dansk Artist Forbund* (Danish Artist Association) and of the unemployment insurance fund, which costs DKK 1,171 per month (€ 157.46) (cf. Dansk Artist Forbund, 2017, A-kasse). In contrast, the French intermittent status system and the Portuguese *Subsídio* are financed by both employers and employees. While the French scheme is funded with a rate of 6.4 per cent distributed at 4.0 per cent payable by employers and 2.4 per cent by employees (cf. mescachets.com, 2022), the Portuguese system regulates the contribution rate depending on employment status. The contribution rate for cultural professionals under very short-term employment contracts is 37.1 per cent, of which 26.1 per cent is the responsibility of the employer and 11 per cent of the employee. Self-employed

¹⁹ The RPAC is a platform for Portuguese contemporary art – a network and support structure that enhances the national and international dissemination of the work of Portuguese artists and creators and the different public and private collections existing in Portugal (cf. Cultura Portugal 2021).

cultural professionals are considered to be sole proprietors for the purposes of the contribution rate. Their contribution rate is 30.3 per cent, of which 25.2 per cent is payable by the self-employed artist and 5.1 per cent is the responsibility of the employer. The contribution rate of the beneficiary entity is always due, regardless of whether the worker is registered with the **Rede Portuguesa de Arte Contemporânea** (Portuguese Network of Contemporary Art, RPAC¹⁹) or not (cf. GDA – Gestão dos Direitos dos Artistas, 2022, p. 4).

The fifth country in the exploratory study, Austria, does not have a special scheme for professionals in the (performing) arts, but offers a separate system for the self-employed in addition to the established regime for salaried employees. Self-employed persons can voluntarily join the unemployment insurance scheme, which entitles them to all the included benefits. Contributions are collected by the SVS. The contributions are income-based, but the calculation system differs significantly from that for employees, since self-employed persons do not have constant and predictable earnings and actual income is only known at the end of the calendar year. For this reason, contributions are calculated in two steps: first, a provisional contribution based on specified minimum contribution rates is paid in advance, and second, the definitive contribution is paid as soon as the income tax assessment of a contribution year is available. Social security within the SVS covers pension, health and accident insurance as well as a self-employment provision (cf. SVS(a), n. d.).

Parenthood

The birth of a child not only marks the beginning of a new life, but also a new stage of life for the parents. Although it brings much happiness, it also comes with uncertainty and many challenges, especially for the parents' professional careers. Many artists – women in particular – disappear from the picture when they start a family. They often feel forced to make a choice between art and their child(ren). They must deal with numerous social, administrative and organisational hurdles when they want to combine career and family. Children are usually excluded from the production side of art: funding programmes, studio grants, events, exhibitions and professional trainings take little or no account of family situations. Thus, compulsory presence, lack of childcare, rehearsal times in the evening or at weekends, lack of social security structures for the self-employed, inadequate accommodation for co-travelling children, lack of coverage for additional costs, the explicit prohibition of the presence of children and difficulties in securing family finances become insurmountable hurdles (Visarte, 2019; Kislinger, Schieck, 2022).

In 2018, Visarte, the association representing the interests of professional visual artists in Switzerland, carried out a written survey among its members on the topic of "art and child". In summary, the evaluation showed that artists tend to refrain from starting a family because of financial considerations or because of their career. They also fail to pursue their art profession because of the triple challenge of making a living, working in the arts and having a family. It also revealed that access to funding and to studio residencies tends to be more difficult in

the presence of a family, and that there is a lack of social, institutional and administrative awareness and interest in thinking systemically about “art and child”. Some of the interviewees reported open discrimination as a family. This has consequences for their careers and thus indirectly for their financial and social security (Sablonier, 2018, p. 1).

To provide a more structured overview, the topic of parenthood was divided into three sub-topics: maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave, which have each been summarised in a comparison table.

Maternity leave

Maternity leave is “a period of absence from work granted to a mother before and after the birth of her child” (Oxford Languages). As will be shown below, the eligibility requirements, length of the leave as well as the benefits mothers get, vary from country to country. Nevertheless, all the European systems analysed have several similarities. These will also be discussed.

Four of the five countries have a system that is intended solely for the mother and is therefore called “maternity leave”: **Mutterschutz** in Austria, **Moederschapsverlof** in Belgium, **Graviditets & Barselsorlov** (which translates literally as maternity leave before and after birth) in Denmark, and **Congé de maternité** in France. In Portugal, the maternity leave was replaced by the **Licença Parental Inicial** (initial parental leave) in context of the new labour law that came into effect in May 2009. The initial parental leave includes a mandatory mothers-only initial parental leave (**Licença Parental Inicial Exclusiva da mãe**) while the remaining period may be shared between the parents (Wall et al., 2021, p. 473).

	Austria	Belgium	Denmark	France	Portugal
Name	Mutterschutz (Maternity leave)	Moederschapsverlof / Congé de maternité (Maternity leave)	Graviditets & Barselsorlov (Maternity leave before & after birth)	Congé de maternité (Maternity leave)	Licença Parental Inicial (Initial parental leave, formerly maternity leave)
Eligibility criteria	All employed women are entitled; short-term employed and self- employed women if they have a voluntary affiliation with the statutory social health insurance; unemployed women if they have completed three months' continuous employment or have been affiliated to the statutory SHI for 12 months within the last three years.	All employees or women on unemployment benefits are entitled; self- employed women are entitled to a flat-rate weekly benefit if they suspend all professional activities while taking “full-time” leave or if they work part-time with no other professional activity during “part-time” leave.	For employees: based on a period of work of at least 160 hours in the four months preceding leave, must have worked at least 40 hours per month for at least three of the four months; for the self-employed: at least part-time professional activity for at least six months within the last 12- month period, of which one month immediately precedes the paid leave, must have a profit of at least DKK 232,212 (€ 31,239.84) per year and have health insurance.	All employees and self- employed workers are entitled, with some length of service conditionality for self-employed (to have been working for at least ten months); registered with the French social security system for at least ten months; worked at least 150 hours in the last three months, or 600 hours in the last year if work has been intermittent.	All employees with six months of social security contributions (continuous or intermittent; the latter is only possible if the period without contributions is less than six months); self- employed workers (who contribute to social security) and unemployed individuals with unemployment benefits are eligible.
Length of leave	Eight weeks before and eight weeks after expected due date.	15 weeks for employees and unemployed women; 12 weeks for self- employed mothers.	Four weeks before birth and ten weeks after birth; two weeks of mandatory earmarked maternity leave and eight weeks of transferable maternity leave to be taken before the child's first birthday.	16 weeks; 26 weeks if there are already two dependent children and 34 weeks if expecting twins.	120 or 150 calendar days, depending on pay level; mothers can take a max. of 30 days' voluntary leave prior to birth and must take a mandatory 42 calendar days following birth; the remaining period may be divided between parents by mutual agreement.
Amount of the benefits / allowance	For employed women: 100% of average income, with no upper limit, based on net earnings of previous three calendar months before the beginning of leave; self- employed women are entitled to a flat-rate benefit of € 56.87 per day or “social assistance”.	For employees: 82% of salary (no ceiling) for the first 30 days, 75% of salary (subject to ceiling) for remaining weeks, max.: €146.98 per day; self-employed women: flat-rate weekly amount of € 499.54 for full-time and € 249.77 for part-time.	All employees and self- employed people are entitled to a daily cash benefit based on former earnings, up to a limit of DKK 4,465 (€ 600.68) per week for full-time leave.	100% of earnings, up to a ceiling of € 3,428 per month (full payment in public sector); two different types of payments at the same time for self-employed: a flat rate “maternal rest” payment (€ 3,428) and daily payments based on average annual turnover over the last three years (max. € 56.35 per day).	120 days at 100% or 150 days at 80% of earnings, with no upper limit; sharing bonus if each parent takes at least 30 consecutive days or two periods of 15 consecutive days once the other parent returns to work: 150 days at 100% or 180 days at 83%.

	Austria	Belgium	Denmark	France	Portugal
Funding	Funded 70% by the Family Burden Equalisation Fund (FLAF), financed by contributions from employers, by general taxes, and 30% by public health insurance.	Funded through federal health insurance, financed by employer and employee contributions and general taxation.	Funded by the state from general taxation.	Funded from health insurance, financed by contributions from both employees and employers.	Funded by the social security system, financed by contributions from employers, employees, self-employed workers, and voluntary forms of social security.

Table 3: Overview of results for overall European social security systems for maternity leave

Both employed and self-employed women are entitled to maternity leave in all five countries. However, in four of the countries there are special requirements for the self-employed. In Austria, self-employed women are entitled to a maternity allowance if they interrupt their gainful employment during the maternity allowance period. A precondition for this is that they were continuously (and voluntarily) covered by health insurance based on gainful employment according to the **Gewerblichen Sozialversicherungsgesetz** (Industrial Social Insurance Act, GSVG) in the six months immediately preceding the exemption from compulsory insurance (cf. SVS(b), n. d.). For Belgian self-employed women, there is a separate system that offers fewer benefits than the scheme for employees (shorter duration and lower allowance). To be eligible for full-time maternity leave, mothers must suspend all their professional activities; however, they are also entitled to part-time maternity leave if they pursue their regular self-employed activity on a half-day basis and are not engaged in any other professional activities (cf. The Village, n. d.).

To be eligible for maternity leave, Danish employees must be employed on the first day of leave, have worked at least 160 hours within the last four full months before the leave, and have worked for 40 hours monthly for at least three of those four months. Self-employed women, on the other hand, must have worked at least half (18.5 hours) of the usual contractual weekly hours (37 hours) for at least six months during the previous 12 months, including one month immediately before paid leave (cf. Rostgaard, Ejrnæs, 2021; European Commission(c), n.d.). French and Portuguese employees and self-employed women have basically the same eligibility criteria. In France, they must have been registered with the social security administration for at least ten months prior to giving birth, have taken at least eight weeks of leave and have worked a minimum of 150 hours within the 90 days preceding the start of the leave (Oyster, 2021). For self-employed women, there is only a mandatory period of employment (at least ten months) as an additional criterion (Boyer, Fagnani, 2021, p. 270). In the case of Portugal, applicants have only one eligibility criterion: they must have paid social security contributions for at least six calendar months (which can be paid continuously or intermittently with a non-contributory period shorter than six months). Additionally, self-employed women must have paid social security contributions for the quarter prior to the month in which they stop working due to the birth of a child (European Commission(e), n. d.).

In terms of duration, all five schemes grant a similar leave period, ranging mainly from 14 to around 21 weeks. In Austria and France, it is obligatory to take all this leave, whereas in Belgium, Denmark and Portu-

gal, the systems distinguish between an optional and a compulsory leave period. In all five countries, the leave is divided between several (often fewer) weeks prenatally and the main period postnatally.

The Austrian system grants 16 weeks in total: expectant mothers must take eight weeks before and eight weeks after the birth and may not work during this time (Schmidt, Schmidt, 2021). Denmark has a pregnancy leave which is due four weeks before the expected childbirth. According to the new rules on parental leave for births on or after 2 August 2022, mothers are granted two weeks of mandatory earmarked maternity leave as well as eight weeks of transferable maternity leave to be taken before the child turns one year old (Fisher, Phillips, 2022). French expecting mothers can take a total leave of 16 weeks; a minimum of two weeks must be taken before birth, and the rest can be taken before or after delivery (Boyer, Fagnani, 2021). The initial parental leave in Portugal grants benefits for 120 or 150 calendar days, depending on the amount of the allowance paid. Mothers can take a voluntary maximum leave of 30 days before delivery and must take 42 calendar days (six weeks) directly after birth (mothers-only initial parental leave). The remaining days can be split between the parents based on mutual agreement; if both parents share the leave, there is an additional 30 days of benefits (“sharing bonus”) (Wall et al., 2021). Belgium not only has the shortest maternity leave, it also has a separate scheme for self-employed women that is even shorter. Whereas employees receive a total of 15 weeks (six weeks can be taken before birth, however, one week before the due date and nine weeks after delivery are compulsory), self-employed women receive only 12 weeks, of which one week before the due date and two weeks after the birth are mandatory (Fusulier, Mortelmans, 2021). In addition, all systems offer extended leaves in special cases, such as premature birth, long hospital stays or multiple births.²⁰

²⁰ As these special cases are very complex and each country has special regulations relating to them, it is beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on them. For more information, see Koslowski et al., 2021.

²¹ All conversions of the currency Danish krone (DKK) in the section “Parenthood” were made on 20 August 2022 using: → <https://www.umrechner-euro.de/umrechnung-daenische-krone>.

As for the amount of the allowances, three of the five countries pay employees 100 per cent of earnings for the entire maternity leave period. The Austrian system grants 100 per cent of the average net income based on the net income received during the last three calendar months before the start of the maternity leave (Schmidt, Schmidt, 2021). Portuguese women receive either 120 days at 100 per cent or 150 days at 80 per cent of earnings (with the “sharing bonus” it is 150 days at 100 per cent or 180 days at 83 per cent of earnings) (Wall et al., 2021). A different scenario applies in France: women taking maternity leave are entitled to 100 per cent of earnings, but this is capped at € 3,428 per month. Only the public sector and some employers in the private sector grant full payments (Boyer, Fagnani, 2021). Belgian employees in maternity leave receive 82 per cent of their earnings with no ceiling for the first 30 days and 75 per cent for the remaining weeks with a ceiling of € 146.98 per day (Fusulier, Mortelmans, 2021). In Denmark, all full-time employees taking maternity leave are entitled to a daily benefit based on former earnings, with a limit of DKK 4,465 (€ 600.68)²¹ per week (Rostgaard, Ejrnæs, 2021).

When it comes to maternity benefits for self-employed women, only the Danish and Portuguese schemes pay the same allowances as for employees. Belgian self-employed mothers receive a weekly flat-rate

amount of € 499.54 for full-time leave and half of this for part-time leave (European Commission(a), n. d.). French women on maternity leave can apply for two different types of payments at the same time, which are calculated on the basis of the average annual turnover of the last three years: an annual flat-rate “maternal rest” (repos maternel) payment of € 3,428 and a daily maternity leave payment capped at € 56.35. If the average annual income for the past three years is less than € 4,046.40, the payments will be reduced to 10 per cent of the amount (€ 342.80 and € 5.63 respectively). To receive these allowances, applicants must stop working for at least eight weeks, including a minimum of two weeks before birth (N26, 2021a). In Austria, self-employed women are entitled to a weekly allowance of € 57.89 per day or they can instead claim a social assistant to substitute for them in their business that cannot be postponed (cf. SVS(b), n. d.).

In Belgium, France and Portugal, the systems are funded by the local health insurance/social security system and are financed by contributions from both employees and employers. In contrast, the Austrian scheme is funded by the **Familienlastenausgleichsfond** (Family Burden Equalisation Fund, FLAF), financed through employers' contributions, general taxes and public health insurance (Schmidt, Schmidt, 2021). The Danish maternity leave scheme is financed by the state from general tax revenues, with the exception of the first eight weeks, during which the municipalities cover half the costs (Rostgaard, Ejrnæs, 2021).

Paternity leave

Paternity leave refers to the period of time that a new father is legally allowed to stop working (paid or unpaid) to spend time with and take care of a baby (Cambridge Dictionary). Compared to the similar maternity leave for mothers, the concept of paternity leave is relatively new in most countries. Its development is gaining popularity because fathers increasingly want to take on a more active role as partners in the upbringing of their children. Paternity leave is thought to give fathers the chance to strengthen their relationship with their child. At the same time, it aims to promote gender equality, as it allows both parents to share the upbringing and still pursue their careers (cf. Vaterfreuden.de, n. d.). Although there is an increasing number of men taking paternal leave, they are still in the minority, which in turn means that most women are still stepping back professionally after the birth of a child.²²

Paternity leave is an entitlement reserved for fathers, and is usually much shorter than maternity leave. In the five European countries analysed, the duration of the leave varies widely, ranging from 15 working days up to ten weeks. Like maternity leave, the Belgian system offers the shortest leave period, with 15 full working days (or 30 half days) for both employees and the self-employed (Fusulier, Mortelmans, 2021; European Commission(a), n. d.; Chini, 2020). Austria and France grant new fathers a paternity leave of one month (Schmidt, Schmidt, 2021; cf. gesundheit.gv.at; N26, 2021b) and Portugal grants fathers 25 working days, which includes 20 mandatory days and five voluntary days (European Commission(e), n. d.). According to the new act on materni-

²² The main reason why fathers do not make use of paternity leave is financial. The fear of negative professional consequences is another reason for not taking (long) paternity leave, although there is, as of yet, no scientific evidence for this, according to a → study from 2019 by the **Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung** (German Institute for Economic Research, DIW) (cf. Samtleben, Schäper, Wrohlich, 2019).

ty/paternity leave which came into force on 2 August 2022, the longest paternity leave is granted by the Danish scheme. Fathers and co-mothers are entitled to 10 weeks of leave, the same amount as mothers after birth (Fisher, Phillips, 2022).

	Austria	Belgium	Denmark	France	Portugal
Name	Papamonat & Familienzeitbonus ("Papa's month" and family time bonus)	Vaderschapsverlof / Congé de paternité (Paternity/co-parental leave)	Fædre / medmoderorlov (Paternity/co-parental leave)	Congé d'accueil à l'enfant (Paternity leave – literally "leave for looking after a child")	Licença Parental Exclusiva do Pai (Fathers-only parental leave)
Eligibility criteria	Employees are entitled to a "Papa's month" (paternity leave), working fathers (salaried and self-employed) to payment of a family time bonus; must have uninterrupted gainful employment during the last 182 calendar days immediately preceding the start of the benefit, be entitled to and receive family allowance for the child, reside in Austria, share a permanent joint household with mother and child.	All male employees are eligible, but unemployed are not; self-employed are also entitled but with a fixed daily allowance.	For employees: based on a period of work of at least 160 hours in the four months preceding leave, have worked at least 40 hours per month for at least three of the four months; for self-employed: at least part-time professional activity for at least six months within the last 12-month period, of which one month immediately precedes the paid leave; have a profit of at least DKK 232,212 (€ 31,239.84) per year and have health insurance.	All employees and self-employed workers are entitled, with some length of service conditionality for self-employed (to have been working for at least ten months); must be registered with the French social security system for at least ten months, have worked at least 150 hours in the last three months or 600 hours in the last year if work has been intermittent.	All employees with six months of social security contributions (continuous or intermittent; the latter is only possible if the period without contributions is less than six months); self-employed workers (who contribute to social security) and unemployed individuals with unemployment benefit are eligible.
Length of leave	"Papa's month" and family time bonus between 28 and 31 days (within 91 calendar days) after birth; job-protected.	15 working days or 30 half days for both employees and self-employed to be taken separately or consecutively within the four months following the birth.	Ten weeks after birth: two weeks of mandatory earmarked paternity leave and eight weeks of transferable paternity leave to be taken before the child's first birthday.	Three days of childbirth leave and an additional 25 calendar days: four days to be taken directly after childbirth leave, remaining 21 days can be split into two parts to be taken within six months after birth.	25 working days, 20 of which are mandatory.
Amount of the benefits / allowance	€ 22.60 per calendar day (around € 700 in total).	Full salary for the first three days; 82% of daily gross salary capped at € 120.52; self-employed persons entitled to an allowance set at € 91.03 for a whole day and at € 45.52 for a half-day.	All employees and self-employed persons are entitled to a daily cash benefit based on former earnings, up to a limit of DKK 4,465 (€ 600.68) per week for full-time leave.	For employees: daily allowances replace full salary up to a limit of € 89.03 per day; for self-employed workers, the limit drops to € 56.35 per day.	100% of gross earnings with no upper limit.
Funding	Funded by the Family Burden Equalisation Fund (FLAF).	Funded through federal health insurance, financed by employer and employee contributions and general taxation.	Funded by the state from general taxation.	Funded from health insurance, financed by contributions from both employees and employers.	Funded by the social security system, financed by contributions from employers, employees, self-employed workers, and voluntary forms of social security.

Table 4: Overview of results for overall European social security systems for paternity leave

All the systems offer paid leave, even though there are many differences regarding the amount of the allowance granted. Only the Portuguese scheme pays 100 per cent of gross earnings with no upper limit for the whole leave period (Wall et al., 2021). Belgian employees receive 100 per cent of their full salary for the first three days; for the remaining days they receive 82 per cent of the daily gross salary capped at € 120.52, whereas for self-employed fathers and co-mothers, the allowance is set at € 91.03 for a whole day and at € 45.52 for a half-day (Fusulier, Mortelmans, 2021; Chini, 2022). Austria, Denmark and France offer a daily allowance for both employees and the self-employed. While the Austrian scheme stipulates a fixed allowance of € 22.60 per calendar day (Schmidt, Schmidt, 2021), Danish fathers and co-mothers receive a daily cash benefit based on their former earnings, up to a limit of DKK 4,465 (€ 600.68) per week (Rostgaard, Ejrnæs, 2021). The French scheme, on the other hand, also provides a fixed daily allowance, but the amount is different for employees and the self-employed: the former receive daily allowances that replace their full salary of up to € 89.03 per day, whereas for the self-employed, the limit drops to € 56.35 per day, which is reduced to € 5.63 a day if the father earns less than € 4,046.40 a year (The Connexion, 2021).

Denmark, France and Portugal have the same eligibility requirements for fathers (and co-mothers) as for mothers. In order to be entitled to the “family time bonus”, Austrian fathers must have uninterrupted gainful employment over the last 182 calendar days immediately preceding the start of the benefit, be entitled to and receive a family allowance for the child, reside in Austria as well as have a permanent joint household with the mother and the child (cf. Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, n. d.). While Belgian unemployed women are entitled to maternity leave, unemployed fathers are not eligible for paternity leave (Fusulier, Mortelmans, 2021).

Contrary to the paternity leave schemes in Belgium, Denmark, France and Portugal that are financed in the same way as the maternity leave schemes, the Austrian system for paternity leave is financed exclusively by the FLAF.

Parental leave

Parental leave is a work-related benefit intended to allow both parents time off work to spend time with and care for a child after birth or adoption. There are basically three types of entitlement: leave can be granted as a non-transferrable individual right (each parent is entitled to a certain number of days), it can be a transferrable individual right or it can be transferrable as a family right (parents can split the total leave among each other as they choose). Depending on the country, parental leave consists either solely of a family or individual right, or a combination of both. In most cases, it can be taken after maternity leave. Some countries even grant the possibility of taking part-time leave. Although parental leave is usually an unpaid benefit, most countries offer some form of compensatory payment, which is often granted for a shorter time within the parental leave period (cf. Koslowski et al., 2021).

With regard to the countries included in the exploratory study, a distinction can be made between systems that offer paid parental leave (Belgium, Denmark and Portugal) and those that grant, in principle, unpaid leave, whereby a separate compensatory payment of a different length can be drawn and which must be applied for separately (Austria and France).

In Belgium, parental leave can be granted in four different ways: a complete break of four months, where parents are not allowed to work; a half break of eight months, during which parents may continue to work part-time; a one-fifth break that allows parents to reduce their working hours to 80 per cent of a full-time position while being on leave for 20 months; and finally, a one-tenth break, where parents take one half-day off per week or one full day off every two weeks for a period of 40 months (cf. Herndler, 2022a; Vlaanderen.be, n. d.). After the first ten weeks of maternity and paternity leave, Danish parents are granted another 14 weeks of paid parental leave, of which nine are earmarked for each parent and five can be transferred.²³ If one or both parents is self-employed, all 14 weeks are transferrable. Parental leave can be extended if the parents are working part-time and must be taken before the child’s ninth birthday (cf. Boesen, Pedersen, Stangerup,

²³ From 1 January 2024, single parents will be able to transfer weeks to a close family member and, in the case of LGBT+, the legal parents of the child will be able to grant transferable weeks to a “social parent” of the child.

2022; IDA, n. d.; Nordic co-operation, n. d.). The Portuguese system grants mothers and fathers a total of three additional months of parental leave, which can be taken in the following ways: an extended parental leave for three immediate consecutive months, by working part-time over a period of 12 months, by alternating periods of extended parental leave and full-time or part-time work (adding up to three months in total) or through interrupted absences from work, provided they are stipulated in a collective bargaining agreement. It is not possible to exercise another professional activity during additional parental leave. Parental leave may be taken up until the child's sixth birthday (Wall et al., 2021; Silva, 2021).

In Austria, on the other hand, parental leave can be taken until the child reaches two years of age and must last a minimum of two months (cf. oesterreich.gv.at, 2022). Childcare allowances, depending on the model, can last until the child is 36 months old (cf. Herndler, 2022a; 2022b). French parental leave can be initially granted for one year with the possibility of renewing it twice (for a single child), ending with the child's third birthday (cf. Service-Public, 2022). While the income-based basic allowance is paid monthly until the child turns three years old (cf. Previssima, 2022b), both parents are entitled to an income-independent shared child education benefit (PreParE), which can be granted to each parent for six months for one child (up to their first birthday) or for 24 months for two children (up to the third birthday of the youngest child) (cf. Previssima, 2022c; Boluze, 2022).

In terms of the allowances, the amounts and payment schemes of the five countries vary widely. In the case of the three systems that offer paid leave, the amount of the allowances paid is either predetermined (Belgium) or income-related (Denmark and Portugal) (cf. Jobat, 2022; borger.dk(a), n. d.; borger.dk(b), n. d.; Wall et al., 2021; Ekonomist, 2021). Austria and France, in contrast, have more complex systems with several payment options that can be claimed separately from the actual parental leave. For the payment of the childcare allowance, Austrian parents can choose between two models: either a flat-rate benefit in the form of an account or an income-related benefit (cf. Herndler, 2022a; 2022b). In France, parents can receive the childcare benefit (*Prestation d'accueil du jeune enfant, Paje*), which includes three different allowances (two of these are income-dependent) that must be claimed separately: the birth bonus (*Prime de naissance*) (cf. Boluze, Meriochaud, 2022; Previssima, 2022a), the basic allowance (*Allocation de base*) (Previssima, 2022b) and the shared child education benefit (*prestation partagée d'éducation de l'enfant, PreParE*) (cf. Previssima, 2022c).

	Austria	Belgium	Denmark	France	Portugal
Name	Eiternkarenz und Kinderbetreuungsgeld (Parental leave and childcare allowance)	Ouderschapsverlof / Congé parental (Parental leave)	Forældreorlov (Parental leave)	Congé parental (Parental leave)	Licença Parental Complementar (Additional parental leave)
Eligibility criteria	Parental leave is only available to employees, unpaid; all parents are entitled to a childcare allowance; they must receive a family allowance for the child, reside in Austria, have a permanent joint household, carry out mother-child check-ups on a regular basis, be compliant with the additional earnings limit.	All employees who have completed 12 months employment (not necessarily consecutively) with their present employer (during the last 15 months), leave must start before child turns 12 years old; both parents can take parental leave but it is not transferrable; self-employed workers are not eligible.	For employees: based on a period of work of at least 160 hours in the four months preceding leave, must have worked at least 40 hours per month for at least three of the four months; for self-employed: at least part-time professional activity for at least six months within the last 12-month period, of which one month immediately precedes the paid leave; must have a profit of at least DKK 232,212 (€ 31,239.84) per year and have health insurance.	All employees are eligible for parental leave if they have worked at least one year for their employer before the birth of a child; self-employed workers must declare that their business will be put on hold one month before the start of the leave and can receive childcare benefit; it is possible for the parents to take leave simultaneously.	All employees with six months of social security contributions (continuous or intermittent; the latter is only possible if the period without contributions is less than six months); self-employed workers (who contribute to social security) and unemployed individuals with unemployment benefit are eligible.
Length of leave	Parental leave can be taken until the child reaches two years of age and must last at least two months; childcare allowance can be granted up to the 36th month of the child's life, depending on the model.	Four types of leave: the complete break (not working at all for four months); the half-time break (part-time work for eight months); 1/5 break (4/5 work for 20 months) and the 1/10 break (9/10 work for a maximum of 40 months).	Nine weeks of earmarked parental leave for each parent and five weeks of transferable parental leave to be taken before the child's ninth birthday; if one or both parents is self-employed, all 14 weeks are transferrable.	Initial leave is for a max. of one year, can be renewed twice (single child) and must be taken before child's third birthday; shared child education benefit can be granted to each parent for six months during the child's first year of age (for a single child).	Three months per parent, which can be taken in three ways: extended parental leave for three months; part-time work over a period of 12 months; alternating periods of extended parental leave and part-time work, totalling three months' absence; may be taken up to the child's sixth birthday.
Amount of the benefits / allowance	Parents can choose either a flexible flat-rate childcare benefit account over a chosen time span (which can be extended if both parents take leave), with daily allowances between € 14.53 and € 33.88 or an income-related childcare benefit of 80% of net income in the previous six months, for 365 days (if both parents claim, the period of entitlement is extended to 426 days) with a capped daily allowance of € 66 (approx. € 2,000 monthly).	Monthly interruption benefit depending on leave type taken: € 828.45 for complete break, € 381.87 for half-time break, € 129.55 for 1/5 break and € 64.78 for 1/10 break.	All employees and self-employed persons are entitled to a daily cash benefit based on former earnings, up to a limit of a maximum of DKK 120.68 per hour or DKK 4.465 (€ 600.68) per week for full-time leave.	Childcare benefit consistent with one-time birth bonus of € 965.34 subject to income ceiling; basic allowance subject to income ceiling and family status; shared child education benefit: € 422.20 for full-time leave, € 272.94 for part-time leave (50% max.), € 157.44 for part-time leave (50–80%).	25% of the value of the reference remuneration if taken immediately after Initial parental leave, or after the other parent has taken additional parental leave, otherwise unpaid.
Funding	Funded by the Family Burden Equalisation Fund (FLAF).	Paid by the National Employment Office (Rijksdienst voor Arbeidsvoorziening – RVA).	Funded by the state from general taxation.	Paid by the local CAF (Family Allowance Fund).	Funded by the social security system, financed by contributions from employers, employees, self-employed workers, and voluntary forms of social security.

Table 5: Overview of results for overall European social security systems for parental leave

While the eligibility criteria for Danish and Portuguese parental leave are the same as for maternity and paternity leave, the Austrian, Belgian and French schemes have different requirements. Parental leave in Austria is per se unpaid and only available to employees (oesterreich.gv.at, 2022). Nevertheless, all parents are entitled to the childcare allowance, providing they receive a family allowance for the child, are residents in Austria, have a permanent joint household, carry out mother-child check-ups on a regular basis and do not exceed the additional earnings limit (Herndler, 2022a). All Belgian employees who have completed 12 months of employment (not necessarily consecutively) with their present employer during the last 15 months are entitled to parental leave. This must begin before the child turns 12 years old and both parents can take parental leave. However, it is not transferrable. Self-employed workers are not eligible (RVA, 2022). In France, all employees are eligible for parental leave if they have worked at least one year for their employer before the birth of a child. They can take full-time leave and suspend their employment contract for the duration of parental leave or change to part-time work with a

minimum of 16 hours per week (Boluze, 2022). Self-employed workers must declare the “temporary cessation of activity” one month before they start their leave. They can either completely cease their activity and may not engage in any other employment or self-employed activity during this time or take a partial leave, and must estimate their working time, which must be less than or equal to 80 per cent. Self-employed parents are also entitled to childcare benefits (Previssima, 2022d).

In three of the five countries, the parental leave systems are financed in the same way as the maternity and/or paternity leave, i.e., by the FLAF in Austria, through the state from general taxation in Denmark and by the social security system in Portugal. In Belgium, the *Rijksdienst voor Arbeidsvoorziening* (National Employment Office, RVA) pays the interruption benefits (Grenzinfopunkt, n. d.), whereas the French childcare benefit is paid by the local CAF (cf. Boluze, Meriochaud, 2022).

Interim summary

In this section, the results of the comparative analysis were presented and discussed. The interim conclusions are discussed below.

In regard to unemployment, four of the five analysed countries – Belgium, Denmark, France and Portugal – have acknowledged the special situation of (performing) artists regarding working conditions and contracts (salaried, self-employed, mixed forms, succession of short-term contracts, etc.) and have developed specific systems for professionals in the (performing) arts to close this gap. These systems are usually intended for self-employed artists. An eligibility requirement that applies across all five systems is the demonstration of a certain number of days/hours of work in order to be entitled to the unemployment benefit. In all four schemes, the amount of the unemployment benefit paid is calculated based on the income received over a given period of time. The duration of entitlement varies in all countries, ranging from one to three years.

Old age seems to be the most urgent issue that needs to be addressed for the artists. However, only two of the five countries analysed have developed specific social security solutions for self-employed (performing) artists: Austria and France. While the Austrian scheme is intended for artists who work in the fields of visual arts, performing arts, music, literature or cinematography, or in one of the contemporary manifestations of the artistic fields, the French social security system for artists differentiates between five main branches of artistic activity: graphic and plastic arts, book writers and illustrators, music songwriters, authors of cinematographic and audio-visual works as well as authors of photographic works. Because performing artists with an intermittent status are salaried employees, they are not eligible for the social security system for artists and authors. Both systems have established the determination of “artistic” activity as one of the main criteria for eligibility and differentiate the criteria required. The most substantial dif-

ference between the two schemes is the nature of the benefits. While the Austrian system provides subsidies for old age, health and accident insurance, which are then deducted from the contributions to be paid by the artists, the French artists-authors acquire personal rights and the old age benefit is based on their social security base (declared income).

As for the third topic, parenthood, which is divided into the three sub-topics of maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave, none of the countries analysed have a specific system for professionals in the (performing) arts. Nevertheless, all systems were analysed due to the relevance of the topic.

Austria, Belgium, Denmark and France have a maternity leave system that is intended solely for the mother, whereas Portugal has a more comprehensive scheme. In all five countries, both employed and self-employed women are entitled to maternity leave. All five schemes grant a similar leave period. Only the Danish and Portuguese schemes pay self-employed mothers the same allowances as employees; in Austria, Belgium and France, self-employed women receive a lower allowance. Paternity leave is usually much shorter than maternity leave. Self-employed fathers are entitled to paid leave in all five countries. All the schemes analysed provide paid leave, although there are many differences in the allowance granted. Similar to the allowances of the maternity leave systems, only Danish and Portuguese self-employed fathers receive the same amount as employees. The systems of Belgium, Denmark and Portugal offer paid parental leave, while Austria and France grant, in principle, unpaid leave, with the possibility of receiving a separate compensatory payment. There are two types of payment modalities: whereas Belgium grants a fixed monthly amount depending on the type of leave taken, Denmark and Portugal pay a percentage of former earnings, and Austria and France offer both options. Accordingly, the amount of the payments varies greatly, but when considering the payment, there is no difference between employees and the self-employed.

An important point to emphasise here is that this exploratory study did not set out to provide a general overview and comparison of all the social security systems in Europe, but rather a focused and – in line with the design and scope of the study – selected identification of country-specific solutions to the problems and risks of old age, unemployment and parenthood in the performing arts. This focused and selective overview thus provides a framework for exploring and discussing the strengths and deficiencies of the German social security system for performing artists, which is presented in the next section.

Examples of good practice: Learning and transferring from other countries

The findings of the comparative analysis will be discussed below in relation to the current social security solutions for German self-employed artists and hybrid workers with regards to the three components in order to identify solutions that can serve as examples of good practice. As a result, policies were identified that could be helpful to further develop and optimise the German scheme. These will be de-

scribed along the three chosen and analysed components of social security: old age, unemployment and parenthood.

Old age

Regarding social security in terms of old age provision for artists, Germany has a specific system. The **Künstlersozialkasse** (German Artists' Social Insurance Fund, KSK) was commissioned by the national legislature to implement the **Künstlersozialversicherungsgesetz** (Artists' Social Insurance Act, KSVG), to allow artists to benefit from statutory social insurance in terms of old age pensions, health and long-term care.

Providing a more objective definition of “artist” and/or “work of art” could make the verification of applicants easier and lead to increased access.

The KSK system for old age has many similarities with the system in Austria. There is an artists' social insurance (fund) act in both countries defining who is considered an artist. The Austrian system is based on the question of artistic quality, as the entitlement depends on whether the activity pursued is considered artistic and whether the resulting product is recognised as a work of art. The German system focuses above all on the continuity and gainfulness of the activity (cf. KSK, 2022d). In contrast, the French social security scheme stipulates that artists must produce an original intellectual creation. These are three very different approaches, whereby the criteria of the German and French systems are more objective, and correspondingly easier to verify.

Taking full account and consideration of income from salaried work in addition to self-employment could take better account of the work situation of performing artists.

All three systems seem to have recognised the precarious situation of self-employed artists in terms of their social security and have therefore created these specific systems to provide them with an option for social security. However, not all of them have acknowledged that artists are not always only self-employed, but often work as employees as well, i.e., as hybrid workers. Whereas the German system only allows salaried employment to the extent of marginal work (cf. KSK, Voraussetzungen), French artists can simultaneously carry out an artistic self-employed activity and another activity under a different scheme, e.g., as an employee, and the earnings of both activities are taken into account for the calculation of old age pension benefits. This solution appears to take better account of the actual situation of artists.

Offering additional insurances that are relevant for performing artists during their career could provide more adequate protection.

Beyond pension provision, all schemes also offer subsidies for additional insurances. While health insurance is included in all of them, only Austrian artists benefit from accident insurance. The French system, instead, offers additional daily allowances in cases of sick leave and for maternity, paternity or adoption (subjected to the income amount), which could also be very interesting for artists. German artists are the

only ones who benefit from additional statutory long-term care insurance, which covers the risk of needing care. However, this insurance is usually claimed in old age, and it does not fully cover the costs of care.

Offering more flexible affiliation criteria in terms of income could better accommodate the needs of performing artists and include those with lower incomes.

German artists, like Austrians, must earn a minimum annual income (€ 3,900 in Germany and € 5,830.20 in Austria) in order to be affiliated with the KSK. When they reach this threshold, artists benefit from the insurances included in the respective schemes (cf. KSK, Voraussetzungen). French artists, on the other hand, receive their first benefits (health care and family benefits) as soon as they register for the scheme. All other benefits though, have to be “earned” by reaching a certain level of annual income. Only if they reach a certain annual income, are artists are entitled to daily allowances in cases of sick leave and for maternity, paternity or adoption. Thus, French artists can benefit from their system from their first euro earned and be entitled to a pension even with the lowest minimum annual income of all three countries. However, they must still reach the highest minimum annual income to gain all other social rights. If they do not reach this income threshold, they can “over-contribute” to an extra flat rate to gain full social rights or even apply for social assistance services if they are unable to pay their social security contributions (La Sécurité sociale des artistes-auteurs, 2022a). This social approach could be a practical solution for low-income artists in Germany.

Unemployment

When it comes to social security in the event of unemployment, Germany does not have a specific scheme for artists since KSK membership does not include insurance against unemployment. Instead, self-employed artists can, under certain conditions, voluntarily join the statutory unemployment insurance scheme.

Establishing a system that aligns self-employed artists with the existing employee status could provide better protection in cases of unemployment.

To join the statutory unemployment insurance, self-employed artists must either have been an employee subject to compulsory insurance for at least 12 months (continuous or intermittent) in the 30 months immediately preceding the start of their self-employment or have received unemployment benefits immediately before becoming self-employed (cf. Deutschland startet, n. d.; IHK Rhein-Neckar, n. d.; Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, n. d.). However, artists are usually not employed on a permanent basis and often only for a short period of time. The 12 months of previous employment within a 30-month period that are generally required for entitlement to unemployment benefits are therefore often not achievable. In this sense, German self-employed artists could clearly benefit from an “artist status” system similar to those in Belgium and France, as this would allow them to align with the existing employee status.

Requiring a realistic period of work time as an eligibility criterion for affiliation could facilitate access for artists with irregular contracts.

All four unemployment systems analysed require a certain number of days or hours worked in a given period to be eligible for unemployment benefits, which is not always easy for artists to achieve. The French scheme has the shortest working requirement (507 working hours during the 12 months preceding the last end of contract). If such a system were to be implemented, it is necessary at this point to review which type of work record (in days or hours) would make more sense for German artists and which period is realistic for the fulfilment of this required work record.

Calculating the allowance rate based on the months with higher income or guaranteeing a minimum allowance could ensure a sufficient livelihood when unemployed.

As for the amount of the unemployment allowances, all four systems calculate these based on income received over a given time period. The Danish system provides the best solution, as it calculates the rate on the basis of the 12 months with the highest income within the last 24 months. Artists are usually hired for a specific project or commission that lasts for a limited number of days, weeks or months, which are often followed by intermittent periods during which no income is earned. Implementing something along the lines of the Danish regulation in Germany would allow artists to select the months with the highest income in order to increase their payout subsidy. Another solution that could be considered for the German system is to guarantee a minimum allowance (either hourly or daily) as implemented by the French intermittent system, the *Régime des salaires intermittents du spectacle*. This would help to ensure that artists have enough money to cover their living costs in those periods without income.

Distributing the contributions payable for unemployment insurance between the artists and a third party could ease the financial burden on performing artists.

An approach from the French and Portuguese systems that could be of relevance to German artists is the distribution of the contributions payable for the unemployment insurance between the artists and a third party – be it the employer, the contracting organisation, the exploiter or, as in the case of the KSK, also the federal government with a subsidy.

Parenthood – maternity leave

In terms of social security for self-employed artist mothers, the *Mutterschutzgesetz* (German Maternity Protection Act) stipulates that all pregnant employees are entitled to maternity leave, although self-employed women are excluded from this regulation. However, German expectant mothers who are affiliated with the KSK are covered by the *Mutterschutzgesetz* and are therefore automatically entitled to maternity benefits. This offers the possibility of taking 14 weeks maternity leave (six weeks before the expected date of birth and eight weeks af-

ter delivery) as well as receiving a maternity allowance during this period. Unlike employees, who receive 100 per cent of their income during maternity leave (paid by the health insurance company and supplemented by the employer), self-employed artists are only entitled to 70 per cent of their earnings from their respective health insurance fund. This allowance is calculated based on the estimated income reported to the KSK for the last 12 calendar months before the start of the protection period. During this time, membership of the KSK and thus the social insurance continues contribution-free, as long as the new mother does not work (cf. Nagel, 2022; Contzen, 2020; Elterngeld.net, n. d.; familienportal.de, n. d.).

Attaching maternity leave entitlement to the payment of social security contributions or an affiliation to statutory health insurance could enable wider participation.

In all five countries, both employed and self-employed women are entitled to maternity leave, although four of the countries have special requirements for the self-employed. In contrast to the minimum income as an eligibility criterion for KSK membership, Denmark and France require, among other things, the self-employed mother to have worked for a certain period prior to maternity leave. Since self-employed professionals as well as hybrid workers in the arts often go through periods without work contracts, which in turn means no “official” work, and accordingly no remuneration, attaching the right to maternity leave to previously carried out work time or income earned can be disadvantageous for them. Instead, a potential solution could be to grant maternity leave entitlements by paying social security contributions for a certain period of time (as in Portugal) or based on affiliation to the statutory health insurance (as in Austria), as this is already included in the KSK membership.

Extending maternity leave could provide artists with a longer period of financial support without the pressure of having to work.

In terms of maternity leave duration, Germany is on a par with Denmark with the shortest period, although Danish mothers are entitled to additional parental leave with the same requirements and allowance. In this sense, not only self-employed artists, but also all other mothers would benefit from extended maternity leave, similar to the scheme in France, where the period is prolonged depending on the number of dependent children and/or children born, or the system in Portugal, which grants four to five months from the beginning.

Offering fixed allowances as well as allowances based on former income could favour women with fluctuating and/or low incomes.

While all countries grant employees a percentage of earnings (between 100 and 75 per cent, sometimes with a ceiling), the majority of the systems pay self-employed mothers daily or weekly allowances, which are either fixed or based on former income. Since artists have a fluctuating income due to their irregular work situation, it would certainly be advantageous to allow both options: the 70 per cent allowance based on income as well as a fixed minimum allowance that

self-employed women with fluctuating and/or low incomes could benefit from, which could be paid by the health insurance fund.

Parenthood – paternity leave.

In Germany, there is no explicit paternity leave; fathers are only entitled to parental leave and a parental allowance, which they can apply for voluntarily. In principle, parents are entitled to 12 months of parental allowance at a rate of 65 per cent of earnings, increased by two additional months if both partners apply for parental allowance (cf. familienportal.de, n. d.).

Implementing a statutory paternity leave could enable more fathers to take leave without the fear of financial or career setbacks.

Typically, men only take the minimum of two months, as otherwise they lose out; although many would like to take more time off, most do not make further use of parental leave because they often fear financial setbacks as well as disadvantages in their jobs (cf. Vaterfreuden.de, n. d.; ING, 2022). For this reason, it would be conceivable to allow fathers to take statutory paternity leave, in the best case with 100 per cent compensation for earnings, in line with the Portuguese system and the current German maternity leave. This would free fathers from the burden of personal decision-making and employers would need to adjust to this. In addition, self-employed fathers could also benefit from this arrangement.

Parenthood – parental leave

Although German parental leave is, in principle, only available to employees, all parents can receive a parental allowance. The prerequisite is that they do not work at all or not more than 32 hours a week. Since the parental allowance is granted independently of the parents' professional status, no previous minimum period of work needs to be proven (cf. familienportal.de, n. d.). Germany has thus the most accessible requirements for parental allowances compared to the other five countries.

Extending the parental leave period by dividing it into phases of benefit receipt and working periods could grant artists a more stable livelihood.

As far as the length of parental allowance is concerned, German parents are offered the longest period of entitlement together with Austrian parents. In both cases it is possible to receive additional partner months if both parents claim parental allowance. At the same time, parents can opt for a longer benefit period with a lower (daily or monthly) parental allowance. Although it is basically possible to work while receiving a parental allowance, Austrian parents are subject to an annual additional earnings limit (€ 16,200), whereas German parents are only allowed to work part-time, and the additional income is always taken into account, i.e., there is no tax-free amount. In contrast, the systems in Belgium and Portugal offer the possibility of extending the reference period by dividing it into phases of benefit and working periods (for example, the one-fifth break allows Belgian parents to reduce

²⁴ If parents received less than € 1,240 net income before the birth, they receive a higher parental allowance; the lower the net income they received, the larger the percentage.

their working hours to four days a week and receive the correspondingly converted parental allowance on the remaining day and thus be entitled to an allowance for 20 rather than four months), with the earnings level not affecting the amount of the parental allowance. This could be an interesting model for artists in Germany as it would allow them to continue working without losing parental benefits, thus leading to a more stable livelihood.

Offering a flat-rate parental allowance could provide more financial stability for many artists with low or fluctuating income.

As mentioned earlier, entitlement to a parental allowance in Germany is not dependent on employment status. If parents did not work before the birth, they receive the minimum amount of € 300 basic parental allowance or € 150 parental allowance “plus” (**Elterngeld Plus**). However, if the parents were employed, they usually receive 65 per cent²⁴ of the net income they received before the birth (cf. familienportal.de, n. d.). A similar system is in place in Austria. Parents can choose between a flexible flat-rate childcare benefit account over a chosen time span or an income-based parental benefit, where 80 per cent of the net income is paid, with a capped daily allowance of € 66 (approx. € 2,000 monthly). The advantage of this system is that the flat-rate option grants significantly more money than the German parental allowance minimum (daily allowances between € 14.53 and € 33.88, depending on the extension period). Considering that artists often have an irregular income due to precarious working conditions, a flat-rate parental allowance would mean a significant increase in income for many of them.

Conclusion

This exploratory study was carried out to understand and compare the social security systems of five selected European countries – Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France and Portugal – with specific schemes for (performing) artists regarding the three chosen social security components: old age, unemployment and parenthood. The main objective was to identify promising approaches and regulations in terms of the social security of self-employed professionals in the (performing) arts that these European countries already implement and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. The results of the exploratory comparative study were then contrasted with the current social security system for German self-employed artists with regard to the three selected components in order to determine which solutions could serve as examples of good practice and could be helpful for the further development and optimisation of the German system.

The explorative and comparative study of the five selected European countries has shown that all the countries studied have specific social security solutions for (performing) artists for at least one of the three components. While Belgium, Denmark, France and Portugal have special schemes for cases of unemployment, Austria and France offer a

specific system for old age. As for the third component, parenthood, none of the analysed countries have a specific system for professionals in the (performing) arts. However, due to the relevance of this topic, all systems were included in the exploratory study.

The research has also shown that all five selected countries have some form of interesting approach when it comes to social security for artists. There are many similarities in the systems outlined, which suggests the existence of similar needs and challenges for artists across Europe. At the same time, major differences were found in some areas, showing the countries' unique and partly creative approaches to dealing with these challenges. The fact that specific solutions for artists exist in all five countries indicates that the respective governments have acknowledged the precarious situation of artists and are willing to address this and take it into account.

The comparison of the five European systems with the German system allowed policies to be identified that could be helpful to further develop and optimise the KSK, which offers social security in terms of old age provision, health insurance and statutory long-term care insurance for self-employed (performing) artists.

Fundamental to the systems in Austria, France and Germany is their definition of an “artist” and/or their “work of art”, which functions in all three systems as an eligibility criterion. Both the German and French system provide a more objective definition than the Austrian scheme. These allow for easier verification when applying for affiliation and, consequently, could lead to better access to the fund. To address the work situation of hybrid workers more effectively, income from salaried work could be fully accepted and considered in addition to self-employment income (as in the French system), rather than only being accepted to the extent of marginal work, as the KSK stipulates. All three systems offer additional insurances with the affiliation. However, it could be beneficial to review them for their relevance in order to provide more adequate protection for artists during their careers. Rather than requiring a minimum annual income to be affiliated, as the German and Austrian systems do, offering more flexible affiliation criteria – such as allowing affiliation from the first earned income, as is the case in the French system – could better accommodate the needs of performing artists and include those with lower incomes.

With regards to unemployment, since Germany does not offer a specific scheme for performing artists, artists are only able to join the statutory unemployment insurance, which comes with requirements that are very difficult to meet. Instead, it might be helpful to establish a system in the style of the Belgian *Kunstenaarsstatuut* or the French intermittent status system, the *Régime des salaires intermittents du spectacle*, that aligns self-employed artists with the existing employee status. For artists with irregular jobs in particular, it would be beneficial to require a realistic period of work time as an eligibility criterion for affiliation to unemployment insurance. Given that many artists have an inconsistent income or even have to cover periods without work contracts, the calculation of the unemployment allowance rate could be based on the months with higher income as in the case of the Danish regulation. Also, guaranteeing a minimum allowance, as in the case of

the French intermittent status system, could ensure a sufficient livelihood when unemployed. To reduce financial pressure on performing artists, it could be helpful to distribute the payable contributions for unemployment insurance between the artists and a third party, as implemented in the French and Portuguese systems.

In the case of parenthood, the German system – unlike all five European systems explored – offers a specific solution for performing artists who are members of the KSK. Nevertheless, the existing arrangements in the five countries analysed provide interesting aspects for further reflecting on the German system. Rather than setting a minimum income or a minimum amount of performed work as an eligibility criterion for KSK membership, attaching the entitlement to maternity leave to the payment of social security contributions (as in Portugal) or the affiliation to a statutory health insurance scheme (similar to the Austrian system) could enable more artists with lower income and/or irregular work contracts to participate. Prolonging maternity leave, as in the examples of France or Portugal, could enable artists to receive financial support for longer while not feeling the pressure of needing to work. Granting flat-rate payments as an alternative to income-based allowances could favour artists with fluctuating and/or low incomes. Since there is no explicit paternity leave in Germany, fathers could benefit from the introduction of a statutory paternity leave (at best with full compensation for earnings), which would allow them to take leave without the fear of financial or career setbacks. In Germany, all parents are entitled to parental allowance, but they are only allowed to work to a limited extent and these earnings are always taken into account. In the case of artists, an extension of the parental leave period by dividing it into phases of benefit receipt and working periods (along the lines of the Belgian and Portuguese systems) could enable a more stable livelihood.

These findings suggest that, in general, the KSK provides a good foundation for building on and already covers some social security needs to a reasonable extent. However, one of the most important findings of this study is that this system still has some serious gaps (such as the lack of protection in cases of unemployment) and does not sufficiently take into account the realities of life as well as the needs of artists with regard to social security.

Despite some creative solutions and approaches, none of the systems manage to adequately cover all the needs of artists in terms of social security. Taken together, the findings of the exploratory study strengthen the idea that these systems are insufficient and therefore urgently need updating, improvement and further development to effectively address the living and working situations of self-employed and especially hybrid workers in the performing arts, which are often characterised by precarious working arrangements and uncertain income perspectives. It is thus essential that all countries engage in exchange and learn from each other.

Despite its exploratory character and the relatively limited sample, this study offers some valuable insights into the different approaches and regulations regarding social security for performing artists, and provides a basis for exploring and discussing the strengths and weakness-

es of the German system. This exploratory study also provides the basis for conducting the second part of the European study, namely interviews with experts and representatives of associations of the performing arts in the five selected European countries. The insights gained from this explorative and comparative study are evaluated and deepened through these interviews, assessing these systems from the perspective of those affected in the respective countries. Based on this, good practice examples of the three chosen components of social protection were identified and elaborated on with the aim of formulating recommendations for action for policy. The preliminary results of both parts of the European study were presented and discussed during the workshop “Social Security for the Performing Arts in Europe” (third part) in order to identify possible solutions that are applicable to Germany.

The background features several thin, intersecting lines in shades of orange and red. A vertical line runs down the left side. Two diagonal lines cross the page, one from the top left to the bottom right, and another from the top right to the bottom left, creating a large 'X' shape. These lines intersect to form various geometric shapes, including triangles and quadrilaterals, some of which are filled with a light orange color.

Chapter 2: Promoting social security in the performing arts

**By Yana Prinsloo &
Jonathan Roth**

An interview survey of good practice examples in Europe

(Non-)Work: What does an independent artist do for a living?

²⁵ These aspects are typical characteristics of the so-called “project worker”. The parallels between the entrepreneurial self and independent artists were discussed by Axel Haunschild & Doris Eikhof (2004) and Vera Nitsche (2022).

Working in the performing arts requires a high degree of flexibility and organisational skills, as well as a certain willingness to self-exploit.²⁵ An example of a typical day in the life of a self-employed artist indicates the various tasks and activities associated with this profession. In the morning, the artist handles the administrative part of their job. They correspond with (new) cooperation partners, write a draft for a project application and check the accounts of their last performance project. At noon they rehearse for a new piece for which they have received a guest contract. In the evening they will be on stage for a performance. Due to their project funding, they are able to perform the play a couple of times on an independent stage and employ four additional actors. In between, they must still find time for networking activities, which they do as part of a political interest group. Since their guest performance fee and project funding are not enough to make a living, they must find time for their part-time job waiting on tables in the Italian restaurant next door. In addition to these various livelihood obligations, the work in their own household must also be taken into account. In the event of unexpected event cancellations or illness, their organisational and, more importantly, their financial framework immediately falters and becomes fragile.

This fictional example indicates three central problems that determine the working conditions of an independent performing artist:

- **Constantly changing work constellation:** Artists often oscillate between different forms of employment during their working day. They are compelled to shift back and forth between their artistic work and “service tasks” in the broadest sense, including administration, public relations and sideline activities. More specifically, a freelance artist has to cope with continuously changing working relations. A distinction between self-employed and employed labour is characteristic of all European labour markets and most of its most occupational fields. Within the independent performing arts, however, there is no such boundary in everyday working life, since professional artists must constantly alternate between different professional forms. And more often than not, they find themselves in so-called atypical employment relationships, which include part-time work, temporary work, work on demand, casual and seasonal work, self-employment and hybrid work (in both artistic and non-artistic occupational fields).²⁶ What is often a common practice for artists is, at the same time, perpetually jeopardising their legal status as professional artists.²⁷

²⁶ → <https://www.bpb.de/themen/arbeitsmarkt/178190/atypische-beschaeftigungsverhaeltnisse/>

²⁷ For example, the German KSK allows secondary income as marginal employment only with an income of up to € 450 per month. These restrictions were recently questioned and at least temporarily lifted in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.
→ <https://www.kuenstler-sozialkasse.de/die-ksk/meldungen>.

²⁸ For more details, see Chapter 3 of this European study.

²⁹ For a more detailed account of the problems and challenges of social risk protection, see Merkel 2022, 15.

- **Unpaid work and non-work:** For self-employed professions, especially in the performing arts, not all work activities are equally remunerated or recognised as work at all, however crucial they may be. Maintaining correspondences and networks, for example, is an elementary as well as time-consuming part of the everyday work of a self-employed artist, but it rarely comes with a price tag.²⁸ Due to the framework conditions of many funding programmes, it is primarily rehearsals and performances that are considered artistic work in the stricter sense. Other relevant working routines that pave the way to the actual artistic process (i.e., acquiring funding, tour management, accounting, etc.), tend to be a marginal part of a project calculation and often remain unpaid work. Furthermore, downtime “between jobs”, which essentially consists of unpaid work (e.g., acquisition tasks), is often perceived and treated as unemployment – a common stigma and devaluation of independent artistic work.
- **Dependence on private networks:** Self-employed work is rarely adequately protected by social security systems, which do not take into account the extraordinary working conditions of self-employed work or offer it equal entitlements to benefits.²⁹ As a result, independent artists usually very much depend on the support of private networks to bridge periods of downtime or to coordinate family and career.

In light of these considerations, it may help to address the question of what “work” actually means in the context of the performing arts. “Work”, in general, involves physical energy, it is based on an economic and social form of participation and represents a performance-oriented activity. Work is an organising principle of society that is shaped by the particular economic, political, cultural and social framework it is situated in; at the same time, the way work is defined, distributed and executed shapes this framework as well as the social identity of people. A coherent understanding of what is understood by work can often only be determined for specific situations, especially in moments of friction or deviation, when certain work practices are not considered work at all and remain unremunerated, such as the administrative tasks and networking strategies mentioned in our exemplary case above.

The working methods of independent artists have been guided in recent years by the notion of collaborative, participatory work and by an experimental approach to try out new forms of cooperation. This fundamentally flexible way of working (along with similar project-based work patterns in the creative industry), however, has not yet been fully acknowledged within contemporary labour policies. True to the motto “Doing Work is Fun, Finding the Work is the Job”, artistic freedom and autonomy seem to lead not only to insecure and unclear working conditions, but also to a dynamic or even ambiguous understanding of “work”. The difficulties are rooted in the very concept of independent performing art: characterised by its extending heterogeneous and constantly changing structure (Matzke, 2013, pp. 259–271), it is simply impossible to summarise the legal and cultural concept of work under a single umbrella term for the performing arts. Nevertheless, there are

two central features that distinguish the independent scene's claim to alternative ways of working and its striving for political representation:

1. The independent performing arts in Europe have developed new institutional patterns, a common language, interaction and cooperation at all levels, and common strategies of interest representation.
2. The infrastructural development continuously creates new assets in the form of dedicated buildings, new organisations or new coalition patterns (Eder, 2021, p. 13).

From a cultural studies perspective, the concept of work, being vastly over-theorised in general, needs to be studied more closely in terms of the actual effects of work practices and labour policies, to come to a better understanding what working in the performing arts actually means – and how working conditions can be improved. Here, the very basic conditions must already be taken into account: employment contracts and regular wages for example, which can usually be assumed for most occupational fields (Füllsack, 2009), are more an exception for the performing arts or other forms of flexible work (e.g., knowledge work or work in the service industry; Prinsloo, 2022, p. 180). The studies within “Systemcheck”, a milestone project by the **Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste** (German Association of Independent Performing Arts; Eder, 2021, p. 13), address precisely these questions and aim to shed some light on this complex issue.

Approach and survey

The focus of this interview study within “Systemcheck” is to illustrate and evaluate country-specific instruments for social protection in precarious employment scenarios from the perspective of experts from national performing arts interest groups. The aim is to describe “examples of good practice” for three key issues that performing artists have to face:

- (Un)employment and insurance: How are artists provided for in times of unemployment or between projects? How do artists manage these periods of “downtime”?
- Parenthood/parental protection: How can performing artists make parenthood work in their profession? On which support systems can they rely?
- Old age provision/retirement arrangements: What are the risk factors for poverty for artists in old age? Does the pension system provide adequately for artists?

The selection of the key questions is based on the results of an exploratory and comparative study within “Systemcheck” on the current structures of social security in Europe by Melisa Bel Adasme.³⁰ While Bel Adasme's study outlined the legal frameworks of social protection, this interview study focuses on the people who are actually affected by the programmes: the artists whose social security benefits are at stake. In a qualitative questionnaire survey, we asked representatives of per-

³⁰ For more detail, see Chapter 1 of this European study.

³¹ Originally, Denmark was also part of the country selection of the survey. Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain a written response to the questionnaire during the survey period, which is why Denmark was excluded from the survey in consultation with the BFDK.

forming artists' interest groups in Belgium, France, Portugal and Austria³¹ about the reality of living and working conditions in the performing arts in their respective countries – and about their opinions on whether the social protection measures are actually sufficient to meet the needs of artists. In the selected countries, developments are currently taking place that call for reflection on how improvements in social security for artists can be effectively facilitated. The representatives interviewed are:

- Esther Baio & Ulrike Kuner, **IG Freie Theater** (Austria)
- Samuela Berdah, **Centre national de la danse** (France)
- Mafalda Sebastião, **Câmara Municipal de Lisboa** (Portugal)
- Maarten Bresseleers, **Sociaal Fonds Podiumkunsten** (Belgium)

The survey results varied in detail. Supplementary follow-up questions were submitted in a few cases. The data collection was completed on 7 September 2022.

A first comparison of the data shows that the position of self-employed artists is currently being renegotiated within the framework of labour and social policy in each of the countries. In this context, quite promising developments can be observed. However, a transfer of approaches in one country-specific system to another seems hardly possible, as each system is the result of long-term and complex developments. The following observations and results of the survey should therefore be understood more as a suggestion for further development than as applicable concepts. The central question is as follows: What weaknesses do the good practice examples of the countries mentioned reveal and to what extent can demands for changes in the German system be derived from them?

As an interview study, this questionnaire offered the opportunity to ask about the underlying subjective views and everyday practical experiences of professional practitioners and representatives of interest groups, in addition to observing policy structures and programmes. On the one hand, the survey allowed us to obtain an overview of certain national labour practices, and on the other hand, these proved to be some kind of “barometer of public opinion” for the situation in the respective countries: the very question of whether certain issues raised in the questionnaire were known or relevant to our interview partners provided an indication of the current situation of artistic self-employment in the five countries studied. For example, Maarten Bresseleers from the **Sociaal Fonds Podiumkunsten** in Belgium responded to our question about parental protection by saying: “We don’t have a clue. I think it was never asked before how they arrange their private lives and if they would need extra care to make it doable” (Bresseleers, 2022).

Our research focuses on describing everyday practices and good practice examples in relation to the three central topics. We understand social practices as doing, speaking, feeling and thinking. Social practices exist independently of individual subjects and, at the same time, they are dependent on being performed by individuals. When practices are performed, certain patterns of social behaviour, habits and organisatio-

nal structures become tangible (Schäfer, 2016, pp. 12–14). Practices represent the smallest unit of society. The physicality of each practical action refers to and reflects the incorporation of knowledge and the performativity of action (Reckwitz, 2003, pp. 282–301). Asking about the working practice of artists therefore also means obtaining information about their social position.

Coping mechanisms and a need for change

In general, the responses submitted confirm the findings from other studies on the work situation in the performing arts:

- 1. Security systems are modelled after standard employment relationships:** The living and working conditions of artists, which are characterised as project-based work and which quite often change between different forms of employment (employed/self-employed), are seldom adequately considered.
- 2. Artists lack legal identity and security:** The legal definition of working as a professional artist is only vaguely defined. This has an impact on the social protection of this professional group.
- 3. Working in the arts is based on coping mechanisms:** Self-employed performing artists tend to rely on private networks rather than state security systems for downtime, retirement provisions or compatibility of family and career. Hybrid work activities in artistic and non-artistic occupational fields are widespread.
- 4. Between work-life balance and work mania:** Although most artists want to sacrifice themselves for their work, they lack public recognition for their work. Burn-out syndrome and a lack of free time and private life are common among self-employed artists.

According to the social scientists Ulrich Brinkmann, Klaus Dörre and Silke Röbenack, these observations all are indicators of precarious work. In their study on the expansion of flexible employment as a trend towards precarity in Germany and in Europe, they define precarious employment in two ways: “An employment relationship can be described as precarious if, due to their work, the employees fall significantly below a level of income, protection and social integration that is defined as the standard in contemporary society and is recognised by the majority. Employment is also precarious if it is subjectively associated with a loss of meaning, a lack of recognition and planning insecurity to such an extent that social standards are clearly corrected to the disadvantage of the employees” (Brinkmann et al., 2006, p. 17, [own translation](#)).

Whereas access to unemployment, health and old age insurance is usually the main focus in terms of social security, the question of parental security is rather underrepresented. We consider this component together with unemployment protection and old age provision as a cen-

tral aspect when it comes to the social security of a working artist. Based on our survey results, we will discuss examples of good practice that show strategies for how flexible work can be secured in a way that does not lead to precarious living situations, but rather ensures a dignified working life is possible.

(Un)employment and insurance: Balancing life between projects

**“Generally, artists struggle the most if they have to work in both systems, meaning they work as employed and self-employed.”
(Esther Baio & Ulrike Kuner, IG Freie Theater, Austria)**

**“Few have savings, others try to find jobs related to cultural work and others have to find jobs in other non-cultural activities.”
(Mafalda Sebastião, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, Portugal)**

**“The public unemployment service doesn’t recognise unpaid labour of artists.”
(Maarten Bresseleers, Sociaal Fonds Podiumkunsten, Belgium)**

There is a discord among artists about the ideal employment status: some artists prefer to be employed so that they can benefit from the regular employment system, whereas others prefer to be independent so that they can keep their autonomy over their artistic activity. However, autonomy is usually accompanied by little or no claims to financial security between projects: “They often do not generate enough income to receive support for their self-employment insurance contributions, but they also do not acquire enough employment time to be entitled to unemployment benefits” (Baio, Kuner, 2022). In general, dealing with labour and tax laws is perceived as a bureaucratic hurdle. As a result, self-employed artists often fall through the social safety net, and they work on the edge of poverty, as they cannot afford to stand up for their working rights.

Many of our interview partners point out one key critical aspect: the distinction between unemployment vs. unpaid work. The stigma of unemployment is pervasive because the public employment service usually marks work between jobs as merely “downtime”, and not as unpaid work that has to be done in order to prepare or acquire new funding and contracts. New policy reforms in the countries surveyed attempt to address this aspect and have therefore redefined the work status of artists.

In Portugal, a newly introduced **Estatuto dos Profissionais da Área da Cultura** (Statute of Professionals in the Area of Culture) aims to compensate financial losses in particular for downtime between projects:

“With the new ‘Statute of the Cultural Professional’, Portugal has created a ‘Benefit for Suspension of Cultural Activity’ for self-employed people to be paid in non-work periods. Employees in Performing Arts sector can benefit from general unemployment allowance. So from

now on, either self-employed and employees will have periods of non-work financially protected” (Sebastião, 2022). The implementation of this new Benefit for Suspension of Cultural Activity started in October 2022.

In France, “downtime” is compensated for in various processes. First, an adjusted unemployment insurance, commonly called *intermittents*, compensates artists as well as technicians employed on a fixed-term contract for the time between two assignments. In order to be eligible for this scheme, 507 hours of work as a performing artist must be documented within a period of 12 months. If these conditions are met, the artist is entitled to one year’s unemployment benefit, which is paid during the periods of downtime. The amount of the unemployment benefit is calculated on the basis of the number of hours worked and the salary received. Second, compensation in the form of royalties is possible when a production is commissioned. Finally, performers can be paid *au cachet* (per fee), which involves a lump sum payment for a stage performance regardless of its duration to consider the table-work as well. What may sound like a coherent concept at first is also criticised by our interview partner Samuela Berdah: calculating the exact amount of unemployment benefits is a “time-consuming and difficult process”, and sick leave between two employment contracts is hardly ever considered (Berdah, 2022).

In Belgium, the new *Kunstenaarsstatuut* (Artist Status) aims to facilitate the situation in periods of temporary unemployment in order to adjust the irregular income stream of artists to the social security system. The *Kunstenaarsstatuut* does not so much describe a new legal status for artists, but consists of a bundle of policies designed to enable artists to obtain access to the same social safety net as employees by providing more flexible conditions. Specifically, the *Kunstenaarsstatuut* describes an unemployment benefit that does not decrease over time and that allows one to pursue artistic activities at the same time. On those days without any income from artistic work, it provides entitlement to a benefit that is based on the work previously performed and depending on the age of the employee. For example, a person under the age of 36 needs to attest to 312 working days in the last 21 months (Bresseleers, 2022).

Thanks to the so-called “Cachet rule”, artists can also gain access to benefits from the *Kunstenaarsstatuut* based on their gross salary. This rule applies only to artists who work with a working wage; in practice, about € 70 gross is applied to a day’s work. This means that an artist under 36 years of age must earn a gross wage of about € 22,000 within 21 months in order to be entitled to unemployment benefits.

Moreover, the *Kunstenaarsstatuut* applies not only to persons having professional status as artists, but to any artistic, technical-artistic or supporting work in the artistic field, “performed by whoever it may be”. “The law strictly defines ‘the provision of artistic services’ and/or ‘the production of artistic works’ as ‘the creation and/or performance or interpretation of artistic interpretation of artistic works in the audio visual and visual arts music, literature, spectacle, theatre and choreography’. Whoever falls under this description has specific entitlements between jobs” (Bresseleers, 2022).

This **Kunstenaarsstatuut** is currently under review. A project group is working on a participatory process on a revision of the statute and the specific regulations facing cultural workers as a whole. The regulations are to be implemented accordingly in the near future.

In principle, programmes like the **Kunstenaarsstatuut** aim to ensure that time between work contracts is no longer considered as a time of unemployment per se, in order to recognise the flexible working structures in the (performing) arts and to balance high- and low-income working phases with a targeted programme. Considering that both reforms in Belgium and Portugal are in the process of being implemented, it is important to follow this process and observe whether they are likely to have a positive impact on social security and the employment relationship of artists.

Parenthood and parental protection: Balancing life and work

“We don’t have a clue. I think it was never asked before how they arrange their private lives and if they would need extra care to make it doable.”

(Maarten Bresseleers, Sociaal Fonds Podiumkunsten, Belgium)

“Artists who do not meet the conditions for compensation during paternity or maternity leave do not declare this period and continue to receive unemployment benefits. ... Very few men take paternity leave.”

(Samuela Berdah, Centre national de la danse, France)

“Many parents working in this field heavily rely on help – often from family members.”

(Esther Baio & Ulrike Kuner, IG Freie Theater, Austria)

“The hurdles start especially when the parental leave is over.”

(Mafalda Sebastião, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, Portugal)

In terms of parenthood and parental protection, self-employed artists in the countries surveyed are supported in general by the standard social system of their countries (e.g., maternity allowance, parental leave). Specific strategies for social protection during parental leave for those in the professional field of performing arts are not provided for in any country.

As our interview partners point out, re-entering the profession after parental leave is the main hurdle. The forms and hours of work in the performing arts (no weekly schedule, unpredictable working hours, rehearsal by announcement, etc.) are rarely compatible with the daily life of families, let alone with the opening hours of public childcare. There is also a lack of flexible childcare options that can be accessed for short-term engagements in projects. Obviously, the compatibility of family and career is a challenge in the performing arts. Esther Baio and Ulrike Kuner (Austria) clarify this in their statement:

“It can be observed that artists who are also parents struggle more in environments where they are the only ones with childcare responsibilities. In artist groups where more people are also parents, the rehearsal hours have often been shifted to earlier hours to match the opening times of nurseries and schools. In some cases, the company would support the parent financially, who needed to pay for private childcare during the evenings shows. However, those cases are rather rare. Some artists have therefore reorganised their professional life to meet the needs of their family life” (Baio, Kuner, 2022).

A recent study from Austria on parenthood in the performing arts highlights that there is less overt, but more structural discrimination against parents in the performing arts system (Glatzner, 2021). There is a lack of funding initiatives that provide financial support to artists on parental leave. There is also a lack of initiatives that support the re-entry of artists into the profession with regards to care times and other parenthood-related disadvantages (e.g., single parents or low-income earners). Due to their reduced flexibility, parents, especially mothers, experience less (feasible) job offers, less networking possibilities and sometimes struggle with being perceived no longer as an artist, but mainly as a parent. Thus, in addition to loss of income and the reorganisation of life and work schedules, the appreciation of artistic work is also significantly shaped by parenthood. With regard to necessary improvements, the study therefore states: “Besides additional funds that artists need to continue their international careers (residencies, guest performances, etc.), almost 60 per cent claim that they wish to be ‘heard, seen and emotionally supported’. Respondents describe the desire to be perceived fully as an artist and not as a ‘mother who is also an artist’, or they describe a tendency to taboo the subject” (Glatzner, 2021, p. 12, *own translation*).

In view of these results, there is a great need for financial, structural but also informal support through visible representation of parents’ interests in the performing arts. So far, however, these challenges have only been addressed to a limited extent.

In Portugal, the issue of parenthood is at least publicly discussed. The *Polo Cultural Gaivotas Boavista*, the Municipality of Lisbon’s resources centre for artistic creation, in co-organisation with the Alcantara Festival in Lisbon, offers a training programme in November, including a forum on work-family life balance for people in the performing arts (Sebastião, 2022).

In France, the social welfare foundation *Audiens* has set up a system of maternity assistance for people in need.³² It provides compensation for those who do not meet the criteria for social insurance, and it offers support with expenses for childcare and health care, where up to 50 per cent of the childcare costs can be subsidised. The maximum annual amount of the grant can be up to € 3,000. Since 2021, a new financial support scheme covers up to 50 per cent of the travel and accommodation costs for childcare during a tour. The maximum annual amount of this support can be up to € 1,000 per household (Berdah, 2022).

³² → <https://www.audiens.org/solutions/intermittents-maternite-paternite-audiens-vous-aide.html> (11 September 2022).

While the approaches of the **Amiens** programme show preliminary possibilities for support, it becomes evident in light of the survey results that there is still much to be done with regard to the social protection of parenthood throughout Europe. Apart from a lack of specific infrastructures and social regulations, the following questions must be asked: To what extent do the working structures in the independent art scene themselves cause the difficulties of reconciling work and family life, and is there a lack of awareness of the issue?

Old age provision: The poverty threshold

**“We keep trying to make artists aware of the importance.”
(Maarten Bresseleers, Sociaal Fonds Podiumkunsten, Belgium)**

**“Artists are therefore stuck between the choice of living below the poverty line during their active years or risking poverty in old age – or both.”
(Esther Baio & Ulrike Kuner, IG Freie Theater, Austria)**

Low retirement provisions are usually the result of many years of working in a financially precarious field such as the independent performing arts. The tendency towards self-exploitation through low fee payments in the chronically underfunded arts sector has a dramatic effect on social security in the times following the professional life.

In part, this problem is already rooted in the way artistic education is structured and how young people enter their artistic profession. As our interview partners Esther Baio and Ulrike Kuner (Austria) point out, “educational institutions across all disciplines of the arts almost exclusively focus on the artistic formation of their students”, whereas “entrepreneurial and administrative skills (including retirement payments) that come with working in the independent field is mostly left to their own initiative” (Baio, Kuner, 2022). Comprehensive provision against poverty in old age should therefore start in education, but at the same time also provide working conditions that allow people to make their own retirement arrangements.

A few approaches will be mentioned that indicate serious attempts to prevent the risk of old age poverty in independent theatre:

In France, the **Union de recouvrement des cotisations de sécurité sociale et d’allocations familiales** (Social System for Artists and Authors, URSSAF) is affiliated to the general social security system. Entitlement to retirement can be acquired through this in the form of a basic pension. The amount of the pension depends on the insurance period as well as the average annual income from the 25 best years of income. Furthermore, there are supplementary funds for each profession that deduct fees from income and provide supplementary pensions. Artistic professions are administered by the **Caisse nationale de retraite complémentaire des artistes-auteurs** (IRCEC) supplementary fund through various programmes. The flexible working conditions in the arts are taken into account insofar as periods of unemployment

are counted towards retirement, which favours the possibilities for artists to receive a decent pension. However, accumulating the necessary **trimestre** (quarters) for a full pension is sometimes a challenge for artists, as Samuela Berdah (2022) points out, since hybrid activities in different professional fields (artistic and non-artistic) as well as international careers are not easily taken into account.

In Austria, the **Interessengemeinschaft (IG) Freie Theaterarbeit** offers consultation and training in order to make artists aware of social security strategies and aims to shape cultural policy developments accordingly. As Esther Baio and Ulrike Kuner emphasise, the most crucial aspect is to substantially improve salaries: “The pensions will be better and higher if the income of artists improves. Higher pay or more income leads to higher social security contributions, which results in a better pension.” Minimum fee recommendations, however, have so far only been established in the city of Vienna since 2020. “The **IG Freie Theaterarbeit** therefore puts a lot of effort into making those minimum fees a standard nationwide” (Baio, Kuner, 2022).

In addition, two institutions in Austria support artists in paying their social security contributions and thus provide them with better insurance.

The **IG Netz**, administered by the **IG Freie Theaterarbeit**, subsidises independent theatres with employed artists by providing groups and institutions with the opportunity to apply for financial support for each artistic staff member. The IG is funded by the Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture, Public Service and Sport (BMKÖS, since 1991) and the art and culture departments of the federal provinces, but is constantly seeking increased financing to support independent theatres.

For self-employed artists in Austria, the **Künstlersozialversicherungsfond** (Artists’ Social Insurance Fund, KSVF) was established. In Austria, all self-employed artists are included in the statutory pension insurance. In order to make it easier for artists insured under this pension scheme to pay their social insurance contributions, the KSVF was created, which provides subsidies for pensions and, since 2008, also for health and accident insurance contributions. The applications process and calculation of entitlements is rather complex. In principle, the system offers subsidies for artists below a certain income threshold, which allows them to make the full contribution to the pension scheme in addition to their own contribution of a maximum of € 158. However, if an artist actually earns a living wage from their artistic income, the cost of social security contributions also increases substantially. And therein lies the weak point of the system: “Trying to avoid stifling social security contributions that would push artists under the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, artists try to claim as little income as possible in their tax declarations. The long-term effect of this practice is of course a very low pension. Artists are therefore stuck between the choice of living below the poverty line during their active years or risking poverty in old age – or both. Higher KSVF contributions would surely encourage artists to claim a better income, which would result in a better overall social standing” (Baio, Kuner, 2022).

Awareness of these challenges has increased since more and more independent artists are affected by poverty in old age. However, developing a viable security system that makes appropriate provisions during the period of professional life and that specifically supports artists in old age poverty is still an ongoing task in all the countries surveyed. Instead, general trends from professional life in the arts continue into their time in retirement: independent artists rely primarily on their private network, for example, through relatives and partners in standard employment relationships.

Conclusion

The results of this study show, above all, that there are indeed certain developments to improve social protection for artists in Europe. However, the individual programmes are only based to some extent on the actual working conditions in the performing arts and therefore rarely contribute to substantial improvements in the social protection of artists. Flagship projects, such as the *Kunstenaarsstatuut* in Belgium and the above-mentioned Benefit for Suspension of Cultural Activity in Portugal do at least address the question of “downtime” or “non-work”. These approaches need further monitoring in order to document their actual effect. Given that the situation in the performing arts is almost the same across Europe, at least with regard to the challenges of social security, a pan-European approach is needed to remedy this precarious situation.

It is important for us to emphasise that this chapter, “Promoting social security in the performing arts”, is not only about an exchange of data and a better understanding of working conditions, it also requires a shift in mindset within the performing arts. This tends to subordinate many problems to their artistic ideals. Often enough, funding opportunities are not exhausted because the bureaucratic effort is perceived as a hurdle. After all, writing applications is part of an artist’s unpaid work and therefore part of this vicious circle of self-exploiting working conditions. That being said, there is also a need to de-bureaucratise application processes.

The challenge of how to develop dignified working conditions in precarious labour fields does not imply the need to establish a special status or specific treatment for independent artists. As social science studies show, the forms of work and life in the arts are merely precursors to an overall societal change in the labour market in which occupational fields are becoming increasingly dynamic and flexible (cf. Florida, 2012; Reckwitz, 2012; Sutter et al., 2017). The standard employment relationship, which social security systems are currently based on in the Western European countries, will increasingly be replaced by flexible, project-based fields of work.

Promoting social security in times of career breaks, parenthood and old age provision, therefore, does not affect the (performing) arts alone but represents a general challenge for which we must find appropriate control mechanisms to prevent poverty. In order to master

these upcoming challenges in solidarity, there is a need for a stronger formation of interest groups and trade unions beyond the individual work sectors. After all, if we cannot make a living from our work, then we need to change **how** we work.

Chapter 3: Looking at our neighbours: Good practice examples from Europe

**By Cilgia Gadola &
Elisabeth Roos**

An evaluation report from the European online workshop “Social Security for the Performing Arts in Europe” (31 August 2022)

Following the lines of the mixed-method approach that this study on social security systems for artists in Europe is pursuing, this third part includes the evaluation of an online workshop “Social Security for the Performing Arts in Europe”, held on 31 August 2022, in which experts and professionals from the performing arts learned about and discussed good practice examples from other European countries in order to identify possible solutions to improve the social security situation of performing arts professionals in Germany. The topic of the workshop was based on the first two parts of this study; therefore, the discussion focused on social security systems for retirement, unemployment and parenthood from other European countries.

The workshop began with short presentations by Melisa Bel Adasme and Jonathan Roth on their findings from the exploratory and interview study. In a next step, experts from Belgium, Portugal and Germany discussed social security systems for artists in cases of unemployment and the possibilities for such a system in Germany. Subsequently, participants were divided into three groups to discuss good practice examples from other European countries in three think tanks. Each think tank focused on a different topic and good practice example. These were:

1. The Austrian retirement system for artists.
2. The newly-developed unemployment system for cultural workers in Portugal.
3. Unfortunately, a good practice example for parenthood could not be identified in the scope of the exploratory and interview study.

In the evaluation of this workshop below, the emphasis will only be on retirement and unemployment, as the results on parenthood from the first two parts did not yield a good practice example. This is due to the fact that this topic is highly underrepresented (see Chapter 2) and not a lot is known about how professionals in the performing arts deal with the challenges stemming from balancing work and family as self-employed and hybrid workers. Therefore, the discussion in this think tank was not as solution-oriented as the other two think tanks on retirement and unemployment. Even though it was not possible to find solutions based on the discussions on a good practice example, the discussion highlighted how parenthood is an important issue that needs to be examined further to achieve a better understanding of the challenges performing arts professionals face in this instance, and be able to work on improving the situation and the systems in place.

Accordingly, the first part of this evaluation will examine the discussion on retirement and possible solutions for improvement that were elaborated on during the workshop. To provide a better understanding, an overview of the general situation in Germany regarding retire-

ment for performing arts professionals and its problems will first be discussed. In a next step, the Austrian system, as a good practice example, is described, while drawing comparisons with the system in Germany. Lastly, possible solutions for system improvements will be discussed.

The second part will focus on unemployment and describe aspects of impulses for change, access to benefits and the possibility of continuous artistic work. Because the discussion on how to classify periods in the artistic working life that are not remunerated have only just begun in Germany, the generic term used in this chapter will mainly be unemployment. The evaluation begins with examples of new or revised systems in Belgium and Portugal for unemployed periods in the working lives of professionals in the artistic sector. It consequently develops potential capabilities for changes in Germany and thereby raises the issues of dignity and acceptance of these working conditions with fluctuating incomes. First, the processes in Belgium and Portugal will be briefly described.

Retiring as a performing arts professional

³³ In Germany, self-employed workers (unless they are artists and members of the KSK) are only required to have health and care insurance (Merkel, 2022, p. 16).

³⁴ Contributions towards health, retirement and care insurance are calculated based on an estimated annual income. Of these contributions, 50 per cent are paid by the members and the other 50 per cent are paid through subsidies. This system mirrors the social security systems for employees (KSK, 2022a).

³⁵ In comparison, the annual average income in Germany is about € 49,200 (Buske & Liedke, 2022).

The challenges described below were identified and addressed throughout the think tank discussions. As mentioned previously throughout the study, performing arts professionals not only work under precarious conditions but will also have to deal with precarious living conditions in old age as most will not receive a pension that allows them to live a comfortable life, even though they have worked throughout their entire lives. In Germany, professionals from the performing arts who are self-employed are required to become a member of the **Künstlersozialkasse** (Artists' Social Security Fund, KSK) and pay contributions to the **Deutsche Rentenversicherung** (German Retirement Fund). However, this does not include all performing arts professionals. The so-called non-artistic professions, like production managers, curators, and technicians, are not able to join the KSK, and therefore it is entirely their own responsibility to organise and take care of their retirement situation.³³ KSK members must pay 9.3 per cent of their estimated monthly income³⁴ towards the public retirement fund. However, as the average annual income of KSK members is € 16,737 (KSK, 2022a), the contributions paid tend to be low.³⁵ In the same instance, it is not possible for them to increase their contributions through income earned from non-artistic work as this is not taken into consideration. If they want to pay contributions on their non-artistic income, they must do this through a private retirement fund, which only yields 40 per cent of the payout from the retirement fund contributions through the KSK (Ihre Vorsorge, 2020). Moreover, having an income from non-artistic work could be a reason to be expelled from the KSK. Ultimately, this situation leads many KSK members to not receiving an adequate pension that meets their living costs, or even any pension at all, because of their low contributions. In 2021, the **Grundrente** (minimum pension amount) was introduced in Germany to address the above-

mentioned problem. This will provide people with additional funds in their pension. To be eligible, professionals must have worked a minimum of 33 years and paid retirement contributions (Deutsche Rentenversicherung, 2022). But only those years in which people have earned 30 per cent of the average pay of all insured persons (around € 14,769) are taken into account (Deutsche Rentenversicherung, 2022). Many performing arts professionals are unable to continuously earn this level of income and will not receive the minimum pension, again leaving them in a precarious living situation.

The goal was to identify possible solutions and formulate improvements to the current system. A starting point for the discussion below was the good practice example from Austria that was previously identified in the explorative and interview study. The Austrian retirement system for artists was chosen as a good practice example because, in Austria, serious approaches are pursued that aim to prevent the risk of old age poverty in the performing arts, as identified in the interview study by Yana Prinsloo and Jonathan Roth (see Chapter 2). Like Germany, Austria has a specific social security fund for self-employed artists, the so-called **Künstlersozialversicherungsfonds** (Artists' Social Insurance Fund, KSVF). However, unlike in Germany, self-employed artists who are also employed do not lose their eligibility for the artist's fund in Austria, meaning that they can pay contributions to both social security funds, i.e., the fund for self-employed work and the fund for employees. In this case, performing arts professionals are able to build up more rights to pension benefits. Nevertheless, professionals in the performing arts are dealing with the same challenges as professionals in Germany. Based on their low income, their contributions also remain low, meaning they are unable to secure safe living conditions for their old age. Therefore, the Austrian association for independent performing arts, the **Interessengemeinschaft (IG) Freie Theaterarbeit** strongly advocates for employment on the one hand, as this is the legal standing in Austria, and, on the other hand, for a minimum fee recommendation in the performing arts to improve the social security of artists and other professionals in the performing arts, because, in this way, professionals will be able to pay more social security contributions with higher fees. In order to support employment in the independent performing arts in Austria, another fund has been established: the **IG Netz**. Independent companies can apply for funds (up to € 300 per month) that will help pay for the social security contributions of their employees, who now, as employees, have access to unemployment insurance and other benefits. A fund like this does not exist in Germany.

Improving the system

Based on the challenging situation for performing arts professionals in regard to retirement described above, possible solutions and system improvements were developed by the participants in the think tank. These can be divided into two categories: smaller system adjustments and fundamental system changes. While discussing these possible solutions, the question "What can we learn from the Austrian system?" was continuously considered throughout the discussion.

As mentioned above, the main challenge for performing arts professionals is the ability to pay sufficient contributions to a retirement fund. In Germany, this matter is intensified by the fact that KSK members only pay contributions based on their income from artistic work, which leads to them not being able to pay enough contributions to receive a solid pension, or even any pension at all. In addition, many do not fulfil the criteria to be eligible for the **Grundrente**, a new system that has been implemented to pay out additional pension funds to those who have worked their whole life for less than the average income (BMAS, 2022). Performing arts professionals fall into this category, but many of them will not be able to receive this incentive. In this context, it is necessary to adjust the criteria for these professionals and, for example, reduce the number of working years required for eligibility. This is a smaller system adjustment. In comparison, in Austria, a similar system exists: the **Ausgleichszulage** (compensation supplement). Under this system, individuals having a low pension will receive additional funds from the state. To be eligible for the **Ausgleichszulage**, and in addition to certain other criteria, individuals need to have paid contributions to the retirement fund for a minimum of 15 years. This threshold is much lower than in Germany. Although the German **Grundrente** is a step in the right direction, this threshold for accessibility needs to be lowered. Another possible solution to improve pension benefits for performing arts professionals is to advocate for additional retirement funds. An example of this is the **Bayerische Versorgungskammer** (BV). This is a compulsory retirement fund for employees at city and state theatres and was previously only available to these employees. However, it has also subsequently been opened to professionals from the independent performing arts. Nevertheless, this opportunity is not widely made use of in the independent performing arts. Therefore, it could be beneficial to draw attention to this additional retirement provision, as BV performing arts professionals would receive additional pension benefits.

The suggested smaller adjustments would be a good/smart way to bring about concrete improvements to the existing system. However, they do not adequately address the question of how poverty in old age can be prevented for professionals in the performing arts. This leads the discussion to more fundamental system changes. The problem for performing arts professionals, as previously described, is that their contributions to retirement funds are insufficient for receiving adequate pension benefits. If their earnings were higher, they would be able to pay higher contributions. Hence, it is necessary to increase fees and salaries in the performing arts. This could be approached in two different ways, both of which should be pursued in Germany. One solution is to employ performing arts professionals. In this way, they will have access to the same social security benefits as employees in other professions. This approach is being pursued in Austria. The **IG Freie Theaterarbeit** association is advocating for a fairness code that demands fair pay for professionals in the independent performing arts and employment. Implementing a minimum fee recommendation in Vienna has shown that companies are able to afford the employment of artists. The other solution is to ensure that performing arts professionals' earnings are high enough to be able to cover the risks that come with self-employment. Currently, funding for projects does not take their status as self-employees into account; it is not designed to make a prof-

³⁶ In this context, it is important to note that non-artistic professionals in the performing arts should also have access to the KSK and its social security benefits because they face the same challenges and precarious working conditions (Kieslinger & Schieck, 2021).

it but only to cover costs. In this context, it is necessary to define the logic of subsidising, i.e., what is being subsidised: project funding, social security contributions or social security benefits? It could be argued that all three aspects require subsidies in order to accommodate the living and working realities of professionals in the performing arts. The reason for pursuing both options is due to the unique situation that exists in Germany. Many professionals in the performing arts work in self-employment, thus for them it is necessary to follow the second approach and increase subsidies so that higher fees and social security contributions are possible. This applies specifically to those who have no access to the KSK and who are responsible for their own retirement.³⁶ At the same time, many professionals fall under the hybrid workers category. They have short-term employment contracts and they also pursue self-employment. These professionals would profit from the first approach, i.e., pursuing employment. Moreover, the situation for hybrid workers could also be improved if it were possible to remain a member of the KSK while also working in employment, as is possible in the Austrian system.

Unemployment, downtime, gaps in income, and more: Working towards sustainable and dignified living and working conditions for all performing arts professionals

The question of what unemployment means in the working situations of professionals in the performing arts sector was an important topic in the workshop. Melisa Bel Adasme addresses this in the section “Unemployment” (see Chapter 1, p. 24), and Jonathan Roth and Yana Prinsloo address it at the very beginning of their essay on good practice examples in Europe for social security in the performing arts (see Chapter 2, p. 51): “For self-employed professions, especially in the performing arts, not all work activities are equally remunerated or recognised as work at all, however crucial they may be. Maintaining correspondences and networks, for example, is an elementary as well as time-consuming part of the everyday work of a self-employed artist, but it rarely comes with a price tag. Due to the framework conditions of many funding programmes, it is primarily rehearsals and performances that are considered artistic work in the stricter sense. ... Furthermore, downtime ‘between jobs’, which essentially consists of unpaid work (e.g., acquisition tasks), is often perceived and treated as unemployment – a common stigma and devaluation of independent artistic work.”

Access and professional continuity

In Portugal, as explained during the workshop by Mafalda Sebastião, coordinator for the Lisbon Municipal Directorate of Culture, for the first time, starting in October 2022, there will be an unemployment benefit for self-employed workers in the arts sector. Although there al-

ready is a system for self-employed workers, its access for artists has proven to be very difficult. In parallel with the improvements in unemployment insurance for self-employed professionals in the performing arts, new legislation aims to guarantee that everyone who should be employed receives the status of an employee and has access to all the benefits that come with this status. Everyone who hires self-employed workers must complete a form to justify this choice of employment. Mafalda Sebastião reports that, as a result, many contracts have been changed from self-employment to employment contracts. Public funding also requires most of the project participants to have employee contracts to gain access to social security. Persons who commission self-employed workers must pay contributions in order to finance the benefits of workers having this status. Mafalda Sebastião added that the higher costs associated with this regulation are, however, a problem.

The two statuses of employed and self-employed should not be abolished, according to the widespread opinion among the workshop participants. Both should continue to coexist, and both should be sufficiently secured against social risks. What is problematic is the situation of hybrid workers who have to navigate through an impervious jungle in order to get the bureaucracy right (Auerbach et al., 2022). Most participants believe that it is important for people to be employed when the working situation corresponds to this status. For some independent companies in the performing arts, for example, this would mean much higher costs and more administrative support and a requirement for greater funding.

In the future, Sebastião expects that there might not be the need to separate the statuses of employment as the working world will change for everyone, or at least for the majority. In her opinion, this could be a consideration for the recommendations for a long-term perspective. According to Sebastião, the most important question to ask is how social security can be provided for everyone, regardless of their employment status. She is convinced that the considerations for a transformed working culture could be exemplified in the field of art, as this field is typically the sector where this flexibility of work conditions exists and is explored earlier than in other sectors.

Mafalda Sebastião explains further that to identify the workers who could benefit from the system, they could register as cultural professionals (there is a specific registration for these professions in the new system), which is coordinated by the General Inspection for Cultural Activities (an institution under the Ministry of Culture). They can assign themselves to this profession to obtain a specific code, and can do this without being examined. If there are any doubts, controls can be made where the worker must show proof of their earnings in the profession they indicated. In cases where this is not possible, there would be consequences. Technicians were also included in the implementation of benefits in times of unemployment for professionals in the performing arts and can also profit from these. It is also possible to register, e.g., as a cultural researcher or for more than one activity. The information on the income relating to the different codes and all income listed to these codes must be provided and is taken into account to cal-

culate the contribution to the benefits system. Moreover, the issue that professionalism in culture is derived through education is not a requirement for accessibility.

In Belgium, the situation is somewhat different. Marie-Louise Reedijk from **Cultuurloket** in Belgium explained that, in terms of social security for artists, reforms were implemented as early as 2002, with renewals implemented in September 2022. This renewal or refinement means that not only creative activities, but also creative technical activities and creative supplementary activities, such as production management, can enjoy certain benefits when it comes to unemployment, which will enable a steady income throughout the year. In Belgium there is less talk about the sector, and more focus on the activities. This means that artistic technical activities, for example, are also included in the system, and this, according to Reedijk, is the biggest change. The argument for broadening the scope of access to other activities is that these different activities fall into the same category of fragile working conditions, as this also entails seasonal work, work on different projects, etc. This is exactly the argument put forward by production managers and technicians we talked to in the frame of “Systemcheck” regarding the question of access to the KSK in Germany for these professions.

In the new Belgian system, an artist’s certificate is required. This can be a “starter certificate”, where no proof of a prior artistic career is required, but proof of some artistic activities and a degree or similar path in the field is required. The other option, or the next step, is a “certificate plus”, for which proof of a certain amount of income in either two or five years is required. In the corresponding law, it also clearly states that if these benefits are not used, it does not mean the individual is not a professional artist. This was implemented to ensure that those not wanting to be included in the unemployment system, but have the necessary income, are still recognised as artists. This is a rather interesting situation as, again in comparison to the German KSK, it indicates that it is not the affiliation to a specific system that is decisive for being considered an artist. It also means that there is a choice when it comes to using the system, in contrast to the KSK, where, apart from a few exceptions (KSK, 2022b), self-employed artists, as defined according to the **Künstlersozialversicherungsgesetz** (Artists’ Social Insurance Act, KSVG), have a legal obligation to be insured with the KSK.³⁷

In Belgium, it is possible to earn a specific amount over and above the unemployment benefit, and this amount has been significantly increased under the new system. Marie-Louise Reedijk assumes that this is probably in order to stimulate people to work and, in this way, help themselves out of the system. Before the increase, the amount was around € 4,400 per year. This is a crucial aspect when looking at the situation for self-employed persons in Germany. In Germany, those who have worked less than 12 months as an employee before becoming self-employed cannot apply for the **Freiwillige Arbeitslosenversicherung** (voluntary unemployment insurance, ALG I) and are only entitled to **Arbeitslosengeld II** (unemployment benefit II, the so-called Hartz IV) (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2022a).³⁸

³⁷ The KSVG regulates how self-employed artists must be insured in the German Federal Pension Fund, the statutory health insurance and long-term care insurance, and defines the category of self-employed artists (KSK; 2022c).

³⁸ **Arbeitslosengeld II**, also called **Hartz IV**, is the basic social security benefit to secure a livelihood available to all persons who are capable of work. (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2022c).

If this benefit is sought, the worker “must make an independent effort to end [their] need for help and actively participate in all measures that support this goal. This means, for example, that [the worker is] obliged to accept any work that [they] are mentally, emotionally, and physically capable of” (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2022b, p. 18). By implication, this means, that an artistic professional might have to discontinue their artistic career if they are unable earn a living through it and be required to take on different work. Current German legislature and its executive level have not considered the intricacies of the working realities in the performing arts. Therefore, changing these systems in favour of performing arts professionals will have a lot to do with the acceptance and understanding of their working situation. This will, and already does, require mediation between professionals in the performing arts and institutions (like the KSK). Mediating these processes is a large part of the work of the **Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste** (BFDK, German Association of Independent Performing Arts).

In Portugal, there seems to be a similar understanding for supporting art workers during phases when their work is not being remunerated, i.e., when the benefits of unemployment are being received, the worker is not forced to work in a job outside of their profession. It is possible to “go in and out of the system” or to receive partial benefits. This is called a “suspension of cultural activity”.

In Belgium, the implementation of a basic income has been discussed, but the government wants to ensure that this comes from social security that is based on a solidarity system, and means that artists must have worked (employed or self-employed) and contributed to the social security system.

For the workshop participants, it seemed to be more important that the broader scope of professions who all contribute to an artistic project (and work under similar conditions) have access to benefits and the possibility of continuing their artistic work than how much their contribution for such a system would be or how much money they would get out of it. The examples from Portugal and Belgium are good examples as they offer up ideas for a fair system, support arts professionals in their work and thus pay tribute to the claim that the work done by arts professionals is very important for our democracy and society. It also seems that these can be seen as examples of a dignified acceptance of support, or at least provide ideas for how this could exist and what an approach could look like.

Concluding remarks

Being unafraid of poverty in old age or in periods where artistic work does not follow the understanding that only money determines the value of labour are crucial for a life of dignity. The exploratory study of social security systems in different European countries by Melisa Bel Adasme, the interview survey by Yana Prinsloo and Jonathan Roth and the workshop with professionals from the performing arts across Europe all together mark an important step in the aim of “Systemcheck” to develop recommendations to improve the social security system for artists in Germany. In doing so, detailed information and data are just as important as interviewing the actors concerned in the respective countries and exchanging information with those in focus in the “Systemcheck” research project, which aims at promoting changes towards a fairer system. The ideas that emerged from this intensive, exploratory and interdisciplinary debate have been presented in this European study in a comprehensible way and form an important contribution for further action in the project’s process. To this end, the following five components need to be addressed when new models for Germany are defined:

1. Access to benefits: for whom and under what conditions?

2. Financing: how much and by whom?

3. The amount of benefits art workers require to live needs to be defined (following the recommendations of fees).

4. Continuity of artist work in phases in which benefits are needed and received.

5. Concerning unemployment, it needs to be decided whether this missing element of insurance could be incorporated into the KSK.

This study, “In search of fair systems: Examining social security for artists in Europe”, together with the other research components within “Systemcheck”, are the guiding principles for what is possible and could be taken into consideration for the final policy recommendations that will be formulated at the end of the “Systemcheck” project in 2023.

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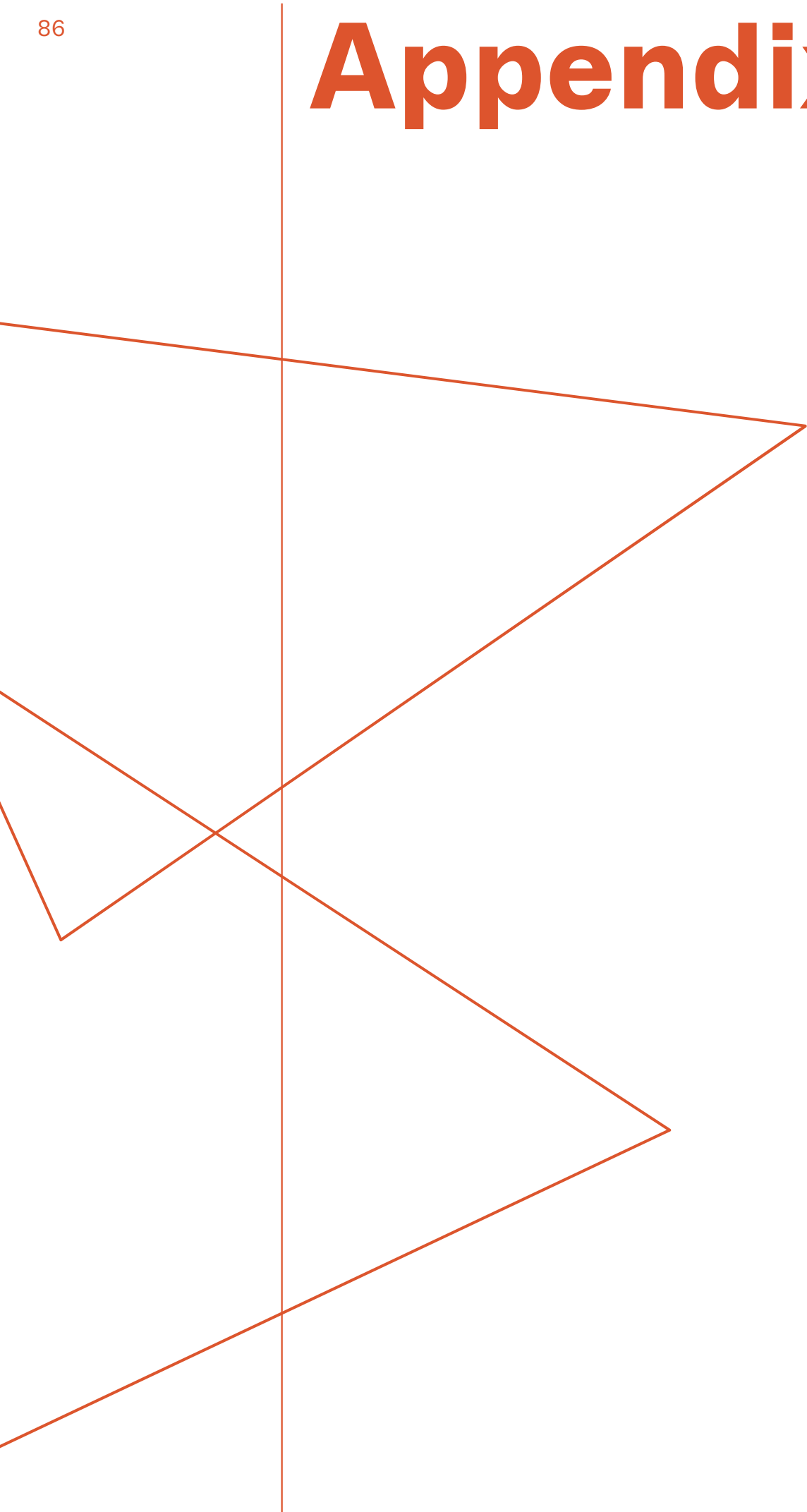
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Appendix



Biographies

Melisa Bel Adasme (MA) is a sociologist and social researcher. She studied in Frankfurt am Main with a focus on migration, participation, gender studies and qualitative social research. Over the last four years, she has been working as a project and diversity manager at the Cologne Public Library, where she designed the diversity-oriented, discrimination-critical development and change process of the cultural institution within the framework of the Federal Cultural Foundation's **360° – Fund for Cultures of the New Urban Society** programme. She previously worked as a research associate at a social science research institute on the topics of migration, civic engagement and participation. As a student of the advanced education master's degree in dance at the German Sport University in Cologne, she also dealt intensively with dance, the performing arts and artistic practice, both in theory and in practice. She currently works as a freelance social researcher, speaker, lecturer and consultant. In her research and work she focuses on gender and diversity, anti-discrimination, dance and performing arts, body and movement, as well as culture and education.

Cilgia Carla Gadola studied contemporary dance, theatre and dance studies. She was active as a choreographer and dancer until 2016 and curated the performance series at the **SAVVY Contemporary** gallery with Raisa Kröger from 2010 to 2012. She was part of the artistic direction team of the **TANZBAD** festival (2012 to 2014) and is co-founder of **M.i.C.A. – Movement in Contemporary Art**. From 2015 to 2019 she co-curated **S.o.S. – Students on Stage** and the **Alumni.Tanz.Berlin** festival. Cilgia worked at the Sophiensaele from 2008 to 2020 for **Tanztage Berlin** and the **FREISCHWIMMEN** network, among others, and from 2009 to 2016 she also worked for Theaterdiscounter. After a short stint at the **Fonds Darstellende Künste**, since August 2021 she has been leading the "Systemcheck" and "Background" projects at the **Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste**. In 2019 and 2020 she was on the board of **Zeitgenössischer Tanz Berlin e. V.** (ZTB) and since 2019 she has been in the Speaker's Circle of the Berlin Coalition of the Independent Arts.

Yana Prinsloo is a doctoral student and research assistant in the field of theatre studies at the Institute for Film, Theater, Media and Empirical Cultural Studies and in the special research area of “Human Differentiation” at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. Her master’s thesis on processes of judgement and opinion formation in contemporary theatre was published by Tectum-Verlag in 2017. From 2017 to 2021, she worked as an editor and deputy head of the online editorial department for the 3sat television feature **Kulturzeit**. In addition to her research and teaching activities focusing on cultural policy and on structures and aesthetics of the independent scene, she works as a freelance author, curator and moderator (**3sat**, **Kunsthalle** Mainz, **Mousonturm** Frankfurt, **Neue Zeitschrift für Musik**, **Hessische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung**, **Frauenreferat** Wiesbaden). She is a founding member of the interdisciplinary doctoral student network **DIS(S)-CONNECT** (2019), was elected spokesperson of the GTW **Theaterwissenschaftler:innen in der Promotion** coordination collective (2021) and is a member of the sound collective **dark matters** (→ <http://darkmatters-mainz.de/>).

Dr Jonathan Roth is a cultural scientist, cultural manager and theatre artist from Germany. He graduated in cultural anthropology in Mainz and in theatre pedagogy at **Theaterwerkstatt** Heidelberg. He conducted research on political anthropology, cultural politics and independent theatre at the Institute for Film, Theater, Media and Empirical Cultural Studies at the University of Mainz. In collaboration with Yana Prinsloo, he led ethnographic surveys on the living and working conditions of independent theatres in the Rhine-Main area. Furthermore, he is involved in various independent groups as a performer, playwright and theatre educator. In his project work on aesthetic research and site-specific performance, he often combines artistic and ethnographic work. He currently works as a municipal cultural manager and is committed to promoting cultural funding and the independent arts scene.

Elisabeth Roos (MA) studied cultural science at Maastricht University and Leuphana University in Lüneburg. Her research focus was cultural urban regeneration. Since June 2021 she has been working for the **Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste e. V.** on both the “Systemcheck” research project and the “Background” project. Previously, she worked for the **Robert Bosch Stiftung** in Stuttgart and the european centre for creative economy in Dortmund, where she conducted several funding programmes for various ministries of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Imprint

Publisher

Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste e.V.
Dudenstr. 10
10965 Berlin
→ www.darstellende-kuenste.de

Board of directors: Nina de la Chevallerie, Anne-Cathrin Lessel, Matthias Schulze-Kraft, Ulrike Seybold, Tom Wolter

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Gefördert durch:



Bundesministerium
für Arbeit und Soziales

aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages