



A Manifesto for the EBMA

October 25, 2023
updated November 22, 2023

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EBMA Manifesto

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introduction

The EBMA has found it hard to recover its place as a driving force for Bluegrass in Europe after Covid. Despite the efforts of the board to stimulate participation and initiatives from the membership, none were forthcoming and the board decided to dissolve the association in January 2023.

This manifesto is in response to that proposed dissolution prompted by a desire to preserve some form of European association for Bluegrass with creative leadership grounded in the community.

It lays out a road map for future development with short and medium term objectives and a proposed organisational structure.

- Short term : Reconnect with the membership, Constitute a board representative of the community, Revise the bylaws to reflect the needs of European Bluegrass today and tomorrow.
- Medium term : Grow the membership, Empower the European Bluegrass community through networking, Bridge the gap between the European music scene and EBMA leadership.

Elliot Siff Photography

The goal is to be a grass roots organisation with Bluegrass activists working in concert with the board to make the EBMA a thriving, dynamic organisation connected to the European community.



the music scene in europe today

There are plenty of signs that now is a good time for a well functioning pan European Bluegrass organisation to help federate initiatives across the continent.

GENERAL TRENDS

- More young people getting into the genre
- Old Time revival in many countries and regions
- Local jams springing up everywhere
- New festivals starting up



YOUNG & TALENTED BANDS EMERGING

Johnny & the Yooahoos, Stereo Naked (DE) - Bluegrass Bandits, Rosine Bluegrass Family (NL) - Dear John, Sunshine in Ohio (FR) - A Murder in Mississippi, Hills of Belgium (BEL) - Denim Rips, Dawlins (ES) - Boatswain Brothers, Blue Lass (GB) - Stacja Folk (POL) - Rookie Riot (SWE) - Milkeaters (CZE) - and many more ...

New promoters and booking agents are actively booking and touring Bluegrass bands into different countries enabling more venues to schedule Bluegrass and so build tours

grass roots activities

Bluegrass has always been a grassroots phenomenon and EBMA should strive to keep its feet firmly on the ground. Being an active part of the bluegrass community is key to this. Ongoing initiatives provide opportunities for EBMA to be a driving force in the community. For example:

KIDS ON BLUEGRASS EUROPE

Started by a group of international teachers at *Bluegrass in La Roche* in 2022 and repeated in 2023 with students from 5 countries, the aim is to make KOBE a pan-European activity.



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NETWORKS

European Festival Network

Regular zoom calls between 9 international European festivals (FRA, NDL, DEU, GBR, IRE, ESP, SWE, CZE) have allowed organisers to build a better understanding of the common issues facing major festivals through sharing knowledge and experiences,, and to help the overall European festival scene grow stronger together.



European Bookers Meet & Greet Network

Regular zoom calls with 20 bookers, agents and venues provide a great opportunity for the bluegrass and old time niche market to work together, share experiences and build possible collaborative tours.

Early discussions suggest more such networks are desirable

short term

Enable European networks to benefit from a shared platform where people can find each other and connect:

- A facilitating organisation for grass roots initiatives with web site to store information
- A Teams or Zoom pro account to create virtual meeting spaces
- A holding organisation where any pan-European grass roots initiative could work under the EBMA banner and use available resources

EBMA labelled actions can and should start in the field; EBMA may incite but does not necessarily initiate actions.



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medium term

Facilitate the collective promotion and development of Bluegrass music in Europe and beyond:

- Promote more grass roots networks (Touring Bands, Record Producers, Luthiers ...)
- Hold Zoom forums and panel discussions on various subjects
- Review ongoing EBMA activities, funding & sponsorship programmes with regard to the financial context and future development goals and orientations
- Reinforce collaboration beyond Europe

In August 2023 a meeting took place between some IBMA Board members and European activists attending Bluegrass in La Roche (photo below)



legal & finance

DOMICILIATION AND TREASURY

In February 2022, the EU passed a resolution to create a Statute for cross-border European associations and non-profit organisations. Implementation is still in progress. This would be the desirable domiciliation of EBMA when enacted and, until such time, it is proposed to leave the association domiciled in Switzerland.

Angelika Torrie, Swiss National, co-founder and former Chair of EBMA, has agreed to return to the Association as Treasurer, at least until the new domiciliation can be arranged.

The outgoing board has agreed to make the current balance available to the incoming board to help finance the transition period.



MEMBERSHIP

To relaunch and boost membership the new board will have to quickly decide the cost of membership, with the goal of keeping it as low as possible while thinking about future development.

FUNDING

EBMA must attempt to keep the support of existing long term partners while looking for new long term partners.

The possibility of applying for EU funding in the future should be explored.

organisation & governance

A BOARD WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

EBMA will be a flat, non hierarchical, grass roots organisation operating in a system that is open, inclusive and welcoming.

This will depend on a board of 5 to 12 people working directly in conjunction with members of the association contributing expertise and leadership in task forces and networks.



ROLE OF THE BOARD

The Board will shape direction, promote networking and organise structure and support to enable the membership and the community to propose and lead actions emerging from the networks.

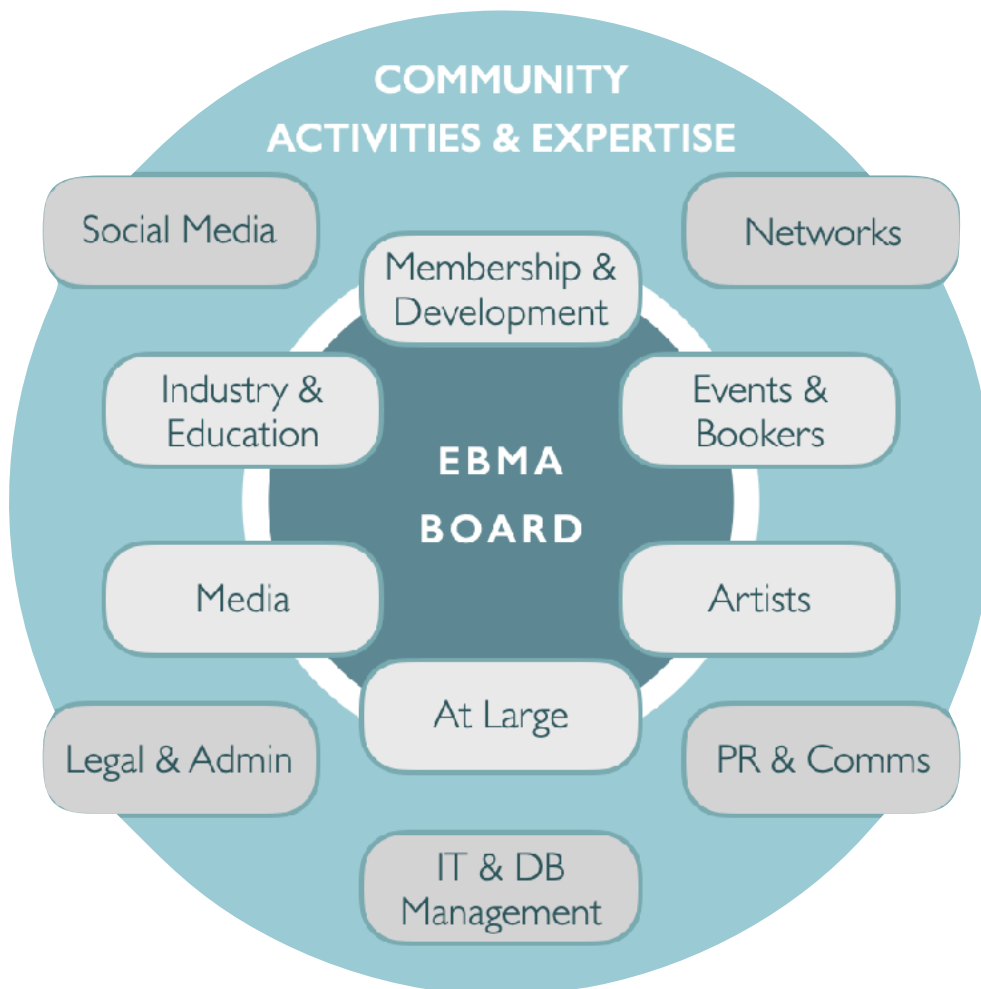
In this operating system the new board stimulates and facilitates grass roots/individual initiatives and avoids a situation where the entire community relies on a few elected Board members to take responsibility for all EBMA activities.

Any member may offer or be invited to contribute expertise without necessarily being on the Board.

constituencies & board

Board Members will be fully connected to the community as representatives of one of six identified constituencies.

Each constituency should have at least one board representative and some may have two.



Membership & Development

Maintain contact with current members, partners and associations and find new, creative ways to grow the community and build membership.

Events & Bookers

Represent everyone involved in running venues, organising festivals, promoting tours, teaching camps and booking bands, and help the constituency grow and get stronger.

At large

"At large" board members serve on the board without representing a specific constituency. They bring experience, expertise and professional knowledge that can serve the community in a broad (or large) sense.

Artists

Represent everyone involved in performing live Bluegrass, including composers, bands, solo artists, stage, sound & light engineers, and help this constituency grow and get stronger

Media

Represent all media platforms and personalities in written, visual & audio form, and help this constituency grow and get stronger.

Industry & Education

Represent all aspects of the industry including instrument building, distribution and sale of instruments and accessories, academia, teaching & camps, recording and publishing music, and help this constituency grow and get stronger.

the interim board

These people were elected to serve on the interim board at the AGM on October 25

Under EBMA bylaws, the board must consist of at least 5 people. 4 people have been instrumental in preparing this manifesto for the future of the EBMA and one outgoing board member has asked to stay.



Christopher Howard-Williams (FRA/GBR) — Chair
Founder and chair of Bluegrass in La Roche. IBMA board member. Bluegrass musician. Previously Chair of FBMA and vice chair of EBMA. IBMA Distinguished Achievement Award in 2018.



Nadia Sardjoe (NDL/FRA)

A fresh, young face in the Bluegrass scene. Active musician (prev. Ruby, Bronco, Half Way Station, Les Cartiers de Paris), independent folk singer/songwriter, mother and freelance business woman.



Piero Biasi (CHE/ITA)

Outgoing EBMA board member. Musician and organiser of jams in Switzerland and Germany.
Co-Organiser of the international Bluegrass Openair Festival in Urnäsch, CHE

Ronnie Norton (IRE)

Outgoing board member. Long time commercial and music photographer. Involved in music since the 60s and radio DJ for 20+ years hosting European Bluegrass round-up on CMRN Nashville and other international shows.



Guido de Groot (NDL)

Funder and organiser of the Rotterdam Bluegrass Festival. Involved in event production and funding music related social projects.



François Vola (FRA/USA)

Musician (guitar/mandolin) and luthier since 74. Lived many years in USA, now in France. 4 albums, two awards from NC School Of The Arts. Played with many prominents US artists and at Merle Fest several years



Angelika Torrie (CHE)

Co-founder and former chair of EBMA & SBMA. Previously IBMA Board member. 13 years European tour manager for US acts Multi-instrumentalist.

Lilly Drumeva (BUL)

Singer-songwriter and band leader since 1996. Music journalist and national radio and TV presenter. Fulbright scholar, author, festival director and music promoter for touring bands.



board election & next steps

The interim board's first task will be to launch a protocol for electing a permanent board.

At the end of this process, and within 90 days of October 25th, a new Extraordinary AGM will be convened where the membership can vote on each individual proposed by the outgoing interim board.

It will be possible to participate in work groups, task forces and community networks without being on the board.



TIMELINE

From October 25th, EBMA will be open for new members to register via the website and all emails sent to board@ebma.org will go to the interim board.

Membership will remain free at least until January 31st.

People wishing to serve on the board should submit their request using the document prepared for the occasion no later than December 6th.

The document “*EBMA Board Application*” will be available on the website from October 26th.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, all members of the interim board will also apply for board membership.

The interim board will convene 2 Q&A sessions with all members to clarify the goals of the association and the roles of the board and the constituencies.

The board will then convene an extraordinary AGM before the end of January, where EBMA members will be invited to elect the permanent board members.

EBMA will be ready for its relaunch in early 2024.