

Vienna, 11 October 2024

**Statement on the State Treaty Draft for the Reform of Public Broadcasting:
A Call for the Europeanisation of ARTE and the Preservation of 3sat**

Dear Members of the Broadcasting Commission,

The IMZ International Music + Media Centre, founded 63 years ago with the mission to preserve the performing arts as valuable cultural assets for present and future generations, fully supports your proposal for the Europeanisation of ARTE.

In a time when cultural diversity and cross-border cooperation are more important than ever, ARTE serves as an indispensable tool for the protection and global dissemination of Europe's cultural identity. However, the Europeanisation, i.e., the geographic expansion of ARTE, would inevitably lead to a reduction of German-speaking cultural content – which makes the preservation of 3sat an even higher priority.

Although 3sat and ARTE may seem similar at first glance, they serve different purposes. ARTE's growing and progressively more international offerings means that the space for the representation of specific cultural content from smaller regions is becoming more limited.

The complementary roles of 3sat and ARTE are crucial to the European cultural and media landscapes. A merger would inevitably lead to a diminishment of both channels. Officially, the four 3sat partners (ARD, ORF, SRF, ZDF) are represented within the ARTE partnership. However, 3sat fulfils a completely different, equally important task:

ARTE has an immeasurable value as a pan-European cultural player – especially for the exchange between German and French-speaking cultural spaces. Furthermore, ARTE Concert is the hub for the European music scene and the nucleus for a European music platform.

On the other hand, 3sat is the cultural soul of the German-speaking world, offering a unique cross-border cultural programme from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. It is also the only channel broadcasting theatrical works in the German-speaking area.

Only by remaining legally and programmatically separate can both channels provide a balanced and diverse programming that covers German-French relations with European programming while also meeting the specific cultural needs of the entire German-speaking region.

It would be a mistake to jeopardise this synergy through a merger. Instead, now is the time to secure long-term funding for diverse cultural programming on public television, not the moment to diminish or compromise its unique offerings

Diversity in Cultural Programming

3sat is distinguished by its uniquely diverse programming, reaching audiences across Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. No other broadcaster in Germany offers culture a primetime slot – opera, concerts, dance, and theatre (in fact, it's the only German-speaking TV channel which broadcasts plays) are aired on Saturdays at 20:15!

Numerous significant regional and international cultural institutions – from orchestras and opera houses to theatres and internationally recognised music festivals – get regularly featured on 3sat.



Between 2022 and 2024¹, 3sat broadcasted over 150 performances from more than 100 cities – from Bregenz to Vienna, Munich to Peenemünde, Lausanne to Zurich – highlighting the impressive diversity of the region. These programmes represented a wide range of artistic genres, from classical music and opera to pop and rock concerts, contemporary dance, and theatre. Furthermore, over 35 orchestras from 26 cities were presented to a wide audience. More than 130 cultural documentaries, weekly local cultural reports, and live broadcasts, such as the Festival of German-Language Literature (Ingeborg Bachmann Prize), form an irreplaceable part of the German-speaking media landscape.

This is reflected in the market share of 3sat and ARTE at around 1.3%, a record level. Particularly noteworthy is this positive development during a year dominated by the European Football Championship and the Olympic Games, suggesting a growing interest in high-quality cultural and educational content in Germany and beyond. Another indicator of the relevance

¹ This data is by no means complete due to limited available information, and it is likely that the actual numbers are higher than those reported.

of 3sat is "Save 3sat" (<https://innn.it/3sat>), a petition initiated just a few days ago, which has already gathered over 140,000 signatures.

Our Appeal to You: Culture Thrives on Diversity – Culture Needs Political Support

Especially in times of societal upheaval, challenges and polarized political climates, cultural offerings are of immeasurable value. 3sat provides space for critical debates, creative diversity, and is, in fact, the only cross-border platform for cultural offerings in the DACH region. Creative and intellectual voices, which enrich our daily lives, would fall silent if 3sat were to disappear.

We urge you to reconsider the proposed merger of 3sat and ARTE. At the same time, we strongly support the Europeanisation of ARTE and the establishment of ARTE Concert as the nucleus of a dedicated European music platform.

Culture, art, and education must not disappear from the media landscape and should remain freely accessible. Our society needs this diversity more than ever; culture needs political support.

Let us work together to ensure that 3sat remains the voice of the DACH region!



Laetitia Huberti
President
IMZ International Music + Media Centre



Max Beckham-Ortner
Secretary General
IMZ International Music + Media Centre

We reached out to leading voices in the performing arts industry, who shared their comments on the proposed merger of 3sat and ARTE and the future of cultural broadcasting:

3sat is a beacon of German-language television, a synonym for quality programming and journalism, thus simply indispensable. Do we really want to continue reducing our cultural spaces? Or, given the current social developments, isn't it rather high time to reverse this trend? For more culture and more cultural education, for profound and enlightening journalism—always ready to think in new ways and take risks.

Anne-Sophie Mutter, Violinist

Without music, life would be a mistake“ said Nietzsche. Without culture, a harmonious life would not be possible. In my opinion, showing the diversity of humanity is helpful to avoid fear of the unknown and support the acceptance of being different. We absolutely need platforms such as 3sat that help viewers to embrace and understand our diverse and fast changing world. Evolution is only possible with constant exchange and conversation, especially in times of globalization. 3sat productions allow us to experience the richness of the culture scenes and stay connected with relevant subjects. It would be a big loss and mistake to lose this platform.

Asya Fateyava, Saxophonist

Creating theatre requires a public debate. 3sat repeatedly creates a platform for theatre, records historically important performances and provides new access to theatre. The discontinuation of this channel would hit the theatre landscape hard and also the public dialog and discourse.

Benedikt von Peter, Intendant and Artistic Director, Theatre Basel

The gradual displacement of culture from certain media is one thing. But when it happens in public broadcasting, it's a completely different matter—and infinitely more alarming. Culture is one of the most important reasons for the existence of the wonderful European concept of public broadcasting and remains a major part of its justification today. The discontinuation of 3sat is therefore absolutely out of the question.

Bogdan Roščić, Director, Wiener Staatsoper

Who truly wants 3sat to disappear – the politicians, or the broadcasters themselves? Observing the trends of recent years, it almost appears systematic and intentional, or at the very least, a final loss of shame. If public broadcasters now shed their fig leaf of outsourced educational responsibilities, they will soon become indistinguishable from banal private channels. At that point, the courts will once again have to explain why people should continue paying broadcasting fees. This could mark the beginning of the end, one that will be clearly remembered.

Christian Gerhaher, Bariton

In the European broadcasting landscape, 3sat, as a cross-border channel in the German-speaking region, uniquely fulfils television's cultural mandate. For 40 years, 3sat has granted a broad audience access to cultural programming, becoming an indispensable force in ensuring widespread access to the arts.

Christof Loy, Regisseur

The declining visibility of arts and culture on public television, such as the potential loss of 3sat, threatens the accessibility of cultural heritage and creative expression for all. Public broadcasters have a responsibility to foster cultural diversity and provide platforms for education, arts, and critical debate. We must protect these spaces, as they are essential for fostering cultural understanding and preserving our shared heritage.

Daniel Hope, Pianist

As the artistic director of the Opera in the Quarry, it is a top priority for me to ensure that as many people as possible can enjoy our productions. For this reason, each premiere is broadcast on public television, and starting in 2019, our operas have also been featured on 3sat and ARTE. The COVID pandemic, in particular, highlighted the significant role culture plays in providing a break from daily life, making it essential for our industry to continue offering a wide array of cultural content in various forms.

Daniel Serafin, Intendant, Oper im Steinbruch

The end of 3sat would represent an enormous loss for the German-speaking cultural landscape. The VBW would also be directly impacted – over the past five years alone, approximately 1.7 million viewers have watched our opera and musical productions on 3sat.

Franz Patay, CEO, Vereinigte Bühnen Wien

3sat is an indispensable cultural mediator for the German-speaking region—a channel where minorities have a voice, who are otherwise rarely heard, and where diversity is valued and celebrated. 3sat enables cultural and social participation, builds bridges, opens new perspectives for viewers, and fosters understanding and empathy. We need 3sat because it is an essential part of the foundation for preserving and strengthening our democracy.

Johan Simons, Intendant, Schauspielhaus Bochum

Public Service Media have been a driving force for the performing arts since its inception. Our world continues to change at an ever-increasing pace, but access to arts and culture must be available to everyone and it is up to us to fight for its preservation.

Juan-Diego Florez, Tenor

I agree with anyone who might say that a ballet or an opera will not save the planet, or that a poem or a documentary film will not put food on the table. You think you don't need the arts and culture but then you fall in love or someone close to you dies. Then what? What else can give you comfort and make you feel understood and not alone? For many people around the world, their only access to the performing arts and cultural entertainment is via the instrument of television- some even have absolutely no access or means to go to a theater or concert hall. We need the arts and culture today, more than ever before. Please don't take it away from us.

Hyung-ki Joo, Composer | Pianist | Conductor

3sat informs, inspires, and connects. As someone from the Netherlands, I am struck by the prominence that culture and musical theater enjoy in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. 3sat stands out as a remarkable and indispensable cultural channel. At a time in which art and culture are increasingly under threat, it is vital to maintain platforms like 3sat. We must work together to ensure that this invaluable channel continues to serve as a showcase for creativity and a hub for cultural dialogue. Preserving 3sat is a pledge to cultural education and the promotion of art in all its diverse forms.

Lotte de Beer, Directress, Wiener Volksoper

Media diversity is one of the prerequisites for cultural diversity. Those who value these principles can refer to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which has also been signed by Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. In the preamble, it reaffirms "that freedom of thought, expression and information, as well as diversity of the media, enable cultural expressions to flourish within societies". The necessary political flexibility is provided by the clarification in Article 6, which states that "[...] each Party may adopt measures aimed at protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions within its territory " In the same paragraph, it is noted that "such measures may include the following [...] measures aimed at enhancing diversity of the media, including through public service broadcasting.

Martin Fritz, Secretary General, Austrian UNESCO-Commission

We need culture in public broadcasting; where else should critical discussions, cultural diversity, and a broad cultural landscape be represented? To restrict culture is to narrow our perspective on the world and deteriorate social cohesion. This is why the proposed reform would be disastrous not just for our industry!

Mira Stadler, Theatre Director

The merger of 3sat and ARTE would be a cultural and political disaster – not only for those working in the arts, media, and journalism, but for society as a whole. In an era marked by populism and fake news, we need a strong and nuanced feuilleton – including on television. It is no coincidence that far-right parties are targeting public broadcasters. Our media diversity safeguards our democracy; its erosion creates space for deceptive voices.

Sonja Anders, Artistic Director, Staatstheater Hannover

I am deeply concerned about the plan to integrate 3sat into Arte. This would mean the dissolving of the wonderful and important TV channel that is 3sat, a channel that contributes in such a precious way to the diversity of the cultural and media landscape. 3sat is a TV channel that stands absolutely for itself and with its high-quality content, it is a pivotal contribution to the TV program in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Sonya Yoncheva, Soprano