

DIVERSE BODY/IES CHARTER

CIRCOSTRADA CHARTER FOR DIVERSITY

Introduction

The Circostrada Charter for Diversity is the result of a nearly year-long collective process between members of the Diverse Body/ies internal committee, Circostrada coordination team, and external experts working around questions of inclusivity, fairness, equity, and accessibility in the arts ¹.

Developed over the course of 2022 and 2023, the Charter sets parameters for the network and its affiliate members to promote a more inclusive ecosystem for artists and professionals working in our field. This means proactively addressing the complex and interwoven forms of structural, institutional, and systemic discrimination against groups and individuals in our society and how they may manifest in the network's activities - especially with regards to age, disability, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, pregnancy and parenting, race, religion and belief. In the context of a global reckoning around many systems of oppression, from the Movement for Black Lives, #metoo, and anti-colonial struggles, Circostrada will work to be in greater solidarity.

Circostrada stands strongly in favour of shared responsibility between all players from the field and will strive to foster solidarity, mutuality, and reciprocity among its international peers. The network wishes to engage in an open dialogue and to prioritise a "non-preachy" way of raising awareness and holding itself and others accountable. The suggestions and best practices presented in this charter are not conditional on participation in Circostrada activities and/or membership, but should be recognised and approved by all members, artists, festival organisers, participants, and other guests involved in the Circostrada programme of activities.

As a European network, Circostrada values and uplifts the great diversity of contexts and environments of all its members. Further, it acknowledges that the legacy of colonial geopolitical histories continues to produce power disparities, unconscious biases, and other ongoing injustices in and beyond Europe.

The network will be vigilant not to discriminate against any non-European members for ecological reasons, and will continue to invite people from the Global South to travel in order to provide equal opportunities.

The Circostrada Charter for Diversity is a work in progress. The internal Diverse Body/ies internal committee will meet once a year to assess the Circostrada network's progress according to the stated objectives and to enrich the content of the charter.

¹ A special thanks is owed to Makarena Marambio for her expertise and Nick Zelle for his sharp eye.

1. Activating change

What to focus on:

- Creating a culture of care for all, and especially those who experience discrimination of any kind
- Providing opportunities to people from diverse gender, ability, racial, social, economic and religious backgrounds
- Challenging colonial and imperial legacies and the hegemonic power relations they produce within the cultural sector and institutions

What Circostrada will do about it:

- Provide training for Circostrada members on the subjects of IDEA²
- Hire a fairness and anti-discrimination representative within the network
- Empower leaders from diverse backgrounds through mentoring programmes

2. Visibility of under-represented groups

What to focus on:

- Raising awareness of the visible and invisible discriminations present in our society against individuals, regarding age, disability, gender expression and sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief
- Addressing the fact that the cultural sector at large is partly responsible for the under-representation of certain groups, and that it must invent new paradigms

What Circostrada will do about it:

- Work to create spaces within the network where members feel safe and supported enough to voice their needs and be heard
- Uplift non-dominant, non-hegemonic aesthetic standards in the arts with regards to the intricacies and particularities of cultural expression
- Encourage and remove barriers for discriminated groups of individuals to participate in our programmes and activities

3. Accessibility

What to focus on:

- Affirming that disabled people have the right to equal treatment, equal respect and equal access to cultural activities and employment opportunities
- Advocating for more accessible information, venues, and infrastructures in the cultural sector
- Acknowledging and confronting the often ableist norms for the body in contemporary circus and outdoor arts

What Circostrada will do about it:

- Create and enforce accessibility guidelines to share with our event partners
- Work to make Circostrada's activities accessible for all kinds of disabilities with the help of experts, including those within the disability community.
- Advocate for these issues on a European level, together with other networks and cultural institutions.

4. Fair and inclusive event curation

What to focus on:

- Raising awareness that cultural events can reflect the normative expectations of society and contribute to the systemic marginalisation of individuals and groups
- Amplifying the diversity of representations and narratives in international events
- Acknowledging that true diversity and inclusion can only occur in the context of safe meetings and interactions

² Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility

What Circostrada will do about it:

- Consider sociological biases as a factor when designing all events and programmes
- Create curatorial materials to contextualise events within the local culture (city/region/country)
- Contextualise the advocacy work done on-site on IDEA issues
- Support disabled artists financially, include them upstream in the production process, and take account of their specific needs in terms of budget

5. Fair and inclusive international mobility

What to focus on:

- Understanding inequalities in mobility due to visas, passports, and international agreements, as well as the fact that travelling as a trans, nonbinary person can be problematic
- Taking seriously the rise in nationalism and nativism, including in Europe, and how this impedes international cooperation
- Accepting the responsibility for international networks to facilitate transnational encounters and unity beyond national borders
- Interrogating how networks like Circostrada may be complicit in the inequities around international mobility

What Circostrada will do about it:

- Endeavour to select panel guests above and beyond considerations of production difficulties, financial costs, and ecological impact, in order to guarantee fairness of opportunity for participation in an international field
- Include in its upstream production costs any expenses related to visas and anticipate any pitfalls that may occur due to mobility discrimination
- Provide extra support and care to trans, nonbinary persons when travelling to ensure their safety

6. Inclusive communication

What to focus on:

- Taking seriously the power of precision in language to include, exclude, empower groups
- Creating communication materials that cater to a linguistically and culturally diverse public
- Advocating for the recognition of different needs in terms of visuals, languages, and formats

What Circostrada will do about it:

- Be as precise as possible with language, and avoid defaulting to umbrella terms or making assumptions about people's identity or experiences
- Update the network's website and graphic design to a colour-blind friendly palette
- Adapt the network's website for the hearing impaired
- Use inclusive writing in all communication material, as well as Circostrada's resources

7. Human resources

What to focus on:

- Ensuring correlation between mental health and work discrimination against individuals, regarding age, disability, gender expression and sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief
- Creating alternatives to the often discriminatory labour conditions within the cultural sector, including the reliance on volunteers and hiring of low-paid staff

What Circostrada will do about it:

- Design recruitment rules that promotes transparency and neutrality, to avoid as much as possible discrimination
- Advocate for dignity at work and fair work conditions within the Circostrada team
- Provide safe spaces for feedback and demands for Circostrada staff members

Annex

Guidelines

- Gender guidelines
- Dyslexia Guidelines
- Easy-to-read guidelines

Training

- British Dyslexia Association provides training
- Training from a learning-disabled perspective

Other

- On the Idea of rest and burnt out
- Europe Beyond Access
- Time to Act report
- Not a toolkit! Fair collaboration in cultural relations: a reflAction