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## PRESS RELEASE AND EVENT NOTICE

# A Soul for Europe Conference: Towards a European Citizens' Convention

#asfe19  
#thistimeimvoting

on 12 und 13 April 2019

Akademie der Künste, Pariser Platz, Berlin

[Press registration](#)

[Online debate preceding the conference](#)

On 12th and 13th April 2019, the **A Soul for Europe** initiative will join with Berlin's Akademie der Künste (Academy of Arts) and partners drawn from civil society to hold its annual European conference, this year under the motto "**Towards a European Citizens' Convention**".

Six weeks before the decisive European elections in May 2019, European artists and intellectuals will gather to confront leading representatives of various European parties with culture-based viewpoints on the future of Europe. Cultural stakeholders from various fields will present their ideas to establish trans-European alliances. In a series of workshops, actors from civil society, politics and the arts will discuss democratic fitness, a European culture of remembrance and the creation of a trans-European public sphere. Visual artist **Wolfgang Tillmans** will call to vote through an artistic campaign depicted on the Akademie's façade.

**Nele Hertling**, spokesperson for the **A Soul for Europe** initiative: *"We are increasingly confronted with nationalist forces that are seeking to jeopardise the achievements of the European unification process. In light of these developments, we feel that an emotional element is necessary to hold Europe together. Culture can be a driving force that strengthens the influence exerted by all European citizens, while also overcoming divides and strengthening democracy in Europe. Cultural diversity is the foundation of the unity of Europe".*

The Akademie der Künste is an international society of artists with a current membership of over 400. The academy is resolutely committed to pursuing creative and decisive ways to preserve Europe as a peace project. For this reason, it is partnering up with the **A Soul for Europe** initiative and hosting this year's gathering. As Akademie president **Jeanine Meerapfel** notes, *"Art can have a major impact on society. It provides opportunities for people to deepen their knowledge, while also creating spaces, sites and objects that allow us to explore different perspectives without having to enter into any tangible battlefield. In my opinion, this is precisely where art can make a significant contribution to creating the framework for our common, democratic and peaceful coexistence in Europe as well as beyond Europe's boundaries".*

The conference will start with the Award Ceremony of the Evens Arts Prize 2019. This biennial European award established by the Evens Foundation honours artists who engage with contemporary realities in Europe and envision perspectives for shaping our common world. This year the Prize goes to Hungarian born choreographer **Eszter Salamon**. Pioneering French composer **Éliane Radigue** receives the Special Mention of the Jury.

Two roundtables will discuss how we should understand the idea of a European culture today, and how art can address current challenges and inspire visions for the future of Europe.



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Leading representatives of European parties **Nicola Beer** (ALDE), **Damian Boeselager** (Volt), **Hannah Neumann** (European Greens), **Violeta Tomić** (European Left), **Yanis Varoufakis** (DIEM25) and **Elmar Brok** (European People's Party) will face the discussion with **Tanja Dückers** (author), **Ulrich Gerhardt** (director of radioplays), **Noémi Kiss** (author), **Kathrin Röggla** (author, vice president Academy of Arts), **Katja Sinko** (activist), **Klaus Staeck** (graphic artist), and **Mia Florentine Weiss** (artist).  
Intervention: **Volker Schlöndorff** (film director)

Among the other speakers at the conference are **Kathrin Deventer** (European Festivals Association), **Mike Downey** (film producer), **Jody Jensen** (Institute for Social & European Studies), **Klaus Lederer** (Deputy Governing Mayor and Senator for Culture and Europe of the State of Berlin), **Jeanine Meerapfel** (film director and president of Akademie der Künste), **Eszter Salamon** (choreographer), **Christophe Slagmuylder** (Wiener Festwochen), **Abram de Swaan** (sociologist), **André Wilkens** (European Cultural Foundation) as well as current and former members of the European Parliament **Michael Cramer**, **Arne Lietz**, **Pia Locatelli**, **Helmut Scholz** and **Hannes Swoboda** as well as of the Berlin House of Representatives **Silke Gebel**.

This year's conference partners include the following civil society initiatives and cultural organisations: Advocate Europe, Allianz Kulturstiftung, Center for Fine Arts Brussels (BOZAR), Cities for Europe, Das Progressive Zentrum, European Academy Berlin, Evens Foundation, Felix Meritis Foundation, Fundación Academia Europea e Iberoamericana de Yuste, Goethe Institute, n-ost, Netherlands Business Academy, Polis180, Wir sind Europa, Zeit Online. The media partners of the conference are ALEX Berlin, euro|topics and FluxFM.

The event is being funded by the following institutions: European Parliament, Representative Office of the European Commission in Germany, Erasmus+ Programme, Allianz Kulturstiftung, Federal Foreign Office, Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb), Evens Foundation, Berlin Senate Department for Culture and European Affairs, Embassy of Romania in Germany, Crowne Plaza Berlin. The conference is being carried out under the high patronage of the European Parliament.

Click [here](#) to see the full programme of events in English. The official language of the conference is English. As a member of the press, you are warmly invited to attend the conference. We look forward to receiving your registration request at the following: <https://asoulforeurope.eu/asfe19-pressregistration/>

For more information on our events and current themes, visit our [website](#). Contact us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and follow the online debate in the run-up up to the conference on [Medium](#)!

**About A Soul for Europe:** A Soul for Europe connects and mobilises citizens and democratic institutions across Europe, fostering a sense of responsibility for the future of Europe and democracy through culture. [www.asoulforeurope.eu](http://www.asoulforeurope.eu)

**About Berlin's Akademie der Künste (Academy of Arts):** Founded in 1696, Berlin's Akademie der Künste is one of the oldest cultural institutes in Europe. It represents an international community of over 400 artists. The archive of the Akademie der Künste is regarded as one of the most important interdisciplinary archives for modern art and culture in the German-speaking world. [www.adk.de](http://www.adk.de)

Press contact:

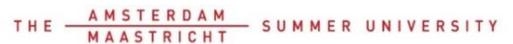
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