

## EUROPEAN FOLK DAY - PILOT PROJECT 2023 - FINAL REPORT

The European Folk Day pilot project was organized by the European Folk Network (EFN)

*The project ran from 01 February to 30 November 2023*

*The European Folk Day was 23 September*

*It was funded by the MusicAIRE project of European Music Council and Inova with funds from the European Union and the Music Moves Europe initiative.*

*The MusicAIRE Grant Agreement was n°: 546ac96a-636f-460d-a699-57ec4d1eb147 from the Small Project strand.*



Co-funded by  
the European Union

## EUROPEAN FOLK DAY - PROJECT SUMMARY FOR PUBLICATION

The European Folk Day, 23 September 2023, was the first-ever pan-European celebration of the folk/traditional arts of music, dance and storytelling, proposed and carried out by the members of the European Folk Network (EFN).

Participation was registered across 32 European countries.

The database and map on the European Folk Day website registered 248 events in 244 venues run by 259 organisers.

200 events incorporated music, 53 included dance and 15 storytelling. 24 were multi-disciplinary, combining all traditional arts.

Over 100 tracks were submitted to the Folk Day website's Music Repository from over 28 countries plus others with multi-national origin.

Recognition and interest was registered from countries outside Europe – e.g. USA and New Zealand.

26 radio stations, members of the European Broadcasting Union, produced special programmes on or around the European Folk Day.

Press releases were issued in 26 European languages.

EFN identified media coverage in 17 European nations and via 5 pan-European networks.

EFN and individual Folk Day participants carried out extensive inter-connected social media campaigns to highlight the concept and participation.

For a full range of information on the European Folk Day visit [www.europeanfolkday.eu](http://www.europeanfolkday.eu)

## EUROPEAN FOLK DAY - CONTEXT AND OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The overarching objective was to coordinate, support and publicise activities as a pilot of the first ever European Folk Day, an initiative proposed by the European Folk Network's (EFN's) 150+ members from 32 European nations. The Folk Day aimed to harness traditional music and arts activity across Europe – from grassroots communities to national organisations, in a way that is only possible through EFN's emerging pan-European network; and, with the use of available digital communication technology, to raise awareness and profile of this essential element of European cultural identity and diversity with the general public and policy makers.

EFN and its partner members had already worked to raise awareness of the concept in the sector, recruiting participants and encouraging creative participation at every level. Practical support and coordination in this pilot, EFN believed, would indicate in part some of the wide range of activity across Europe and demonstrate the prevalence and critical mass of traditional arts in European societies.

Coverage for Folk Day activities was to be achieved at local, national and pan-European level by participants working on their own local and national contacts, digital and social media channels, coordinating and cross-linking with EFN's PR and marketing at European level.

Through this manifestation of music and arts activities, taking place simultaneously across Europe, traditional artists, communities and organisations would be able to experience visible collective solidarity, dispelling the debilitating isolation brought on by the pandemic. The Folk Day aimed to engender self-confidence in the sector and strengthen its determination to prove its importance and value through collective action and advocacy.

EFN would perform a unique role as facilitator and aimed to make a significant impact on public awareness by coordinating the European added value of the inaugural Folk Day whilst gaining information, contacts, knowledge and experience to apply to the development of the network and the Folk Day in future years.

## EUROPEAN FOLK DAY - WORK PERFORMED AND MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

The operation of the European Folk Day project by the European Folk Network (EFN) had to be arranged very quickly once the funding agreement was in place. The planning time for festivals, promoters, broadcasters and journalists had to be taken into account and for many their work in September was already being, or had already been, set up. EFN's voluntary Board was responsible for the oversight of the project and in anticipation of the work to be done and contracts to be issued they convened a special planning meeting in-person in Ghent, Belgium at the end of January to agree an outline of the project's operation and the personnel who would take it forward.

The Board defined the 3 person Core Team who would be contracted to run the project, the 2 Board members who would act as an Advisory Group in the early stages and the role of the 8-person Board as a Monitoring Group.

Before the project could be announced in full the Board defined the roles and issued contracts for the 3 members of the Core Team: Administration, PR/Media and Coordination. In February the Team then produced a full Action Plan and briefs for the design of the website and the design of a logo/identity, which were issued for tender to designers. Designers were interviewed and appointed by early March.

In order to publicise the Folk Day effectively and recruit participants at such short notice, it was decided, as part of the Action Plan and the overall marketing and PR plans, that it would be essential for members of the Core Team and the Advisory Group to disseminate the information to the sector in-person and in meetings where large numbers of relevant people were gathered.

By April the website domain [www.europeanfolkday.eu](http://www.europeanfolkday.eu) was registered, as were webmail addresses for the Core Team functions: [info@europeanfolkday.eu](mailto:info@europeanfolkday.eu) (Administration, Nod Knowles), [media@europeanfolkday.eu](mailto:media@europeanfolkday.eu) (Media & PR, Araceli Tzigane), and [participate@europeanfolkday.eu](mailto:participate@europeanfolkday.eu) (Coordination, Eric E. van Monckhoven). Web design options were appraised and a decision made on the logo.

EFN members had been given early notification of the Folk Day project and by April the project and the date of 23 September had been fully announced via Mailchimp to EFN members and a wider EFN mailing list. Information on the Folk Day, including a landing page, had been added to the EFN website and EFN had issued a sign-up form to gather initial interest from potential participants.

The Core Team continued to publicise the Folk Day and encourage participants but encountered a serious delay in the development of the Folk Day website. In April the logo design had been produced by the contractor and a draft website design had been received and approved. But, for what turned out to be reasons of personal mental health, the web development contractor did not meet the agreed deadline for the launch of the website. Further delays followed despite communications from the Folk Day Administrator and Advisory Group and series of promises (subsequently broken) of new deadlines from the developer. Finally it was mutually agreed that the developer's contract should be terminated. The Media/PR member of the Folk Day team worked to salvage some parts of the website and add as much information as possible so that it could go live, despite the lack of full visual design. However, the essential aspect of the website that was not yet developed was the map of Europe and the database to which participants could add their event. The Team hurriedly searched for a web developer who might have the time and skill to add this crucial facility to the site. Fortunately a new and reliable contractor was found and the full database facility was available on the website by early June. The delay, however, had been at least two months from the originally scheduled date and until the facility was ready it had been impossible to collect and display the events planned by Folk Day participants.

Meanwhile, in April and May, the Core Team kept to its planning schedule and had issued the first Press Release and secured voluntary agreements from EFN members and associates to produce translations of the release into other European languages. In order to disseminate the message to as wide and diverse a sector as possible, and one in which

specific languages were often an important element of folk song and story heritage, 26 translations of the release were produced, all of which were added as links on the Resources section of the Folk Day website. The main language of the Folk Day was, inevitably, English but the translations were an important part of the reach of the project, as were the translations of printed flyers into French, Dutch and Italian, which were distributed at sector meetings and by all members of the EFN Board wherever it was possible. The full range of the communication kit and resources for use by participants was made available (and continually added to) on the Resources page of the website.

In-person PR and publicity for the Folk Day was undertaken from March onwards by Core Team members and Board members, giving presentations and distributing printed leaflets in three languages. It began at BabelMusicXP in France; then the Nordic Folk Alliance Conference, Denmark; at the European Music Council's annual conference/Music Forum in Budapest; at the General Assembly of the French network FAMDT in Pau, France; at Folkest International in Italy; and at gatherings of folk activists in countries including Latvia, Belgium, Norway, Scotland and Spain.

Through the Scottish folk network TRACS, led by the director of their Trad Music Forum and Chair of the EFN Board, the European Folk Day was adopted by and firmly linked to an inaugural Scottish Folk Day. Using their own resources, TRACS was able to engage a professional PR company and undertake a campaign that led to extensive media coverage, a high number of Scottish participants during the Folk Day and a motion supporting the project put by an elected member to the Scottish Parliament.

EFN Team's contacts led to the development of media partnerships. In online media partnerships were made with Spain's Mondofonias weekly online radio show, allied to the monthly online and email newsletter Mapamundi Musica; with Italy's online Linatrad webzine/T which contributed monthly advertisements about the Folk Day; and the Italian Blogfoolk online webzine which not only made the Day its cover story but partnered two live events.

Waterwaves Media, an online radio station based in the UK but covering events across Europe became a media partner and ran fortnightly radio programmes about the Folk Day, interviewing each member of the Team as well as the EFN Chair. The programmes and interviews were also made available as online podcasts. Waterwaves went further and used its contacts and influence to develop and support a new one-day European Folk Day festival in the English town of Malmesbury which was also endorsed and supported by the town's mayor.

After making contact and entering discussions with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and its representatives leading the Music and Folk sections of the union, it was agreed that the EBU would be a media partner for the Folk Day. To assist the EBU and its members EFN created a text and short radio clips about the Folk Day – in English, French and Spanish – for use by online and broadcasting stations. EBU featured the Day on its website and a total of 26 EBU members joined the partnership by broadcasting special features about the Folk Day and in programmes on or around 23 September.

To create opportunities for individual musicians and bands to participate in the Folk Day the EFN Team set up a Music Repository section of the website. Musicians were invited to each submit one track on MP3 for the website and agree to offer free access to the track for listeners to download or broadcasters to use as a feature of their Folk Day programming. First launched in July, by 23 September the Music Repository had accumulated over 100 tracks from over 28 European countries.

Throughout the project the EFN Team continued to issue social media posts, newsletters and updates to EFN members and contacts on the existing EFN mailing list and continuously pursued new contacts with local, national and pan-European organisations. As a result of this process of making individual contacts the EFN team was able to add over 450 new contacts to the newsletter mailing list. Key pan-European organisations were also added as contacts and associated partners, such as the EBU, the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC) and Europe Jazz Network (EJN). On a national level a variety of significant organisations (for example, the Netherlands World Music Forum and the UK's Musicians' Union, amongst many others) not only connected with EFN but helped to publicise the Folk Day project in their country and to their members.

EFN had made the decision to make 23 September European Folk Day but, especially because of the short time from the time it was announced to the September date, participants were encouraged to register events that would happen on the date itself or on the days immediately before and after the date. Registration by participants could only begin once the map and database had been set up on the Folk Day website and registrations were relatively slow in the summer months but were received at a very fast pace as the date approached.

The final total of registered events was 248 in 32 countries, organised by 259 organisers using 244 venues. 200 of the events focused on traditional and folk music, 53 on dance and 15 on storytelling, while others were multi-disciplinary with a combination of artsforms.

In the course of communication and registrations by participants EFN not only made many new contacts but learned more about the strength and extent of the BalFolk movement in Europe. The other discovery was the interest and recognition of the European Folk Day shown by organisations outside Europe, especially in the USA and in New Zealand, where organisers were keen to run associated Folk Day events.

To follow up on the Folk Day EFN organised two consultations. One was a series of seminars at the 2023 EFN conference in Manchester in late October and the other was an online survey via Survey Monkey targeted on those who had registered on the map and database. The results and statistics from those consultations are still being analysed but the initial findings are overwhelmingly positive, about the value of the Folk Day on both a local and European level and in favour of the continuation of the project on an annual basis.

## EUROPEAN FOLK DAY - RESULTS BEYOND STATISTICS

The results of the project in terms of registered participation as explained above are an indication of the extent of the coverage that EFN achieved in a short time with limited resources and from a 'cold' start.

First and foremost, the European Folk Day project's overall impact was in establishing an active demonstration of what could be achieved by concerted, coordinated collective action. Within that remit other significant impacts included:

- Bringing a widely disparate sector across a widely differing group of nations together in a focused profile raising action.
- Creating sustainable links with significant established European networks (for example AEC, EBU and EMC itself) and extending the Folk Day's reach exponentially through their networks.
- Creating the basis and some of the necessary tools and channels of communication for a regular annual event.
- Prompting increased national recognition in several countries for the Folk Day and the folk sector, including, in Scotland, at parliamentary level.
- Capturing a range of new information and contacts for EFN in what is still a largely uncharted sector.
- Recognising the importance of language in the traditional arts sector.
- Identifying the media impact of the Folk Day as far as could be known and providing pointers for future work and development.

The project also allowed EFN to identify areas for future improvement and development.

These include the need for:

- Dedicated financial and personnel support for continued coordination and development of the project
- An extended reach and influence for the project in some regions of Europe, especially in the east
- A settled annual date and early notice for each year to allow participants time to plan
- Further development of the Folk Day website facilities
- Further development of the use of social media channels
- Greater and more focussed capacity to enable the project to capture the full extent of its reach, especially in social and local media
- Strategic planning in order to build and consolidate the project over a time period of at least 10 years.

## EUROPEAN FOLK DAY - SUSTAINABILITY AND EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

Although the full results of the online survey of participants and the contributions from delegates at EFN's annual conference in October are still being analysed, all initial indications are of an overwhelmingly positive response to the European Folk Day and a determination to see it continue annually. In summary the effects that the inauguration of a Folk Day had on the traditional music and arts sector included:

- Engendering confidence in participants who felt part of a wider community.
- Creating links between a wide range of those involved in the traditional arts across many countries.
- Proving the essential vitality of the sector and its commitment to being active and forward looking.
- Proving, in part, the potential extent and nature of a sector in Europe which is as yet uncharted.
- Prompting the creation of new events and activities underpinned by the confidence that they were part of a wider action.
- Strengthening the local and national credence and profile of many participants by emphasising that their events were receiving Europe-wide recognition.
- Recognising the importance of language in the traditional arts
- Emphasising the continued importance of in-person representation and PR.

The Folk Day project had significant implications for the European Folk Network. It underlined the ability and necessary existence of a pan-European network that was uniquely able to coordinate such a project. In promoting and coordinating the Day EFN was able to considerably extend its reach, its partnerships, its contacts and knowledge of the sector. These factors would also assist EFN in building its Mapping The Sector project and in attracting a wider membership.

## EUROPEAN FOLK DAY - POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the responses to the European Folk Day and EFN's experiences in proposing and then coordinating it, primary considerations for future policy should include opportunities to:

- Seek and access guaranteed support for long term development.
- Facilitate permanent dedicated support staff for the project.
- Settle a permanent annual date for the European Folk Day.
- Enable a year-round campaign to encourage, build and sustain participation.
- Extend the facilities and opportunities for participation, especially digitally and online.
- Encourage and support the integration of the Folk Day project and its activity with other pan-European network activities.



## EUROPEAN FOLK DAY - COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

In addition to EFN's contribution of regular newsletters (with a frequency of at least one per month leading to multiple mailings in the last two months before 23 September), frequent social media posts, press releases in 26 translations, and printed flyers in three languages, all participants ran their own communications online, in print and via social media. Whilst this was far too extensive for EFN to be able to monitor and quantify, the EFN Team was able to identify and capture the coverage in the list below.

### **MEDIA COVERAGE BY EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS**

EBU - European Broadcasting Union

<https://www.ebu.ch/music/european-folk-day>

AEC - Association européenne des conservatoires

<https://aec-music.eu/news-article/join-the-first-ever-european-folk-day/>

World Music Central

<https://worldmusiccentral.org/2023/09/19/over-111-events-scheduled-for-first-ever-european-folk-day/>

World Music Forum

[European Folk Day – World Music Forum NL](#)

European Jazz Network

<https://www.europejazz.net/news/european-folk-day-september-2023>

<https://www.europejazz.net/news/updates-european-folk-day-2023>

Creative Lives

["Traditional music really thrives at the community level" | Creative Lives \(creative-lives.org\)](#)

### **MEDIA COVERAGE BY COUNTRY**

#### **UKRAINE**

<https://ui.org.ua/en/news-en/european-folk-day/>

#### **ITALY**

<https://meiweb.it/2023/07/13/european-folk-day-folk-day-europeo-23-settembre-partecipate-anche-voi/>

<https://www.blogfoolk.com/2023/06/il-giorno-del-folk-il-23-settembre-e-lo.html>

<https://www.segnalisonori.it/european-folk-day-2023-partecipa-anche-tu/>

<https://www.romatoday.it/eventi/festival-popolare-italiano-celebra-european-folk-day-23-settembre-2023.html>

Foolking Thunder Revue - Ministero della cultura (beniculturali.it)

<https://www.riverflash.it/wordpress/il-23-settembre-il-festival-popolare-italiano-celebra-leuropean-folk-day/>

<https://www.radiromacapitale.it/articolo/european-folk-day-dal-23-settembre-il-grande-appuntamento-vedra-in-contemporanea-centinaia-di-eventi-legati-alla-world-music/>

<https://www.roma-o-matic.com/it/refeed/426333>

[European Folk Day - OrticaWeb](#)

[Festival Popolare Italiano celebra European Folk Day - ExPartibus](#)

[Il 23 settembre il festival popolare italiano celebra l'european folk day - UrloWeb - Notizie da Roma](#)

[webmagazine.unitn.it/fileswebmagazine/download/117864/europeanfolkdailylibrettoversioneleggera1compressed1.pdf](http://webmagazine.unitn.it/fileswebmagazine/download/117864/europeanfolkdailylibrettoversioneleggera1compressed1.pdf)

<https://www.corriereproposte.it/evento/6-musica-leggera/143160-dario-aspesani-lara-giancarla-.html>

<https://www.mentelocale.it/genova/eventi/261402-le-vie-dei-canti-festival-2023-inaugurazione-con-concerti-focaccette-e-spettacoli.htm>

<https://allevents.in/trento/efd2023-european-folk-day-1/200025430217155?ref=eventlist-cat>

#### **IRELAND**

<https://www.rte.ie/radio/lyricfm/news/2023/0919/1406096-european-folk-day/>

#### **UK**

<https://musiciansunion.org.uk/news/take-part-in-efn-s-first-european-folk-day>

[European Folk Day – 24/7 Folk Radio \(247folkradio.com\)](#)

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/23505780.new-scottish-event-will-run-tandem-european-folk-day/>

<https://www.festivalorganisers.org/news/995/European+Folk+Day>

<https://www.welovestornoway.com/index.php/articles-auto-3/30571-euro-folk-day-marked-in-sy>

<https://tradfolk.co/tag/european-folk-day/>

<https://tracscotland.org/news-post/>

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/scottish-folk-day-run-tandem-040000923.html>

<https://www.scotsman.com/whats-on/arts-and-entertainment/the-generation-game-edinburgh-folk-club-at-50-4336876>

<https://www.ardrossanherald.com/news/23772071.scottish-folk-day-ayrshire-events-set-mark-celebration/>

[Call for Scots musicians to get involved in inaugural Scottish Folk Day 2023 - Bagpipe News](#)

[Call for Scots to get involved in inaugural Scottish Folk Day | News | What's On Glasgow \(whatsonglasgow.co.uk\)](#)

[Sound Sense :: Scottish Folk Day :: supporting community music](#)

[Call to join first Scottish Folk Day - The Oban Times](#)

<https://visitbath.co.uk/whats-on/european-folk-day-jim-causley-and-john-kirkpatrick-at-widcombe-social-club-p3361533>

#### **ESTONIA**

<https://klassikaraadio.err.ee/1609099697/european-folk-day>

<https://klassikaraadio.err.ee/1609103999/european-folk-day-2023-muusikaline-reis-labi-horvaatia>

#### **CZECH REPUBLIC**

<https://www.culturenet.cz/akce/european-folk-day-hleda-ucastniky-ce/>

#### **HUNGARY**

<https://hagyományokhaza.hu/en/programok/folklornapja>

<https://www.karpatinfo.net/2023/9/5/european-folk-day-200075213>

[European Folk Day - Hírnavigátor \(hirnavigator.hu\)](#)

<http://tanchaz.hu/index.php/hu/hirek/hirek-2023/4933-folklor-napja-europaban-european-folk-day>

<https://www.szolnoktersegiprogramok.hu/european-folk-day-7560.html>

<https://mediaklikk.hu/cikk/2023/09/24/tudta-e-nepzenei-nyomozoiroda-european-folk-day-lilium-acoustic/>

**SWEDEN**

<https://folk.nu/european-folk-day-23-september-2023/>

<https://sverigesradio.se/avsnitt/bast-just-nu-topplista-for-european-folk-day>

**PORTUGAL**

<https://www.auradolima.com/featured/viana-do-castelo-participa-na-primeira-celebracao-do-european-folk-day/>

[El 23 de septiembre se celebrará el primer Día Europeo del Folclore – Musika bulegoa](#)

**SLOVAKIA**

<https://elohagyomany.sk/european-folk-day/>

**NORWAY**

<https://www.folkemusikk.no/europa-fylt-med-folkemusikk/>

**SERBIA**

<https://hetnap.rs/cikk/European-Folk-Day-45006.html>

[Od pustinjskog bluzo do flamenka: Šta nam donosi ovogodišnji Todo mundo \(n1info.rs\)](#)

**LATVIA**

[The first European Folk Day on Saturday 23 September 2023 | Lauska](#)

**BELGIUM**

<https://vi.be/events/de-allereerste-european-folk-day>

**FRANCE**

<https://openagenda.com/tradlor/events/european-folk-day>

<https://www.ouest-france.fr/pays-de-la-loire/bouguenais-44340/au-nouveau-pavillon-de-bouguenais-week-end-irlandais-les-22-23-et-24-septembre-94238ffc-578d-11ee-a390-be4049371535>

**SPAIN**

[https://www.ivoox.com/mundofonias-2023-67-european-folk-day-audios-mp3\\_rf\\_116421556\\_1.html](https://www.ivoox.com/mundofonias-2023-67-european-folk-day-audios-mp3_rf_116421556_1.html)

<https://www.lossonidosdelplanetaazul.com/2023/09/por-primera-vez-se-celebra-el-dia-europeo-del-folk-este-sabado-coincidiendo-con-el-equinoccio-de-otono/>

<http://www.diariofolk.com/noticia/el-primer-dia-del-folclore-europeo-tendra-lugar-el-sabado-23-de-septiembre/>

<https://lacircular.es/event/dia-del-folk-europeo>

<http://musikabulegoa.eus/es/el-23-de-septiembre-se-celebrara-el-primer-dia-europeo-del-folclore/>

<https://www.musicafolk.es/el-primer-dia-del-folclore-europeo-se-celebrara-el-23-de-septiembre/>

<http://guiadelaradio.com/catalunya-musica-celebra-el-dia-europeo-del-folk-junto-a-otras-25-emisoras-publicas-de-la-uer>

**FINLAND**

<https://musicfinland.com/en/news/celebrate-european-folk-day-with-our-playlist>

**PARTICIPATING EBU RADIO STATIONS** <https://www.ebu.ch/music/european-folk-day>

BULGARIA BNR Horizont  
BELGIUM RTBF La Première  
CYPRUS CyBC Radio 1 CyBC Radio 3  
CZECHIA Czech Radio Brno Czech Radio Zlín  
DENMARK DR P2  
ESTONIA ERR Klassikaraadio  
FRANCE Radio France / France Musique  
GEORGIA GPB Georgian Radio  
CROATIA HRT – HR3  
HUNGARY MTVA Dankó Rádió  
ICELAND RUV Rás 1  
IRELAND RTÉ lyric fm  
ISRAEL Kan Kol Hamusika  
ITALY RAI Radio3  
LITHUANIA LRT KLASIKA  
LATVIA Latvijas Radio 3 'Klasika'  
NORWAY NRK radio  
POLAND Polski Radio PR2  
ROMANIA Radio România Muzical Radio Romania Antena Satelor  
SERBIA Radio Belgrade  
SLOVAKIA RTVS Rádio Devín  
SPAIN Catalunya Música  
SWEDEN Sveriges Radio P2

**SOCIAL MEDIA – EXAMPLES ONLY**

**FACEBOOK**

**28 August** [Music Repository](#)

Post impressions 5,942 | Post reach 5,628

**18 Sept** [This is the Week](#)

Post impressions 5,162 | Post reach 5,147

**Last 28 days** (26/09/2023)

Post reach 25,630

Post Engagement 5,202

New Page likes 171

Total Followers Followers: 1,762

**23 September – European Folk Day**

76 posts

Most Popular [IT'S TODAY!! European Folk Day!](#)

Post impressions 4,015 | Post reach 3,770