



Advocacy work for music – The view point of FIM

Advocacy is an essential aspect of the work of most international NGOs. It is naturally the case also for those organisations whose objective is to protect and enhance the rights and interests of professional musicians.

Basically, the challenge is to convey the right message to the right persons at the right time and, most importantly, to have this message heard and understood. It is all the more challenging as both our human and financial resources are limited. It is therefore important to select issues with the highest priority, use our strengths and overcome our weaknesses to implement a carefully considered strategy.

The following key features need to be outlined

I. Engaging into advocacy

3 categories of activities may be outlined:

1. Issues that form part of the FIM policy by virtue of a statutory provision or following a Congress decision.
2. Issues that have been or still are dealt with by other organizations and for which the involvement of the Federation is both relevant and in compliance with general policy objectives.
3. Support to members facing national issues through international solidarity campaigns.

II. Decision making process

1. As a democratic organisation, we must first ascertain that the advocacy activities envisaged are in line with the FIM policy and endorsed by at least a majority of members. FIM Being a global organisation, it is obviously not possible to undertake actions in support to a fraction of the membership against the interests of members in another region.
2. As efficiency may require prompt decisions, some actions may have to be carried out quickly or with a certain level of flexibility, with little time available for a thorough consultation of the governing bodies or the members themselves. An accurate knowledge of all aspects of the organisation's policy in force is therefore necessary.
3. In order for the Secretariat to be able to work with maximum efficiency and in full transparency, such policy needs to be democratically designed by the Congress and Executive Committee, and all actions must be reported to the governing bodies.

III. Networking

1. Support by national members who may either give their "passive" support or commit themselves at national and international levels, in terms of both time and expertise.
2. Interaction with other organizations with similar goals and compatible objectives. Diverging interests on certain issues, which may render networking sometimes complex and uneasy, may limit such interaction.

IV. Using our strengths

1. Music performers create music without necessarily being fairly rewarded. In general, the public and the politicians have a natural empathy for performers and are aware that they represent the weakest negotiating party in the music value chain (as opposed to record and tour producers, managers, ISPs, broadcasters, etc.). They therefore benefit from a positive image, which may be of a high value in the context of our advocacy campaigns.
2. In this particular environment, the feeling that we are "doing the right thing" is not too difficult to share, as long as our demands remain reasonable and realistic.
3. FIM has about 70 members worldwide. However, beyond the circle of our affiliates, we also indirectly represent hundreds of thousands of professional music performers in all parts of the world, which gives us a unique legitimacy.

V. Overcoming our weaknesses

1. As our human and financial resources remain limited, actions must be carefully selected and prioritised.

2. A high workload is not unusual and we must accept to deal with complex matters, which may also be unfamiliar to us. Constant self-questioning and accepting to “learn” everyday are at the core of our job.
3. That is all the more necessary as competing stakeholders involved in the same matters may have much higher financial means and in-house expertise.
4. Advocacy usually requires pedagogy towards decision-makers. Although they may show interest towards issues affecting our members, they usually have limited knowledge and understanding of the challenges and peculiarities of the musicians’ work.
5. That being said, being “small” is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as one can make one’s voice heard. On the contrary, decision-makers sometimes report that “excessive lobbying” by big industry players may lead to exasperation and counterproductive results.