

## **Stuck inside: How did performers manage to fare the COVID-19 pandemic?**

### **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic has made authors wonder whether the creative industries will once again fare a global shock. However, the nature of the present shock is very different compared to the 2008 economic crisis. Through the imposed restrictions the present shock is expected to have a uniquely negative effect on performers. As such, the purpose of the present paper is to investigate the experience of Romanian performers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As Romania is the last country in the European Union in terms of cultural employment, this study provides insights into the resilience strategies adopted by performers who were already working in an unfavorable context for cultural activities. Additionally, by including both freelancers/independent performers and publicly employed performers the study captures the effect already existing precariousness and vulnerabilities had during the pandemic.

The results show that during the lockdown performers experienced financial problems and mental distress, while after the lockdown performers perceived a negative effect on their performance skills. However, in the case of freelancers the pandemic had a particularly strong negative effect by exacerbating the already existing vulnerabilities and problems.