

Joint Statement – No Platform for Authoritarianism in Cultural Spaces

We, the undersigned civil society organizations committed to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, welcome the decision made by the management of the Royal Palace of Caserta to cancel¹ the scheduled participation of Valery Gergiev at the “Un’Estate da Re” festival, set to take place at the Royal Palace of Caserta, Italy, on 27 July 2025.

Valery Gergiev is not simply a conductor. He is an active cultural ambassador of the Kremlin, with a long record of public support for Vladimir Putin and the Russian Federation’s military aggression, censorship, and repression. He has consistently refused to distance himself from Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Gergiev has publicly supported Vladimir Putin’s leadership for decades, including participating in official campaigns and endorsing him during presidential elections.² He has repeatedly praised Putin’s leadership and aligned himself with the state’s political objectives.³ He has conducted concerts in occupied South Ossetia following Russia’s war against Georgia (2008)⁴, in Palmyra after the Russian military intervention in Syria (2016),⁵ where he received a medal from Putin “For the liberation of Palmyra”⁶, and has performed at Kremlin rallies and events.⁷ Among other Russian cultural figures, he also signed in support of Putin’s “position on Ukraine and Crimea”.⁸ In December 2023, he was appointed head of Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre, in addition to the Mariinsky Theatre, taking over from a director who had signed an open letter in opposition of Russia’s military aggression in Ukraine.⁹

Following the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and after he refused to speak out against the war, Gergiev was removed or disinvited by major institutions across Europe, including the Munich Philharmonic and Milan’s La Scala.¹⁰ We note that a European Commission spokesperson, commenting on Gergiev’s invi-

1 https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/cultura/2025/07/21/annullato-il-concerto-di-valery-gergiev-a-caserta_7a460ee7-abac-464a-b453-37997df42295.html

2 https://web.archive.org/web/20121226233432/http://www.cikrf.ru/law/decree_of_cec/2012/02/06/Zp12767.html
https://www.google.com/url?q=https://web.archive.org/web/20230420235534/https://www.therestisnoise.com/2012/03/gergiev-endorses-putin.html&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1752513265626649&usg=AOvVaw2GuYntrpMG0_3s8ZLk5vfg
<https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/657d8da79a794735eb311176>

3 <https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2014/02/03/271168650/valery-gergiev-the-powerful-and-polarizing-maestro>

4 [google.com/url?q=https://web.archive.org/web/20080828093922/http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id%3D202990&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1752512333570551&usg=AOvVaw1NLxJTyFjgmGJ06EI5iBXi](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://web.archive.org/web/20080828093922/http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id%3D202990&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1752512333570551&usg=AOvVaw1NLxJTyFjgmGJ06EI5iBXi)

5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uVlt0nqwkI>

6 <https://x.com/dimsmirnov175/status/732289840327348224>

7 <https://web.archive.org/web/20220525092134/https://iz.ru/1339487/zoia-igumnova/slava-slovu-matcuev-i-gergiev-ispolnili-sanktcionnogo-rakhmaninova>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20240425180328/https://www.mariinsky.ru/news1/2024/april/29/>

8 <https://web.archive.org/web/20171001213219/https://iz.ru/news/567299>

9 <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czxw4n7vy70o>

10 <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czxw4n7vy70o>

tation to the Italian event, has urged European cultural stages not to provide platforms “to artists who support the war of aggression in Ukraine.”¹¹ Gergiev’s silence regarding the grave and pervasive human rights and international humanitarian law violations committed by Russia in Ukraine reflects a clear alignment with the Kremlin.

Gergiev’s scheduled appearance at a publicly supported cultural event in Italy contradicts the values of democracy and peace, and risked offering symbolic rehabilitation to a figure who has actively supported a regime engaged in war, censorship, and human rights abuses.

We call on the Italian Ministry of Culture and all Italian regions to ensure that public cultural events are not used to amplify voices aligned with authoritarianism. We urge cultural institutions across Europe to remain vigilant against attempts to whitewash aggression through the language of art.

Signed,

- Associazione dei Russi Liberi
- Centre for Civil Liberties
- Federation Global Initiative on Psychiatry
- Freedom Files
- Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly Vanadzor
- Human Rights Centre ZMINA
- Human Rights Defense Center Memorial
- Human Rights Movement Bir Duino
- Human Rights Without Frontiers
- Institute Respublica
- International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)
- Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (KIBHR)
- La Federazione Italiana Diritti Umani – Comitato Italiano Helsinki (FIDU)
- Macedonian Helsinki Committee
- NGO “Crimean Process” / ГО “Кримський процес”
- Norwegian Helsinki Committee
- Promo LEX
- Public Association Dignity
- Russi Contro La Guerra
- Solidarus e.V.
- Sphere Foundation
- The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia
- The Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan
- Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group (ULAG)

11 <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czxw4n7vy70o>

Dichiarazione congiunta – La cultura non è una piattaforma per l'autoritarismo

Le sottoscritte organizzazioni della società civile, impegnate nella difesa dei diritti umani, della democrazia e dello stato di diritto, accolgono con favore la decisione presa dalla direzione della Reggia di Caserta di annullare la partecipazione prevista di Valery Gergiev al festival “Un’Estate da Re”, che si terrà in Campania presso la Reggia di Caserta il 27 luglio 2025.

Valery Gergiev non è semplicemente un direttore d'orchestra. È un attivo ambasciatore culturale del Cremlino, con un lungo passato di sostegno pubblico a Vladimir Putin e alla Federazione Russa, comprese le sue politiche di aggressione militare, censura e repressione. Ha rifiutato in ogni occasione di prendere le distanze dall'invasione dell'Ucraina da parte della Russia.

Gergiev ha sostenuto pubblicamente la leadership di Vladimir Putin per decenni, partecipando a campagne ufficiali e appoggiandolo durante le elezioni presidenziali.¹² Ha spesso apertamente lodato la leadership di Putin e si è allineato agli obiettivi politici dello Stato russo.¹³ Ha diretto concerti nell'Ossezia del Sud occupata, dopo l'aggressione militare della Russia contro la Georgia (2008)¹⁴, a Palmira dopo l'intervento militare russo in Siria (2016)¹⁵ - ricevendo in quell'occasione da Putin una medaglia “per la liberazione di Palmira”¹⁶ - e si è esibito in manifestazioni ed eventi organizzati dal Cremlino.¹⁷ Insieme ad altre figure culturali russe, ha anche firmato un appello a sostegno della “posizione della Russia su Ucraina e Crimea”.¹⁸ Nel dicembre 2023 è stato nominato direttore del Teatro Bolshoi di Mosca, oltre al Teatro Mariinsky, subentrando a un direttore che aveva firmato una lettera aperta contro l'aggressione militare russa in Ucraina.¹⁹

Dopo l'invasione dell'Ucraina nel 2022 e il suo rifiuto di condannare la guerra, Gergiev è stato rimosso da importanti istituzioni europee, tra cui i Filarmonici di Monaco e La Scala di Milano.²⁰ Segnaliamo che una portavoce della Commissione europea, commentando l'invito di Gergiev all'evento italiano, ha invitato le istituzioni culturali europee a non offrire spazio “ad artisti che sostengono la guerra di aggressione in

- 12 https://web.archive.org/web/20121226233432/http://www.cikrf.ru/law/decree_of_cec/2012/02/06/Zp12767.html
https://www.google.com/url?q=https://web.archive.org/web/20230420235534/https://www.therestisnoise.com/2012/03/gergiev-endorses-putin.html&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1752513265626649&usg=AOvVaw2GuYntrpMG0_3s8ZLk5vfg
<https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/657d8da79a794735eb311176>
- 13 <https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2014/02/03/271168650/valery-gergiev-the-powerful-and-polarizing-maestro>
- 14 [google.com/url?q=https://web.archive.org/web/20080828093922/http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id%3D202990&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1752512333570551&usg=AOvVaw1NLxJTyFjgmGJ06EI5iBXI](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://web.archive.org/web/20080828093922/http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id%3D202990&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1752512333570551&usg=AOvVaw1NLxJTyFjgmGJ06EI5iBXI)
- 15 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uVlt0nqwkI>
- 16 <https://x.com/dimsmirnov175/status/732289840327348224>
- 17 <https://web.archive.org/web/20220525092134/https://iz.ru/1339487/zoia-igumnova/slava-slovu-matcnev-i-gergiev-ispolnili-sankcionnogo-rakhmaninova>
<https://web.archive.org/web/20240425180328/https://www.mariinsky.ru/news1/2024/april/29/>
- 18 <https://web.archive.org/web/20171001213219/https://iz.ru/news/567299>
- 19 <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czxw4n7vy70o>
- 20 <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czxw4n7vy70o>

Ucraina".²¹ Il silenzio di Gergiev di fronte alle gravi violazioni dei diritti umani e del diritto internazionale commesse dalla Russia in Ucraina evidenzia un chiaro allineamento con la linea del Cremlino.

La prevista partecipazione di Gergiev a un evento culturale sostenuto con fondi pubblici in Italia contraddice i valori di democrazia e pace, e rischiava di offrire una riabilitazione simbolica a una figura che ha attivamente sostenuto un regime impegnato in guerra, censura e violazioni dei diritti umani.

Chiediamo al Ministero della Cultura italiano e a tutte le regioni italiane di garantire che gli eventi culturali pubblici non vengano utilizzati per amplificare voci allineate all'autoritarismo. Esortiamo le istituzioni culturali di tutta Europa a rimanere vigili contro ogni tentativo di ripulire l'immagine dell'aggressione russa tramite il linguaggio dell'arte.

Firmato,

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21 <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czxw4n7vy70o>