



ESNS TURNS 40: 'EUROPE CALLING' TO LEAD ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN JANUARY

In a world marked by geopolitical tensions, cultural fragmentation and rapid industry shifts, Eurosonic Noorderslag (ESNS) will celebrate its 40th anniversary in January 2026 and responds with a strong, unifying theme: *Europe Calling*.

For four decades, ESNS has been Europe's leading showcase festival and conference for emerging talent, helping to launch the careers of artists such as Dua Lipa, Stromae and Robyn. As the European music sector stands at an important crossroads, the 40th anniversary will not just celebrate the past, but also bring the music sector together to build a shared European future.

Europe Calling

In recent years, ESNS has put the spotlight on different European countries - Poland in 2024, Italy in 2025 - celebrating their unique cultural stories through music. But with rising global geopolitical pressures, the call for European unity has never been more urgent. *Europe Calling* is ESNS's new manifesto: a shift from national spotlights to a shared cultural movement.

"For years, shining a light on individual countries has helped us celebrate Europe's rich diversity, but the challenges we face today demand more," says Anna van Nunen, Managing Director of ESNS. "Now is the time to bring those voices together and build an even stronger, connected European music community. Europe Calling is about more than identity, it's about taking responsibility for our shared future. Music can bring us together. It's time to make that connection louder than ever."

A celebration of 40 years of European music

In addition to showcasing hundreds of Europe's most urgent emerging artists, ESNS26 will proudly celebrate its 40-year anniversary. Expect curated archival deep-dives, exclusive collaborations with media partners, pop-up activations and unique anniversary events that will highlight success stories of artists who started on ESNS stages and went on to shape European music.

These stories will unfold both in the city of Groningen and across digital platforms, making the rich legacy and ongoing impact of European music visible, accessible and celebrated across the continent.

Europe Calling: For our industry. For our culture. For our future

Europe is the second-largest music market in the world, with artists breaking international barriers in their own languages. But this position is not guaranteed. *Europe Calling* is more than a theme, it is a call to action. A rallying cry to invest in artists, in infrastructure and in the future of a unified European music sector.

Read the full Manifesto

Join us in Groningen from January 14 to January 17, 2026, as we celebrate 40 years of groundbreaking European music and shape the next chapter together. You can get your ESNS26 Delegate Pass [here](#).

About ESNS

ESNS is Europe's leading platform showcasing emerging European music talent. Every January, Groningen (NL) hosts the ESNS festival and conference, connecting fresh artists with fans and industry professionals.

Year-round, ESNS supports new talent through initiatives like the European Talent Exchange and presents major awards including the Music Moves Europe Awards, the European Festival Awards, and the Popprijs. It partners with key projects and alliances such as Yourope, EBU, Keychange, and Green Deal Circular Festivals to foster a diverse, sustainable music scene.

Since 1986, ESNS has helped launch careers of artists like AURORA, Stromae, Christine and the Queens, Fontaines D.C., Sigrid, Altin Gün, Priya Ragu, The Haunted Youth, The XX, Robyn, Tramhaus, Sam Smith, Hozier, Zaho de Sagazan, Fat Dog, Judeline, Luvcat, Boko Yout, Antony Szmierek, Kingfishr, Sylvie Kreusch, Arp Frique & The Perpetual Singers. ESNS celebrates its 40th anniversary January 14 - 17, 2026, in Groningen, Netherlands.

Not for publication:

More information, contact & downloads

Download a selection of hi-res photos of ESNS 2025 - [download](#)

Contact ESNS | press@esns.nl

ESNS logo and images - [download](#)

Founding Partner



Partners



Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap

