

13 NOV '25

EMMA BANKS, RAMONES PRODUCER CRAIG LEON AND SZIGET'S TAMÁS KÁDÁR SPEAKING AT ESNS CONFERENCE

Topics include activism on stage, corporatization of the music sector, music export and exchange

ESNS (Eurosonic Noorderslag) announces a new wave of conference highlights for its 40th edition, taking place from January 14 to 17, 2026 in Groningen. None other than music agent Emma Banks, producer Craig Leon, Sziget festival director Tamás Kádár and the Director-general of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), Noel Curran, are attending Europe's largest music conference.

One hour with Emma Banks

Journalist Lisa Henderson invites music agent and Co-Head of Global Touring at Creative Artists Agency (CAA) **Emma Banks** to the stage for an in-depth keynote conversation about her career, the music industry and the future of live music. Banks is one of the most influential figures in the global live music business. From her early days in London's agency scene to leading one of the world's **most powerful touring divisions**, she is shaping the touring landscape for some of the world's biggest artists like Red Hot Chili Peppers, Katy Perry, Paramore and Florence & The Machine (to name but a few!).

From Ramones to the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Producer, composer, and arranger **Craig Leon** comes to ESNS to reflect on his groundbreaking work as a producer for acts like the Ramones. Leon played a pivotal role in shaping the sound and success of artists such as Talking Heads, Blondie, Richard Hell, and Suicide. Exactly fifty years ago, he produced the self-titled debut of the Ramones—a record that would forever redefine the landscape of punk music both in the US and Europe. Expect rare insights into the making of that seminal album, interwoven with behind-the-scenes stories and vivid anecdotes. A masterclass not to be missed.

Sziget, a new chapter

Director of **Sziget Festival Tamás Kádár** will be attending the ESNS Conference to talk about the growing influence of large ownership structures across the festival scene. Private equity firms, corporate takeovers and big investment groups are increasingly shaping the future of live music. We've all heard the stories: artists refusing to play, the unease surrounding companies like KKR and festivals like Sziget forced to quit after acquisition when profit is not high enough. However Kádár is hopeful: "we are fighting for a new chapter of Sziget returning to its independent roots".

When activism meets polarisation

Activism in music has taken center stage over the past year and it's a key theme at the conference in 2026. As the leading expert on polarisation, **Bart Brandsma (Inside Polarisation)**, will explore the correlation between activism and "us versus them" thinking. Understanding these dynamics

and the role that activism plays in today's cultural landscape can lead to more thoughtful conversations and choices about how actively you want to engage.

Director-general of the **European Broadcasting Union (EBU)**, **Noel Curran** is attending the ESNS Conference to explore the future of public service media and cross-border collaboration in Europe. With a distinguished career spanning leadership roles at Ireland's national broadcaster RTÉ and an award-winning background in investigative journalism, Curran brings a unique perspective on how media can serve the public good in a rapidly changing landscape.

House of Europe

Located at the heart of the ESNS Conference, House of Europe is the place where different cultures meet and collaborate. European music export offices will bring flavour to the programming, showcasing the best from their regions — from local talent to culinary delights and cultural traditions. **European Music Exporters Exchange (EMEE)** hosts a session about building bridges through music export and exchange, invitation only.

German Music Export by **Initiative Musik** invites ESNS delegates to test their knowledge of music “made in Germany”. Meet the German artists performing at ESNS 2026 in short live spotlight sessions, fun interviews, and entertaining quiz rounds.

Conference attendees discover the new Catalan music scene while sipping on a 30' Cocktail and enjoying Iberian ham, hosted by **Catalan Arts** and **iCat**.

Experience Italy like never before, with Don Pasta's Food Sound System - Vinyl and Cuisine, presented by **Italian Trade Agency**, **Puglia Sounds**, **Emilia-Romagna Music Export**, **Assomusica**, **Sicily Music Conference** and **Italian World Music Network**.

Bulgarian Music Association, **EU NextGeneration** and **Recovery and Resilience Plan Bulgaria** will bring together artists, managers, festivals, and industry representatives to connect, exchange ideas, and explore opportunities. After the networking reception, prepare for something that can make some of you laugh, but many to cry; the Bulgarian pepper.

Other featured speakers taking the stage at ESNS 2026 include:

Bas Dokter (Agents After All), Barbara Vos (Barbara Vos), Bas van Wageningen (bassist DI-RECT), Ben Wynter (Unstoppable Music, Power Up), Brij Gosai (Pollstar), Canan Yurdakul (EBB Music), Claire O'Neill (A Greener Future), Dorian Perron (Groover), Dr Charisse Beaumont (Black Lives in Music), Dylan Heneck (SubmitHub), Eric Skunck (YouTube), Ernst-Jan Pfauth (journalist, schrijver & media pionier), Froukje (artist), Kevin Cole (KEXP), Koos Zwaan (Inholland University of Applied Sciences), Lesley Grieten (Concert at SEA), Ognjen Tomašević (EXIT Festival), Paulina Parvanov (Austrian Music Export), Peter Verkennis (Stichting Bospop), Roisin O'Connor (The Independent), Ruth Barlow (Beggars Group), Saskhia Menendez (Sassy Records LTD), Tim van der Zalm (Labeltje Labeltje), Tirsa Creusen (Pinkpop), Vasil Gjuroski (Tromsø World).

ESNS26 Tickets

Delegate Passes for ESNS26 are now available at a Late rate at ESNS.nl - Rates will go up soon.

[Purchase a Delegate Pass](#)

- ESNS Delegate Passes include:
- Fast-lane access to 250+ showcases

- Full access to the ESNS Conference
- Networking lounges and hospitality options
- Access the ESNS Delegates Database
- Access ESNS Analytics for up-to-date artist data

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. The final day is dedicated to Noorderslag, the benchmark for Dutch pop music since 1986.

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 Dutch Popprijs. It partners with key organisations and alliances such as Yourope, EBU, 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, 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.

Not for publication:

More information, contact & downloads

Photoselection
ESNS 2026 - artists

[Download](#)

Hi-res Photos
ESNS 2025

[Download](#)

Contact ESNS:
[Nikki McNeill](#)
[Floor Oostra](#)

[Press-mail](#)

ESNS logo

[Logo](#)

Stay connected:



EUROPE CALLING

Founding Partner



Partners

