

For Immediate Release

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Circus, Schools, and Fair Coalition seeks “Next Steps” from the European Parliament

Brussels, Belgium – Urs Pilz, President of the European Circus Association, leading a delegation of representatives from circus, fairs, professional circus schools and the traveling communities, today announced the publication of a comprehensive report on the implementation of the European Parliament’s 2005 Resolution on Circuses. The report was presented to European Parliamentarian Doris Pack, who championed the 2005 Resolution and was recently elected chairwoman of the Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education. The report summarizes progress made on the Parliament’s requests to the European Commission and Member States concerning recognition of circus as culture, mobility of artists and workers, harmonization of technical standards, the education of traveling children and vocational education, which are critical to circuses, fairs and related educational professionals.

“The subjects addressed in the 2005 Resolution are a matter of survival to the thousands of workers and their families who depend on circuses, festivals, funfairs and carnivals for their daily existence,” said Pilz. “Our coalition looks forward to continued collaboration with the Committee to achieve even more in the coming years.”

Entitled “Next Steps,” the report also identifies areas that require further attention. Recommendations aim at further recognition of circus arts as part of European culture and of the important contribution of funfairs to social cohesion and local culture. The report also requests action on artist and worker mobility, citing the United Kingdom’s new system for sponsorship of foreign workers as a possible model for other Member States.

Concerning technical requirements, the report urges action to eliminate contradictory standards that block the free movement of circuses and fairs. Noting the successful creation of a French charter agreement between traveling circuses and local communities, the coalition calls for support for a European-wide charter. Finally, coalition partners identify the need to develop a pilot program for distance learning for travelling students via internet communications with teachers from students’ native countries.

Joining the European Circus Association in the presentation of the report were Mr. Albert Ritter, President of the European Showmen’s Union; Mrs. Annette Schwer, representing the European Network for Traveler Education; Ms. Danijela Jovic, representing the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools; and Father Bernard van Welzenes on behalf of the Forum of Christian Organisations for the Pastoral Care of Circus and Carnival Workers.

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