



The AEC is a European organisation of more than 250 institutions in professional music training in 40 European countries, representing almost 90% of all officially recognised institutions in this sector¹. The membership includes institutions that provide training for music teachers for schools.

The aims of the AEC are to promote European cooperation and intercultural dialogue in the professional music training sector. This is being achieved by various activities, such as seminars, congresses, the publication of documents and websites, and the implementation of European cooperation projects. The ERASMUS Thematic Network for Music “Polifonia” coordinated by the AEC was recently mentioned by the European Commission as an “ERASMUS Success Story”. Through these activities, the AEC has developed substantial expertise on issues related to the synergy between education and culture.

The AEC greatly welcomes the publication of the EU Staff Working Paper “Schools for the 21st Century” and would like to stress the importance of a strong cultural dimension in primary and secondary education.

An active role for music and arts in general education is seen as essential because:

- It helps young people to develop the participation in and the understanding of culture and the music and arts, which will enrich their daily lives
- It develops creative, personal and interpersonal skills that can be essential transferable skills for workers in a knowledge-based society, as referred to in the “The Economy of Culture in Europe” study²
- It can provide social cohesion and intercultural understanding, which is essential for an Europe built on cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue
- It will help to develop the key competence “cultural expression and awareness” as one of 8 key competencies each European citizen should possess to be able to function in a knowledge-based society, as mentioned in the “Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning”.

Therefore, we invite the Commission to:

1. Encourage the EU member states to give music and art education a substantial role in primary and secondary school study programmes
2. Support creative partnerships between schools on the one hand, and music and arts organisations on the other to provide pupils with genuine high-qualitative musical and artistic experiences (e.g. in bands, choirs, orchestras, etc)
3. Use the opportunities offered by the Open Method of Coordination, which already exists in education and is now also suggested for the field of culture in the EU “Communication on a European agenda for culture in a globalising world”, to exchange information on policy developments and examples of good practice in this field
4. Promote investments by the EU member states in specialised music teacher training, in line with the recommendations made in the Communication “Improving the Quality of Teacher Training”
5. Make use of the expertise of the AEC on synergies between education and culture, for example by consulting the AEC in the development of issues and indicators related to cultural education for the Open Method of Coordination.

For more information, please contact Mr Martin Prchal (AEC Chief Executive) at aecinfo@aecinfo.org.

¹ See www.aecinfo.org for more information.

² “Study on the cultural economy in Europe” – study DG EAC 03/05 executed by the partnership KEA European Affairs, Media Group (Turku School of Economics) and MKW Wirtschaftsforschung GmbH (September 2006).