



Association Européenne des
Conservatoires, Académies de
Musique et Musikhochschulen



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Dear colleagues,

The AEC has great pleasure in inviting you to the next edition of

**The AEC Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators in
European Institutions for Higher Music Education (IRCs meeting)**

which will take place in an hybrid form

**as an in-person event at Conservatorio Superior de Música de Vigo, Spain, from 16 to 18
September and online on 3, 13 and 24 September 2021**

What for and for whom?

The Annual Meeting for IRCs is meant for administrative and/or teaching staff members in conservatoires who deal with international relations and European programmes (such as ERASMUS+). The meeting is open also to students interested in the international dimension of their learning. During the meetings, relevant topics in the field of mobility and international cooperation are discussed in plenary sessions, workshops, discussion fora and parallel sessions. The meeting is also a unique platform for networking at European level: participants have the opportunity to develop relations with fellow IRCs, meet project partners and potential partner institutions and show projects and activities that have been developed within their home institution.

Call to Action

working towards inclusiveness and recognition in the new Erasmus programme

The last one and a half year has been challenging for all of us: very few trips and no presential events, reduced human contacts and endless online meetings have changed our private and professional life. Now things are slowly going back to a *new normal* with new challenges coming up: a brand new Erasmus programme generation in a blended/hybrid world, where diversity, inclusiveness and recognition are increasingly important. Are we ready to take an active part in this *brave new world*? It is finally time for the international relations coordinators to get together again and celebrate the 20th anniversary from the very first IRC Meeting, that took place in 2001. September 2021 will be the “IRC month” with a complex and rich programme which will include plenty of **presential and online activities spread between 3rd and 24th September** with a culmination in the **in-person gathering taking place on 16th-18th September** at the **Conservatorio Superior de Música de Vigo, Spain** which has been looking forward to hosting international colleagues since a long time: hopefully this year this long-awaited plan will become a reality! This edition of the IRC meeting is therefore going to be a very special for many reasons: besides its truly **hybrid format** and the IRC anniversary year, this gathering is

going to be the last IRC meeting taking place in the framework of the Creative Europe funded network project “AEC - Strengthening Music in Society” (SMS Project). We are going to close a chapter while already looking at the future!

On **3rd September** the IRC month will open with an **online day dedicated to *New Opportunities***: there will be an introductory session to newcomers and sessions focusing on blended intensive courses, cooperation partnerships, and possibilities for music education institutions in the upcoming Erasmus+ and Creative Europe Programmes. In the afternoon we will reflect on the “Zoom fatigue” we all suffered from in the months and we will look together at new ways of dealing with it in the post-pandemic future. On **13th September** the **online workshop** by the SMS working group on ***Identity, Diversity and Inclusiveness*** entitled “Re-Thinking and Opening Curricula within the new EU mobility programmes” will make participants reflect on what being inclusive and diverse means for higher education institutions.

This new and prominent aspect of the new Erasmus+ Programme will also be addressed during the **first day of our in-person event in Vigo on 16th September**, fully dedicated to the diversity and inclusion topic, including gender issues, sustainability and student involvement. On **17th September, second day of our in-person event in Vigo** will be dedicated to a fundamental issue in international relations, somehow related to the concept of diversity and inclusion: ***Recognition***. A panel of experts, including representatives of the Erasmus+ Students Network will address the recognition issues coming with mobility, both in student and staff mobility and also in vertical international mobility. What is the story of this issue and the state of the art in the new Erasmus+ Programme? Which solutions can be offered by new technologies to overcome recognition issues? Recognition is also a matter of trust, and trust is fed by well-established interpersonal relations that foster mutual understanding and cooperation. That is why, in the best IRC tradition, good practices and information will be exchanged also in the informal setting of a boat **Networking Trip** to the charming Cies Islands, a unique real-life opportunity to catch up with old colleagues and get to know new one to set the basis for new collaborations! During the **third and last day of our in-person event in Vigo, Saturday 18th September**, we will remain on the inclusion topic by addressing the specific and delicate issue of the continuation of international collaborations with UK conservatoires. Our British colleagues will be connected remotely with the onsite audience to us and to keep the connection with the EU colleagues alive after Brexit. Finally, during our usual Information Forum we will give updates on the EASY system and its connection with Erasmus Without Paper, and international projects and initiatives by AEC members will be also presented. The presential meeting will give plenty of opportunities for group discussion during breakout sessions, networking with refreshments and organized meals.

But the IRC month is not over yet with our departure from Vigo: on **24th September** the IRC meeting will come to an end with an **online half-day dedicated to *EASY: Digitization*** is another prominent topic of the new Erasmus+ programme and the AEC is in the forefront with its unique system dedicated to the management of applications for higher music and art education institutions. This year the webinar will focus on the new Learning Agreement and on issues brought up by users especially (but not limited to) the relation with Erasmus Without Papers.

Practical information and procedures to attend the meeting

Join us for this intense IRC month! You can take part online or both online *and* in person in Vigo. Please note that the main plenary sessions taking place in Vigo will be streamed online. At the moment we can welcome to Vigo up to 90 participants (subject to change) so we recommend you to subscribe as soon as possible! This year we have a strict deadline, so please make sure you **subscribe by 31st August**.

Further information, such as the programme of the meeting, information on travel, accommodation and participant fee categories and payment, as well as the registration form can be found at <https://aec-music.eu/event/annual-meeting-for-international-relations-coordinators-2021>

We are very much looking forward to seeing you in Vigo and/or online in September!

Kind regards,

The AEC Office Team and the IRCs working Group