

Minutes of the 2020 General Assembly meeting



Online, 7 November 2020

Eirik Birkeland, AEC President, welcomes the AEC members and opens the AEC General Assembly. He describes the special situation that an AEC General Assembly is held online for the first time in its history. It was checked in advance, with the involvement of all AEC members, whether the necessary legal prerequisites are met so that resolutions made online can become legally binding. This could be affirmed after detailed examination.

1. Minutes of the 2019 General Assembly in Turin

- ✓ The General Assembly approves the Minutes of the 2019 General Assembly.

2. President's Report: Annual Report 2019 and activities to November 2020

- As a detailed report of the year 2019 can be read in the AEC Annual Report (available on [AEC website](#)), the President focuses on AEC's activities and achievements in 2020.
- 2020 has been an intense year, with the Covid-crisis hitting all AEC member institutions. The AEC Council was not able to meet in person for the whole year, the AEC Office staff members worked mainly from home for most of the year, EPARM was postponed to 2021, and it was needed to move to a fully online format both the IRC meeting and the Annual Congress and General Assembly.

AEC COUNCIL

- The AEC Council met three times online in 2020. In addition, Executive Committee met five times between the Council meetings, once in Brussels and four times online. Weekly contact is maintained between the CEO and the President.
- In cooperation with the Office, the 2016-2021 Strategic plan was implemented, focusing on events and platforms, project work, external relations, lobbying activities and communication. Revised Statutes were finalised and membership matters were considered. Staff performance and finances were monitored in particular with regards to the implications of the Covid-19 crisis.

In addition to the Council members elected or re-elected at the General Assembly meeting 2019, two student representatives were invited as co-opted members of the Council. Since the General Assembly meeting 2019, the AEC Council consists of the following representatives:

- President: Eirik Birkeland, Oslo, Norway
- Vice-Presidents: Georg Schulz, Graz, Austria; Deborah Kelleher, Dublin, Ireland
- Secretary General: Harrie Van Den Elsen, Groningen, Netherlands
- Council Members: Ingeborg Radok-Žádná, Prague, Czech Republic; Iñaki Sandoval, Viljandi, Estonia; Lucia Di Cecca, Frosinone, Italy, Zdzisław Łapinski, Krakow, Poland; Kathleen Coessens, Brussels, Belgium; Claire Michon, Poitiers, France; Ivana Perković, Belgrade, Serbia; Jeffrey Sharkey, Glasgow, the United Kingdom
- Co-opted member representing Associate members: Bernard Lanskey, Singapore
- Co-opted representatives of the Student Working Group and Network: Eline Accoe, Leuven, Belgium; Miranda Harmer, Leeds, the United Kingdom

Personnel changes within the AEC Office:

- Stefan Gies, Linda Messas, Paulina Gut, Sara Primiterra and Alfonso Guerra have continued their work.
- Chiara Conciatori started as Communication Officer in January, after completing internships with AEC and with MusiQuE.
- Barbara Lalić started as Office and Project Coordinator in August to replace Esther Nass who left the Office at the end of May after 2.5 years with the team.
- Carla Larrauri stayed with AEC after her internship to help the Team with the challenges related to lock-down and substantially push forward to *AEC Goes Green* agenda.
- Several student interns have joined the staff during 2020.

AEC ACTIVITIES according to Pillars of the Strategic Plan:

Pillar 1: Enhancing quality in Higher Music Education

- AEC has made substantial progress in its exploration of student-centred learning, digitisation, entrepreneurship, internationalisation (all topics addressed within the SMS project). AEC collected practices related to the various digital tools for learning, teaching and performing when the lock-down started.
- Artistic research has also been high on the agenda, even though the EPARM meeting had to be postponed.
- AEC organised 1 event face to face and 2 online events, where staff and students from member institutions discussed, brainstormed, and exchanged ideas and best practices.
 - Pop and Jazz Platform, Ghent (7-8 February)
 - SMS Network Meeting, Online (18-19 March)
 - (EPARM Conference, London - postponed)
 - IRC Meeting, Online (24-25 September)
 - AEC Annual Congress and GA, Online (5-7 November)
- AEC continued its cooperation with MusiQuE

Pillar 2: Promoting participation, inclusiveness and diversity

- AEC continued to promote participation and diversity in its own activities by encouraging feedback from the various regions. It has started to brainstorm about the link between AEC as an organisation and the regions in which its members are situated, with the aim to improve the way AEC enables its members to participate and are related to each other while learning from their diversity.
- Finally, AEC continued to work towards increasing student voice and student participation in the association (in its strategic planning and activities), as well as in higher music education generally. The Student WG reached out to students to support them during the lock-down period.

Pillar 3: Strengthening partnership and interaction with stakeholders

- AEC maintained its collaborations with partner organisations despite the Covid-19 crisis:
 - Under the leadership of AEC, 12 organisations and transnational networks dealing with Artistic Research in Europe made significant collaborative work which resulted in the policy paper named The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research. The declaration advocates for full recognition of Artistic research also within OECD's Frascati Manual.
 - In the framework of the SMS project, the close cooperation continued with:

- The European Music School Union (EMU)
- The European Association for Music in Schools (EAS)
- Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe (Pearle*)
- The Centre of Excellence of Music Performance Education of the Norwegian Academy of Music (CEMPE)
- AEC was also in constant and close contact with various organisations in the culture and/or educational fields (with some Council members and the CEO involved themselves on the Board of other organisations).
- Finally, among others, an event was jointly organised with IMZ, and a project application submitted together with the EUA.

Other than abovementioned, AEC has also enhanced cooperation with:

- ELIA, Cumulus, Cilect
- SAR - Society of Artistic Research
- European Music Council (EMC) and International Music Council (IMC)
- Culture Action Europe
- ENCATC
- IMZ - International Music and Media Centre
- European University Foundation (EUF)
- European Jazz Network (EJN)
- European University Association (EUA)
- REMA - European Early Music Network
- Opera Europa
- NASM, SEADOM

Pillar 4: Fostering the value of music and music education in society

- AEC has made substantial progress in exploring the contemporary potential and the challenges musicians and HMEIs are facing in society, and how these interact with the complex responsibilities that HMEIs have, artistically, educationally, economically, socially and environmentally.
- AEC continued its advocacy activities: meetings and “smalltalk advocacy” have unfortunately considerably slowed down, but to a certain extent, new opportunities have also emerged through online meetings. AEC issued policy papers in relation to Brexit and contributed to discussions related to the EU Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027. Since March, most of the advocacy initiatives have been dealing with the consequences of the Covid-crisis on artist and therefore on advocating for a central place for culture in the EU recovery.

AEC PROJECTS 2020

Strengthening Music in Society (December 2017-2021)

- The SMS project is at the core of AEC activities and actions since 2018 and allows AEC to explore and address various issues that are crucial to the sustainability of AEC institutions and the higher music education sector, as it has been the case during this Congress.
- All of the SMS Working Groups continued working and produced considerable outcomes.
- SMS website sms.aec-music.eu has been launched in September where the working groups uploaded their articles and publications. The full publication on practices in HME institutions in relation to diversity is available on the website.

Other projects in which AEC is involved:

- NEWS IN MAP, Erasmus+, 2019-2021
- INTERMUSIC, Erasmus+, 2017-2020
- European Opera Academy, Erasmus+, 2019-2021
- Opera Vision, 2017-2020
- Opera Incanto, Creative Europe, 2018-2020
- Opera out of Opera, Creative Europe, 2018-2020
- SWING, Erasmus+, 2018-2021
- SWAIP, Erasmus+, 2018-2020
- DEMUSIS, Erasmus+, 2019-2022
- METRIC, 2019-
- ECMA PRO, Creative Europe, 2020-2024
- PRIhME, Erasmus+, 2020-2023
- HarMA+, Erasmus+, 2020-2023
- RAPPLab, Erasmus+, 2020-2023
- LOTUS, Erasmus+, 2020-2023

3. Elections to the Executive Committee and the Council and announcement of the results

In previous years, there always were two returning officers who were overseeing the counting of the ballots. Previous officers Heinz Geuen (Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln) and Lies Colman (Royal Conservatoire Antwerp) ended their two-year terms last year. Given that the voting procedure has to take place exclusively online this year and is undertaken through a dedicated voting software, with transparent results which can be shared immediately with the membership, the Council has decided to appoint only one returning officer, whose appointment will be exclusively for 2020. The returning officer proposed by the Council is Núria Sempere from ESMUC, Barcelona, Spain.

- ✓ The General Assembly elects Núria Sempere as returning officer for 2020.

One vacant seat is available for the Executive Committee: Vice-President Georg Schulz is finishing his second term and is not eligible for reelection. There one application for the post from Elisabeth Gutjahr from Mozarteum University in Salzburg, Austria.

- Article 8.3 of the current AEC Statutes states that 'The members of the Council including the Executive Committee are elected by the General Assembly from the representatives of active member institutions.'

- In addition, in the document called Eligibility, Profile, Role and Duties of the AEC Vice-President which was shared with the membership as part of the call for candidatures, it was announced that the candidate should preferably be a currently or previously serving member of the AEC Council.

Since Elisabeth Gutjahr has served on AEC Council until 2019, the Council endorsed her candidature.

- ✓ The General Assembly elects Elisabeth Gutjahr as Vice-President of the AEC (80 valid votes, 76 yes, 0 no, 4 abstentions).

One vacant seat is available for the Council. There are 2 applications for the post from Udo Dahmen from Popakademie Baden-Württemberg (Mannheim, Germany) and Rico Gubler from University of Music Lübeck (Lübeck, Germany).

- ✓ The General Assembly elects Rico Gubler as member of the AEC Council (84 valid votes, 34 votes for Udo Dahmen, 48 votes for Rico Gubler, 2 abstentions).

4. Revision of the AEC Statutes

During the last General Assembly in Turin, the Active Members of AEC voted to approve revised Statutes. In retrospect it has become clear that the decision making process at the last GA did not meet the formal requirements that would have been necessary for the decision to become legally effective. It is therefore necessary to submit the AEC Statutes to the General Assembly again.

AEC used this opportunity to thoroughly review and revise the text once again, to correct errors and to make some further adjustments. AEC members have been informed about the newly revised version in late June and asked to send feedback by 31 August. As the few feedback received was without exception positive and supportive, no changes were made compared to the version that was circulated in June.

Before proceeding to the vote, AEC President Eirik Birkeland points out article 12 of the current AEC statutes which states that: “The number of active members participating in a vote on any amendment to the articles of the association must amount to at least one third of the eligible membership at that time for the vote to be valid. As AEC has currently 254 active members, at least 85 active members voting are necessary. In addition current statutes state that: “Any resolution with regard to the amendment of the articles of Association can only be adopted with a majority of three-quarters of the votes cast at the meeting”.

Members present proceed to voting which is repeated due to connection issues. In the first vote there are 84 valid votes with 82 approvals and 2 abstentions. In the repeated voting procedure, there are 82 valid votes with 79 approvals and 3 abstentions.

- ➔ The quorum of 85 active members voting is not reached and the revised Statutes are not approved.

5. Action Plan 2021 and Communication Strategy

AEC identified several directions for AEC’s work in 2021:

- Creating framework conditions that enable fair and reliable power relations
- Promoting student-centred and collaborative practices of learning and teaching
- Making AEC more environment-friendly and sustainable
- Promoting digitisation and entrepreneurship to strengthen Music HEI graduates' employability
- Enhancing the societal relevance of Music HEIs

In addition, AEC has prepared a list of actions for 2020 under each of the 4 pillars of the Strategic Plan. *AEC invites its members to carefully read the directions and initiatives of the Action Plan 2020, and to comment and react by 1 December 2020.*

6. Approval of the extension and revision of the current AEC Strategic Plan (2016-2021) report of the Vice-President

The current AEC Strategic Plan, which shapes the direction of AEC's activities, is valid until the end of 2021 (AEC Strategic Plan 2016-2021). This means that a new Strategic Plan should normally be drafted during 2021 and submitted to AEC General Assembly (GA) for approval during the GA meeting in November 2021.

However, the composition of AEC Executive Committee (ExCom) will change in November 2022, with the second term of three ExCom members coming to an end and the seats of President, Vice-President and Secretary General becoming vacant. It therefore seems counter-productive for AEC Council to engage in drafting a new Strategic Plan that would be valid from January 2022 onwards and which AEC Council and Office would not be able to implement beyond the first year. In addition, the new leadership arriving in November 2022 should have the freedom to change the Plan after stepping in, if they wish to do so.

As a result, the AEC Council is proposing to extend the period of the current strategic plan (2016-2021) until the end of 2023 (i.e. 2 more years) and to revise and update it in order to better reflect AEC's current priorities.

- ✓ The General Assembly approves the extension and revision of the current AEC Strategic Plan (2016-2021) report of the Secretary General (81 valid votes, 75 yes, 2 no, 4 abstentions)

7. Policy on Working Groups and Platforms

The policy document on Working Groups and Platforms is discussed. The document explains that, if a stable, reliable and content-wise convincing initiative emerges from among the AEC membership, AEC may support such initiatives by providing access to its network, advice, assistance with applying for funding and logistical support. The document then gives key criteria to gain AEC support in the matter:

- a clearly defined field of activity;
- promoting the mission and vision and the key values of AEC;
- a convincing concept and clear and workable goals;
- the existence of a committed core group in which members from at least three countries collaborate;
- the willingness to take on voluntary work serving the objective of the initiative;
- the willingness to make the activities carried out in the respective Working Group or Platform to other AEC members and to share the results of the work with them;
- the willingness to actively campaign for diversity, in particular geographical and generational diversity and gender balance.

8. Financial report of the Secretary General

Harrie van den Elsen, AEC Secretary General, presents the financial report. The report covers the following five topics:

- The AEC Accounts for 2019
- Approval of the proposed membership fees for 2021

- Approval of the forecast outturn 2020
- Approval of the proposed budget for 2021
- Appointment of external auditors for the 2020 accounts

Annual Accounts for 2019

The Secretary General informs that external auditors Melissa Mercadal (Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, Barcelona) and Peter Tornquist (Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo) both recommended approval of the 2019 Accounts and he expressed gratitude for their work.

- ✓ The members present approve the annual accounts for 2019 with 3 abstentions.

Proposed membership fees for 2021

In accordance to the principles of the Sustainability Plan approved at the 2017 GA, the following is proposed:

- The countries are assembled in 10 different categories depending on their 2019 GNI.
- All 2021 membership fees are adjusted in line with the inflation rate (+1.5%).
- In addition, for active members based in Luxembourg, Switzerland, Norway, Ireland, Iceland, Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Finland, France, UK and Italy, the membership fees are raised by $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total raise envisioned by 2022.
- A raise of 25% is applied for institutions in with more than 700 students, and a decrease of 25% for institutions with less than 200 students. For institutions in with 200-700 students, the fee is not further adjusted.
- As in previous years, a discount of 5% will be applied to the figures listed in the document, if the payment to AEC is made before 01/04/2021.
- In addition, a discount of 10% is offered to member institutions who are member of both AEC and ELIA, if the students concerned by each organization are indeed counted twice.

- ✓ The General Assembly approves the proposed membership fee levels for 2021 (79 valid votes, 66 yes, 4 no, 9 abstentions)

Forecast outturn 2020

The 2020 finances did not develop in line with expectations due to the Covid-19 crisis and postponing or reformatting of activities and events. The Creative Europe grant for the SMS project offered great level of flexibility so the financial consequences shall be limited. The expected result for 2020 is 4'506.69 euros.

Income 2020

- The income from membership fees in 2020 shall continue raising, as 2020 is the second implementation year of the sustainability plan.
- AEC is expected to lose about 117'000 EUR of events fees as events had to be cancelled or were organised online with lower participation fees.
- In relation to project grants:
 - AEC is still receiving 250'000 euros per year for the SMS project activities and staff (until November 2021). An amendment has been

sent to the European Commission to reallocate expenses planned on travel and accommodation costs to other expenses (such as website, publication, and staff costs).

- AEC is receiving several grants from Strategic Partnerships and Creative Europe projects. However, the extent to which budgets for travel and accommodation can be reallocated is not certain.
- The income from EASY remained stable.
- Finally, it is important to note that the AEC Council was asked by MusiQuE if the amounts reimbursed by MusiQuE to AEC every year (for the costs of staff put at MusiQuE's disposal by AEC) could be renegotiated. AEC agreed that MusiQuE would reimburse in 2020 and in 2021 a smaller percentage of staff costs.

Expenditures 2020

- The total staff costs shall raise as a result of staff changes in the office (namely the creation of the position of Finance and Membership Coordinator in October 2019) as well as due to a progressive raise of salaries (this was the third year of the substantial salary raise planned by 2022 in accordance with the principles of the sustainability plan)
- In relation to events, travel and office costs:
 - Events costs are much lower due a move to the online format for IRC and Congress and PJP costs being moved to the SMS budget.
 - Travel costs and Council costs reduced due to the online format of meetings.
 - Office costs are still high, as new computer equipment is needed to ensure that staff can work properly from home.
- Project expenses for SMS are slightly lower as some costs were reallocated to staff costs. Costs spent on other project activities vary from year to year depending on the project plan.
- The service fee for EASY software has increased in accordance with the number of applications received by all EASY partner institutions.
- ✓ The General Assembly approves the forecast outturn 2020 with 6 abstentions.

Proposed budget for 2021

The proposed budget is a careful prediction of a scenario in which all 2021 events of AEC would have to be held online, while some working group meetings could still take place. The proposed budget shows a result of 700 EUR.

Income of 2021

- Based on the principles of the Sustainability Plan, AEC's income from membership fees shall further increase in 2021 while income from events fees shall decrease.
- In relation to project income: the SMS grant shall remain at its 2020 level while the income from other projects is expected to decrease.
- The participation from AEC members in the EASY system is expected to remain stable and AEC is expected to receive a fee to coordinate the METRIC network.

- Finally, MusiQuE shall significantly decrease its reimbursement to AEC for the staff put at its disposal.

Expenditures 2021

- Staff costs shall slightly raise in line with the 4-year salary raise plan.
 - Events costs shall be moved entirely to the SMS budgets. Other travel costs will drastically decrease, and office costs should be reduced compared to 2020.
 - SMS project expenses shall remain similar to 2020 and expenses for other projects shall decrease.
 - Finally, the EASY service fee shall remain at its 2020 level, but a small part of it could exceptionally be covered by the SMS project grant.
- ✓ The General Assembly approves the forecast outturn 2020 with 4 abstentions.

Appointment of two auditors for the 2020 accounts

- ✓ The General Assembly approves the appointment of Peter Tornquist, Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo (who already served last year) and Małgorzata Sternal, Academy of Music in Krakow as external auditors for the 2020 accounts with 3 abstentions.

9. Matters related to the European subject-specific quality assurance agency for music, MusiQuE

Martin Prchal, the Chair of the MusiQuE Board, updates the General Assembly about MusiQuE's recent activities (2019-2020) and developments.

There are currently 2 vacant seats for 1 Board member and 1 Student Board member. A call for applications was launched by MusiQuE in July 2020.

The AEC Council asks the General Assembly to endorse two recommendations for the candidates to be proposed by AEC.

- ✓ The General Assembly endorses the following recommendation from the AEC Council to the MusiQuE Board: *“For the Board of MusiQuE, the AEC Council nominates the following candidates (in alphabetical order): Philippe Dinkel, Orla McDonagh and Jacques Moreau, based on their solid background and experience.”* (77 valid votes, 71 yes, 0 no, 6 abstentions).
- ✓ The General Assembly endorses the following recommendation from the AEC Council to the MusiQuE Board: *“The AEC Council also supports the appointment by MusiQuE of Ankna Arockiam as the new student Board member.”* (75 valid votes, 72 yes, 1 no, 2 abstentions).

10. Confirmation of new members, withdrawals and expired memberships

The following institutions have been accepted as Active Members:

- Conservatorio di Musica ‘Giovan Battista Martini’ (Bologna, Italy)
- Kurmangazy, Kazakh National Conservatory (Almaty, Kazakhstan)
- Vilniaus Kolegija, University of Applied Sciences (Vilnius, Lithuania)
- Ege University, Turkish Music State Conservatory (Izmir, Turkey)

The following institutions have been accepted as Associate Members:

- Golden Jazz, Contemporary Music Institute (CMI) (Zhuhai, China)
- Sichuan Piano Institute (Chengdu, China)
- Sunway University, School of Arts (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia)

The following institutions have withdrawn their membership:

- *(active)* Prayner Konservatorium Wien (Vienna, Austria)
- *(active)* Vienna Konservatorium (Vienna, Austria)
- *(active)* Kalaidos Musikhochschule (Aarau, Switzerland)
- *(associate)* Manhattan School of Music (New York, USA)

Finally, memberships with 2 years of non-payment of the membership fee are expired. The following memberships have been expired in 2020:

- Conservatorio di Musica "San Pietro a Majella" (Napoli, Italy)
- Conservatory Municipal de Thermi (Thermi, Greece)
- Kazakh National University of Arts (Astana, Kazakhstan)
- Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music (Kyiv, Ukraine)
- Cairo Conservatoire of Music (Giza, Egypt)

Taking these changes into account, AEC ends 2020 with 283 members.

11. Future congresses

- 2021: Royal Conservatoire Antwerp, Antwerp
- 2022: CNSMD Lyon, Lyon