AEC Strategic Plan 2016-2023 (revised in 2021)

Vision

AEC is the leading voice for Higher Music Education in Europe, a powerful advocate for its member institutions.

AEC understands and supports music and arts education, together with cultural participation, as central contributors to quality in human life, and inclusive societies founded on democratic values.

AEC sees professionally focused arts education as a quest for excellence in three areas: artistic practice; learning and teaching; research and innovation. It seeks to foster these elements and to encourage the diversity and dynamism with which they are pursued in different institutions, countries and regions.

Mission

AEC works for the advancement of Higher Education in the performing arts, primarily focusing on music. It does this based on three pillars:

- Pillar 1: Fostering the value of music and music education in society
- Pillar 2: Enhancing quality in Higher Music Education
- Pillar 3: Promoting participation, inclusiveness and diversity

AEC operates inclusively, sustainably, efficiently and effectively, enabling communication and sharing of good practice.

Pillar 1: Fostering the value of music and music education in society

- AEC will represent and advance the interests of the Higher Music Education sector at national, European and global levels for the greater societal good, by:

> ➢ Acting as a "Higher Music Education trend scout" and reacting to societal change
>
> ➢ Empowering artists as makers in society pro-actively contributing to strengthening social coherence
>
> ➢ Strengthening lobbying at the level of the European institutions in order to create understanding for the distinctive value and identity of the arts and of Higher Music Education
>
> ➢ Developing an advocacy toolkit for its member institutions enabling them to strengthen advocacy and lobbying at national, regional and local level

- AEC will work to increase opportunity and access to Music Education, by:

> ➢ Further developing and innovating music education, from the scope and responsibilities of institutions to learning & teaching and curriculum design
>
> ➢ Promoting early childhood music education and strengthening the STEAM approach in general education
>
> ➢ Supporting its member institutions in the provision of music teachers for general and specialist schools equipped with appropriate artistic and educational skills

- AEC will assist its members in engaging audiences in an evolving cultural environment and in exploring the musical needs in society, by:

> ➢ Gathering and sharing examples of good practices and innovative approaches that Higher Music Education institutions have identified as helpful in their work to increasing audience inclusivity and diversity
>
> ➢ Engaging in dialogue with cultures and traditions of knowledge transfer that differ from the traditional conservatoire culture, promoting the integration of more diverse learning and teaching approaches among its member institutions

Pillar 2: Enhancing quality in Higher Music Education

- AEC will promote excellence across Europe in relation to artistic practice, learning & teaching and research & innovation, by:

> - Investigating, advocating and disseminating innovative practice in all three fields
> - Encouraging quality enhancement, among others through a sustained cooperation with MusiQuE
> - Promoting the understanding of artistic research as a means of ensuring deeper musical engagement
> - Supporting member institutions in the delivery of high-level pre-college music studies
> - Striving for an environment-friendly and green Higher Music Education sector, including in relation to mobility

- AEC will foster internationalisation, by:

> - Promoting and encouraging exchange among its members at European level and beyond
> - Supporting the work of the International Relations Coordinators in its member institutions
> - Endorsing the benefits of internationalisation at home and with regard to its impact on the future careers of graduates

- AEC will support the education of graduates with high professional standards, well prepared to work in a diverse and rapidly changing, globalised society, by:

> - Assisting its member institutions in exploring and developing new learning & teaching models embracing both traditional and wider professional developments, in order to educate creative and communicative musicians
> - Promoting the integration of entrepreneurial skills to prepare students for their future roles as musicians
> - Promoting the integration of communicative and technical skills to prepare graduates to efficiently and appropriately use digital technologies in music performance and music education
> - Raising consciousness for the responsibility of artists as makers in society and for the social responsibility of Higher Music Education institutions

Pillar 3: Promoting participation, inclusiveness and diversity

- AEC will promote the diversity of approaches to Higher Music Education, by:

> ➢ Shaping and implementing fair, inclusive, diverse and gender equal frameworks in Higher Music Education Institutions
> ➢ Opening up Higher Music Education Institutions to diverse musical traditions and genres, cultures and languages and facilitating their intersections
> ➢ Involving leaders, administrators, teachers, students and external stakeholders in further promoting diversity
> ➢ Encouraging its member institutions to ensure equal opportunities to all individuals, regardless of their sex, colour, ethnic or social origin, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, disability, age or sexual orientation
> ➢ Empowering Higher Music Education Institutions to deal with power relation issues

- AEC will support its members in different regions of Europe in ways that are appropriately tuned to their diverse needs and priorities, by:

> ➢ Further developing 'regional fora' based on the existing allocation of individual regional responsibilities to Council members
> ➢ Offering country-specific support services and developing mechanisms to strengthen participation in its activities, including special support for institutions with modest financial resources
> ➢ Engaging with national and European policy-makers and organisations

- AEC will strengthen the student voice inside the association and its membership, by:

> ➢ Supporting students in exploring ways in which their voice can be increased at European and at institutional level
> ➢ Encouraging its members to strengthen student-centred learning and assessment
> ➢ Engaging students in sharing their views in relation to the association's activities and work

Ensuring operational excellence

1. AEC will perform all the functions of an effective and efficient member association, with clear governance and a well-run, proficient and dedicated office team, by:
- Ensuring regular information exchanges and physical meetings among the AEC CEO, the AEC President, the AEC office team, the AEC ExCom and Council
- Reviewing regularly the organisational structure, the internal communication, the functions and the allocation of tasks within AEC Council, between AEC Council and AEC office team members, and between AEC office team members
- Reviewing regularly the performance of all individuals involved in the governance and running of the association

2. AEC will strengthen its financial sustainability and strive to become more independent from project funding, by:
- Exploring various funding strategies and their feasibility
- Developing a sustainable financial model that enables it to function at the level required by its membership

3. AEC will strengthen and improve the communication to and from members, by:
- Further developing the communication to members on its activities and work and on relevant political developments
- Regularly expanding its channels to share information and reviewing what AEC can do for its members and what they can contribute to the association (including in relation to the organisation of events, seminars and training sessions)
- Improving and expanding its channels to share information about members' activities and practices and to promote them within and outside the membership
- Sharing with the full membership results and practices of projects and initiatives undertaken by smaller groups of institutions
- Enhancing its contacts database to increase its outreach to students and teachers and to gather individual and institutional expertise in certain clearly defined areas

4. AEC will strengthen partnership and interaction with stakeholders, by:
- engaging with organisations dealing with higher education policy at European level
- connecting the levels and branches of the music education sector, helping it to become a united voice for music within the cultural and political debate
- intensifying dialogue with organisations across all art disciplines dealing with arts practise, artistic research, arts education and interdisciplinarity