

Annual report 2020

Members, activities, policies and finances



Association Européenne des
Conservatoires, Académies de
Musique et Musikhochschulen

About the AEC annual report 2020

Each year, the AEC publishes an Annual Report in accordance with proper accounting practice but, more specifically, with its statutes, whose article 11.4 states that 'The report will include a balance sheet and a profit-and-loss statement. It will also provide a detailed account of the administrative tasks performed in the preceding financial year'. In addition to fulfilling this statutory requirement, this report aims to outline the different areas of AEC's work in 2020, explaining the Association's financial position as well as its activities, discussions, developments and events.

Full information on the financial situation of the AEC can be found in the AEC 2020 annual accounts. In this Annual Report, only the key elements of the Annual Accounts are included, but members wishing to receive the entire AEC 2020 Annual Accounts can do so by contacting the AEC Office at info@aec-music.eu.

This report is available for downloading in PDF-format from the Publications section of the AEC website (www.aec-music.eu).

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1. Message from the President

It is a great pleasure to present the Annual Report for 2020 of the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC).

2020 has been a special year, marked by the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Since early spring, most European countries have been locked-down for long periods. The cultural and educational sectors have been heavily affected and there has been a strive within higher music education to keep up ordinary activities by going online. The last AEC event taking place on the site was the Pop and Jazz Platform (PJP) Meeting in Ghent, Belgium on 7-8 February 2020.

AEC has, despite all challenges, managed to keep a high level of activity. The online Congress and General Assembly, partly hosted by the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw) was the central meeting place for our member institutions. Other major online events have been the Annual Meeting for International Relation Coordinators 24-25 September and the REMA Early Music Summit on 20-22 November.

AEC's flagship project, AEC-SMS – Strengthening Music in Society, launched in September a [new project website](#) disseminating the outputs from the working groups, among them a central document in the AEC-SMS project, the Academic Paper [Musicians as "Makers in Society": A Conceptual Foundation for Contemporary Professional Higher Music Education](#)". AEC was also involved as a partner in a number of other Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships and Creative Europe projects with the aim of supporting our member institutions in exploring and developing new models for educating creative and communicative musicians.

Together with our partner organisations the AEC has continued its advocacy activities in order to create understanding among the European decision-makers for the distinctive value and identity of the arts and higher music education.

Central on the agenda has been the collaborative work for securing financial support to the Cultural and Creative sectors during the COVID-19 crisis, for strengthening the freedom of artistic expression and for obtaining recognition by OECD for artistic research as a fully eligible research field.

The AEC finances have, despite the uncertainty connected to the pandemic, resulted in a comfortable surplus at the end of the year. It is also good to know that the heavy challenges during the lockdown of society have given us some valuable knowledge and experience on how to further develop the use of digital tools and reduce our carbon footprint in the near future.

I would like to thank all AEC members for your contribution. It is from your commitment AEC derives its strength and power to meet the challenges of the future. I will also express my deep gratitude to the AEC Vice-Presidents, Secretary General and the members of the Council for your wisdom and support, and not least to CEO Stefan Gies and Deputy CEO Linda Messas and the dedicated office team for your excellent work throughout the challenging year 2020.

Eirik Birkeland
President of the AEC



2. AEC's vision and mission

Vision

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

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.

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.

Mission

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

Pillar 1: Enhancing quality in Higher Music Education

- Promoting excellence across Europe in relation to artistic practice, learning & teaching and research & innovation.
- Fostering internationalisation.
- Supporting the education of graduates with high professional standards, well prepared to work in a diverse and rapidly changing, globalised society.

Pillar 2: Fostering the value of music and music education in society

- Representing and advancing the interests of the Higher Music Education sector at national, European and global levels for the greater societal good.
- Working to increase opportunity and access to Music Education.
- Assisting its members in engaging audiences in an evolving cultural environment and in exploring the musical needs in society.

Pillar 3: Promoting participation, inclusiveness and diversity

- Promoting the diversity of approaches to Higher Music Education.
- Supporting its members in different regions of Europe in ways that are appropriately tuned to their diverse needs and priorities.
- Strengthening the student voice inside the association and its membership.

Pillar 4: Strengthening partnership and interaction with stakeholders

- 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.
- Strengthening dialogue with organisations dealing with arts practice, arts education and culture and strengthening interdisciplinarity.

In 2020, progress has been made in relation to each of these pillars, through a range of events, activities and projects, as reported in the following pages.

3. Events

AEC organises events in order to promote the exchange of practices, ideas and people within its member institutions at European level and provide staff from Higher Music Education (HME) institutions with opportunities for professional development and career advancement.

Pop and Jazz Platform (PJP) Meeting



- Date and location: 7–8 February, KASK & Conservatorium / School of Arts Gent, Ghent (Belgium).
- Theme: *Sound*.
- Number of participants: 188.

The Pop and Jazz Platform (PJP) Meeting took place in Ghent, Belgium on 7–8 February at the Music department of KASK & Conservatorium Ghent. The theme of the conference was “Sound”, perfectly resonating with the music department’s educational profile with departments in music production, jazz and pop music with a focus on cross-over education to stimulate the combination of learning an instrument and creating your own music. A group of artists, teachers and experts went deep in the discussion on the conference theme and the aspects of sound in music education today. For more information on this event, please visit the [2020 PJP Meeting webpage](#).

Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators (IRCs)

- Date and location: 24–25 September, online.
- Theme: *Ready to Change? Digitisation, crisis management and green thinking for a sustainable future.*
- Number of participants: 195.

The Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators (IRCs) 2020 took place as an online event. The big umbrella topic of this meeting was the sustainability of internationalisation and mobility and included sessions and discussions addressing the world pandemic crisis that impacted considerably our professional and personal lives in the recent months. The meeting also featured two pre-conference webinar on the well-being of international students and on crisis management, and a webinar on the functionalities of the EASY system. The 2020 edition was the third IRC meeting delivered within the AEC – Strengthening Music in Society project supported by the Creative Europe Programme. For more information on this event, please visit the [2020 IRC Meeting webpage](#).



47th Annual Congress and General Assembly



- Date and location: 6–7 November, online, co-hosted by University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna.
- Theme: *Going On(line) – Connecting Communities in the Digital Age*.
- Number of participants: 411.

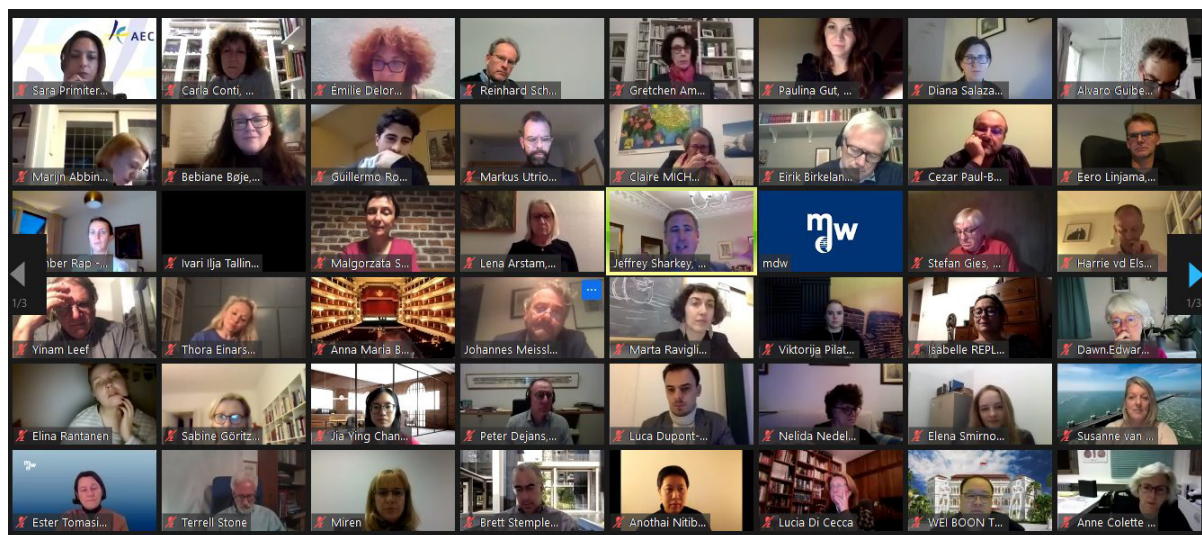
The AEC Annual Congress 2020 was a very special congress that forced organisers and hosts to break new grounds. When it turned out to be clear that there was no possibility for the original plan to hold the congress in Antwerp, AEC was happy and incredibly grateful for the commitment of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw) to fill in at short notice. Mdw has outstanding facilities and technical infrastructures and spontaneously agreed to take the risk of hosting an AEC Congress whose precise course of events might have only been known at the last minute.

It seemed reasonable to address the special challenge that is triggered by this special time in terms of content at this congress, but also to link it in

a meaningful way to the leitmotif of AEC's current Creative Europe project: Strengthening Music in Society. Albeit in a form adapted to the technical and communicative possibilities of online transmission, this AEC Congress 2020 aimed, more than ever, at connecting communities and constituencies that are divided by physical distance – among other barriers – and are therefore more and more in need to communicate, exchange, confront and collaborate. As usual and despite the constraints given by the situation, the AEC Congress offered a whole gathering of workshops, discussion forums, best practice presentations, panels and plenaries to work together to find constructive and forward-looking solutions.

This congress gave also space to try out new forms of presentation and communication. This did not include only the use of chat rooms, but also teleconferencing systems that enable musical interaction on the Internet. Via LoLa, Milan and Tallinn were connected to Vienna as part of a pan-European network and acting as co-hosts of AEC Congress 2020.

For more information on this event, please visit the [2020 Congress and General Assembly webpage](#).



REMA Early Music Summit

- Date and location: 20–22 November, online.
- Theme: *Our Future Past: Early Music in Context*.
- Number of participants: 505.

[REMA](#), the European Network for Early Music in collaboration with the [AEC](#), organised an Early Music Summit online on 20–22 November 2020.

The conference assessed and took a critical look at the current state and future of Early Music in respect of performance, education, research, instrument-making, musicology, and concert promotion. As well as keynote speeches, panel debates, Q&A sessions, and parallel forums covering a variety of thematic strands, there have been digital networking possibilities, poster sessions on groundbreaking research topics, live music performances, and Showcase concerts exploring innovative presentations given by young international ensembles in Bozar, Brussels. The sessions related to early music education organised in cooperation with the AEC Early Music Task Force took place online on Saturday 21st November but AEC members have been welcome to take part in all the event sessions and concerts.

The Programme organised by the AEC can be found on the [webpage of the event on the AEC website](#). Please find the full programme at [the official webpage of the event by REMA](#).



4. AEC Flagship Project: AEC-SMS – Strengthening Music in Society (2017–2021)

AEC coordinates projects to work on core issues from the sector, to foster the value of music, to enhance quality in Higher Music Education (HME), and to develop and promote capacity building among its members.

Within the project AEC – Strengthening Music in Society (AEC-SMS), AEC supports and encourages Music Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to adapt to change, embrace innovation and open up new fields of activities.

Progress achieved in 2020

In 2020 (which was the third year of the AEC-SMS project, running until November 2021), AEC launched the [new project's website](#) in September 2020, disseminating the outputs of the different working groups. AEC continued to work on the following themes and outcomes together with experts from AEC membership and partner organisations:

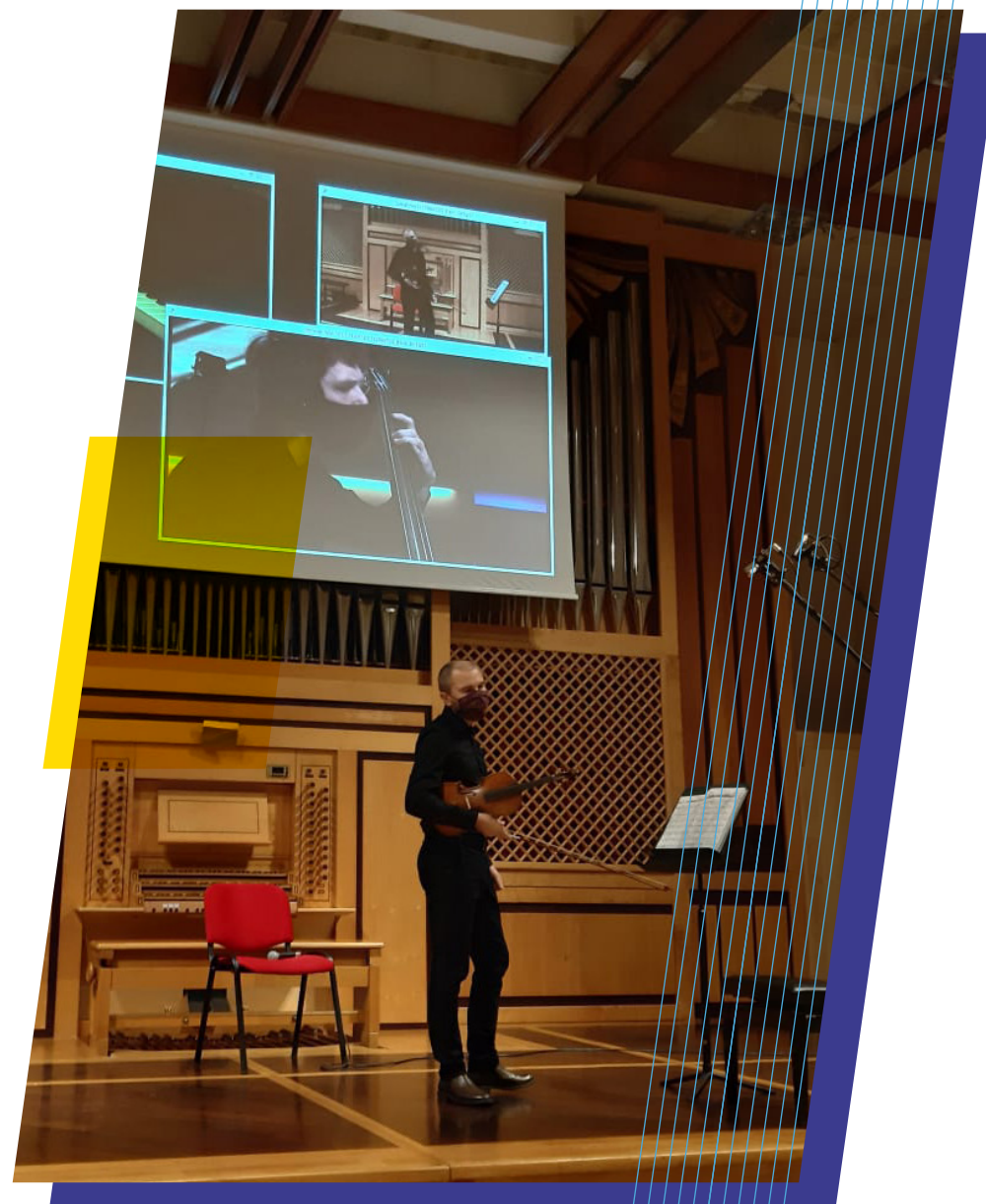
- In addition to a selective annotated bibliography related to the themes addressed by the SMS project, the [Working Group on Higher Music Education Institutions' \(HMEIs'\) Role in Society](#) has been preparing an Academic Paper informed by research. The Paper [Musicians as "Makers in Society": A Conceptual Foundation for Contemporary Professional Higher Music Education](#) sets the rationale for SMS, problematises the fundamental challenges in creating an appropriate education process, as well as the opportunities, and encourages institutions to rethink the nature of HME along these lines.
- The [Working Group on Diversity, Identity and Inclusiveness](#) launched [its first publication](#) on the SMS website, presenting relevant case studies on how HMEIs integrate minority cultures and diverse backgrounds in their educational programs and policies. Furthermore, the WG presented its second publication in a pre-conference workshop at the AEC Congress: a compendium of self-reflective questions aimed to challenge the ways of thinking of curricula from a diversity perspective within HMEIs.
- The [Working Group on Entrepreneurial mind-set for musicians](#) has been mainly focused on gathering resources and preparing materials to develop a Web App dedicated to entrepreneurial mindset. In addition, a [set of podcasts](#) on Entrepreneurial mindset has been successfully developed. The Web App is designed to inspire further reading and discussion among students, teachers and management of HMEIs. This tool is supposed to contain a set of relevant materials on various topics (institution, skills, students, teacher training), and in various format (tutorials, articles and interviews). The Web App will be accessible through the SMS website. The WG also delivered a seminar prior to the AEC Congress on the impact of COVID-19 on the music sector and the crucial role of entrepreneurship during the time of Corona pandemic.
- With mobility and international projects being deeply affected by the pandemic, the [Working Group on Internationalisation and transnational mobility](#) had the opportunity to reflect on the vision and mission of the International Relations Coordinators (IRCs) community and produce the [IRCs Manifesto 2020 accompanied by a video](#). The IRCs Annual Meeting took place for the first time as an online event under the title "Ready to Change? Digitisation, crisis management and green thinking for a sustainable future".
- In May, [LATIMPE \(Learning and Teaching in Music Performance Education\)](#) hosted the [second Learning and Teaching conference](#). This time the topic was digitisation in higher music education. The conference was held on digital platforms with 130 attendees and included one keynote, 23 presentations as well as two inspiring world café sessions. Read more on [latimpe.eu](#)!

- The [Working Group on Digitisation](#) has been working on the [data of a questionnaire about ongoing digitisation projects](#). Follow up interviews were conducted in order to gain more in depth information on the selected projects. In addition, an article presenting a set of pedagogical principles to guide future online and blended teaching was written and submitted to the international peer-reviewed [journal Technology, Pedagogy and Education](#).
- 91 Institutions joined the [European Online Application System for Mobility \(EASY\)](#), and a comprehensive [EASY User Manual](#) has been produced. The system moved its first steps towards the integration with the Erasmus Without Paper ecosystem.
- The [Early Childhood Music Education Working Group](#) (ECME) finished most of the chapters of their handbook for early childhood music education including lesson plan examples. [One of the chapters deals with pedagogical principles and is already online](#). Workshops which were planned for autumn had to be cancelled because of the COVID-19 crisis.
- In addition to its permanent work on enhancing student voice in HMEIs and within the AEC, the [Student Working Group](#) strived during the lockdown to [reach out to peers and connect them during these turbulent times](#) by providing a platform and community for students to meet each other and share their experiences. Another highlight was an [online panel session investigating artistic identity on World Music Day](#).

Partners



For more information about the different Working Groups, please see Section "People" for their composition and visit <https://aec-music.eu/project/aec-sms-2017-2021-creative-europe-network/>.



5. AEC Involvement in projects

AEC aims to promote and encourage exchange among its members at European level and beyond, and to assist its member institutions in exploring and developing new models to educate creative and communicative musicians. In addition to coordinating AEC-SMS and RENEW, AEC was involved as partner in the following projects:

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships

The role of the AEC in the following projects was to promote the Strategic Partnership through dedicated sessions at AEC events, to disseminate to external targets information about the project activities and outcomes and to take responsibility for the external evaluation of the Strategic Partnership by providing criteria for the evaluation and by hiring competent external evaluators.

INTERMUSIC – INTERactive environment for MUSIC learning and practising (2017–2020)

This project came to an end in August 2020. The main objective of this project was to create an [online shared platform](#) for distance learning dedicated to music teaching and practice – to enable modelling and sharing best training practices for musicians as well as joint courses and online projects. For more information, please click [here](#).



SWING – Synergic Work Incoming New Goals for Higher Education Music Institutions (2018–2021)

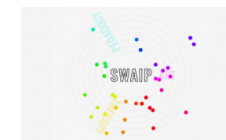
Its main objective is to experiment and then develop and implement a set of new distance learning modules, while at the same time promoting enhancement and deployment of new features



in LoLa and other tools that are tailor-made for remote ensemble playing and remote music education. Because of the pandemic, most of the activities of the project have been put in standby but a major demonstration of a three point connection performance has been delivered at the AEC Congress. For more information, please click [here](#).

SWAIP – Social inclusion and Well-being through the Arts and Interdisciplinary Practices (2018–2021)

The main objective is to introduce artists and health workers with an art background, to art's abilities to make connections, facilitate well-being, empowerment and strengthen self-confidence. Emphasises is on training flexible and sensitive artists, capable of relating to advanced ideas and finding new roles in the constant changing society. For more information, please click [here](#).



NEWS IN MAP (2019–2021)

The News in Map project proposes a new map for the path from music studies to the career, with a fundamental step: the self-leadership for a new employability. The aim is to implement new courses in Music HEIs such as psychology, leadership, management, motivation strategies to increase performance, team building, business creation, marketing, touring/event to enhance employability in the greater music career. As a highlight of 2020, the project delivered a one-week online teacher training on self-leadership, coordinated by the AEC and presented its first outputs at the AEC Congress. For more information, please click [here](#).



EOALAB – Triggering innovation in the field of opera (2019–2021)

The project intends to offer new answers to the emerging needs of contemporary opera making in which opera artists need to have entrepreneurial, collaborative and interdisciplinary skills. Based on the concept of shared education, the vision of this project is to trigger innovation in the opera field in Europe and beyond. For more information, please click [here](#).



DEMUSIS (2019–2022)

The project aims to strengthen the entrepreneurial capacities of academic musicians to use technology artistically, creatively and responsively in a general and cultural context. The goal is to provide sustainable careers for musicians by providing knowledge, skills, and an understanding of how to work on their own and how to manage their own careers. For more information, please click [here](#).



PRiHME – Stakeholder Assembly on Power Relations in Higher Music Education (2020–2023)

The project aims to strengthen the cooperation and networking between organisations around the issues of power relations in the HME sector, thus leading to more healthy and sustainable careers for both the stakeholders within HME and their graduates. A key result of PRiHME is to give HMEIs a true understanding of the traditions and norms we perpetuate that can create power inequities. For more information, please click [here](#).



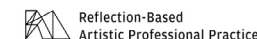
HarMA+ – European landscape of teaching practices and pedagogical innovation in HMEI's – Music theory fields (2020–2023)

This project recognises the need to develop collaborative tools, share knowledge and transfer pedagogical innovation in the very specific field of music theory in higher music education institutions throughout Europe by working towards a pedagogical rapprochement. For more information, please click [here](#).



RAPP Lab – Reflection-based Artistic Professional Practice Lab (2020–2023)

RAPP Lab explores how the reflective methodologies of artistic research empower musicians to creatively respond to the economic-cultural environment with which they are confronted. Gaining new knowledge through reflectiveness and critical thinking empowers students, graduates and teachers in their art-making but also helps them to develop new economic and cultural roles and, as a consequence, to widen and increase students' future cultural participation. The project had its kick off in the second half of 2020. For more information, please click [here](#).



LOTUS – Leadership and Organisation for Teaching at European Universities (2020–2023)

The project aims to develop a programme for capacity building in Learning&Teaching (L&T) strategic change management, mainly targeting vice-rectors in charge for L&T. It emphasises the role of leadership and participatory approaches for implementing L&T strategies, involving staff and students across the institution. It will also promote inter-university exchange and collaboration by exploring how higher education networks, L&T organisations, and governments can support them. For more information, please click [here](#).



Creative Europe projects

OPERA IN CANTO (2018–2020)

This project has the primary objective of creating a new audience, by educating the new generations to know and appreciate the performing arts better, with particular regards to the Opera. Through the creation of a network of theatres and European culture centers, and a close collaboration with the educational sector, it stimulates audience development, by engaging children and their families with the Opera. The main highlight of 2020 is the presentation of the project at the European Parliament followed by a flashmob on the Parliament esplanade.



- The AEC is the leader of Networking and Communication Work Package. For more information, please click [here](#).

OPERA OUT OF OPERA (2018–2020)

This project, which ended in Spring 2020, focused on audience development, spreading its knowledge and developing new public (young people). It combined in an innovative way virtual environments, animated backgrounds with traditional representations and performances, with the aim of creating unexpensive and flexible representations that can easily be transported and replicable and of realising real-time animations and subtitles. In 2020 AEC realised short trailers of each performance and a final docu-video of the whole project which was widely disseminated on social media. The AEC also took care of the restructuring of the project app with the aim of make this outcome sustainable beyond the lifespan of the project.



- The AEC is the leader of the Communication and Dissemination Work Package. For more information, please click [here](#).

ECMA PRO – European Chamber Music Academy (2020–2024)

The general aim of the ECMA PRO project is to support young professional chamber music ensembles in the development of their international careers and to explore new performance formats. The project further develops the already existing set up of ECMA (European chamber music Academy), a further education program for young ensembles in Europe based on a cooperating between educational institutions and festivals from all over Europe. The project features various activities such as: workshops on career skills, showcases, workshops for musicians on how to engage with new audiences and how to innovate traditional concert formats within a regular venue.



- AEC's role and responsibilities within this project are related to the communication and dissemination of the project outcomes and activities. For more information, please click [here](#).

Other projects in which AEC and networks was involved

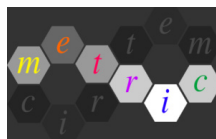
OPERA VISION (2017–2020)

Opera Vision is a streaming platform for opera coordinated by Opera Europa, the organisation for professional opera companies and opera festivals. For some time now, Opera Europa has been very successful in running an online platform which offers high-quality video streaming of opera productions from their members. For more information, please click [here](#).



METRIC – Modernising European Higher Music Education through Improvisation (2019-)

METRIC has the aim to focus on the modernisation of higher music education through intensive international cooperation in the field of improvisation. This aim is based on the conviction that improvisation education can have a notable effect on existing curricula in higher music education institutions. Through a continuous process of mutual enrichment, METRIC wants to support the development and improvement of improvisation teaching, performance and research. In doing so, it also wants to take care of genres and styles with less-established activity in improvisation. For more information on the network, please click [here](#).



- AEC serves as coordinator of the METRIC network. For more information on this service provided by AEC, please click [here](#).



6. Communication and services

COMMUNICATION

The AEC Office has analysed the tools and channels the association uses to reach its target audiences in order to ensure efficient communication. All the communications channels described below have experienced a notable increase in traffic throughout 2020 in line with the implementation of the AEC Communication strategy.

AEC website

- **134,088** page views
- **46,055** users



Newsletter

In 2020 a total of **12 newsletters** have been sent in English, French and German, reaching circa **1,370 readers**.



Facebook

In 2020, the number of people that likes the AEC Facebook page **increased by 10%** reaching up to **3,224 followers**. AEC gained **290 likes**.



Twitter

In 2020, AEC Twitter account gained **147 followers**. The total number of likes on the tweets increased from 799 in 2019 to **824** in 2020.



*Due to a technical problem, data from 1 January to 9 April 2020 is not available. For this reason, the numbers refer to the period 10 April to 31 December 2020

SERVICES

Vacancy Platform

Despite the pandemic, the AEC Vacancy Platform continued being very active on the AEC website, with:



14.035 visitors
45 new vacancy posts

EASY Platform

Though **EASY – European Online Application System for Mobility**, students can send mobility applications and international relations coordinators can manage incoming and outgoing Erasmus, Nordplus and other types of student mobilities. In 2020, EASY went through its **4th** year of operation with **105** institutions joining it and started the first steps towards the integration with the Erasmus Without Papers ecosystem.



Coordination of institutional networks (new service offered as pilot initiative in 2019)

The AEC Office staff supported the organisation and activities of the [METRIC network](#) (Modernising European Higher Music Education through Improvisation).



AEC webpage Tools & Suggestions for HMEIs during the Covid-19 emergency

AEC created a collaborative [webpage](#) through the Working Groups (WGs) of the Strengthening Music in Society project (SMS) on how to keep the Music Higher Education business running online. The [webpage](#) provided a list of useful tools and technologies in order to share processes and good practices within the AEC community.



- [E-Learning](#)
- [Ensembles and rehearsals](#)
- [Practising](#)
- [Project management](#)
- [Mental health](#)
- [Other resources](#)

7. Advocacy and Partners

This year we have experienced how our routines and our daily activities have had to happen through screens. Communication and networking have also been impacted but this has not prevented AEC from continuing its advocacy work. In 2020, AEC joined forces with several artistic institutions in order to claim the value of the arts and the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS) and an adequate and fair management of the health crisis within the sector.

European Institutions

AEC has continued its lobbying and advocacy activities at the level of the European institutions in order to create understanding among the European decision-makers for the distinctive value and identity of the arts and of HME. Although the usual physical meetings and informal coming together with members of parliament and other political decision-makers were discontinued due to the corona crisis, it was still possible to maintain and continue existing contacts online. It was, however, much more challenging to make new contacts, which was particularly regrettable because many new MoPs had only started their work in Brussels in December 2019, i.e. just a few weeks before the lock-down. Nevertheless, the Music and Arts Higher Education sector was able to make its voice heard at key points also in 2020.

2021–2027 Multiannual Financial Framework

The budget for Erasmus+ and Creative Europe funding programs were in doubt throughout 2020 as part of the support was expected to be included in the Corona Recovery Fund, a subsidy created specifically to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis. Fortunately, in November 2020, an agreement was reached by the European Parliament and the member states, in which additional 16 billion € will be provided for flagship programs which include Creative Europe, Horizon and Erasmus+.

Music sector joins together to call for EU and national investment to address current crisis and promote diversity

In joint action with almost 40 other European associations, the AEC signed an open letter asking for a sustainable public support and structural policies at EU, national, regional and local level to consolidate the music ecosystem.

Open letter to the EU demanding support for the Cultural and Creative Sectors in the COVID-19 crisis

In the open letter, supported by over 70 members of European Parliament and many private individuals and associations such as the AEC, the signatories demand for an adequately funded stimulus package for cultural creators, social benefits for all cultural professionals and claim the EU to support and protect the CSS. This initiative was introduced by the Green Group of the European Parliament.

Effect of Covid-19 on Creative Europe and the European CCS – Culture Action Europe

The letter lists proposals regarding the consequences of COVID-19 on Creative Europe and the European Cultural and Creative Sectors. The signatories propose more flexibility within the Creative Europe programme, including the eligibility of costs and periods, the replacement of activities and additional funding for beneficiaries facing significant losses, as well as a plea to the European institutions and national governments to adopt specific emergency measures to the CCS.

Open letter on the European Democracy Action Plan and Freedom of Artistic Expression

This open letter was submitted in response to the public consultation launched by the European Commission on the European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP). Along with 16 other organisations, the AEC supported the initiative since Artistic Freedom is a fundamental aspect of cultural rights.

National level

As in previous years, AEC has also been actively involved in 2020 in supporting AEC members in political debates and negotiations at the level of the nation states. However, the AEC always remains true to the principle of not interfering in national affairs, unless at the special request and initiative of members from the respective nation states. In the following, only a few chosen examples of such activities are listed:

Hungary

AEC, together with other institutions such as Cumulus, EAAE, ELIA and GEECT¹ signed a [joint document](#) asking the Hungarian government and policy makers to guarantee freedom of development and organisational autonomy and expressing their solidarity with the Budapest University of Theatre and Film Arts (SZFE) and all higher arts education institutions in the country. This document emerged from the situation occurred in September 2020, when the steering bodies of the Budapest University of Theater and Film Arts (SZFE) were disempowered and replaced by a board whose members were appointed by the Hungarian government under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

1 Cumulus – International Association of Universities and Colleges in Art, Design and Media
EAAE – European Association for Architectural Education
ELIA – European League of Institutes of the Arts
GEECT – The European Grouping of Film and Television Studies

Belarus

AEC expressed its support during 2020 to Maria Kolesnikova, one of the leading figures of the Belarusian freedom movement and alumna of two AEC member institutions.

International level

International Coalition led by Performing Arts Organisations to Commission COVID-19 Study

AEC joined an [international coalition](#) lead by a group of US institutions, associations and researchers that investigates the effect of aerosol transmission in the performing arts and the diffusion of the COVID-19 virus. The study examines **aerosol rates produced by wind instrumentalists**, vocalists, and actors, and how quickly those aerosol rates accumulate in a space. The coalition has developed several projects in order to assist future plannings and implementation of preventive measures.

The results and outcomes released consist of a [written report](#), a [collection of articles and studies](#) and several videos that can be accessed in the [National Federation of State High School Associations' website](#).

Frascati Manual

Frascati Manual, is an internationally recognised methodology tool used by statisticians, scientists and policy makers as a framework for collecting and Reporting Data on Research. **The Frascati Manual** was first published in 1963 and is regularly updated under the supervision of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).

In its most recent edition, published in 2015 there is some ambiguity about the distinction between 'Research for Art' and 'Research on Art'. Since 2018, the AEC is joining forces with associations such as **SAR** (Society for Artistic Research), **Cilect** (Centre International de Liaison des Ecoles de Cinéma et de Télévision), **ELIA** (European League of Institutes of the Arts), **Cumulus** (International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media) and **EAAE** in order to assure Artistic Research is recognised and catalogued as a fully eligible research discipline at its own by **OECD**.

Partnerships

AEC is since long in friendly and constructive contact with numerous European sister organisations. Mutual invitations to contribute to conferences are commonplace. In 2020, however, most of these contacts could only be maintained online. That was regrettable, but it also made it possible to participate in more events than in previous years, albeit often in smaller roles.



8. Financial Report by the General Manager / Deputy CEO and Secretary General

2020 has been characterised by uncertainty: due to the travel bans and safety measures adopted all over the world to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak, various budget scenarios were prepared and updated in the course of the year, reflecting various potential losses in AEC income. Eventually, AEC has ended the year with a substantial surplus of € 15,813 which will reinforce the Association's financial reserves. Two key factors account for this:

Firstly, the flexibility of the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission: AEC receives an important grant for the AEC-SMS project (grant for "European Networks"), which does not only support its think tank activities conducted by eight working groups, but also its more regular activities (communication, events, etc.) and the related staff costs. In 2020, an important part of the grant could be reallocated from meetings and events held online to staff costs and costs related to the development of the new AEC website (launched in 2021).

Secondly, the increased income from membership fees, in line with the Sustainability Plan. As a reminder, the principles of this plan were approved by the AEC General Assembly in November 2017: restructuring AEC's income strands by progressively decreasing the extent to which AEC's income is dependent on project funding and increasing the proportion of membership fees in AEC income².

In 2020, both the overall income and the overall expenditure have respectively decreased by about € 109,000 (compared to 2019): the income from € 953,200 to € 845,759 and the expenditure from € 940,665 to € 829,946. The simplified version of the 2020 accounts presented below shows the figures from 2019 for the purposes of comparison.

The three main **sources of income** of the Association remained membership fees (40% of the total income in 2020), subsidies from the European Commission (35%) and events registration fees (7%):

- The income from membership fees has increased by more than 7% (i.e. about € 22,500) compared to 2019.
- The income from subsidies has decreased by 7% compared to 2019. Part of this income, coming from AEC's continued involvement in many European projects, has been transferred to 2021 as a precautionary measure.
- The income from events registration fees has decreased by 64% (i.e. by about € 110,000), due to the online organisation of two major AEC events (special fees were offered to encourage the attendance of several participants per institution).

Other sources of income included:

- The amount reimbursed by MusiQuE, which is composed of staff costs for the AEC staff members serviced to MusiQuE, as well as of a fixed percentage of overhead costs. As MusiQuE was particularly hit by the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak with the postponement of all its review activities planned after March 2020, AEC agreed to lower MusiQuE's reimbursement.
- The fee collected from institutions taking part in EASY (which raised by about € 3,000, with 14 additional institutions enrolled in the system in 2020). This fee represents almost 9% of the total income in 2020.

2 The raise is based on the principle of solidarity: the level of the Gross National Income (GNI) of the countries where member institutions are situated is, from 2019 on, better taken into account and for the first time also the size of the institutions (according to the number of students) is considered. This means that larger member institutions situated in richer countries face a significant increase, while the fees charged on small-sized institutions situated in countries with lower GNIs remain unchanged or even decrease.

As in other years, AEC's **expenditure** consisted mostly of staff costs (54% of the total expenditure against 43% in 2019), project expenditures (23%, against 25% in 2019) and events, travel and office costs (13%, against 25% in 2019):

- Staff costs have increased by over € 45,000 compared to 2019, due to the implementation of a structural salary raise planned over four years³, the expansion of the staff by 0.71 FTE, the distribution of monthly allowances for teleworking, and a higher holiday reservation.
- The events, travel and office costs have decreased by almost € 124,000, due to the travel restrictions and the fact that most of AEC activities had to be organised online from March 2020 onwards. Further investments in the EASY software and a new AEC website are included in these costs.

As a result of all these developments, a surplus of € 15,813 has been generated in 2020, which brings the amount of reserves to € 67,141. The second implementation year of the Sustainability Plan has proved to be successful and AEC is progressively building its reserves as planned.



3 The raise, implemented progressively from 2018 to 2021, aims at adjusting the Office team's salaries to the living costs in Brussels and to salaries in comparable organisations as well as to take into account staff seniority.

AEC Balance Sheet 2020

Assets		391,462.00
A	Short-term debts (of up to one year) to be received	145,468.00
B	Liquid means	238,265.00
C	Accruals	7,730.00

A includes membership fees and events fees for 2020 which had not yet been paid to AEC by 31/12/2020, as well as subsidies and other income still to be received by AEC in 2021;

B is the amount of cash which AEC possessed on 31/12/2020 in its accounts (AEC General and Reserves).

Liabilities		391,462.00
D	Results since 2013	67,141.00
E	Short-term debts (of up to one year)	90,807.00
F	Accruals	233,515.00

D is the sum of all results obtained by the Association since it started to operate in Belgium in 2013;

E includes all expenses taken into account in the 2020 expenses, but which relate to invoices received and paid in 2021, as well as the amount of the holiday pay reservation and other salary costs for 2020 paid in 2021;

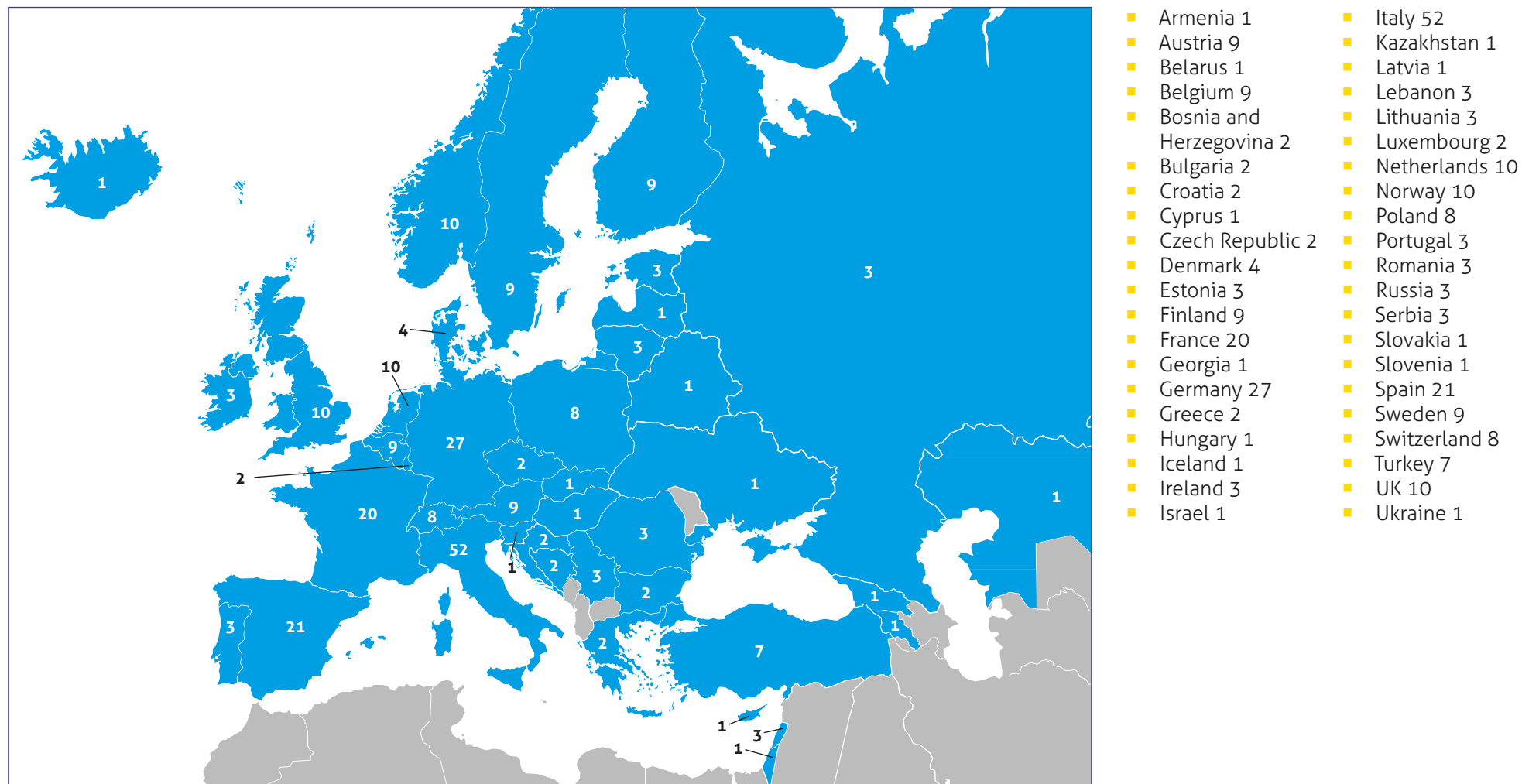
F consists of parts of multiannual subsidies that AEC has received in 2020 for several projects and which have been transferred to 2021 (€ 175,000.00 for SMS Year 4 and a total of € 56,603.61 for FAST45, INTERMUSIC, HarMA+, EOALAB and News in Map) and various payments received by AEC in 2020 for invoices and events related to 2021.

AEC Profit-and-loss statement 2020 (with 2019 for comparison)

	2020	2019
Income	845,759.41	953,199.54
Membership fees	334,942.26	312,403.20
Events fees	61,367.98	171,295.41
Subsidies (i.e. project funding)	291,791.96	315,168.33
Contributions from partner institutions to EASY Pilot project	75,886.00	65,950.00
Reimbursement of staff and overhead costs from MusiQuE	80,036.42	76,929.73
Service fees (application writing and coordination METRIC network)	-	9,098.70
Other (including re-invoicing expenses)	1,734.79	2,354.17
Expenditure	829,946.21	940,664.92
Staff costs (salaries incl. restaurant checks, social security, pensions, holiday pay reservation) plus student interns and staff development costs	448,733.66	402,889.74
Goods & services (including events and legal expenses)	358,081.98	511,343.65
Written-off debts	11,354.71	14,238.08
Discounts on membership & events fees (early bird rates)	11,447.42	11,727.56
Bank charges	328.44	465.89
Result	15,813.20	12,534.62

9. Members

AEC members



AEC also has members in: Australia (4), Canada (4), China (5), Malaysia (1), Singapore (1), Thailand (1) and USA (6)

New Members

In 2020, the AEC has welcomed several new members, reaching a community of 283 institutions from Europe and beyond.

The following institutions have joined as active members:

- Conservatorio di Musica 'Giovanni 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 joined as associate members:

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



10. People

Finally, AEC would like to highlight the work of the different people involved and thank them for making 2020 a successful year.

Council Members

President

Eirik Birkeland – Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo, Norway

Vice-Presidents

Georg Schulz – University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz, Austria

Deborah Kelleher – Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin, Ireland

Secretary General

Harrie van den Elsen – Prince Claus Conservatoire, Groningen, The Netherlands

Council Members

Jeffrey Sharkey – Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow, United Kingdom

Ivana Perković – Department of Musicology, Faculty of Music, University of Arts, Belgrade, Serbia

Kathleen Coessens – Director of Music Department, Conservatoire Royal de Liège, Belgium



Ingeborg Radok Žádná – Prague Academy of Performing Arts, Music and Dance Faculty, Czech Republic

Claire Michon – Pôle Aliénor Poitiers-Tours, France

Lucia di Cecca – Conservatorio di Musica “Licinio Refice”, Frosinone, Italy

Zdzisław Łapinski – The Academy of Music, Krakow, Poland

Iñaki Sandoval – University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy, Viljandi, Estonia

Bernard Lanskey (Co-opted Representative of AEC Associate Members) – Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, Singapore

Miranda Harmer (Co-opted Representative of the Student WG and Network) – Leeds College of Music, UK

Eline Accoe (Co-opted Representative of the Student WG and Network) – Luca School of Arts, Belgium

Office Members

Stefan Gies – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Linda Messas – General Manager/Deputy CEO

Sara Primiterra – Events and Project Manager

Esther Nass (until May 2020) – Office and Project Coordinator

Barbara Lalić (from August 2020) – Office and Project Coordinator



Paulina Gut – Project and Events Coordinator
Chiara Conciatori – Communication Officer
Alfonso Guerra – Membership and Finance Coordinator

Several student interns have joined the staff during 2020.

Working Groups (WGs) & Task Forces (TFs)

Music's and HMEIs' Role in Society

The Music in Society WG seeks to raise consciousness for the social responsibility of artists and HMEIs and for governments' political responsibility to foster cultural organisations.

Helena Gaunt – Royal Welsh College of Music & Dance, Cardiff, United Kingdom (Chair)

Ana Čorić – University of Zagreb, Academy of Music, Croatia

Oleksandr Pryimenko – Kharkiv I.P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts, Ukraine

Henrik Sveidahl – Rythmic Music Conservatory Copenhagen, Denmark

Isabel González Delgado –

Conservatorio Superior de
Música de Murcia, Spain
(student representative)

Linda Messas – AEC Office,
(Working Group Coordinator)



Diversity, Identity, Inclusiveness

The Diversity WG encourages HMEIs to open their educational offer towards more diversity and to promote inclusiveness throughout their activities.

David-Emil Wickström – Popakademie
Baden-Württemberg, Mannheim,
Germany (Chair)

Clara Barbera – Berklee College of Music
– Valencia Campus, Valencia, Spain

Joshua Dickson – Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland, Glasgow, Scotland, United
Kingdom

Baptiste Grangirard – CESMD, Pôle
Aliénor, Poitiers, France (Student
representative)

Stefan Heckel – University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Graz, Austria

Mojca Piškor – Academy of Music, Zagreb, Croatia

Katja Thomson – Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki,
Helsinki, Finland

Alfonso Guerra – AEC Office (Working Group Coordinator)



Entrepreneurial mind-set for musicians

The Entrepreneurship WG promotes the integration of entrepreneurial skills in the education of the artist to prepare students for their future role as musician-entrepreneur in a rapidly changing society. It attended a five-day Teacher Training and Student bootcamp in The Hague prior to the RENEW Project final Conference where they had opportunity to connect to a Higher Education or European Entrepreneurial Network in order to exchange and/or observe good practice models.

Renee Jonker – Royal Conservatoire The Hague, The Netherlands (Chair)
Anna Maria Ranczakowska – Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Estonia
Payam Gul Susanni – Yasar University, Izmir, Turkey
Vourneen Ryan – Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin, Ireland



Anita Debaere – Pearle* live performance, Europe
Camilla Overgaard – Royal Academy of Music Aarhus/Aalborg, Denmark (student representative and co-chair)
Paulina Gut – AEC Office (Working Group Coordinator)

Internationalisation and transnational mobility

This WG helps music students and teachers internationalise their careers and activities in order to strengthen the quality of higher education through mutual understanding and awareness of cultural diversity. The WG is in charge of the organisation of the AEC Annual meeting for International Relations Coordinators and of the monitoring of the online tools supporting mobility among HMEIs: the AEC website database, the AEC Job Vacancy Platform and the European Online Application System for Mobility EASY.

Christofer Fredriksson – University College of Opera – part of the Stockholm University of the Arts, Stockholm, Sweden (Chair)
Jan-Gerd Krüger – Prins Claus Conservatorium, Groningen, The Netherlands
Frauke Velghe – KASK & Conservatorium – HOGENT, Ghent, Belgium
Dimitrios Marios – Athens Conservatoire, Athens, Greece

Esther Vinuela Lozano – Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain
Roberto Boschelli – Former student at Conservatorio di Musica Stanislao Giacomantonio, Cosenza, Italy (Student representative)
Sara Primiterra – AEC Office (Working Group Coordinator)



European Online Application System for Mobility – EASY

EASY is the most important online tool for student mobility in HME. Through EASY, students can send mobility applications and IRCs can manage incoming and outgoing Erasmus, Nordplus and other types of student mobilities. In 2018, EASY went from being a pilot project to a fully operational system, promoting and encouraging international exchanges.

Lucia Di Cecca – Conservatorio di Musica Licinio Refice, Frosinone, Italy – AEC Council Member
José Luis Fernández – Conservatorio Superior de Música de Vigo, Spain
Salvatore Gioveni – Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium
Regine Brosius – UdK Berlin, Germany
Chiara Pellegrino – CNSMD Lyon, France
Sara Primiterra – AEC Office (Task Force Coordinator)

Shaping the musician of tomorrow through innovative Learning and Teaching (L&T)

In order to promote excellence across Europe, the L&T WG explores and discusses new L&T models enabling HEIs to educate creative and communicating musicians. This WG is jointly coordinated with the Centre

of Excellence in Music Performance Education (CEMPE) of the Norwegian Academy of Music in which took place the Learning and Teaching in Music Performance Education (LATIMPE) event on Becoming musicians – student involvement and teacher collaboration in higher music education.

Jon Helge Sætre –

CEMPE, Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo, Norway (Chair)

Stefan Gies – AEC Office (Co-chair)

Lars Brinck – Rhythmic Music Conservatory, Copenhagen, Denmark

Anna Maria Bordin – Conservatorio Paganini, Genova, Italy

Susanne van Els – Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Cardiff, UK

Karine Hahn – Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse, Lyon, France

Siri Storheim – Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo, Norway (Student representative)

Ellen M. Stabell – CEMPE, Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo, Norway (Working Group Coordinator)



Digitisation (Teacher education in the digital age)

The Digitisation WG encourages the sensible use of digital technologies in music education. This WG is fully coordinated by the European Music School Union (EMU).

Luc Nijs – Royal Conservatory of Antwerp, University Gent, Lemmen Inst. Leuven, Belgium (Chair)

André Stärk – Hochschule für Musik Detmold, Germany

Enric Gaus Termens – ESMUC, Barcelona, Spain

Sandrine Desmurs – CEFEDM, Lyon, France

Marina Gall – University of Bristol (EAS), UK

Matti Ruippo – University Tampere, Finland – (EMU)

Miranda Harmer – Leeds College of Music, UK (Student Representative)

Till Skoruppa – EMU (Working Group Coordinator)



Early Childhood Music Education (ECME)

The ECME WG seeks to increase the quality of early childhood music education as a crucial phase within music education. By this way, it seeks to extend the audience of tomorrow. The task force attended one of the first conferences on the topic – the Mediterranean Forum for Early Childhood Music Education and Musical Childhoods – in Nicosia. This Task Force is fully coordinated by the EMU.

Michael Dartsch – Hochschule für Musik, Saarbrücken, Germany (Chair)

Natassa Economidou – University of Nicosia, Cyprus

Ulla Piispanen – Author, lecturer & teacher

Till Skoruppa – EMU (Working Group Coordinator)

Involving Youth – Students' input in shaping their education

The Student WG seeks to strengthen the student voice inside the Association and its membership and to establish a European network of HME students. In 2018, the WG met with student representatives from ANMA (Association of Nordic Music Academies) members, resulting in a stronger student network and in a set of recommendations.

Miranda Harmer – Leeds College of Music, UK (Co-Chair, Member of the AEC-SMS Digitisation WG)

Isabel González Delgado – Conservatorio Superior de Música de Murcia, Spain

Roberto Boschelli – Conservatorio di Cosenza, Italy (Member of the AEC-SMS Transnational Mobility WG for IRCs)



Siri Storheim – Norwegian Academy of Music, Norway (Member of the AEC-SMS Learning and Teaching WG)

Camilla Overgaard – Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus/Aalborg, Denmark (Member of the AEC-SMS Entrepreneurship WG)

Baptiste Grandgirard – Pôle Aliénor, Poitiers, France (Member of the AEC-SMS Diversity WG)

Eline Accoe – Luca School of Arts, Leuven, Belgium (Co-Chair)

Esther Nass (until May 2020) / **Barbara Lalić** (from August 2020) – AEC Office (Working Group Coordinator)

European Jazz Network (EJN) Task Force

The AEC and the EJN have engaged in a collaboration between their respective members with the aim of supporting emerging artists coming from formal HME and entering the market. In the framework of their new Creative Europe granted projects for networks 2017–2021, they produced a tangible output out of their longstanding dialogue: a joint project between conservatoires and festival/clubs to support the career of young artists at international level.

Jaak Soäär – Estonian Academy, Tallinn – Jazzcar and EAMT, Estonia

Peter Lesage – Hogeschool Gent School of Arts, Belgium

Mik Korfs – JazzLab, Gent, Belgium

Angelo Valori – Conservatorio, Pescara – Pescara Jazz Festival and Conservatorio di Pescara, Italy

Sara Primiterra – AEC Office (Task Force Coordinator)

Francesca Cerretani and Gianbattista Tofoni – EJN

Pop and Jazz Platform (PJP) Preparatory Working Group

The PJP preparatory WG is in charge of the organisation of the AEC Annual PJP meeting. It aims to promote and support higher education in popular music and jazz in the widest definition of those terms.



Linda Bloemhard – Codarts, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (Chair)

Susanne Abbuehl – Royal Conservatoire The Hague, The Netherlands

Jere Laukkanen – Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

Anna Uhuru – Leeds College of Music, UK

Lars Andersson – Malmö Academy of Music, Malmö, Sweden

Udo Dahmen – Pop Academy, Mannheim, Germany

Paulina Gut – AEC Office (Working Group Coordinator)

European Platform for Artistic Research in Music (EPARM) Working Group

The EPARM WG is responsible for organising the AEC Annual EPARM meeting. Its objective is to strengthen the understanding of artistic research as a means of promoting deeper musical engagement.

Stephen Broad – Royal Conservatoire Scotland (Chair)

Leonella Grasso Caprioli – Conservatorio di Vicenza, Italy

Kevin Voets – Artesis Plantijn Hogeschool, Antwerpen, Belgium

Henrik Frisk – Royal College of Music, Stockholm, Sweden (until April 2020)

Wei-Ya Lin – MDW Vienna, Austria (from April 2020)

Lina Navickaitė-Martinelli – Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Vilnius

Matthias Hermann – Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart

Sara Primiterra – AEC Office (Working Group Coordinator)

Early Music Task Force

The Early Music Task force has been put together to coordinate the collaboration with the Early Music Network REMA for the Early Music Summit and follow up the activities of the AEC in the field of early music in the upcoming years.

Issac Alonso de Molina – Royal Conservatoire The Hague – AEC Early Music Task Force Chairman, representative of AEC in the REMA Summit organisational committee

Linde Brunmayr-Tutz – Musikhochschule Trossingen – AEC Early Music Task Force member

Ashley Solomon – Royal College of Music in London – AEC Early Music Task Force member

Claire Michon – Pôle Aliénor Poitiers-Tours – AEC Council Member responsible for activities in the field of Early Music

Sara Primiterra – AEC Office – Coordinator of the Early Music activities at the AEC





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