



Overview of AEC members actions and further needs in terms of advocacy

1. State of the Art - Advocacy from the inside view

Advocacy as a topic plays a key role within the current [AEC Strategic Plan](#) of the AEC Vision which is part of it. Among other things, this Strategic Plan states:

“AEC is the leading voice for Higher Music Education (HME) in Europe and a powerful advocate for its member institutions.”

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

Advocacy is present in all four pillars of the Strategic Plan, and especially in Pillar 4:

Pillar 1: Enhancing quality in Higher Music Education

Pillar 2: Promoting participation, inclusiveness and diversity

Pillar 3: Strengthening partnership and interaction with stakeholders

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

Pillar 4 sets three objectives for AEC in relation to advocacy about the value of music and music education in society:

- 1. AEC will represent and advance the interests of the Higher Music Education sector at national, European and global levels for the greater societal good*
- 2. AEC will work to increase opportunity and access to Music Education*
- 3. AEC will assist its members in engaging audiences in an evolving cultural environment and in exploring the musical needs in society*

The AEC bodies (AEC Council, AEC Executive Committee) have specifically addressed the topic on several occasions since 2019, among others at AEC events (e.g.: AEC Congress 2020, as a topic at the virtual open brainstorming session; AEC International Relation Coordinators annual meeting 2021 in Vigo as a core topic at the European Student Network session; AEC Congress 2021 in Antwerp as a session entitled 'Advocacy on European level - Access to Culture & more', with representatives of AEC partner organisations; AEC EPARM meeting 2022 in London at a Round Table on 'Artistic Research Advocacy')

From these meetings and from other informal discussions with AEC members, key points to be addressed and a non-systematic list of what is sensed to be hot topics and burning needs in the area of advocacy were gained. These insights are a good basis for developing questions to be raised as part of a more systematic survey among AEC members (and maybe even beyond) that should provide more reliable and valid information on how to best support AEC member institutions in their own advocacy activities.

However, we have also learned that the needs and practices in the area of advocacy differ considerably from country to country. The following factors contribute to this heterogeneity and diversity:

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- The room and range for political action on the one hand and financial capacity on the other hand which is available to AEC member institutions differs a lot from country to country;
- The structures and hierarchies in which negotiations take place and decisions are made are correspondingly diverse;
- Cultures of negotiation and discussion sometimes differ significantly from country to country;
- The same applies for the scope of co-determination rights that is given to stakeholders (senior management, teaching staff, students, administration, external board, etc.).

Some keywords and possible actions related to advocacy in a broader sense that were collected at the above-mentioned occasions and within formal discussions with AEC member institutions:

- Advice and support for members on European funding programs;
- Work for a better understanding for the distinctive value and identity of the arts and of HME among political decision-makers at the European level;
- Development of an advocacy toolkit to be used by AEC members, enabling them to engage in advocacy and lobbying;
- Strengthening of transdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary advocacy;
- Fighting for better working conditions and socially secure employment for those who are earning a living in the cultural and creative sector;
- Raising public awareness of specific topics such as Music & Health, Power Relations in the Music Sector, Early Childhood Music Education;
- Supporting AEC member institutions in providing music teachers for general education and specialised schools with appropriate artistic and pedagogical competence;
- Empowering HME institutions to act as trend scouts that are willing and able to react on new developments and trends and to pro-actively promote change;
- Entering into dialogue with cultures and traditions of knowledge transfer that differ from the traditional conservatoire culture;
- Promoting the diversity of musical phenomena and pathways of handing on musical traditions.

2. Trends and topics - Advocacy in the Cultural & Creative Sector (CCS)

While the findings from section 1 reflect the needs, but also the internal view of the Higher Music Education sector, this second section addresses also hot topics and burning needs in a broader context. Despite the special needs and features that characterise the music and the music HE sector, there are numerous overlaps with other art disciplines and other areas of the CCS and thus also good reasons to join forces and to strive for doing advocacy within the CCS in close cooperation with partners. It has therefore been a declared objective of the Artemis project from the outset to involve representatives of AEC partner organisations from other art disciplines and umbrella organisations of the CCS in a prominent position in the work of the Advocacy Advisory Group and Task Force.

As a first step in the process of developing and implementing a distinctive Artemis advocacy strategy, the activities and strategies of some partner organisations or individual noteworthy elements from it were viewed and contextualised.

The focus of a [Culture Action Europe \(CAE\) strategy 2022-24](#) is in the areas of a) Culture, Environment and Sustainability, b) Well-being (and Well-living) with a specific focus on Access to and Participation in Culture and Cultural Rights, c) Welfare and Living Conditions in the Cultural Ecosystem. The *European Music Council* is pursuing its [European Agenda for Music](#) which was

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launched in 2018 and is based on the [5 music rights](#), along the thematic fields of Education & Access to Music, Diversity, Shaping Society, Technology, Mobility, Recognition and the 3 technical and over-arching thematic fields Cooperation & Partnership, Dissemination and Data Collection & Analysis. The *European Musical Council* and *ELIA* were jointly involved in the [SHIFT](#) project which made together with the AEC run [PRIhME](#) project a significant contribution to bringing forward the issues of gender equality and power-relation and are thus providing a good basis for future advocating for the issue in a more systematic and coordinated way.

The European Commission itself must be mentioned here as a relevant actor as well, because it provides a methodological tool and a working group that make a decisive and valuable contribution to better viewing and describing the advocacy needs specific to the CCS - the [Open Method of Coordination Group](#) (OMC). OMC was introduced back in 2000 with the aim of helping member states to progress jointly in the reforms they needed to undertake in order to reach the so-called Lisbon goals. Originally developed for the areas of employment and economic policy, the method now also provides valuable assistance in the further development of the CCS, albeit essentially limited to the aspects of Creating new Jobs in the CCS / Economic Growth and Research & Development.

The keywords and hot topics highlighted below are derived from a brainstorming among CAE members at the CAE Members Forum 2021. They were chosen to be showcased here because they give an illustrative and representative example of how key players and stakeholders from the CCS as a whole see the needs of the sector. The outcomes of this brainstorming are compared to the specific needs of the music and music HE sector and - if felt necessary - adapted and tailored to its particular needs. It can be stated, however, that there are hardly any contradictions between the items identified as needs and hot topics by the music and music HE sector on the one hand and the cultural and creative sector as a whole on the other hand. Rather, individual topics were identified that are less prioritised in the one sector than in the other.

In the following, these keywords and topics are listed according to thematic groups. Each of these thematic groups is underpinned with keywords and / or brief notes on

- a) its content,
- b) reference points to current or planned AEC activities,
- c) potential activities and tasks that might be addressed and further worked out by the Advocacy Advisory Group and Task Force:

- Status of Artists
 - a) Precarious working conditions; the role of arts and artists within the society; ensuring public funding.
 - b) Recent and current AEC run Creative Europe projects ([SMS](#), [Artemis](#)) raise awareness for the close link between music and society.
 - c) Work for a better understanding for the distinctive value and identity of the arts and of Higher Music Education (HME) among political decision-makers at the European level.
- Technical training & Capacity building
 - a) Ensuring high quality professional education; facilitating entrepreneurial activities and start-ups in the CCS; providing Life long learning (LLL) structures.
 - b) Providing high quality professional education is the core business of AEC member institutions; Entrepreneurship and LLL activities as part of projects such as Artemis, ICON, [DEMUSIS](#) etc.

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- c) Bringing existing activities from all projects and partners together and transform it into a long-term strategy to advocate for further developing related structures and measures.
- Equality and Diversity
 - a) Promoting equal opportunities across gender, social background, regional and ethnic origin, age groups etc.; access to cultural activities and cultural education for every human being; equal opportunities in terms of ensuring access to public funding across all EU member states.
 - b) Artemis WP 8 activities, SMS WG 2, PRIhME project, SHIFT, [Keychange](#).
 - c) Taking up ongoing projects and activities, creating synergies and merging these activities and strategic approaches into a common, overarching strategy.
- Digital Environment
 - a) Enhancing digital infrastructures to support the use of IT as tools, as means of communication and as art form; further investigating the impact of AI and VR on the CCS; fair access for artists to the digital market.
 - b) Artemis WP 5 activities, SMS WG 6, [GloCoDa](#), [MUSENSE](#), etc.
 - c) Investigating to what extent experiences from dealing with the topic in different art disciplines might contribute to the development of a joint advocacy strategy.
- Artistic and Cultural R&D
 - a) Cross-sectoral impact of the Vienna Declaration; Promoting Artistic Research outside the Arts HE institutions; Strengthening links to R&D in the technological sector (e.g. through making links to the outcomes of the [MAST](#) project).
 - b) EPARM, AEC has a leading role in launching the [Vienna Declaration and following up the Frascati Manual](#).
 - c) R&D in general and Artistic Research in particular is already now a success story in the developing and implementing a joint cross-disciplinary advocacy strategy, both in terms of advocacy towards politics and towards stakeholders.
- Welfare and Work Conditions in the CCS
 - a) Offers to maintain physical and mental health as a prerequisite for sustainable working conditions in the CCS; fair and competitive work conditions for artists; Social security for workers in the CCS, in particular for freelancers
 - b) Welfare and health have always been part of specific AEC activities and sessions at AEC events; the commitment of the AEC student working group in this matter should be emphasized, including their participation in the Voices of Culture project of the EU; work conditions are addressed by the Artemis WP 3.
 - c) Advocacy on these issues has not yet been part of targeted actions within the AEC; the close collaboration with partner organisations, however, offer good conditions for benefitting from joint action in these areas.
- Fair Environment
 - a) How can the CCS contribute to reducing CO² emissions? How can the CCS contribute to achieving the goals of the European Green Deal? Following up the New European Bauhaus project,
 - b) AEC goes green as part of both the SMS and the Artemis project.
 - c) Thinking about AEC specific advocacy on the topic is still in its beginnings; the close collaboration with partner organisations, however, offer good conditions for benefitting from joint action in these areas.

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- Promoting Cultural Democracy
 - a) Access to culture and cultural education for every human being; developing a working paradigm for cultural democracy; following up the Porto Santo Charter and the idea of a European cultural citizenship.
 - b) SCHEME, AEC strong contribution to developing and implementing the education strand of the European Agenda for Music; several Audience Development & Audience Engagement activities.
 - c) Based on the already existing SCHEME advocacy strategy and AEC's commitment to contribute to following up the [Porto Santo Charter](#), this is an already well-developed element of a future overall Advocacy Strategy
- Advocacy towards the EU Institutions
 - a) Be in constant contact with the European Commission (GA Culture, Education, ...; EACEA), the European Parliament (CULT Committee); standing informal contacts within a consortium of partners in the CCS; Reaching out to stakeholders that might be potential supporters of advocacy actions towards the EU institutions.
 - b) AEC representatives are traditionally well involved in EU hearings, expert and stakeholder groups, boards of partner organisations etc.
 - c) Continuing and strengthening the proven joint activities.
- Freedom of expression
 - a) Partnering with [Freemuse](#); developing a policy plan on the topic; supporting a study on the European legal framework for Freedom of Artistic Expression.
 - b) The topic has not yet been systematically addressed by the AEC; The Artemis project could offer an opportunity to change that in the future
 - c) Investigating options to include the topic in a future AEC advocacy strategy.

3. Questions for AEC members

The Advocacy Advisory Group and Task Force has decided to develop as a next step a questionnaire to learn more about what AEC members consider to be the most urgent needs and / or priorities to be addressed and what would be the most suited and relevant methods to be used in order to bring forward advocacy.

In preparation of this questionnaire, 5 areas were identified (A. Topics & Target Groups; B. Key Messages & Priorities; C. The interests of the HME sector compared to others; D. How to react to challenges & threats; E. Measures & Methods of Advocacy), and AEC members were asked to give feedback on how relevant they consider these areas as part of an overall AEC advocacy strategy. The outcomes of this feedback will then be the basis for the final elaboration of an in-depth questionnaire.