

Minutes of the 2021 General Assembly meeting



Antwerp and online, 6 November 2021

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 organised in a hybrid form with both online and in-person participants for the first time.

In October all members were informed that there would not be elections to the AEC Council this year. There were no applications for the Council seat which will become vacant after Ingeborg Radok-Žádná is finishing her second term. The coming year the AEC Council will consist of eleven members until the next elections. This situation is fully in line with AEC Statutes (article 5.2. states that “Council shall consist of a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve persons.” and article 5.3. states that “An incomplete Council or Executive Committee shall remain competent, notwithstanding its obligations to have additional members elected.”).

1. Minutes of the 2020 General Assembly

- ✓ The General Assembly approves the Minutes of the 2020 General Assembly.

2. President’s Report: Annual Report 2020 and activities to November 2021

- As a detailed report of the year 2020 can be read in the AEC Annual Report (available on the [AEC website](#)), the President focuses on AEC’s activities and achievements in 2020-21.
- 2021 has been a productive year for AEC, and the activities could progressively be organised in person again after the summer. The AEC Council met once online and twice in-person; the AEC Office staff members worked mainly from home for most of the year; most of the project activities took place online, and events were delivered online or, from September onwards, in a hybrid format.

AEC COUNCIL

- The AEC Council had an online meeting in April and met in person in Prague in September and in Antwerp in November. In addition, the Executive Committee met three times between the Council meetings, due to the pandemic exclusively online (on 10 December 2021, 16 February 2022 and 14 June 2022). Regular, mostly weekly contact is maintained between the CEO and the President.
- In cooperation with the Office, the council worked on implementing the current strategic plan as well as planning the coming years. In particular the Council:
 - Reflected and brainstormed on the content of the new Creative Europe application [which was eventually submitted in August]
 - Prepared the revised strategic plan 2016-2023

- Prepared the 2021 activities, monitoring them and reflecting on them, such as:
 - the events and platforms, and in particular the AEC Congress
 - project work, in particular the project Strengthening Music in Society (AEC-SMS)
 - external relations, lobbying activities and communication
- Considered membership matters
- Monitored staff performance and finances (especially with regards to the implications of the Covid-19 crisis)
- Reflected on how to adjust our work to meet the needs of our members in the Covid crisis and beyond.

The AEC Council consist of the following representatives:

President:	Eirik Birkeland	Norway
Vice-Presidents:	Elisabeth Gutjahr	Austria
	Deborah Kelleher	Ireland
Secretary General:	Harrie van den Elsen	The Netherlands
Council members:	Jeffrey Sharkey	United Kingdom
	Ivana Perković	Serbia
	Kathleen Coessens	Belgium
	Ingeborg Radok Žádná	Czech Republic
	Claire Michon	France
	Lucia Di Cecca	Italy
	Zdzisław Łapinski	Poland
	Rico Gubler	Germany
Co-opted:	Bernard Lanskey	Singapore
	Miranda Harmer	United Kingdom
	Eline Accoe	Belgium

Personnel changes within the AEC Office

- Stefan Gies, Linda Messas, Paulina Gut, Sara Primiterra, Alfonso Guerra, Barbara Lalić and Chiara Conciatori have continued their work.
- Several student interns have joined the staff during 2021

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, thanks to the various SMS WGs working on these topics
- AEC organised 2 online and 3 hybrid events, where staff and students from member institutions discussed, brainstormed, and exchanged.
 - Pop and Jazz Platform, online (11-13 February 2021)
 - EPARM Conference, online (18-20 March 2021)
 - IRC Meeting, Vigo, Spain (16-18 September 2021)
 - AEC Early Music Platform meeting, Trossingen, Germany (8-9 October 2021)
 - AEC Annual Congress and GA, Antwerp, Belgium (4-6 November 2021)
- Cooperation with MusiQuE

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

- AEC has made substantial progress in exploring the the contemporary potential and challenges for musicians and HMEIs in society. A major step has been achieved with the publication of SMS WG 1 academic paper on the ‘Artist as a maker in society’.
- AEC also contributed to promoting early childhood music education through the SMS project.

Pillar 3: Promoting participation, inclusiveness and diversity

- AEC has made substantial progress in its exploration of diversity & inclusiveness, thanks to the SMS WG 2 on diversity. In addition, the first Assembly of the project on power relations was held online in September.
- AEC continued to promote participation and diversity in its own activities, including by encouraging feedback from the various regions.
- Thanks to the Student WG, AEC continued to work towards increasing student voice and student participation in the association (in its strategic planning & in its activities), as well as in higher music education more generally. The student working group members have made impressive progress towards establishing the European Performing Arts Students’ Association.

Pillar 4: Strengthening partnership and interaction with stakeholders

AEC worked hard to maintain its collaborations with partners despite the Covid-19 crisis:

- The election of Stefan Gies as a board member of Culture Action Europe has created helpful synergies in daily cooperation with partner organisations and strengthens cooperation in the area of joint advocacy
- Eirik Brikeland’s and Harrie van den Elsen’s involvement as Board Members of the European Music Council have strengthen the cooperation in the area of joint advocacy
- An informal working group bringing together 12 organisations and transnational networks dealing with Artistic Research had been established under the leadership of AEC in summer 2019. This working group has after one year of intensive work agreed on the wording of an alternative formulation ensuring full recognition of Artistic research within OECD’s Frascati Manual and is now in contact with

representatives of the Frascati Manual Editorial Board to negotiate an implementation of our suggestions in a next edition of the Frascati Manual.

- The standing SCHEME Working Group, bringing together European umbrella organisations from the Music Education sector, has continued its collaboration.
- The same applies to AEC's collaboration with partners representing the music and performing arts labour market, such as the Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe (Pearle*), Opera Europa and the International Music and Media Center IMZ

AEC PROJECTS 2021

- The AEC Congress 2021 was the closing event of the SMS project, which has been at the core of AEC activities and actions since 2018 and has enabled AEC to explore and address various issues that are crucial to the sustainability of our institutions and the sector. All the SMS Working Groups have produced considerable outcomes. The final outcomes of the project can be found on the [SMS brochure](#).

Other projects in which AEC is involved:

- Strengthening Music in Society (SMS)
- News in Map, Erasmus+, 2019-2021
- European Opera Academy, Erasmus+, 2019-2021
- Opera Incanto, Creative Europe, 2018-2021
- SWING, Erasmus+, 2018-2021
- DEMUSIS, Erasmus+, 2019-2022
- ECMA PRO, Creative Europe, 2020-2024
- PRIhME, Erasmus+, 2020-2023
- HarMA+, Erasmus+, 2020-2023
- RAPPLab, Erasmus+, 2020-2023
- LOTUS, Erasmus+, 2020-2023
- METRIC, 2019-...

3. Approval of the revised AEC Statutes

Last year, the quorum was not reached at the General Assembly to approve the revised AEC statutes. The same version of the revised AEC Statutes as in 2020 is presented again this year to be approved by the members.

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 249 active members, at least 83 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”.

Due to technical issues with the online voting system, the President informs members that all voting will be open for the duration of the meeting and that the results will be presented at the end.

- ✓ The General Assembly approved the revised AEC Statutes (86 valid votes, 79 yes, 1 no, 6 abstentions).

4. Approval of the revised AEC Strategic Plan (2016-2023)

Last year, the General Assembly approved the extension of the strategic plan for 2 years until 2023, and this extension implied that the Strategic Plan would also be revised. The Council and the Office worked on revising the plan this year.

Vice-president, Deborah Kelleher, presents the revised AEC strategic plan and summarizes the main differences from the previous one.

- ✓ The General Assembly approves the revised AEC Strategic Plan (2016-2023) (77 valid votes, 76 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention).

5. Action Plan 2022 and Communication Strategy

Stefan Gies and Linda Messas presents the content of the new Creative Europe project.

The new project has been titled “Empowering artists as Makers in Society”. It will be a strong continuity of the SMS project and build on the outcomes and findings from SMS.

The project will include the following work packages:

- WP1: Project management and coordination
- WP2: Networking of organisations and individuals throughout Europe and beyond
- WP3: Training and providing advice to professionals
- WP4: Representing the sector and advocating
- WP5: Collecting and disseminating data, information and practices
- WP6: Communication and dissemination
- WP7: Building the capacity of the HME sector to train artists as makers in society
- WP8: Fostering diversity, inclusion & gender equality

The project plans to form eight working groups, each of them including representatives of HMEIs, one student, one member of the AEC Office team and in some cases external partners. There will also be three taskforces, which will be smaller groups who focus on a specific task.

Chiara Conciatori, AEC Communication Officer, presents the Communication Strategy.

The next year, AEC communication activities will be particularly focusing on reaching more people within its member institutions. The AEC would like to raise awareness about the resources and tools that have been developed for its members, in particular those produced in the framework of the AEC-Strengthening Music in Society project (SMS).

AEC will work towards these objectives using several communication channels. In particular, the new AEC website, the new and improved mailing system, and through social media.

6. Financial report of the Secretary General

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

- The AEC Accounts for 2020
- Approval of the proposed membership fees for 2022
- Approval of the forecast outturn 2021
- Approval of the proposed budget for 2022
- Appointment of external auditors for the 2021 accounts

Annual Accounts for 2020

The Secretary General informs that external auditors Małgorzata Sternal (Krzysztof Penderecki Academy of Music, Krakow) and Peter Tornquist (Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo) both recommended approval of the 2020 Accounts and he expressed gratitude for their work.

- ✓ The 2020 Annual Accounts were approved beforehand through an online vote: there were 79 votes casted, out of which 75 yes, 1 no, 3 abstentions.

Proposed membership fees for 2022

In accordance with 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 2022 (74 valid votes, 65 yes, 2 no, 7 abstentions)

Forecast outturn 2021

The expected result for 2021 is 10 296,84 €.

Income 2021

- Based on the principles of the Sustainability Plan, AEC's income from membership fees has further increased in 2021
- Income from events fees has increased compared to 2020, as 2 events could take place in presence again
- In relation to project income: the SMS grant shall remain at its 2020 level while we expect the income from other projects to increase (with new projects starting).
- The income from EASY shall remain stable and we received a fee to coordinate the METRIC network
- 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. Indeed, MusiQuE has been seriously hit by the Covid crisis with all its review activities slowed down in 2020-2021. AEC agreed that MusiQuE would reimburse in 2021 a smaller percentage of staff cost

Expenditures 2021

- Staff costs shall raise (due to indexation and the granting of a monthly allocation for teleworking).
- Events costs were covered almost entirely by the SMS project budget. Office costs should get back to their 2019 level, and other travel costs have drastically decreased.
- SMS project expenses shall return to their 2019 level and expenses for other projects shall increase
- Finally, the EASY service fee shall slightly raise.

✓ The General Assembly approves the forecast outturn 2021 (69 valid votes, 69 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions)

Proposed budget for 2022

Harrie van den Elsen presents two scenarios for the proposed budget for 2022 depending on the outcome of the Creative Europe application.

The first proposed budget is a careful prediction of a scenario in which the Creative Europe application is not selected by the European Commission. The proposed budget shows a result of 1 634,86 €.

The second proposed budget is a prediction of a scenario in which the Creative Europe project is fully funded. The proposed budget shows a result of 13 621,18 €.

Income of 2022

- In both scenarios, and based on the principles of the Sustainability Plan, AEC's income from membership fees shall further increase in 2022
- For the moment we are counting on an income from events fees for in-person events
- Concerning the project grants:
 - If the AEC do not have the new grant, the association will be able to still rely on funding from other ongoing projects.
 - If the AEC have the new project grant, the association will transfer part of the funding from other ongoing projects to the year 2023
- The other income strands are similar for both scenarios

Expenditures in 2021

If the AEC do not obtain the new grant (see the first orange column):

- Staff costs will be reduced (1 staff member is leaving the team in January and would not be replaced)
 - Events costs will be much higher as they will not be integrated as part of the new project expenses
 - There will be no expenses for this new project
 - Finally, the other expenditure strands are similar for both scenarios
- ✓ The General Assembly approves the proposed budget for 2022 (75 valid votes, 73 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions)

Appointment of two auditors for the 2020 accounts

- ✓ The General Assembly approves the appointment of Małgorzata Sternal, Academy of Music in Krakow (who already served last year) and Mario Carrillo, Centro Superior Música Creativa, Madrid as external auditors for the 2021 accounts (75 valid votes, 72 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions)

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

Gordon Munro, the Chair of the MusiQuE Board, updates the General Assembly about MusiQuE's recent activities (2020-2021) and developments.

In January 2022 one seat will be vacant for the MusiQuE board. A call for applications was launched by MusiQuE among AEC member institutions in September 2021.

The AEC Council asks the General Assembly to endorse three 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): Anna Maria Bordin,*

Lies Colman and Julia Peters, based on their solid background and experience.”
(77 valid votes, 72 yes, 0 no, 5 abstentions).

8. Confirmation of new members, withdrawals and expired memberships

The following institutions have been accepted as Active Members:

- Maltepe University Conservatory (Turkey)
- National Academy of Advanced Orchestral Studies (Portugal)
- Pilea-Hortiatis Municipal Conservatory (Greece)
- Conservatorio Statale di Musica “C. G. da Venosa” (Italy)
- Bahçeşehir University Conservatory (Turkey)
- Istituto Superiore di Studi Musicali Giuseppe Verdi (Italy)

The following institutions have been accepted as Associate Members:

- Fondazione Centro di Musicologia Walter Stauffer (Italy)
- Qatar Music Academy (Qatar)

The following institutions have withdrawn their membership:

- Association Chinese Culture Music & Art (The Netherlands)
- Linnaeus University, Department of Music and Art (Sweden)
- Université Antonine - Institut Supérieur de Musique (Lebanon)
- Conservatorio Superior de Música de Aragón (Spain)

Finally, memberships with 2 years of non-payment of the membership fee are expired. The following memberships have been expired in 2021:

- Istituto Superiore di Studi Musicali P. Mascagni (Italy)
- Ege University, Turkish Music State Conservatory (Turkey)
- Conservatoire de Musique et d’Art Dramatique du Quebec (Canada)

Taking these changes into account, AEC ends 2021 with 287 members.

9. Future congresses

- 2022: CNSMD Lyon, Lyon
- 2023: Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag, The Hauge

10. Any other business

None