

FRAMEWORK FOR AEC STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2028



**Association Européenne des
Conservatoires, Académies de
Musique et Musikhochschulen**

MISSION AND VISION

Vision

AEC is the leading voice for Higher Music Education in Europe, a powerful advocate for its member institutions. AEC understands and supports music and arts education, together with cultural participation, as central contributors to quality in human life, and inclusive societies founded on democratic values. AEC sees professionally focused music and arts education as a quest for relevance in four areas: artistic practice; learning and teaching; research and innovation, and contributions to society. It seeks to foster these elements and to encourage the diversity and dynamism with which they are pursued in different institutions, countries and regions.

Mission

AEC works for the advancement of higher education in music and the arts. It does this based on three pillars:

- **Advocating**
- **Developing new content and exchanging knowledge through transnational cooperation**
- **Making the sector sustainable**

Values

AEC promotes cooperation, participation and diversity. It operates inclusively, sustainably, efficiently and effectively, enabling communication and sharing of good practice.

FRAMEWORK

In this Framework for the AEC Strategic Plan 2024-2028, AEC takes as a starting point the four missions of higher music education institutions: Artistic Practice, Learning & Teaching, Research & Innovation, and Contributions to Society, and explores how it can best support its member institutions with achieving each of their four missions.

PILLARS

Advocating

**Developing new content and exchanging
knowledge through transnational
cooperation**

**Making the sector
more sustainable**

HME MISSIONS

**ARTISTIC
PRACTICE**

**LEARNING &
TEACHING**

**RESEARCH &
INNOVATION**

**CONTRIBUTIONS
TO SOCIETY**

PILLAR 1 : ADVOCATING

Advocacy is one of the main priorities and core tasks of the AEC. AEC understands advocacy as systematic and targeted actions to represent and safeguard the interests of its members, in particular in relation to political decision-makers and partner organisations, but also with other stakeholders and the civil society as a whole. The strength of the music and cultural sectors also lies in collaborations with partners. Thus, joining forces and launching joint projects and campaigns with partners who are pursuing similar goals is key for AEC. AEC has developed an advocacy strategy which will be regularly revised.

During the strategic period 2024 - 2028, AEC will advocate for:

In relation to **Artistic Practice:**

- a strong position for music and the arts in general
- a better understanding of artistic practice by emphasizing the role of musicians and artists as makers in society

In relation to **L&T:**

- the importance of music and the arts in general education
- the specific characteristics needs of music as opposed to other disciplines in higher education and other levels of education
- academic freedom
- mutual recognition of learning
- the permeability between general schools and specialised schools

In relation to **Research & Innovation:**

- the recognition of research relevant to our sector (e.g. artistic research, theoretical research)
- the recognition of third cycle level studies in music and the arts

In relation to **Contributions to Society:**

- the value of arts and culture as ways to promote democracy, equality, inclusion and wellbeing in our society
- the economic impact of the cultural and creative sector, and how AEC member institutions contribute to that eco-system
- the access to music and arts education for all at all levels;
- the access of artists and arts organisations to funding
- a STEAM approach to learning in general education
- better work conditions of artists (remuneration, impact of IT and AI particular AI on copyright, etc.)

PILLAR 1 : ADVOCATING INDICATIVE ACTIONS

AEC will:

- advocate mainly at the European level and, at members' request, at national level
- conduct advocacy actions on its own as well as joint advocacy actions together with partner organisations in music and the arts (including with EPASA and student organisations)
- collect data on the sector that can be used to inform decision-makers
- advocate within the association to bring members closer together by creating a shared understanding on common goals and issues.
- ...

PILLAR 2 : Developing new content and exchanging knowledge through transnational cooperation

AEC's core task is also to be think tank and a hub: it studies various subjects and issues relevant for the advancement of the sector and provides its members with inspiration, information, ideas, advice; it connects its member institutions through the exchange of ideas, practices, and the development of new artistic and pedagogical knowledge. This work will continue in 2024-2028.

In relation to **Artistic Practice**, AEC will:

- revisit and re-imagine its platforms to create fora for knowledge development, future thinking and the promotion of artistic cooperation with strong connections between traditions, aesthetics and genres
- encourage its members to introduce and/or further develop co-creation and cross-disciplinary as well as cross-sectorial collaboration, both within the arts and with other academic disciplines
- invite its members to be open to diverse musical traditions and genres, cultures and languages, facilitate their interconnections, and to promote the works of underrepresented artists
- promote among its members the use of technology as a creative medium.

In relation to **L&T**, AEC will:

- encourage its members to further develop and innovate music and arts education and training by developing new and diverse L&T approaches and methodologies, strengthening student-centred learning and assessment through collaborative methods
- promote the integration of skills needed to equip creative and communicative artists and teachers, e.g. digital skills and skills to deal with diverse audiences
- support its members in the development of methods for L&T involving new technologies and explore their impact on L&T activities and experiences
- encourage its members to address power relation issues and implement the recommendations of the PRIhME project
- support its members to deliver high level pre-college education and work on a closer connection between the pre-college education and higher education levels
- explore how it can best support its members in their mission to provide lifelong learning opportunities to their teaching and administrative staff

PILLAR 2 : Developing new content and exchanging knowledge through transnational cooperation

In relation to **Research & Innovation**, AEC will:

- challenge the traditional understanding of the notions of quality and of excellence and encourage its members to regularly review their understanding of quality and excellence
- support its members in including research and innovation in teaching
- encourage its members to further promote critical reflection
- contribute to further develop and promote a better understanding of artistic research
- promote cross-disciplinarity and cross-sectoral research, both within the arts and with other academic disciplines
- follow the latest developments in research on new technologies and advocate to address in this context issues such as ethics / authorship / copyright

In relation to **Contributions to Society**, AEC will:

- continue encouraging its members to consider their role in relation to societal interaction, participation, audiences and the role of artists as 'makers in society' and to innovate curricula accordingly
- promote cross-collaboration in the context of societal themes, among others through EU projects, and co-creation with other sectors for the benefits of society
- encourage its members to ensure an adequate provision of teacher education for general and specialist schools
- encourage its members to grasp the new possibilities to reach and interact with audiences through IT

PILLAR 2 : Developing new content and exchanging knowledge through transnational cooperation
INDICATIVE ACTIONS

AEC will:

- act as a think tank - researching, collecting and sharing good example practices
- review its events and platforms to address the above mentioned ambitions
- facilitate the creation of a women leadership forum for the sector
- collect data (e.g. about cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral elements, data on interdisciplinary projects and the student needs & desire in our data collection)
- address the notions of quality and excellence in its events
- deliver workshops on topics dealing with the above-mentioned ambitions
- ...

PILLAR 3: Making the HME sector sustainable

AEC sees sustainability in the broader sense: from green sustainability to health & wellbeing; from career sustainability and lifelong learning to institutions' responsibility for global development; from a quality culture of permanent improvement to financial sustainability and for long-term engagement with our communities and the art form as a whole. AEC wants to embed its activities in the Sustainable Development Goals.

In relation to **Artistic Practice**, AEC will:

- foster a continuous relationship with the cultural and creative sector and industry
- encourage its members to foster artistic cooperation at transnational level
- open to new fields in the arts (see pillar 2 inclusiveness)

In relation to **L&T**, AEC will:

- promote interdisciplinarity, both within and outside the arts
- encourage its members to educate and train students in addressing sustainability issues in their creative work as the musicians and artists of tomorrow
- explore sustainable forms of internationalisation for the personal development of artists so that they can perform for and respond to diverse audiences, and engage with global citizenship
- promote sustainable and long-term institutional transnational cooperation, including joint programmes, joint modules, joint courses and blended intensive programmes
- support its members in the development and implementation of frameworks to ensure fairness, inclusivity, diversity and gender equality for their students, teachers and staff

PILLAR 3: Making the HME sector sustainable

In relation to **Research & Innovation**, AEC will:

- promote institutional cooperation in the field of research
- support transdisciplinary research
- consider the role of the arts in working towards a more sustainable way of life and how artistic research activities can leave an impact on society
- address issues of ethics in research activities
- explore the power as artists in countering disinformation and strengthening democratic participation

In relation to **Quality Culture**, AEC will:

- support a robust quality culture in its member institutions that connects artistic standards and educational quality and that continuously monitors the quality of L&T through the use of internal and external tools
- expand institutions' sustainability through the promotion of professional development for both management and teaching positions to support effective leadership and enable cultures for change

In relation to **Contributions to Society**, AEC will:

- strengthen the democratisation of culture
- strengthen the position of its member institutions in society as centres for continuing professional development implementing lifelong learning opportunities for professionals in the field
- support its members to become more diverse, inclusive and gender equal (ensuring equal opportunities) as well as to promote diversity, inclusion, gender equality outside the institution
- consider with its member institutions aspects of 'glocalisation', i.e. being rooted in their local community while having a global mindset
- research on the economic impact of cultural institutions and how HMEIs contribute to that eco-system

PILLAR 3: Making the HME sector sustainable INDICATIVE ACTIONS

AEC will:

- collect relevant data
- address sustainability issues with regards to internationalisation by promoting 'internationalisation at home' and blended mobility activities
- promote research & innovation activities that will support the sustainability of sector
- encourage members to include sustainability as a topic in the curriculum
- ...

OPERATIONAL PILLAR

AEC AS AN ORGANISATION WILL:

- perform all the functions of an effective and efficient member association, with clear governance and a well-run, proficient and dedicated office team
- explore and plan how AEC can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals
- strengthen its financial sustainability
- strengthen and improve the communication to and from members, involving leaders, administrators, teachers, students etc.
- further develop 'regional fora'
- offer country-specific support services and mechanisms to strengthen participation in its activities
- strengthen partnership and interaction with stakeholders