

AEC - European Association of Conservatoires

SURVEY REPORT

Data Collection and Analysis of
Environmentally Sustainable
Practices and Needs in Higher
Music Education Institutions

**Presented by the
ARTEMIS
AEC Goes Green
Working Group**

**AEC - EMPOWERING ARTISTS
AS MAKERS IN SOCIETY**



Co-funded by the
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Introduction

AEC – Empowering Artists as Makers in Society (AEC-ARTEMIS, 2022-2025) is a project funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission, in support of European networks.

The project builds on the results of previous projects carried out by the AEC, in particular the work and outputs of the Creative Europe-funded project AEC – Strengthening Music in Society (AEC-SMS, 2017-2021).

The **ARTEMIS AEC Goes Green Working Group (WG)** brings together advocates of the green shift, highly motivated and committed to investigating the link between arts and the environment and exploring educational, artistic and professional concepts in which music contributes to raising ecological and environmental awareness.

This report presents the findings from an online survey conducted among the members of the Association Européenne des Conservatoires (AEC) between **April and September 2023**. Additionally, it includes results from two surveys conducted among AEC students –one at the AEC Congress in Lyon in 2022 and another through an online platform in April 2023. The data collected from these surveys were shared at various AEC events, including the IRCs meeting in Leuven in 2023 and the AEC Congress in The Hague in 2023.

The primary objective of this report is to both **inform and inspire Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs) about environmentally friendly and conscious practices**, while also highlighting the sector's needs. This document outlines the current state of affairs within the sector and will serve as a foundation for developing **Recommendations for green transition in higher music education**.

The AEC Goes Green Working Group (WG) expresses its sincere gratitude to all who participated in the survey and generously shared their experiences regarding environmentally sustainable practices. While the WG acknowledges that the data is not extensive—given that just under one-third of AEC members responded to the survey—it views this initiative as an important first step. This survey represents a pioneering effort to **explore eco-sustainable practices** within HMEIs. The analysis provided in this report is based solely on the survey responses received.

As we move forward, we hope to gain further insights and develop robust, actionable recommendations that can be effectively implemented, ultimately driving positive change in the sector.

The AEC Goes Green Working Group



CHAIR : **DUŠANKA JELENKOVIĆ VIDOVIĆ**

Independent researcher, Belgrade, Serbia

COORDINATOR: **ASHKHEN FIXOVA**

AEC Office Team



MARIA KALLEITNER-HUBER

Mozarteum University, Salzburg, Austria

HELOISE LECOMTE

Lyon National Conservatoire, Lyon, France



MARÍA SANZ

Student of Centro Superior Música Creativa, Madrid, Spain

ETTORE CAUVIN

Alumnus of Codarts University of the Arts,
Rotterdam, The Netherlands



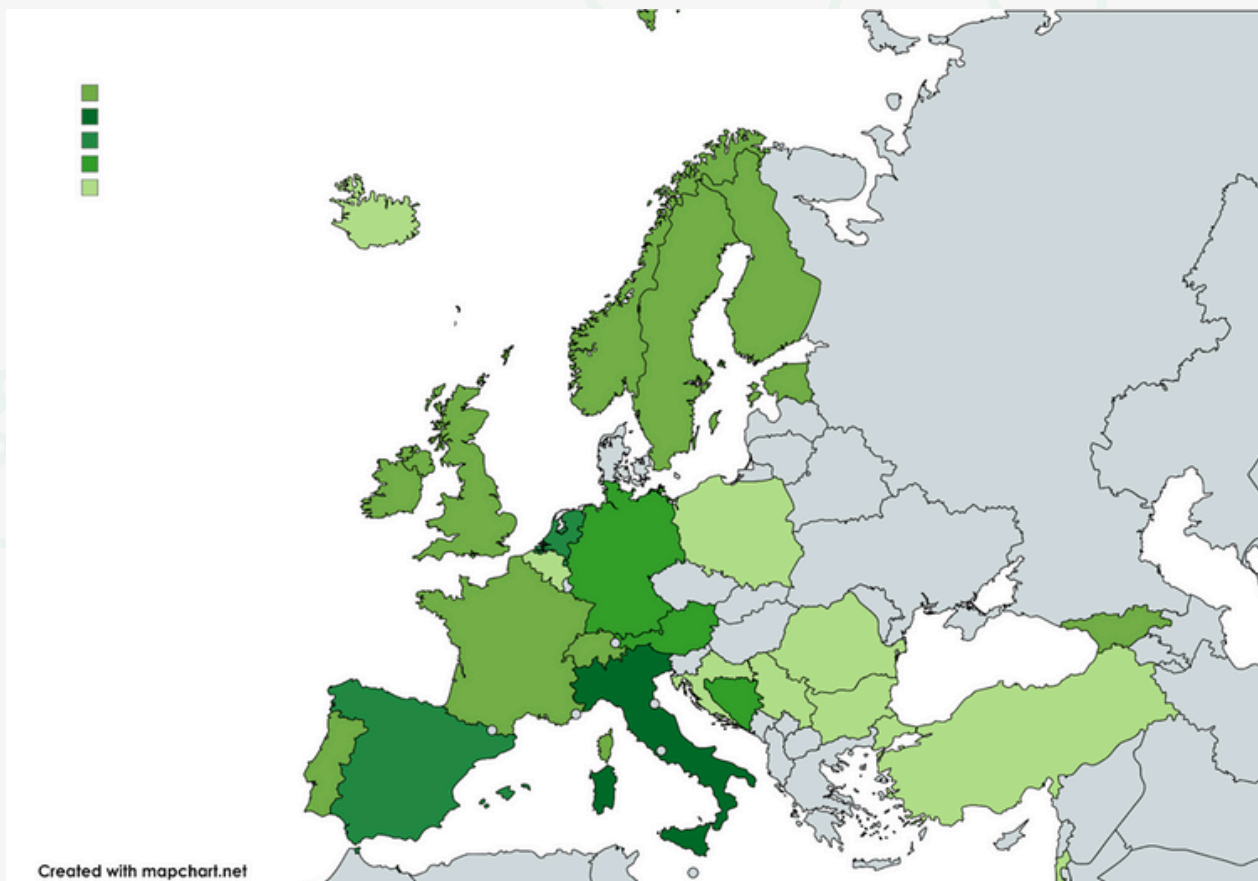
MARLOES DE NUL

Student of Conservatorium Maastricht, Maastricht, The Netherlands

General information

COUNTRY

The AEC Goes Green Survey on eco-sustainable practices and needs in higher music education institution was answered by **86 respondents** coming a total of quarter of AEC's members from **27 countries from Europe and beyond**.



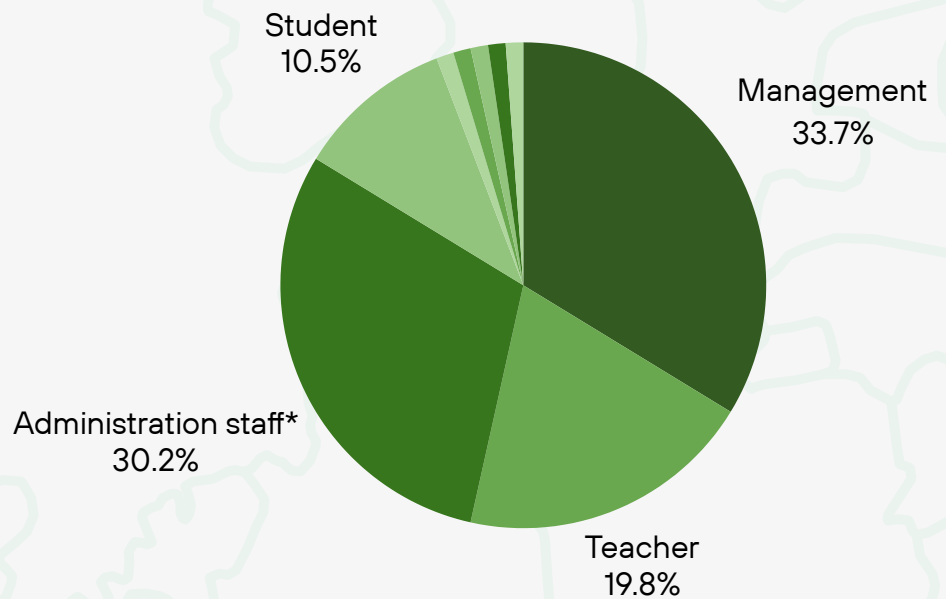
On the map above, the countries with most responses to the survey are marked with a darker shade of green.

Countries and number of answers

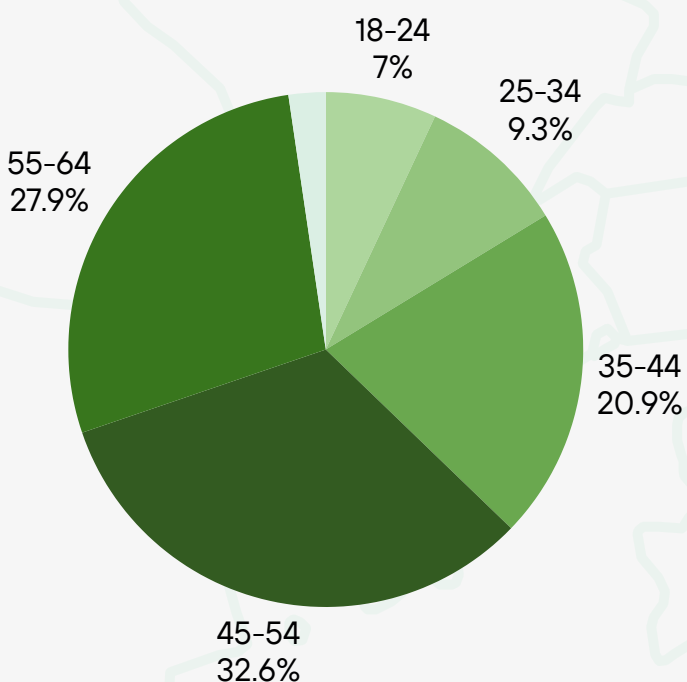
Italy: 19	Australia: 1
Montenegro: 2	Austria: 4
The Netherlands: 8	Belgium: 1
Norway: 3	Bosnia & Herzegovina: 5
Poland: 2	Croatia: 1
Portugal: 3	Estonia: 3
Romania: 1	Finland: 2
Serbia: 1	France: 3
Spain: 7	Georgia: 3
Sweden: 1	Germany: 5
Switzerland: 2	Iceland: 1
Turkey: 1	Ireland: 3
The United Kingdom: 3	Israel: 1

CURRENT POSITION IN THE HOME INSTITUTION

Looking into the positions of the respondents in their institutions, the majority, comprising over a third (33.7%), **hold management positions**. Another 30.2% are **administrative staff** members (encompassing roles such as those in **international relations offices**, quality assurance, student services, and maintenance). **Teachers** make up 19.8% of the respondents, while **students** constitute 10.5% of the total. It is interesting to note that only one individual holds the post of Sustainability Manager, which shows that this type of position is still a great novelty among higher music education institutions.



*international relations office, Quality Assurance, Student services, Maintenance, etc.



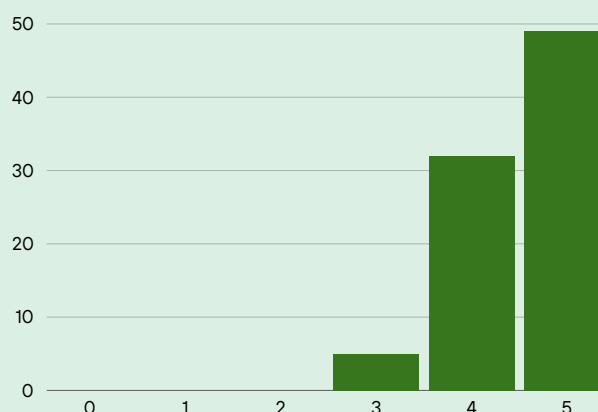
AGE CATEGORY

As illustrated in the graph, the largest portion of respondents, accounting for **32.6%**, **belongs to the 45-55 age category**. Following closely behind, around **27.9% of respondents fall within the 55-64 age group**. Additionally, around 20.9% of participants are aged between 35 and 44 years old. The youngest demographic, aged 18-24, constitutes 7% of the total respondents.

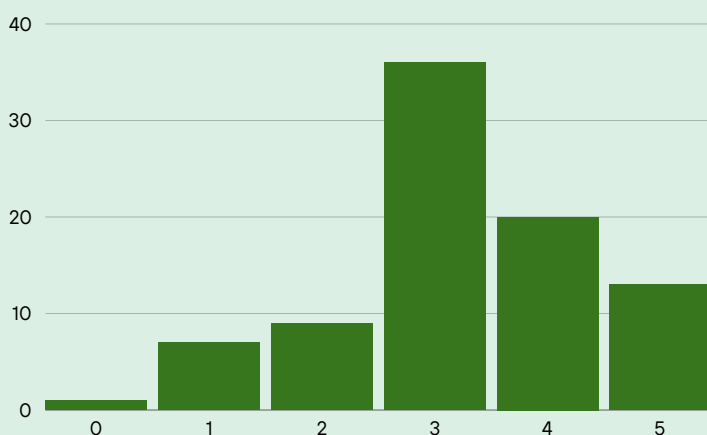
Position regarding the green and environmental issues

On a scale of 0 to 5, how concerned personally are you regarding the climate crisis and environmental problems?

The **majority of respondents** (57%) rated their **concern for climate crises** and environmental problems at the highest level, 5 out of 5. Additionally, 37.2% graded their level of concern at 4 out of 5. Another 5.8% rated their concern at 3 out of 5. Notably, there were no respondents who rated their concern for environmental issues below 3 out of 5.



On a scale of 0 to 5, how much do you think that you can personally contribute to the green transition in the higher music education sector?



While there is notable concern for ecological and environmental issues, the **confidence in being able to contribute to the green transition** in the higher music education sector is **much lower**. A rather high percentage of respondents – around 42%, rates their contribution to the green transition 3 out of 5.

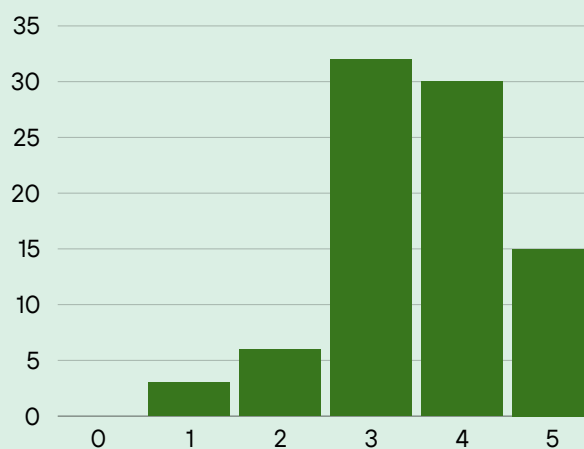
On the other hand, 18,6% of respondents consider themselves as **low influencers** on the green transition, rating their personal contribution to 1 or 2 out of 5. Even though 15% express strong confidence in their ability to contribute to environmental issues, a significant proportion of respondents believe they can contribute substantially, with 15.1% rating their potential impact as 5 out of 5 and 23.3% giving themselves a 4 out of 5. Further examination of the individual responses indicates that those who view themselves as most **capable of driving change tend to occupy management roles**. This positioning enables them to effectively implement transformative actions within their institutions.

How much do you think that your institution can contribute to making the higher music education sector more sustainable and environment-friendly?

Responses to the question about the institution's contribution to sustainability generally mirror those regarding personal contribution, albeit with slight differences. **The percentage of respondents who believe their institutions can contribute to the green transition (17.4%) is similar to those who believe they can personally contribute (15.1%).**

However, **fewer** respondents believe their institutions can **contribute significantly** (3.5%

compared to 7% who believe the same about their personal impact). This discrepancy highlights a potential **underestimation of institutional influence**, especially given the expressed concern regarding the environmental crisis.



Are there already actions taken at your institution toward eco-responsible behaviour? If so, please mark which kind.

30.3%

In **everyday functioning**

(e.g. in separation of waste, energy and water consumption control, using eco-labeled stationary paper and other office supplies, etc)

In **events planning** (e.g. choosing venues reachable in more sustainable modes of transportation, minimising printed materials, offering waste separation points, etc.)

16.4%

Sustainability **policy/strategy** in development, or developed and implemented

15.4%

In **communication and raising awareness** (e.g.

organising "green" events, thematic concerts, green projects, etc.)

10.8%

9.2%

In **teaching and learning** (e.g. adding green topics and courses in the curriculum, organising green skills workshops, opting for online (entrance) exams, etc.)

4.6%

I don't know

8.7%

Sustainability or Green Team

established to ensure more sustainable functioning and practices

4.6%

None

12.8%

Other

Other answers include:

*"The main focus of "green" issues is in **other** parts of the university, **not so much in the faculty of music**"*

*"**Student initiative** to support eco-friendly ideas and actions, sustainable measures in the management of the **Erasmus programme** of the university"*

*"**Traveling by car is no longer financed**, we all travel by public transport (train)"*

*"We create **digital modules** when there is a need that affects many people, achieving a significant **reduction in the use of paper** in administrative acts and during classes. We are waiting for the necessary authorisations to install the solar panels."*

The question if the respondents have already taken part in the green initiatives showed a great number of responses and a range of activities. A bit over 20% indicated either that they have **never participated in any green initiatives** (10.5%), or hesitated to answer (10.5%). The **majority**, almost 70%, stated that their institutions implement green practices in **everyday functioning**, such as waste separation, energy and water consumption control, and using eco-labeled stationary paper. This suggests that **basic operational changes** are typically easier to implement and more directly under the control of the institution's management. Even though it is positive that the majority of respondents acknowledged these actions, the real impact heavily depends on consistent execution and active participation from all members of the institution.

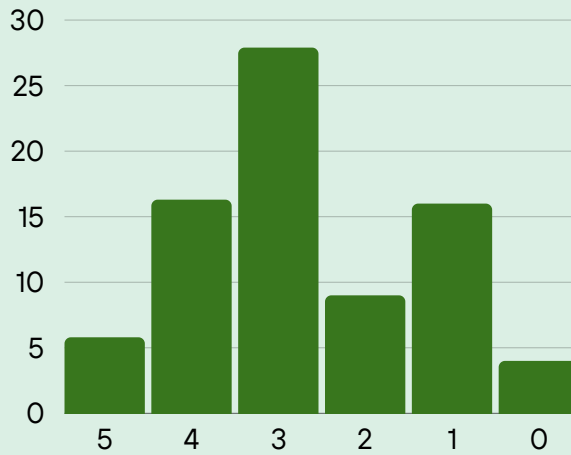
Additionally, having over a third of institutions (34.9%) with a **developed or developing sustainability strategy**, along with the presence of **dedicated green teams** in approximately one-fifth of the institutions (19.8%) to ensure more sustainable practices is a positive sign of formal commitment to environmental issues, suggesting institutional commitment to achieving specific sustainability goals.

A similarly high number of respondents (37.2%) stated that their institutions practise green initiatives in **event planning**, such as minimising printed materials and offering waste separation points. However, the effectiveness of these measures depends on the scale of events and adherence to eco-responsible event planning across all events. Additionally, a quarter of institutions have a proactive approach to **communicating environmental issues** and awareness-raising efforts, while 20.9% indicated implementation of green initiatives in **teaching and learning**.

Eleven percent of replies indicated detailed specific activities they have participated in and implemented in their institutions. Some of these examples include:

- **Student-led initiatives** supporting eco-friendly ideas and actions.
- Implementation of sustainable measures in the management of the **Erasmus programme**.
- Creation of digital modules to reduce **paper usage** in administrative tasks and classes.
- Installation of **solar panels** to harness renewable energy.
- **Promotion of public transport** and trains instead of financing duty travel by car.

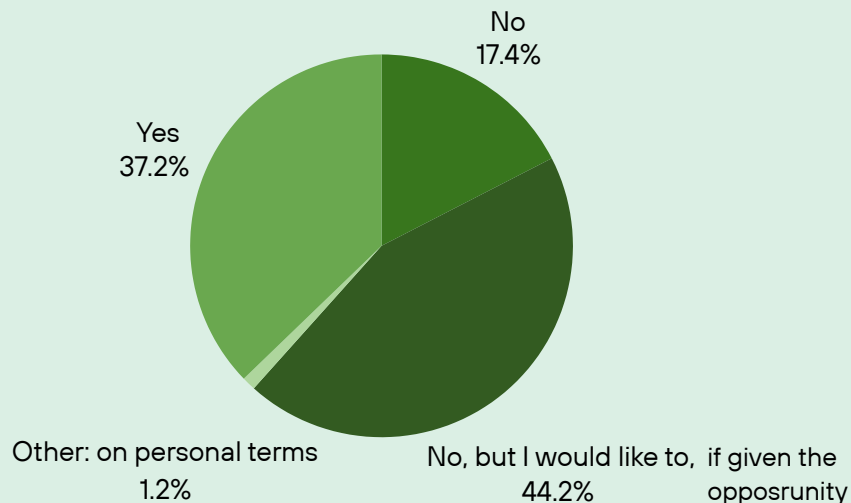
In your opinion, how active your institution is in making the green transition in higher music education sector?



The discrepancy becomes apparent when comparing responses to the previous two questions (personal contribution versus possible institutional impact) and how active the institution’s efforts are toward the green transition. Only 5.8% of respondents believe that their institution is making a maximum effort towards the green shift, while the **majority (29.1%) rated the efforts as 2 out of 5**. Additionally, 16.3% consider the efforts to be 1 out of 5, and another 4.7% think that their institution is not making any efforts.

These responses highlight **significant differences** between the perceived potential impact of institutions on the green shift versus the actual efforts they are making to achieve that impact. This may also suggest an expectation for institutions **to take more substantial action** toward the green transition.

Have you already taken part in green initiatives and actions in your professional career and/or in your institution?



Answering the question regarding participation in the **institutional green initiatives** and actions, **44.2% of respondents expressed interest** in participating in green initiatives at their institutions if given the opportunity, while 37.2% have already participated. Conversely, 17.4% stated they would not be interested in taking part in any green initiatives.

The data therefore suggests a significant potential for increased participation in green initiatives if institutions provide more opportunities, although a notable minority remains uninterested, indicating possible barriers, a lack of perceived relevance or information.

SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICES

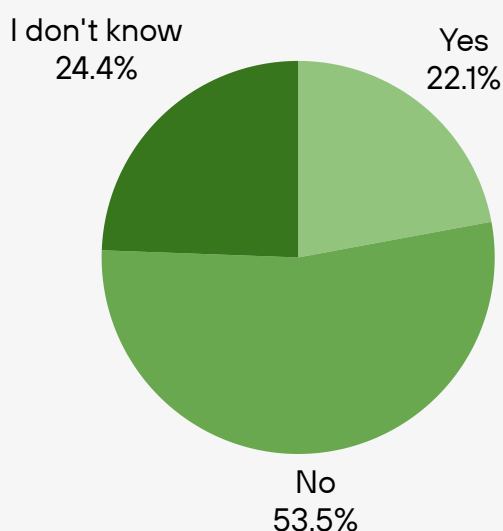
A good example of national and regional support for the green transition of the music conservatoires is the construction of a **new state-of-the-art building** of the **Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory in Milan**, known as Bosco della Musica (Forest of Music), financed by Italian national and regional funds, such as the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Ministry of University and Research, and the Region of Lombardy. The new building is focused on the **integration of green policies, sustainability, technology and enhancement of the local environment**. The design of the conservatory emphasises sustainability through the use of renewable energy sources and the integration of green roofs on the pavilions. The development plans to use materials and construction techniques that increase soil permeability and reduce the urban heat island effect, aligning with broader environmental sustainability goals. It additionally aims to **revitalise the previously less developed area** in which it is situated, as a vibrant and inclusive cultural hub that respects and enhances the local environment.

[More info here](#)

Management and Sustainability strategies

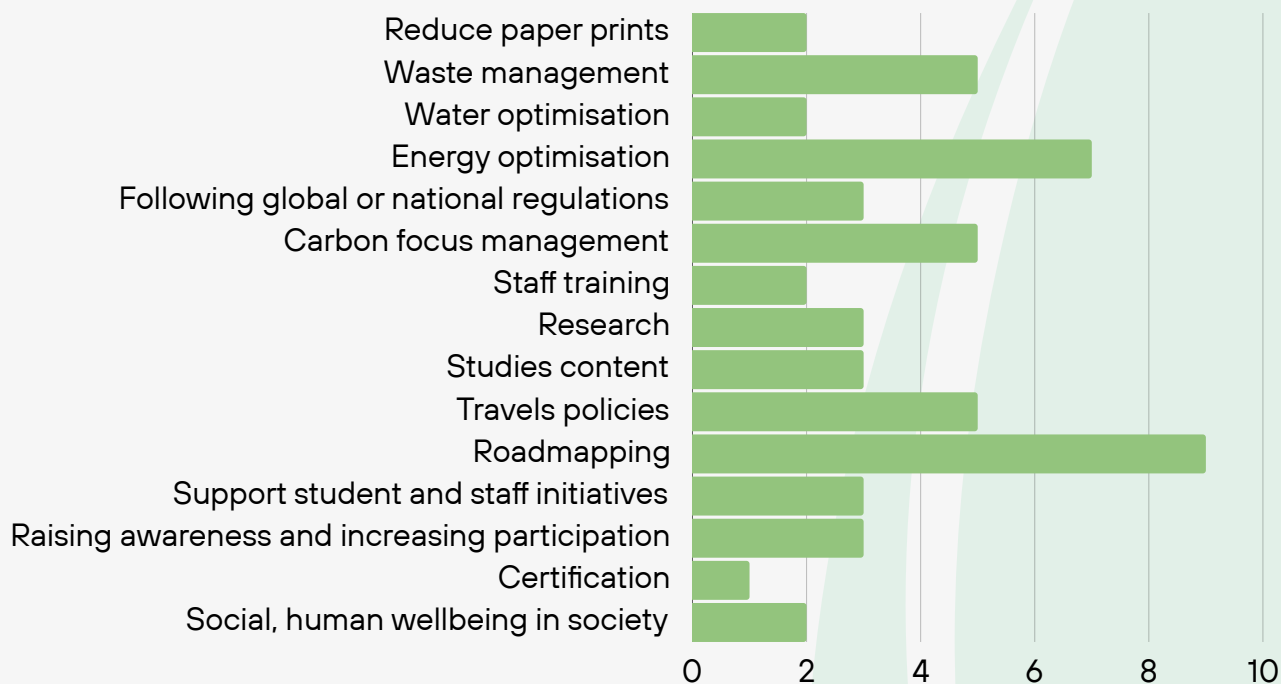
Strategic action plans and human resources are the keys to success for any ecological transition initiative. As demonstrated in answers to the three main questions about daily management and policies in the survey, there is a **significant discrepancy in HMEIs** between the perceived **importance of sustainability** and its **actual implementation** within institutions.

Does your institution have a sustainability policy/strategy?



To the question "Does your institution have a sustainability policy or strategy", only 22.1 % **affirmed the existence of formal environmental commitments** at the institutional level. Over half of the respondents (53.5%) indicated the absence of such policies, with an additional quarter (24.4%) uncertain if their institution has one, suggesting that many institutions have not yet prioritised or successfully integrated sustainability into their strategic frameworks.

Zooming in the content of the policies, about 20 detailed answers were received, showing a broad **focus on key sustainability areas**, that can be summarised into 15 main subjects:



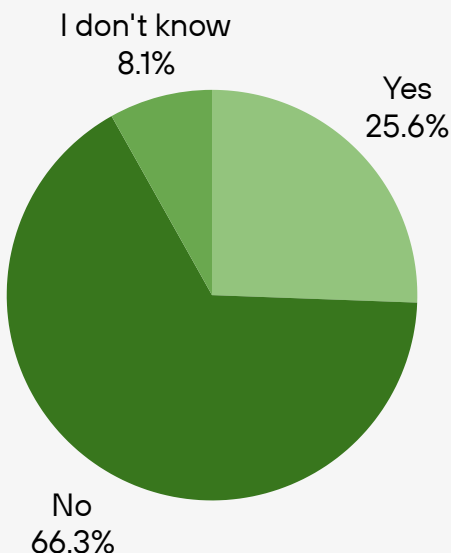
The graph highlights the top 5 policy contents as follows:

- 1 Roadmapping, **encompassing commitments, working groups**, and charters, was mentioned 9 times.
- 2 **Energy optimisation** through eco-renovation, building initiatives, and green technology was cited 7 times.
- 3 **Carbon-focused management**, specifically targeting eco-renovation and building initiatives related to carbon reduction, was mentioned 5 times.
- 4 **Waste management strategies**, including recycling and waste reduction efforts, were also mentioned 5 times.
- 5 **Mobility policies**, such as hybrid meetings and incentives for bicycle and public transportation usage, were mentioned 5 times.

Additionally, other mentions included adherence to global or national regulations, research and study initiatives, support for student and staff-led initiatives, raising awareness, and promoting increased participation, each mentioned 3 times. Reduction of paper usage, water optimisation, and staff training were mentioned twice.

It seems that the distribution of policy contents, from roadmapping to mobility policies, reflects a wide-ranging, although somewhat uneven, attention to major sustainability issues. While energy optimization and carbon management are commonly addressed, other critical areas like waste management and mobility policies receive less attention. One potential way of having a more balanced approach that does not overly prioritise one sustainability aspect over others would be getting eco-certification, as cited by one of the responding institutions, emphasising in that way a comprehensive systematic approach encompassing the institution, its suppliers, providers, and partners.

Does your institution have a Green Team responsible for the implementation of the environmental sustainability policy and/or actions?

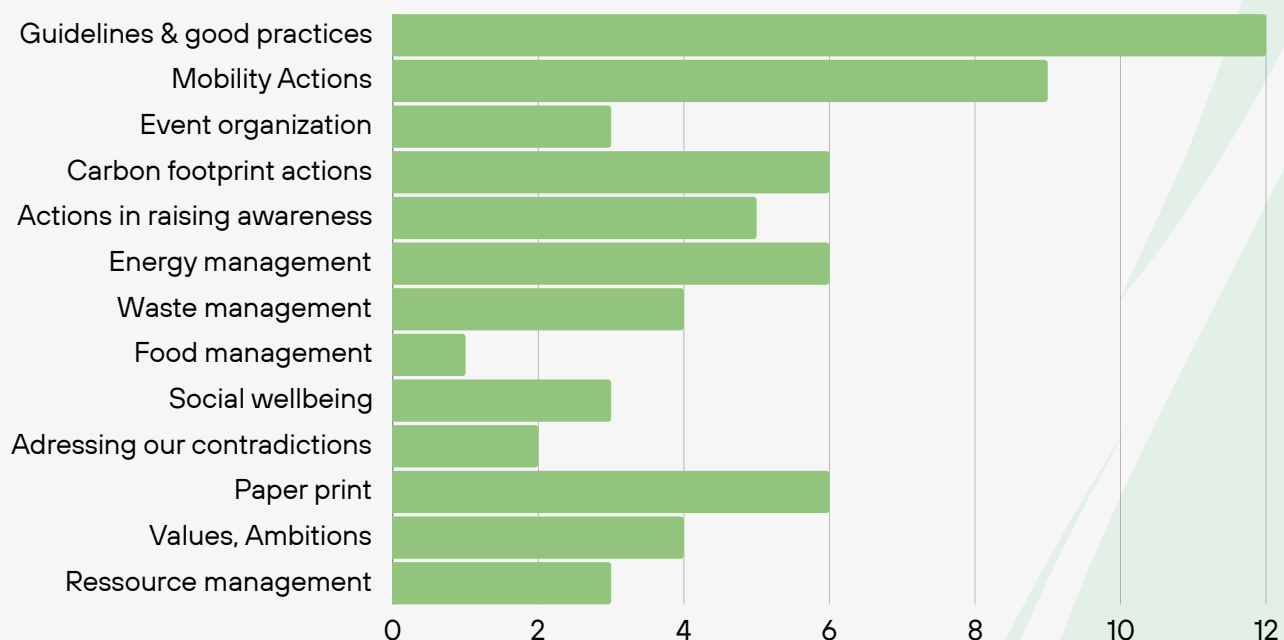


On the human resources side, **only 25.6%** of respondents indicated that their institution has a **Green Team**, designated individuals responsible for handling green matters. Additionally, 8.1% of respondents reported uncertainty about the existence of a Green Team within their institution. As Green Teams can be instrumental in driving and managing sustainability initiatives, their sparse existence suggests many institutions lack structured mechanisms to promote, implement and monitor sustainability strategies internally.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note a **slight discrepancy** between the percentage of replies reporting having an **institutional sustainability policy** (22.1%) versus those having a **Green Team** (25.6%), which might suggest a few interesting possibilities. It could be due to different stages of policy development (in which establishment of a Green Team could be in place to initiate and develop sustainability policies), functioning of a Green Team more as an operational group responsible for managing day-to-day sustainability activities without a formal policy guiding their actions, indicating a more practical approach to sustainability, or merely lack of awareness or communication within some institutions regarding the existence of a formal sustainability policy.

The respondents were asked to identify the most important issues an environmental sustainability policy should address.

In your opinion, which issues are the most important to be addressed in such a environmental sustainability policy?



The top two elements identified as crucial in an environmental sustainability policy are **guidelines and good practices** (mentioned 12 times) and **actions regarding mobility** (mentioned 9 times). Following closely are linked to **energy management and carbon footprint** actions, each mentioned 6 times. Respondents also emphasised the importance of addressing **paper print** matter in policies, with 6 mentions. Despite paper print being considered a minor issue in the context of addressing the global climate crisis, it underscores the need for visible and concrete actions in everyday practices.

Selected quotes from respondents highlight the **importance of avoiding general ambitions** and values in policy writing and instead focusing on providing concrete guidelines and addressing specific sector issues and contradictions.

In your opinion, which issues are the most important to be addressed in such a document?

*"I think it is important to **offer concrete steps for the institution** as a whole and for each one working or studying there, **not only symbolic steps** like climate emergency."*

*"It is, therefore, necessary to be able to set **criteria to be reached, measurable improvement data**, because these are very often visible operational levers and not just speeches (I draw the parallel with charters and other documents on discrimination which can be very peremptory and not bring about any change)."*

*"**Prioritise the areas** where your institution can make the greatest contributions in the environment."*

"artists as change makers"

*"what it means to be a **musician in a society** that must necessarily put the environmental and **ecological problem at the top.**"*

*"strategy that cover how particularities of our **profession affect sustainability.**"*

*"**Change in general habits** - today still the artist travelling the most is the most valuable artist. This doesn't match our ecological goals."*

SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICES

The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Royal College of Music (RCM), both from London (UK), and **University of the Arts Berlin (UdK)** are among a number of higher music education institutions that shared their **sustainability strategies** answering the survey. All three institutions share a commitment to reducing environmental impact and fostering a culture of sustainability strategies, by embedding sustainability in their operations and education, though each includes distinct characteristics. A common approach is **the integration of sustainability into curricula and governance structures**, with dedicated committees overseeing their initiatives. Furthermore, Guildhall focuses on environmental awareness and biodiversity through sustainable procurement and waste management practices. On the other hand, RCM engages students and staff via comprehensive communication strategies and supports sustainability projects like RCM Accelerate. UdK Berlin promotes sustainable mobility, resource conservation, and biodiversity, with a strong emphasis on forming **alliances with external partners**.

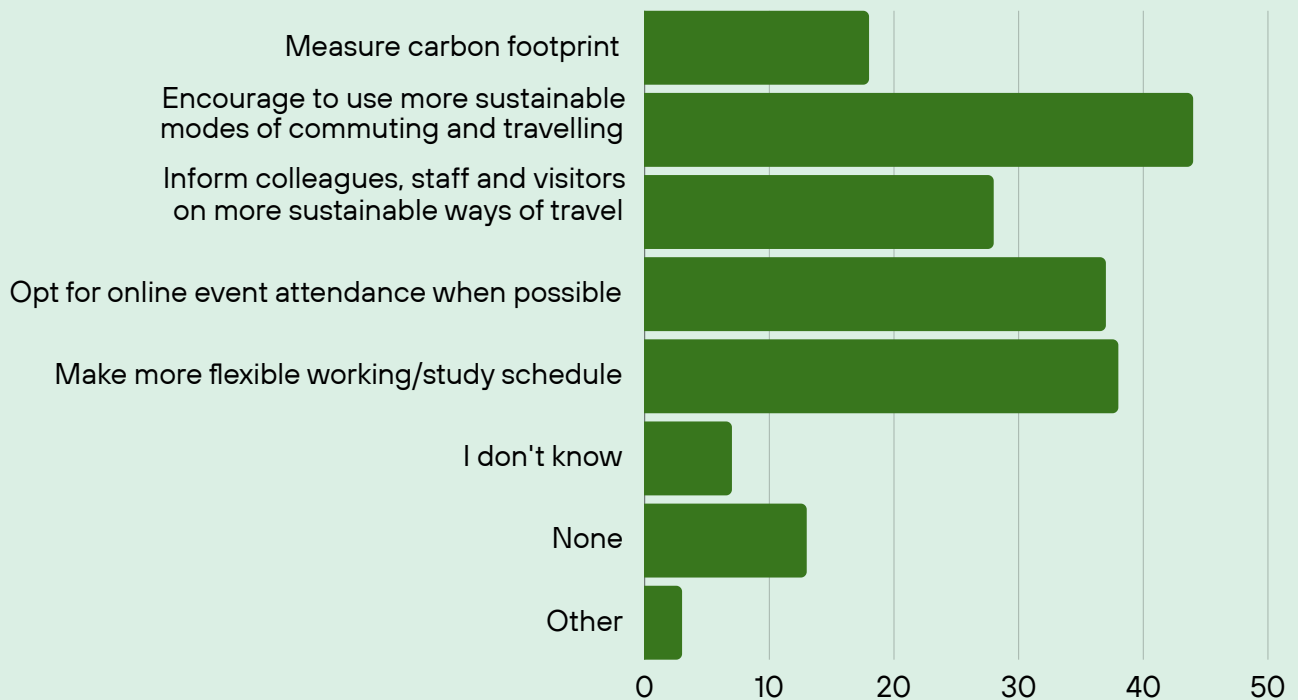
[More info here.](#)

Travel

Do you personally, or the institution you work in, take any measures toward sustainable commuting and traveling?

While travel and commuting activities contribute significantly to a university's **greenhouse gas emissions**, initiatives aimed at promoting more sustainable commuting and travel practices are **not yet widely adopted**.

While about **half of the respondents** already encourage the use of **more sustainable modes of commuting** and travelling, like providing **bike parking space or offering incentives** for sustainable commuting and the use of public transportation, about 76% responded that these measures would be important to be taken. Moreover, 33% already informed colleagues, staff and visitors about more sustainable ways of travel, while 58% stated that this would be important to do so.



Other answers include:

*"I travel by train through all of Europe - for work and privately; we had 101 persons signing the **self-commitment not to fly distances less than 1000 km.**"*

*"I personally do all of these things (perhaps with the exception of "informing" colleagues, though I hope I lead by example) but my **institution does not do any of these things** for environmental reasons, except to the extent that the **University of which it's a part encourages it.**"*

*"I am going to University with a bike when I have the opportunity, but it's not very cheap, because I have to rent city bikes, because in **Academy we don't have parking for our own bikes.** when I am not going by bike, I am using public transportation (tram or trolleybus)."*

A more **flexible working or study schedule** is already implemented in 44% of the institutions, whilst 59% of the respondents would suggest doing so. Examples of a more flexible working or study schedule could be accomplished by **combining in-person and online classes** or working sessions.

There is an interesting balance in 43% of respondents stating that their institutions opt for **online event attendance when possible**, whereas exactly the same number recognised that this would be an important measure to be taken.

Additionally, 21% of the respondents stated that their institution already **calculates carbon footprints in order to measure the impact** of different modes of transportation in use, about 37.2% replied that CO₂-accounting (CO₂eq) would be important to perform.

Only a minority of **15% do not take any measures** in the field of travelling and commuting at all, while less than 10% do not have any knowledge about the status of implemented measures or have suggestions for important ones to be taken (1.2%).

A **change of general values in measuring artistic value** has been suggested in order to give more weight to **local initiatives** and thus prevent travelling necessities. Also, a **gap between personal behaviour and institutional customs** has been detected. A more sustainable behaviour should be directed to the **institutional leadership level** for action to be taken not only for the environment but for the continued relevance and sustainability of music institutions themselves. As (Higher Education) Music business can be travel intensive, solutions for less negative impact have to be found on a sectoral level. Best practices show the way.

SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICES

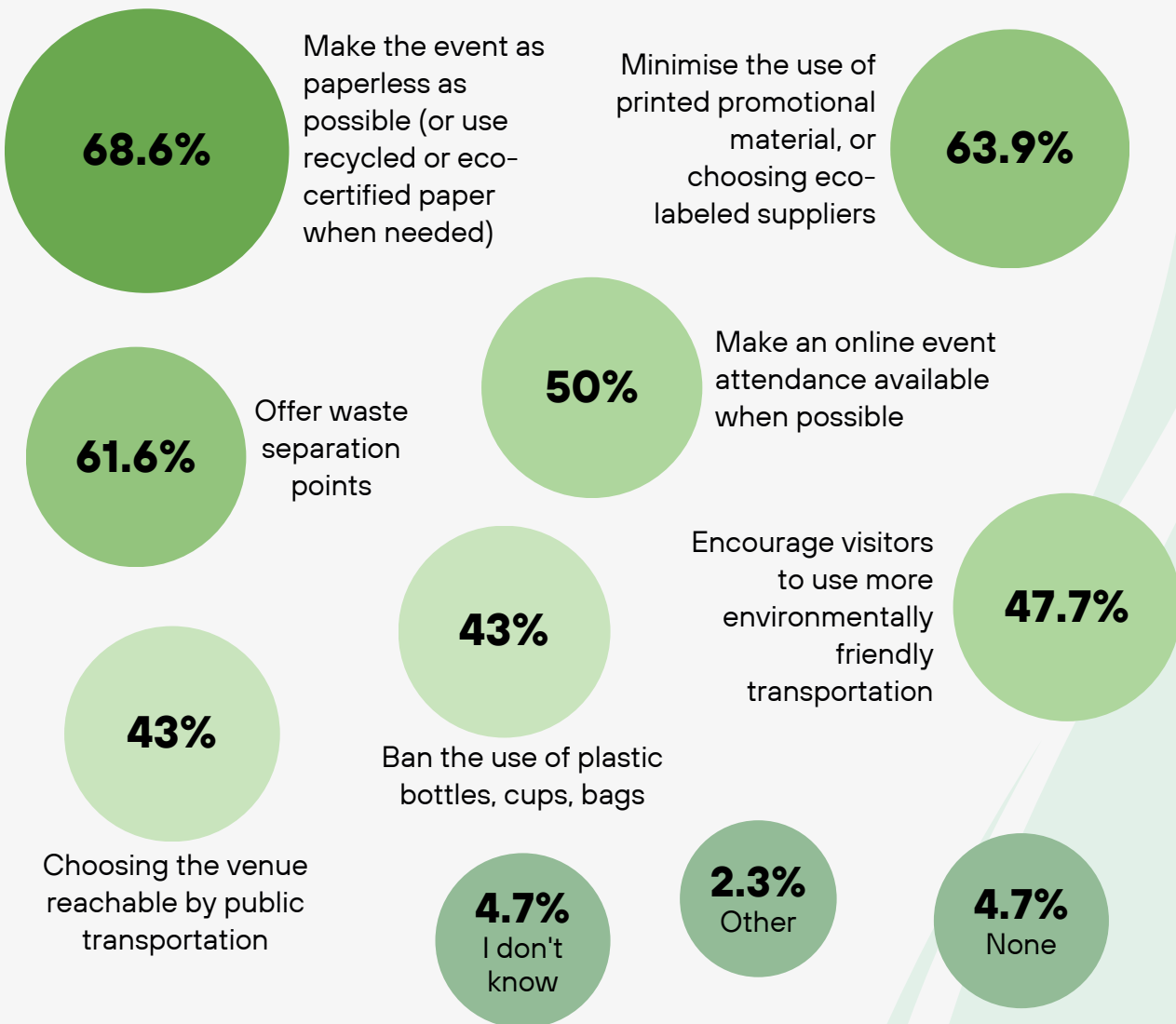
Mozarteum University in Salzburg (Austria) installed home office regulations for its staff, offering to telework two days a week (based on full-time employment), and **online event attendance** when possible.

The use of more **sustainable modes of commuting and travelling** is additionally encouraged by the support of public transportation tickets, and a business travel policy including ecological criteria is under development. Study trips are increasingly being **shifted to the railway**.

[More info here.](#)

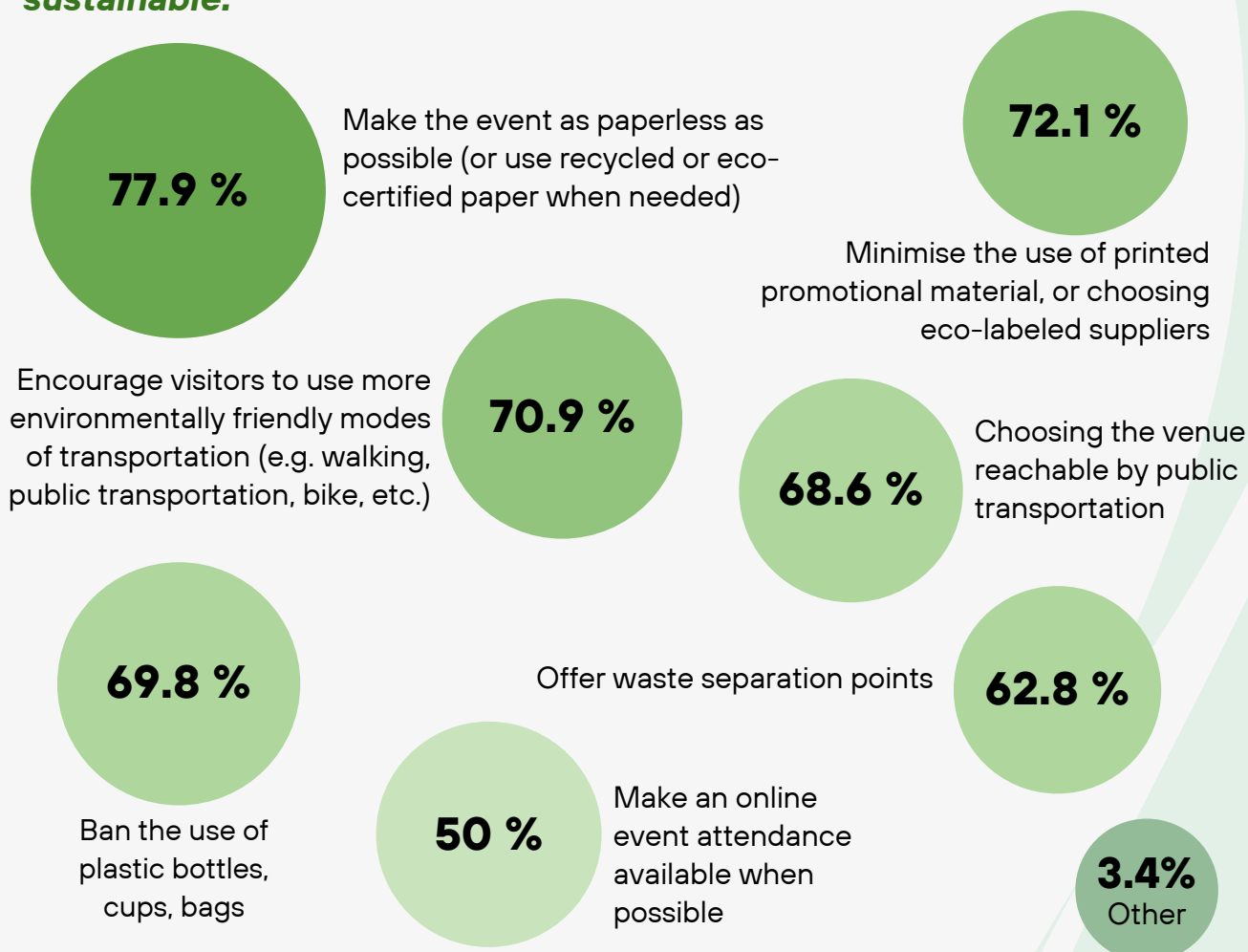
Event organisation

Do you personally, or the institution you work in, take any measures toward more sustainable event organisation? (multiple answers)



In response to the question about personal or institutional efforts towards more sustainable event organisation, only a small minority, 4.7%, indicated that neither they nor their institution were implementing any sustainability measures for events, while another 4.7% were unaware of any such measures. This suggests that the majority of surveyed institutions are **actively engaged in sustainability practices**, which reflects high commitment and awareness of the environmental impact of strategies and actions in music event organisation. Almost 70% of respondents **prioritise making events as paperless as possible** or using recycled or **eco-certified paper** when necessary, whereas 63.9% minimise printed or promotional materials. Only half of respondents prefer **hosting events online** whenever possible to reduce environmental impact. Additionally, 43% **restrict the use of plastic bottles, cups, and packaging** at events. Notably, one respondent suggested providing vegan/vegetarian catering at events, indicating potential areas for further sustainability initiatives.

Please mark the measures you feel are the most important to be taken in making the event organisation more environmentally sustainable.

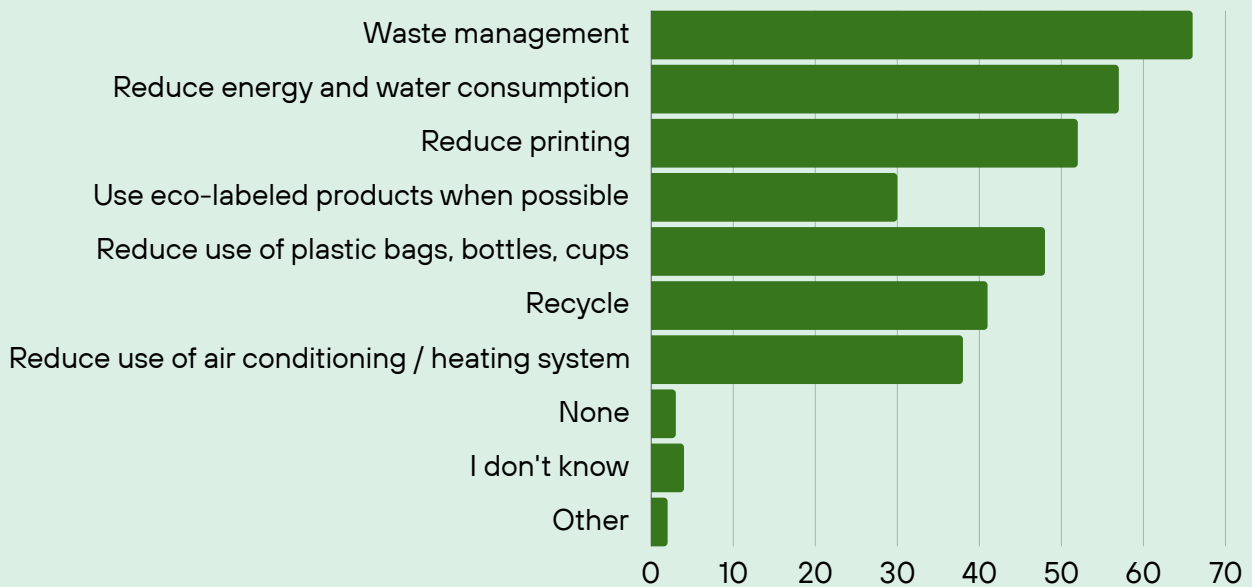


In answering the question on the most important measures for making event organisations more environmentally sustainable, the response **favouring paperless events** remained predominant, with 77.9% of respondents considering it crucial. Similarly, the second most important measure, minimising printed promotional materials, is mentioned by around 72.1%. Correspondingly high number of responses recognize the need to **minimise travel-related emissions**, aligning with broader goals of reducing the carbon footprint of attendees. To that extent, approximately 70.9% consider encouraging visitors to **use environmentally-friendly modes of transportation** for reaching the event venue, along with the 68.6% that prioritise selecting venues accessible by public transport. One comment stressed the importance of travel emissions (especially where flying is involved) are usually the greatest carbon emissions source and, thus most important to reduce.

Notably, only half of respondents view **online meetings** as a significant measure for greener events, which might reflect concerns about the effectiveness of online formats in delivering the same value as in-person events. This hesitancy could also be influenced by the perceived impact on networking opportunities and audience engagement, which are often critical components of music events. It is furthermore worth mentioning that waste separation is considered very important by 62.8% of respondents, showing a proactive stance on **reducing single-use plastics**, though this number could be higher given the current environmental awareness about plastic waste.

Sustainable daily functioning

Do you personally, or the institution you work in, take any measures toward more sustainable daily functioning?



The most practised measure for sustainable daily functioning, reported by approximately 76.7% of respondents, is **waste management**. Following closely, around 66.3% of respondents or their institutions engage in measures to **reduce energy and water consumption**, such as switching off lights, printers, and other equipment when not in use, and reducing water usage by turning off taps and limiting elevator use. Additionally, 60.5% of respondents or their institutions practice **reducing printing** by downloading and reading sheet music and scores from electronic devices.

Interestingly, the least practised measure reported by respondents is the use of eco-labelled products, such as stationary, toilet paper, and cleaning products, with around 34.9% of respondents indicating its implementation.

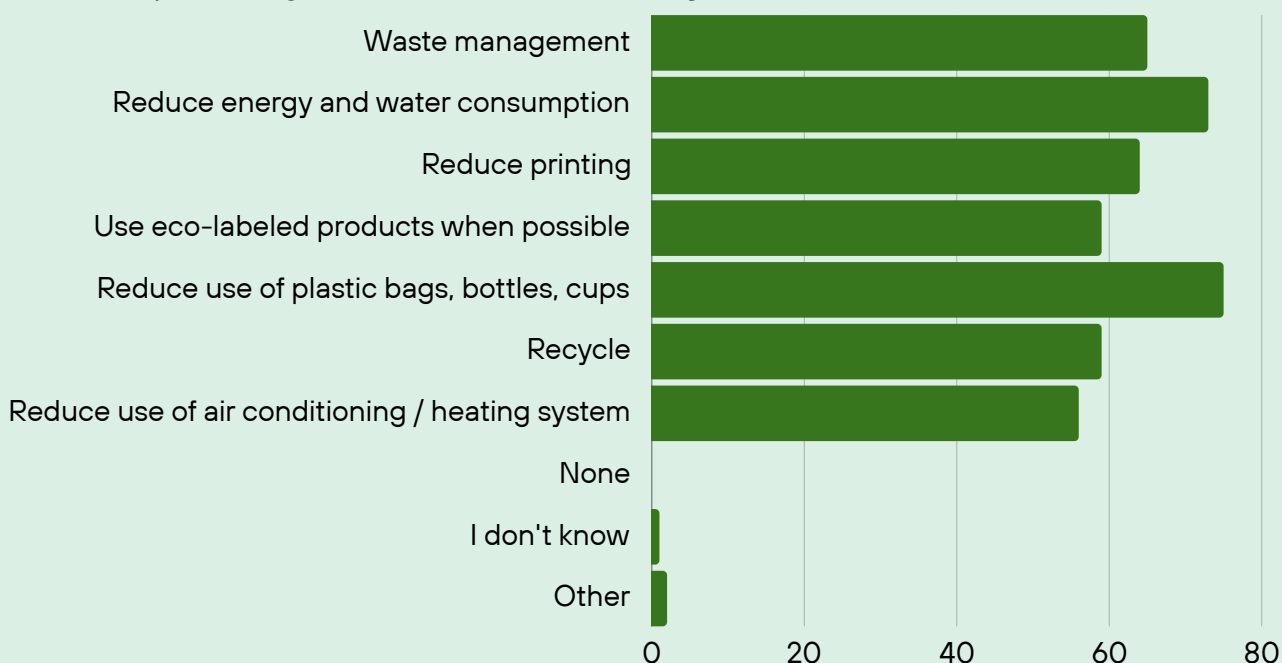
Only 3.5% of respondents stated that they or their institution does not take any measures to make their daily operations greener.

It is worth noting that efforts to reduce energy consumption may be driven more by the anticipation of **energy crises**, rather than solely by sustainability considerations.

When asked to mark the measures the respondents considered as the most important to be taken in making the daily work more environmentally sustainable, an overwhelming majority (87%) stated **reducing the usage of plastic bags, bottles, and cups** (e.g., by allowing personal mugs or reusable water bottles) as the most critical action for improving everyday environmental sustainability. Additionally, around 85% of respondents emphasise the importance of reducing energy and water consumption, a figure notably higher than the actual implementation rate of the same measure, indicating a perceived need for more action in this area.

Waste management and decreasing printing were cited as important measures by approximately 75% of respondents. While the use of eco-labelled products is practised by 34.9% of respondents, it is considered important by 69%. Similarly, although reducing the usage of plastic bottles/cups is practised by 55.8% of respondents, it is deemed important by 87%. The low implementation rate despite a reasonable recognition of the importance of these actions could reflect infrastructural barriers, a lack of availability, higher costs, or insufficient promotion of these products and behaviour within the institution. Potential solutions could lie in exploring possibilities of group purchasing options or partnerships with suppliers to make eco-friendly products more accessible and affordable, or fostering a culture that encourages and normalises sustainable practices.

On average, there is a 20% disparity between the measures already implemented and the perceived importance of these measures, suggesting a gap between recognition and action in promoting environmental sustainability.



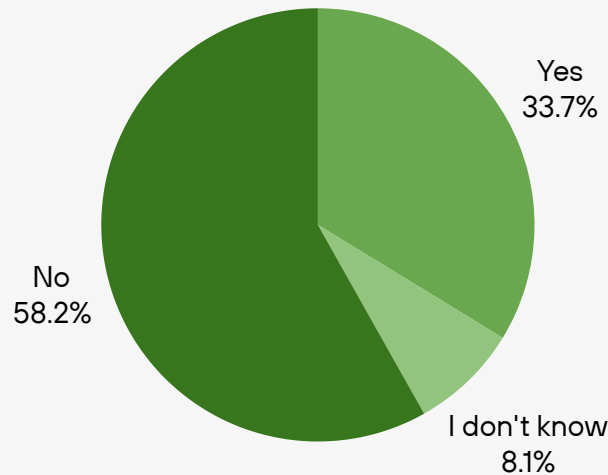
SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICES

The Norwegian Academy of Music's sustainability policy for 2022-2025, focused on reducing emissions, particularly from travel, improving planning, and minimising environmental impact through systematic environmental management, includes several strategies for making daily operations more sustainable. These strategies focus on reducing travel emissions, optimizing planning to minimize environmental impact and implementing systematic environmental management practices. Additionally, the academy emphasises sustainable procurement and waste management, ensuring that sustainability is integrated into all aspects of its operations. A dedicated working group oversees these initiatives, aligning them with national goals to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

[More info here.](#)

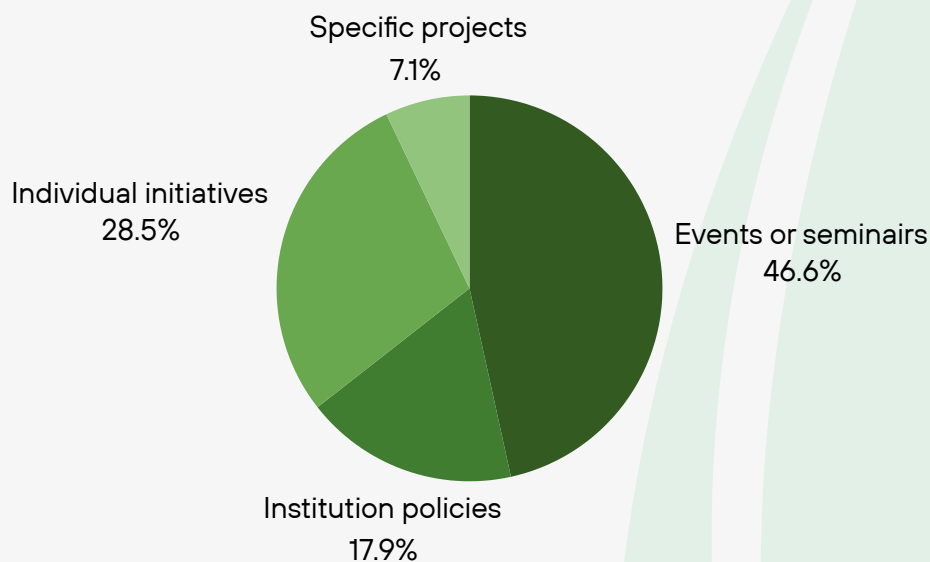
Communication & Raising Awareness

Have you personally, or your institution, taken any specifically music related actions and activities for communicating and raising awareness regarding environmental issues and challenges?



In communication and raising awareness, one third of respondents institutions and individuals have taken actions or organised specific activities about environmental issues and climate change. A large majority however, stated non-existence (over 58.1%) or unawareness of such undertakings.

Details on actions and activities for communicating and raising awareness regarding environmental issues and challenges



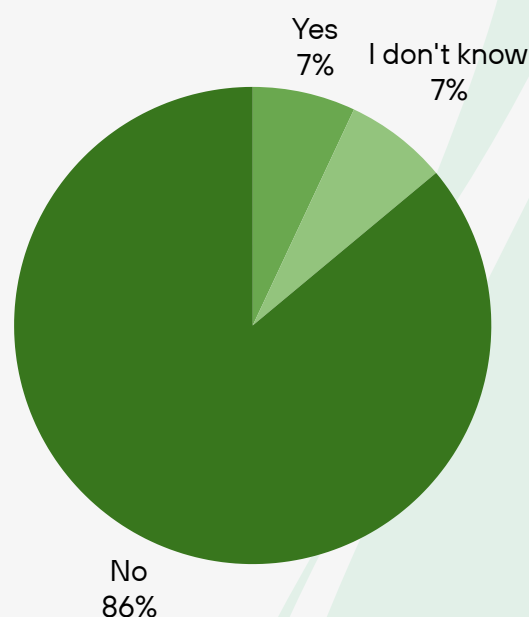
Among actions and activities, 46.5% are events or **seminars organised** or supported by the institution such as concerts, masterclasses, roundtables or participating in partner events. Another 28.6% mentioned actions or activities relying on individual initiatives: eco-friendly projects or artistic projects held by students, teachers raising awareness through their courses or staff raising awareness by constantly speaking out to colleagues or students.

Some institutions (17.9%) have **established rules** (paperless policies, recycling and mobility policies or building a green team) that **help raise awareness** among students, teachers and staff. Others mentioned (7.1%) specific projects, such as Escuela Superior de Musica Reina Sofia (see below).

To the best of your knowledge, are the green skills and sustainability topics present in the music studies curricula in your institution?

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (86%) declare that green skills and sustainability topics are **non-existent in the music studies curricula**, with additional 7% reporting being unaware if there are any.

Nonetheless, 65% of them think those topics should be included in music studies.



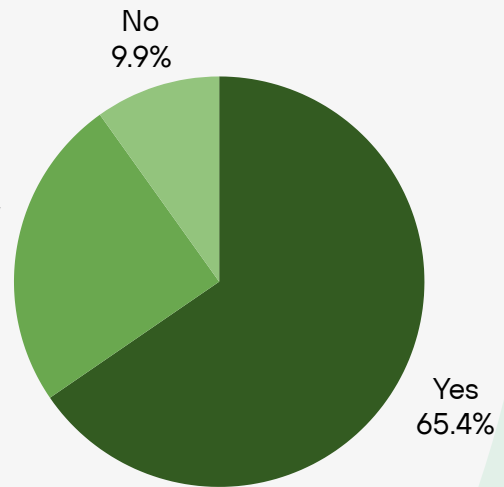
SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICES

La Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofia (Madrid, Spain) offers a Green Music Entrepreneurship programme (GreenME) which focuses on eco-friendly practices in music production and management. This environmental awareness programme, co-funded by the European Union through the MusicAIRE programme, aims to promote initiatives that develop synergies in the fields of music and environmental commitment. It includes special collective actions, such as a Green Week in which the whole educational community and staff of the school take an active part, a module on music and environment, as well as design, development and implementation of real projects at the intersection between music and environment.

Furthermore, through the programme on entrepreneurship and social innovation offered as part of the Master's degree in Music Performance, the school encourages students to develop sustainable business solutions that address environmental challenges in the arts. Learn more by clicking on the links in the text.

If you answered No, do you think green skills and topics should be included in music studies?

Among the 7% of answers stating that green skills and sustainability topics do exist in their institution, there is a large variety from lectures, thematic weeks, to modules or supporting student projects.

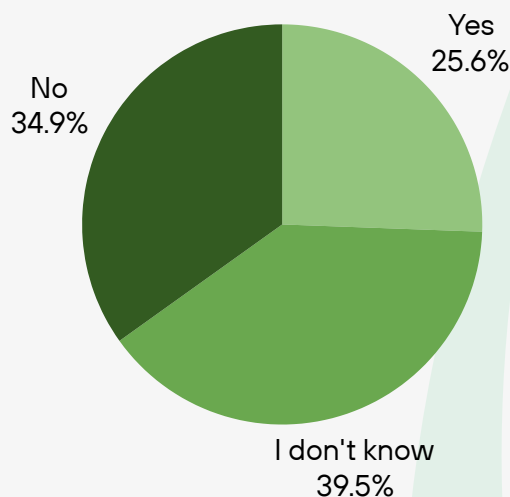


SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICES

The Royal College of Music in London (UK) provides a programme Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to prepare the students as 21st century citizens which includes awareness and knowledge of global issues. ESD strategy aims to integrate sustainable development themes into its curriculum and extracurricular activities, preparing students to address global environmental, social, and economic challenges through their music careers and daily lives.

[More info here.](#)

To the best of your knowledge, are students encouraged to communicate their ideas about more sustainable work or deliver their own green actions?



Zooming in on encouraging students to take part in **raising awareness and taking action**, only 25.6% of respondents state that students:

- Suggest **improvements**
- Suggest or take green actions **via the student council**
- Develop and implement project ideas through **joint initiatives**
- Rally forces on supporting institutional sustainable policies in place (e.g. regarding sustainable mobility, recycling, or other)
- Are called to participate in specific student programmes reflecting on **the role of music and arts** in shaping a more sustainable future.

SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICES

The coaching and funding program Arts of Change - Change of Arts, funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, offers opportunities to students from all Austrian art universities, among which Mozarteum University Salzburg, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, and the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, to implement a trans-/interdisciplinary project that explores the links between art, sustainability and socio-ecological transformation.

[More info here.](#)

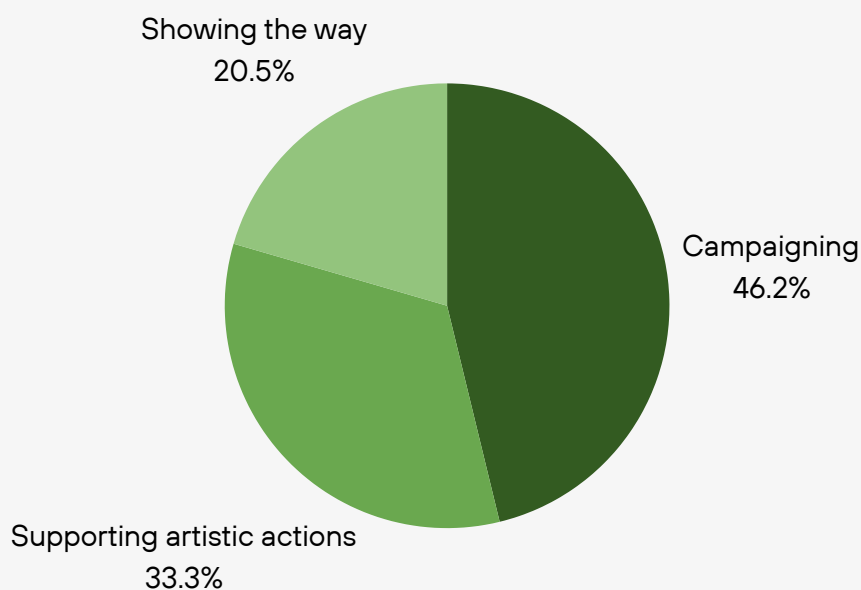
SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICES

UdK For Future is a cross-faculty student initiative that aims to promote climate policy engagement among students at the Berlin University of the Arts, and to communicate and exploit different ways of getting involved. The group coordinates the climate policy work at the University of the Arts, and acts as an interface with other (university) climate movements (Students for Future, including FU for Climate Justice and HU for Future).

[More info here.](#)

More on the student position and ideas on the ways their institutions can contribute to decreasing their impact on the environment and the role of arts in it, can be found under answers to questions 12 and 13 of the AEC Goes Green Student Survey in the continuation of the report.

How do you think musicians and higher music education institutions can particularly help in addressing the environmental challenges and accelerating the green transition?



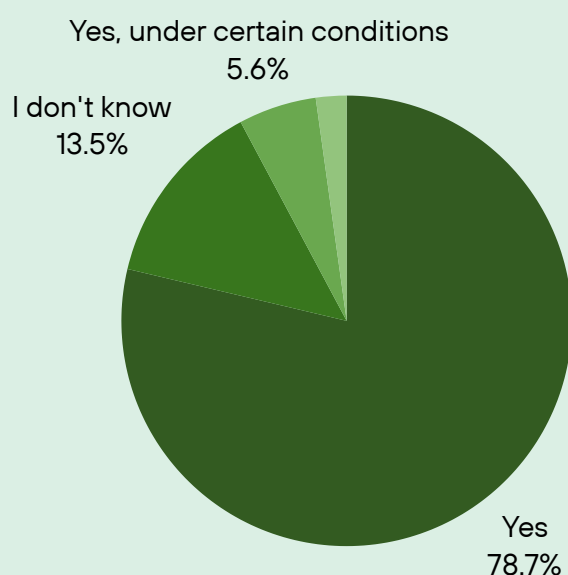
Finally, to the question about the ways musicians and higher music education institutions in particular can help address the environmental crisis, three types of answers and levels of embodiment can be perceived:

- A bit less than half of respondents (46.2%) think that the institutions should campaign by raising awareness **through specific events**, "strengthening the topic as a cross-cutting issue in all areas of teaching and research",
- About a third (33.3%) thinks that the institutions should **support artistic actions and endeavours** of students, teachers and partners, raising awareness among them, championing good examples, and issuing good practices for artists,
- Finally, every fifth respondent (20.5%) thought that the **institutions should lead the way**, embed the issues in their practice, and take concrete actions on a strategic institutional level.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE GREENING OF THE HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION SECTOR

The final part of the survey examined the willingness of higher music education institution representatives to implement environmentally sustainable practices and the specific areas in which they would be prepared to integrate eco-guidelines and recommendations.

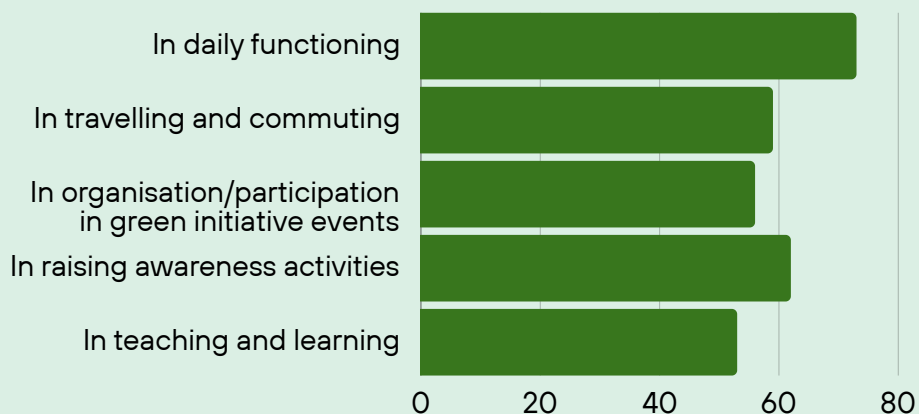
If provided with the eco-guidelines and recommendations from the AEC for more environmentally sustainable work, would you take part in implementing it (to the best of your possibilities and resources) in your institution?



The overwhelming majority of the respondents (around 79%) expressed their **willingness to implement eco-guidelines or recommendations** if provided with any. On the other hand, 13.5% could not confirm or deny the possible implementation of recommendations. None of the respondents answered “No” to the question, which is expected, as perhaps those not interested in sustainability policy in the HMEIs would likely not participate in the survey.

Approximately 5.6% of respondents provided conditional responses. They did not refuse to implement eco-guidelines but specified certain conditions, such as harmonisation of recommendations with the HMEI’s own policies, availability of institutional resources, or forwarding the recommendation to the climate project manager.

If presented with eco-sustainability recommendations and guidelines, would you, to the best of your possibilities and resources, implement them in your professional work?

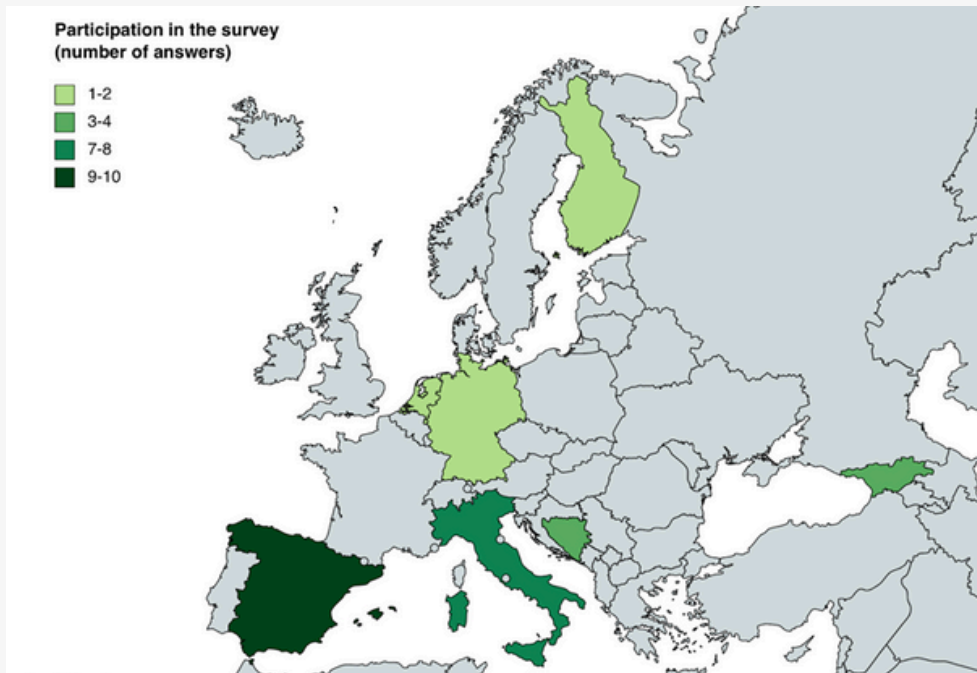


When asked in which specific aspects they are ready to implement the eco-guidelines and recommendations, 84.9% responded that they would integrate these recommendations into daily functioning. The second most popular response, with around 72.1%, was implementing the guidelines in **raising awareness activities such as projects, workshops, courses, thematic events, and concerts**. Somewhat surprisingly, if answers to previous questions in the survey are taken into account, only 68.6% expressed readiness to implement eco-guidelines in travelling and commuting. Additionally, 61.6% of respondents are prepared to incorporate recommendations into teaching and learning. Interestingly, one respondent mentioned they would implement the recommendations in their research.

Overall, these answers indicate a strong willingness among respondents to adopt eco-guidelines and recommendations, particularly in daily operations and awareness-raising activities, highlighting a **promising potential for integrating sustainable practices within higher music education institutions**.

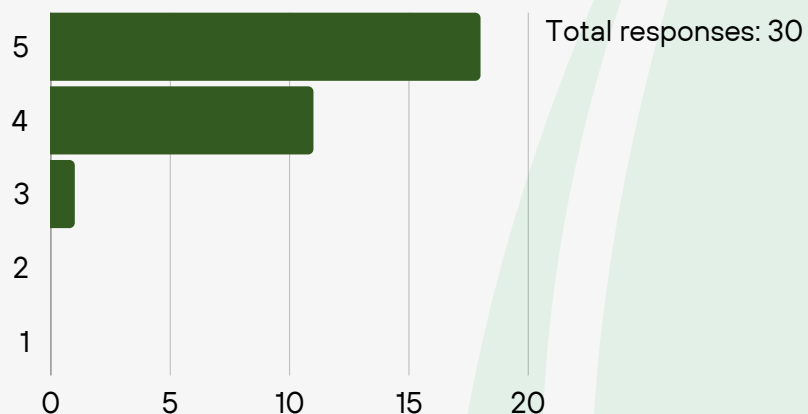
ARTEMIS AEC Goes Green Student Survey

The AEC Goes Green Student Survey was conducted in **November 2022 and April 2023**, with an aim to have an insight into music students' positions, opinions, and practices regarding environmental sustainability across various European institutions. This analysis presents a sample covering responses from thirty students on their interest in sustainability, their perceived roles, and their suggestions for improving environmental impact.



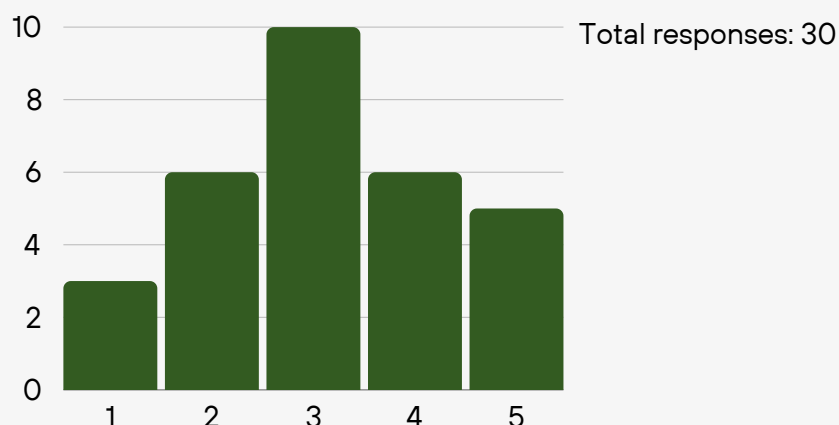
The survey received 30 answers from students across seven different European countries: **Spain, Italy, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Netherlands and Germany.**

Are you interested in environmental sustainability (decreasing our carbon emissions, recycling, reducing our waste, saving water, etc)?



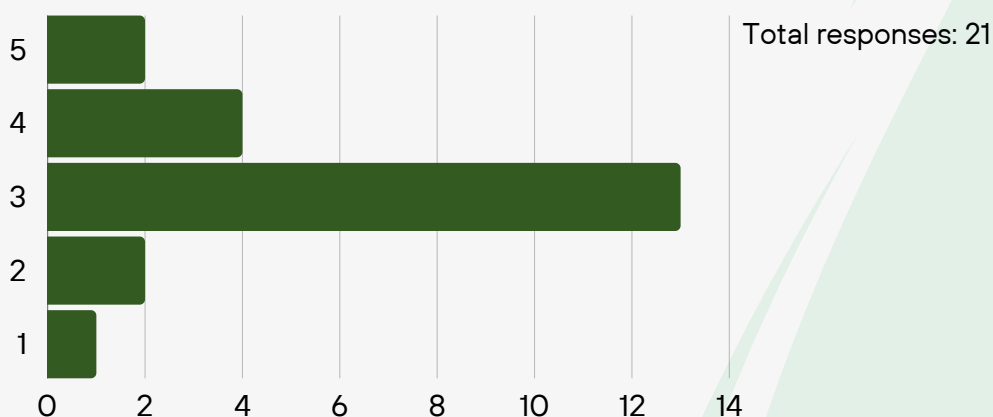
With 97% answers between categories 4 and 5, all students that responded to the survey, understandably, showed great interest in environmental sustainability.

Do you think you, as a student, have an important role in decreasing the environmental impact of your institution?



For this question the answers are more divided. Option 3 has the highest percentage chosen by third of the students (33.3%), followed by options 2 and 4 (20%), option 5 (16.7%) and option 1 (10%).

What level of information/awareness do you think you have in terms of global warming, sustainability, ecology, etc?

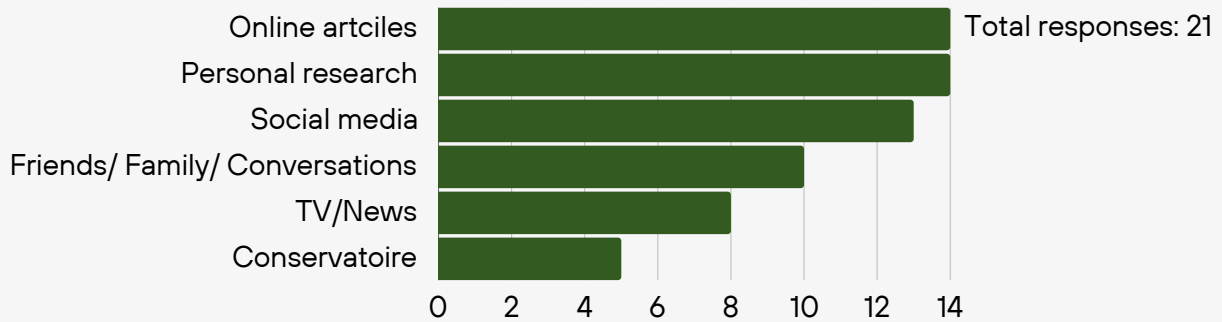


Most students (62%) participating in the survey report having a **medium knowledge of sustainability**. Nonetheless, a considerable percentage (29%) claim to have a high understanding of the topic.

As an additional remark, the participants' countries of origin do not provide further information for this question. The survey results do not show a pattern of greater or lesser interest in sustainability topics depending on the location within Europe.

The responses to questions 2-4 highlight the overall interest and self-perceived knowledge about sustainability among students, which could provide insights into the need for more educational resources.

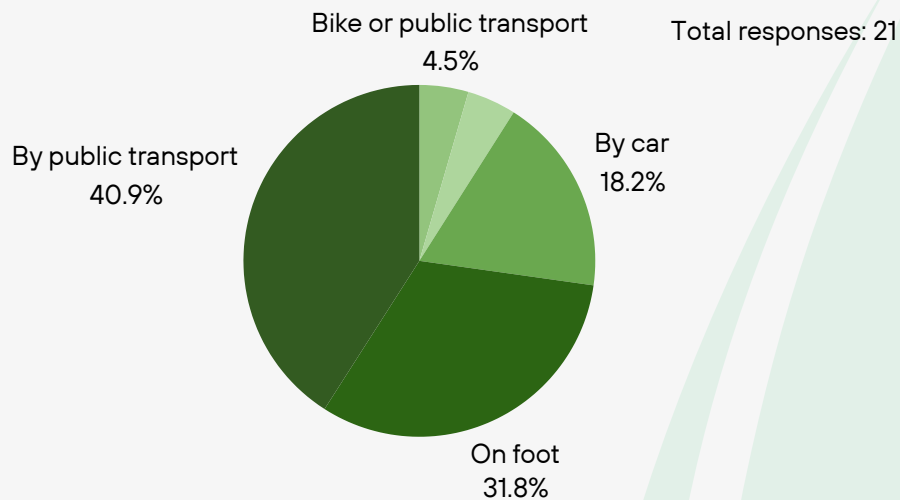
Through which channel do you prefer to obtain that information?



As depicted on the graph, students value **online articles and personal research** as preferred channels to learn about the climate crisis. Social media comes as the second most used source of information nowadays. Therefore, institutions are highly encouraged to use this tool to bring the green topic to the table. A good approach would be to promote this type of content via institutional social media.

Generally, students **do not expect to get information on this topic from their conservatoires**. Nevertheless, as students spend most of their time at their institution, conservatoires should use this fact to be the first to raise awareness about the climate crisis and take action.

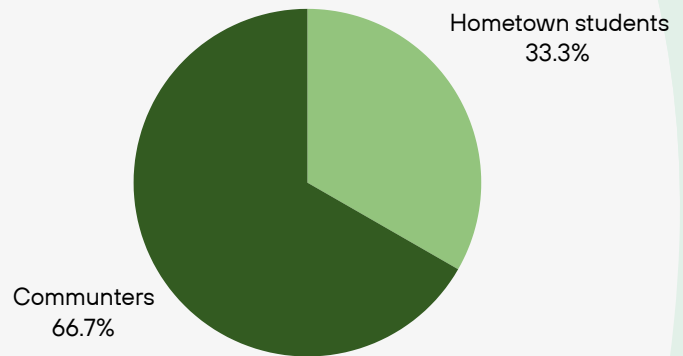
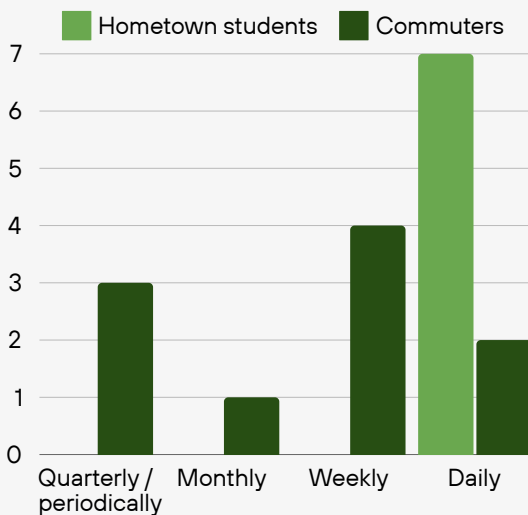
How do you usually commute to your HMEI?



The most common way for students to commute to their institution is by **taking public transport**. About 41% choose public transport, 31.8% go on foot, 4.5% by bike, and 4.5% use a combination of bike and public transport. Only about 18% use a less green option and travel by car. Therefore, more than 80% of participating students choose a green option to travel to their institution.

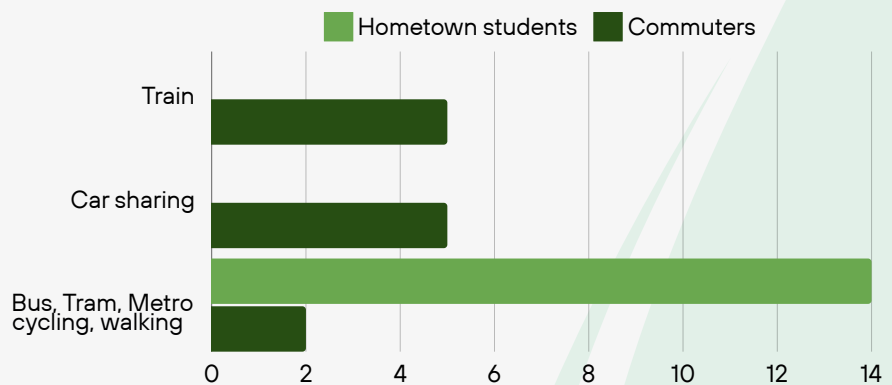
Is your HMEI located in your hometown? If not, how do you travel to your hometown and how often?

Two thirds of the students (66.7%) are **commuters**, while one third (33.3%) are hometown students.

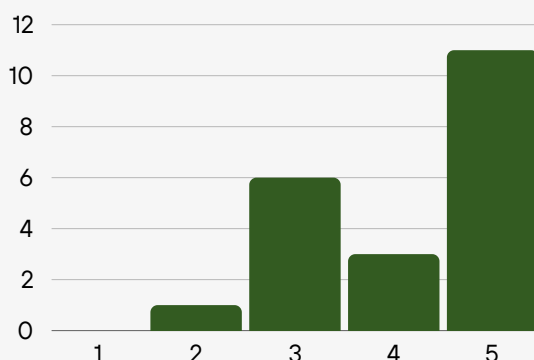


Concerning travel frequency, commuters tend to travel to the institution significantly less than hometown students who reach their school daily.

In terms of preferred transportation, most students **prefer walking, cycling** or using public transport like buses, trams or metro lines. However, it is interesting to see that most commuters travel by train or shared car in equal amounts.



Do you think the energy and water used on your institution building and the waste it produces is something students should care about?

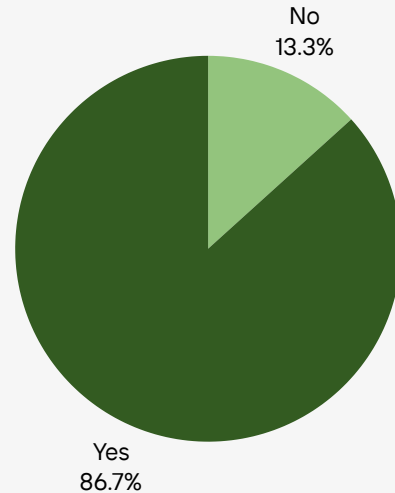


With 67% of students answering option 4 or 5, the majority of the students that filled in the survey think they should care about the **environmental impact the building** of their institution has.

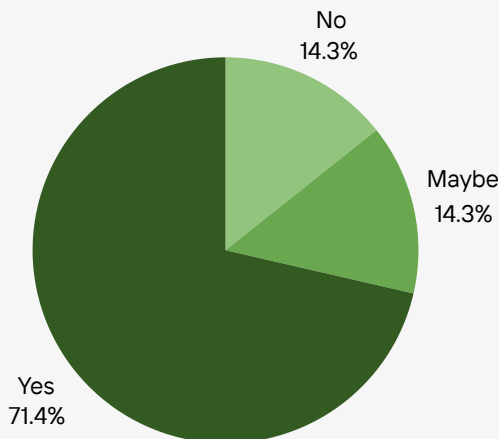
Looking back to the answers to question 3, the sense of responsibility expressed in it is linked with the concern for the institution's environmental impact (Q8), which can underscore the students' willingness to engage in meaningful actions. It further indicates the perceived importance of student involvement in institutional sustainability efforts.

Do you separate waste into different containers at home? Are you aware of what goes in each container?

The great majority of the responding students (86.7%), declare **to be aware of recycling** and waste sorting. Only 13.3% declare not to be.



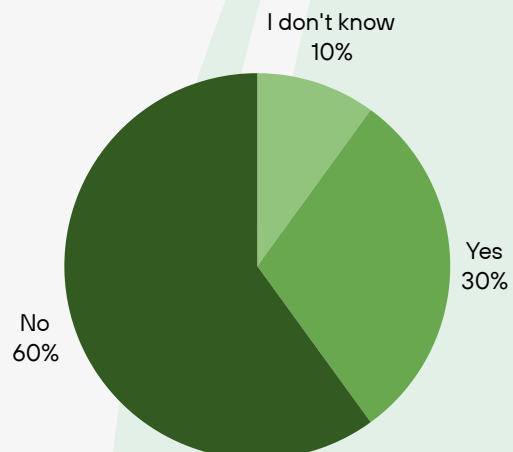
If your HMEI organised sustainability workshops, would you be interested in attending?



The majority (more than 71%) of the responding students would be **interested in attending sustainability workshops** within their institution. Another 14.3% said that they would consider attending it.

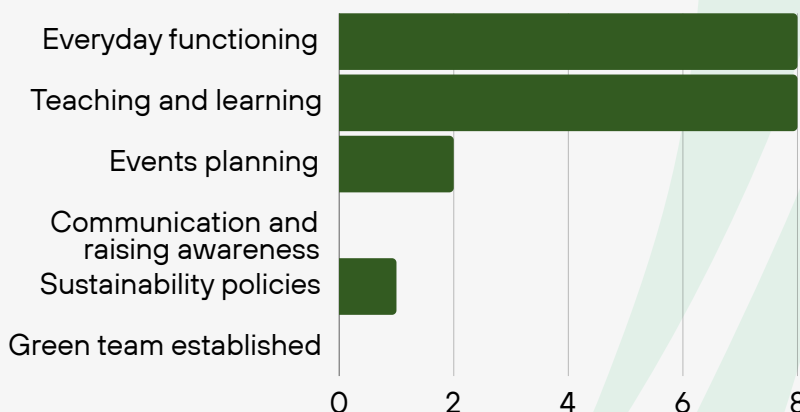
Has your HMEI launched any initiative to raise awareness on the topic or improve its environmental impact? If so, please explain shortly

Most participating students report that their HMEIs do not include initiatives to raise awareness of green issues or measures to limit their environmental impact. Additionally, 10% of the students believe they have no information about the topic.



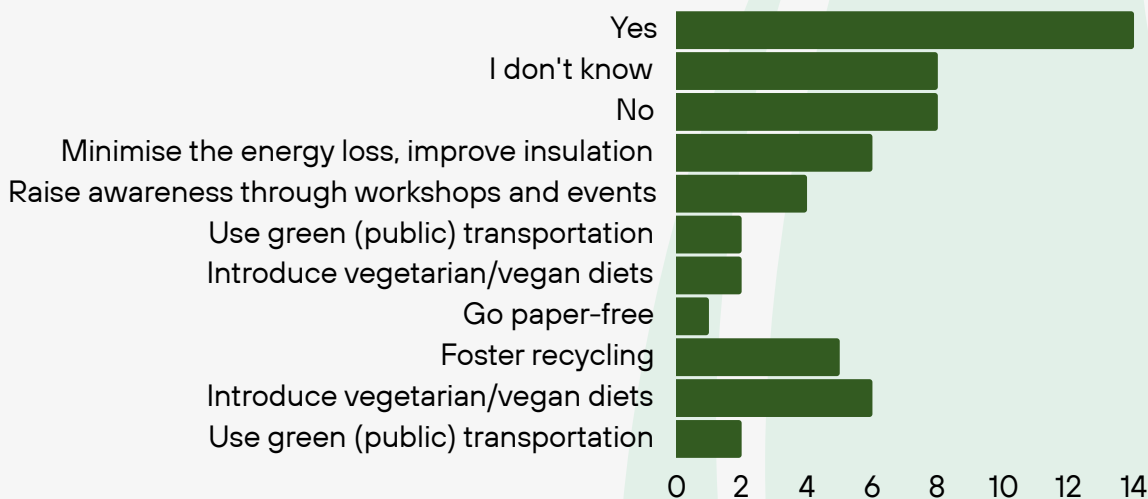
It is interesting to note that some answers to this question are contradictory to the answers of other students from the same institution who also participated in the survey, reporting different information. This discrepancy could lead to the conclusion that the communication between the HMEIs and their students is sometimes confusing or unclear. Better use of social media and other online platforms for efficient communication, as suggested also in answers to question 5 about the preferred channels of communication, might improve student awareness of institutional sustainability initiatives.

Based in the main categories of actions taken at institutions toward the eco-responsible behaviour, here are the answers from the students who answered yes and shared examples of good practices in their conservatory:



- **Everyday functioning** (e.g. in separation of waste, energy and water consumption control, using eco-labelled stationary paper and other office supplies)
- **Teaching and learning** (e.g. adding green topics and courses in the curriculum, organising green skills workshops, opting for online (entrance) exams)
- **Events planning** (e.g. choosing venues reachable in more sustainable modes of transportation, minimising printed materials, offering waste separation points)
- Communication and **raising awareness** (e.g. organising "green" events, thematic concerts, green projects)
- Sustainability **policies/strategies** in development, or developed and implemented
- A sustainability or **Green Team** was established to ensure more sustainable functioning and practice.

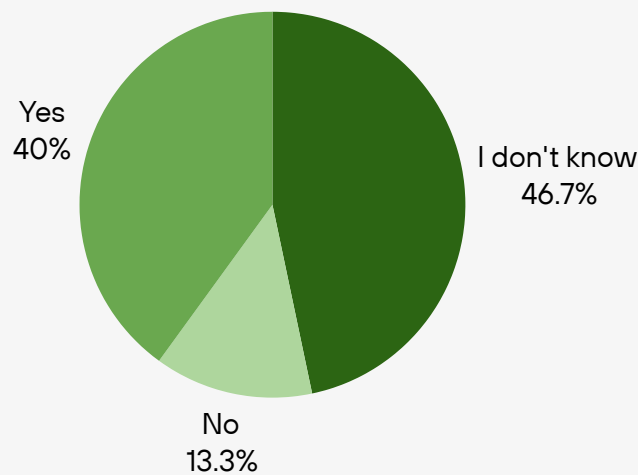
Do you have any ideas/suggestions/thoughts on what your institution could do to improve its environmental impact?



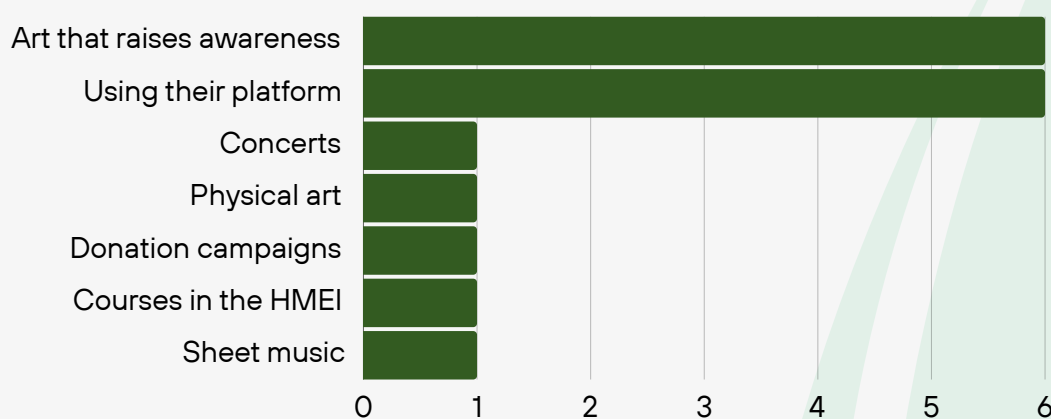
Half of the **students declare to have ideas**, suggestions or thoughts about how their institution could improve its environmental impact. The other half is either uncertain about the matter or responds with a no.

Among the responses, minimising **energy loss** is the most significant issue raised by the student community. The majority argue that improving insulation would be beneficial to decreasing both costs and waste. Recycling comes in second, with many suggesting fostering waste sorting in frequented or communal areas. Furthermore, a multitude believes their institution could raise more awareness through internal workshops and events. Some students also encourage using green public transportation, suggesting new policy-making between their institution and the municipality to tackle financial difficulties. Finally, a smaller group indicates introducing vegetarian or vegan diets and going paper-free as an open and accessible initiative.

Is there anything artists in particular can do in terms of sustainability?



From the students who answered yes, the following ideas emerged:



- Reduce **CO2 generated in concerts** or events involving multiple people and materials (e.g. renewable energy sources, transportation, food, flyers, staging equipment).
- Sustainable and **recyclable physical art**.
- Make **art that raises awareness** on the topic.
- Using their platform to address the climate crisis (through interviews, social media, events, concerts) as they, compared to most people, have a space to reach, influence and be heard by others.

- **Donation** campaigns.
- HMEIs could offer courses that **incorporate green issues** into music (e.g. through workshops, concerts, and songwriting).
- Reduce the amount of paper or go **paper-free**.

Additional thoughts and comments students shared in the open-ended last question to the survey include worry about the national inclusion of green practices in their country, encouragement to people to go vegan, and a suggestion to conservatoires to focus on cooperating with eco-friendly companies.

Overall, students showed great concern and willingness to take action.

A look ahead

Overall, the survey results indicate that while there are pockets of commitment towards sustainability, there is a **considerable need for broader integration, enhanced communication, and more comprehensive strategic approaches** to ensure effective and widespread adoption of sustainability practices in universities.

The answers to questions regarding the connections between sustainable management, policies and daily functioning provide a distinctive view of the alignment and discrepancies between perceptions, policy content, and actual practices. While there is a notable emphasis on guidelines and good practices in policy content, **the real challenge lies in translating these policies into daily practices.** The prioritisation of mobility and energy management in policy indicates awareness, yet the practice percentages, particularly in energy consumption reduction, suggest room for more consistent application. This gap highlights the need for policies that not only set standards but also actively facilitate and enforce these practices through clear guidelines and perhaps incentives for compliance.

The data and insights collected through the survey and AEC Goes Green initiatives in AEC annual events such as International Relations Coordinators' meetings and Annual Congresses, further supported by additional information collected through targeted interviews and analysis of resources, will provide the basis of the AEC Goes Green Recommendations for Higher Music Education Institutions.

The recommendations are expected to be published during the fall of 2024.





Who

The Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC) is a European cultural and educational network with around 300 member institutions for professional music training in 57 countries. The network is co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme.

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European Union

Contact

Avenue des Celtes/Keltenlaan 20
1040 Etterbeek, Brussels, Belgium

info@aec-music.eu



www.aec-music.eu

