

Minutes of the 2023 General Assembly meeting



The Hague and online
11 November 2023

1. Minutes of the 2022 General Assembly and Returning officers

- The Council presents the minutes of the 2022 General Assembly for approval.
- The Council presents Bernd Redmann, Musikhochschule Lübeck and Francesca Costa, Conservatorio di Musica Giacomo Puccini La Spezia as returning officers.

✓ The voting ballot was sent out. The results are announced at the end of point 2.

2. President's Report: Annual Report 2022 and activities to November 2023

- As a detailed report of the year 2022 can be read in the AEC Annual Report (available on the [AEC website](#)), the President focuses on AEC's activities and achievements in 2022-23.
- 2023 has been a productive year for AEC. The AEC Council met in The Hague in March, online in July, August, and September and in The Hague again on Thursday; the AEC Office staff members continued to work mainly from home for most of the year; and our events were all organised in hybrid format.

AEC Council

The AEC Council and ExCom continued their work, including through discussions groups to brainstorm on current and future activities. In particular, the Council:

- continued the reflection on the next strategic period 2024-2028
- monitored the 2023 activities, such as: *a.* the events, and in particular the AEC Congress and its 70th anniversary *b.* project work, and in particular the work conducted within the framework of the ARTEMIS project *c.* advocacy activities, external relations, and communication
- endorsed the advocacy strategy developed by the Advocacy Task Force
- considered the feedback from the regional meetings as well as general membership matters
- monitored staff performance and finances

In 2023, the AEC Council consisted of the following representatives

President:	Deborah Kelleher	Ireland
Vice-Presidents:	Elisabeth Gutjahr	Austria
	Jeffrey Sharkey	United Kingdom
Secretary General:	Ivana Perković	Serbia

Council members:	Bruno Pereira	Portugal
	Claire Michon	France
	Keld Hosbond	Denmark
	Martin Prchal	The Netherlands
	Riccardo Ceni	Italy
	Rico Gubler	Germany / Switzerland
Co-opted:	Abra Bush	United States
	Anothai Nitibhon	Thailand
	Miranda Harmer/ Monica Vejgaard	EPASA
		EPASA

Personnel changes within the AEC Office

The AEC office team has continued its high level of activity and commitment. During 2023, the team was composed of 7 permanent members, supported by two interns.

- Stefan Gies, Linda Messas, Beatriz Laborda, Alessandra Callegari, Alfonso Guerra and Sara Primiterra continued their work.
- At the end of March, AEC Office and Project Coordinator Barbara Lalic left AEC. Her successor, since the end of March, is Ashkhen Fixova.
- Project Coordinator Konstantinos Aspiotis' temporary contract ended in February after he supported the IN.TUNE alliance application process
- AEC Director Stefan Gies has announced his retirement from March 2024 onwards. The Council appointed a Director Search Committee including all ExCom members, a member of Council and a representative of the Office Team. After several stages of interviews, the Search Committee appointed Finn Schumacker as the new AEC Director starting in February next year.

AEC Activities according to Pillars of the Strategic Plan:

Pillar 1: Fostering the value of music and music education in society.

- AEC has been very active in advocacy, both on its own and with partner organisations at European level.
- An advocacy strategy was developed, an advocacy Task Force is in place, another advocacy workshop was delivered in the framework of the AEC Congress 2023.

Pillar 2: Enhancing quality in Higher Music Education

- All the developments and improvements in our institutions are constantly discussed during all international events.
- AEC organised 4 hybrid events and a series of webinars on early music where staff and students from member institutions discussed, brainstormed, and exchanged.
- The theme of AEC Congress 2023 was Enhancing quality; the participants had a glimpse of the activities of the various working groups and projects which all explore ways to enhance quality in our sector: through lifelong learning, support to curricular changes, internationalisation, making sustainable connections etc.
- Cooperation with MusiQuE (Contributing to the revision of the MusiQuE standards)

Pillar 3: Promoting participation, inclusiveness and diversity

- Thanks to the PRIhME and ARTEMIS projects, AEC has been making substantial progress in its exploration of diversity & inclusiveness. The ARTEMIS Diversity, Inclusion & Gender Equality (DIGE) Working Group published a resource package [‘Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Music Education: An Invitation for Action’](#).
- AEC continued to promote participation and diversity in its own activities, including by encouraging feedback from the various regions.
- AEC continued to support the European Performing Arts Students’ Association - [EPASA](#), both administratively and financially.

Ensuring operational excellence

The strategic plan also includes goals related to AEC operation, related to governance and internal communication, financial sustainability, communication to our members and strengthening cooperation with our partner organisations. Work in this area included:

- Preparing the new strategic plan
- Regular exchanges between AEC Director, AEC President, AEC Office team and the ExCom/Council
- Regular staff reviews
- Exploring various funding strategies and their feasibility
- Further developing the communication to members on its activities and work and on relevant political developments
- Strengthening partnership and interaction with stakeholders

The AEC is cooperating with an impressive amount of partners by organising or attending regular meet-ups, by being represented on the Board of these organisations, through working groups, by organising joint events, etc.

The Council was particularly pleased to sign a memorandum agreement with SEADOM in March 2023.

AEC partner organisations

- NASM
- SEADOM
- ELIA, Cumulus, Cilect
- SAR - Society of Artistic Research
- European Music Council (EMC) and IMC
- Culture Action Europe
- ENCATC
- ECSA - European Composer & Songwriter Alliance
- IMZ - International Music and Media Centre
- European Association for Music in Schools (EAS)
- Centre of Excellence of Music Performance Education (CEMPE)
- European Jazz Network (EJN)
- European University Association (EUA)
- Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe (Pearle*)
- REMA - European Early Music Network
- Opera Europa
- European Music School Union (EMU)
- European University Foundation (EUF)
- MusiQuE

Projects in which AEC is involved:

- ARTEMIS - Empowering Artists as Makers in Society, 2022-2025
- PRIhME (Stakeholder Assembly on Power Relations in Higher Music Education), Erasmus+ 2020-2023
- News in Map, Erasmus+, 2019-2022
- DEMUSIS, Erasmus+, 2019-2022
- FAST45, Erasmus+, 2021-2023
- ECMA PRO, Creative Europe, 2020-2024
- HarMA+, Erasmus+, 2020-2023
- HarMA Hub, Erasmus+, 2023-2026
- RAPPLab, Erasmus+, 2020-2023
- LOTUS, Erasmus+, 2020-2023
- MUSENSE, Erasmus+, 2022-2024
- GloCoDa, Erasmus+
- TUNE, Erasmus+, 2021-2023
- IncluMusic, Erasmus+, 2022-2025
- FAMES
- Lost Music
- Opera out of Opera 2
- METRIC, 2019-...
- IN.TUNE
- ETIKETA
- VIETMUS, Erasmus+ 2022-2025
- TEAM - Teacher Education Academy for Musi, Erasmus+ 2023-2025
- Winds of Central Europe (WoCE)

Update on AEC's communication initiatives and challenges

Current Reach and Audience Distribution:

AEC engages audiences across multiple platforms, including Facebook, Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Of these, Facebook boasts the highest reach with approximately 4,500 followers. Additionally, the AEC Newsletter has a substantial readership, reaching over 2,000 individuals.

Challenges and Opportunities in AEC Communication

AEC is actively exploring ways to overcome current communication challenges while capitalising on new growth opportunities. Key areas of focus include **developing relevant and digestible content** specifically tailored to the needs of AEC members; **creating diverse and engaging content** that appeals to both stakeholders and the general public and **disseminating findings from the ARTEMIS (Empowering Artists as Makers in Society) project** to broaden the impact of its initiatives and from the other AEC-supported projects, where AEC serves as a Communication and Dissemination Partner;

ARTEMIS Project Dissemination Initiatives

As part of the ARTEMIS project, AEC has introduced several key initiatives aimed at enhancing engagement and awareness. These include **#InsideARTEMIS Newsletter** presentations, **Social Media Series** to engage the online community and **Regular News Items** highlighting ongoing initiatives.

Call to Action for Members

To support and amplify these communication efforts, AEC encourages its members to:

- **Subscribe to and regularly read the AEC Monthly Newsletter** to stay informed about the latest updates, projects, and opportunities.
- **Share and disseminate insights gained from AEC events** within their institutions, as these events remain AEC's most powerful platform for dissemination, enabling

members to connect, share, and amplify the impact of AEC's initiatives across a broad audience.

Through these collective efforts, AEC aims to strengthen its community impact and promote broader recognition of its projects and objectives.

Approval of the minutes of the 2022 GA and returning officers (continued from point 1)

Deborah Kelleher invites Ashkhen Fixova to share the screen with the results.

- ✓ The General Assembly approves the GA 2022 minutes.
- ✓ The General Assembly elects Francesca Costa and Bernd Redman as returning officers for 2023.

3. Elections to the Executive Committee

The seat of Vice President is vacant. There is one candidate for this post : Elisabeth Gutjahr (Austria), current Vice-President and eligible for a second term.

- ✓ The voting ballot was sent out. For results see point 7.

4. AEC Strategic Plan (2024-2028)

- Two years ago, the General Assembly approved a revised version of the Strategic Plan 2016-2023.
- The Council and the Office have been working all year long on preparing a new strategic plan for 2024-2028. However, when the Selection Committee conducted the recruitment process of the new Director in October 2023, it received from the shortlisted candidates very interesting feedback and input on the draft plan 2024-2028. It became clear that the new Director should be able to give input on the next Strategic Plan. For this reason, the Council decided to present to the GA a FRAMEWORK for the Strategic Plan 2024-2028.
- The Council will be able to work with it from 2024 onwards but wants to give space to the new Director to give input and set priorities within this overall framework.

This framework is presented to the GA for information.

5. Endorsement of the recommendations developed within the PRIhME project

Deborah Kelleher presents the PRIhME project and its [final recommendations](#).

- As the recommendations were produced by the Stakeholder Assemblies and form one of the principal outcomes of the PRIhME project that which ended in 2023, the present recommendations will not be changed.
- Council believes that these recommendations provide a helpful framework and guidelines on how to approach power relations. The Council therefore asks the General Assembly to endorse these recommendations as guidelines.

- ✓ The voting ballot was sent out. For results, see the item before point 10.

6. Financial report of the Secretary General

2022 has been a positive year for the association's financial situation. Thanks to the ARTEMIS project grant, which supports AEC's regular activities such as events and communications, and the related staff costs for the project coordination, and the last year of implementation of the Sustainability Plan 2019-2022, AEC ended the year with a surplus of almost 14.500,00 EUR. This brings AEC's reserves to 100.000,00 EUR, as initially foreseen in the Sustainability Plan approved at the 2017 General Assembly.

Annual Accounts for 2022 (for information)

The Secretary General Ivana Perković informs that the full annual accounts for 2022 have been checked by the following two external auditors: Mario Carrillo, from the Centro Superior Música Creativa in Madrid (appointed for 2021 and 2022) and Kaarlo Hildén, from the Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki (appointed for 2022 and 2023). They both recommended approval of the 2022 Accounts. Ivana Perković expresses gratitude for their work.

The Annual Accounts for 2022 had been approved in August 2023 through an online vote: 89 votes were cast, out of which 84 members approved and 5 abstained from voting.

Proposed membership fees for 2024

- In 2024, the membership fees are indexed at 1.5%.
- 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 01/04/2024.
- A discount is offered to member institutions who are member of both AEC and ELIA.

Forecast outturn 2023

The expected result for 2023 is € 1'456,69.

Income 2023

- Membership fees have increased compared to 2022, in line with the indexation rate and new members joining;
- Event fees have increased, due to a significant attendance of our members to all events organised in 2023;
- Project income has also increased thanks to the ARTEMIS project grant and AEC's involvement in several other projects;
- Regarding EASY, given that 2023 was a transition year while changing to a new system, the income will resume only from 2024 onwards;
- There is an additional income from a service of application writing for the European University Alliance IN.TUNE;
- The amount reimbursed by MusiQuE to AEC for staff and overhead costs has slightly increased compared to 2022.

Expenditures 2023

- Staff costs shall increase in comparison to 2022 levels, mainly because of the increased level of the internship fees and hiring more interns in 2022.
- Events costs were partially covered by the ARTEMIS project budget.
- Office costs have increased due to a VAT regularisation process with VAT lawyers, and other increased travel costs.

- ARTEMIS and other project expenses shall remain stable, as it was planned in the different project applications.
- The EASY service fee will remain stable as well.

Proposed budget for 2024

Ivana Perković presents the proposed budget which shows a result of over 1.200 €.

Income of 2024

- An inflation rate of 1,5% should apply to membership fees;
- The income from event fees should remain stable;
- Concerning project grants, we have allocated the ARTEMIS budget according to its level in 2022, and all other project funds should remain stable;
- The income from EASY should resume after the new system will have been put in place in 2024
- The income from the METRIC coordination should remain the same as in 2023;

Expenditure 2024

- Staff costs shall increase;
- Event, office and travel costs are expected to remain stable;
- Project expenses should decrease;
- The EASY expenditures should decrease in line with the developments of the new system by the SoP provider.

Appointment of two auditors for the 2023 accounts

The Council suggests to the GA Kaarlo Hilden, Sibelius Academy, University of Arts Helsinki and Dimitrios Marinos, Athens Conservatoire College of Music as external auditors for the 2023 accounts

- ✓ The voting ballots on the membership fee levels for 2024, forecast outturn, proposed budget for 2024 and the appointment of external auditors were sent out. The results are announced before point 10.

7. Elections to the Executive Committee and Council (continued from point 3.)

7.1 Announcement of the ExCom election results

Deborah Kelleher asks the returning officer Francesca Costa to come on stage. The results of the vote are shown on the screen. Deborah presents the results.

- Elisabeth Gutjahr received 97 votes and is re-elected.

The returning officer Francesca Costa confirms the information provided by the voting software and announced by the Chair of the GA.

7.2 Elections to the Council

This year, the Council is opening 2 seats and has received 3 applications (from 2 new candidates and 1 current Council member).

- Rico Gubler, Hochschule der Künste Bern, Switzerland

- Małgorzata Sternal, The Krzysztof Penderecki Academy of Music in Krakow, Poland
- Barbara Maria Willi, Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno, Czech Republic

✓ The members present proceed to the vote. See point 11 for results.

8. Internal regulations

Ivana Perković reports that as per Article 13 of the AEC Statutes, “Each year, the Council shall re-examine any internal regulations in force and shall adapt them if necessary”. Internal regulations further clarify and define procedures such as the nomination and election of AEC Council and ExCom members, eligibility, profile, roles and duties of Council and ExCom members and the profile, role and responsibility of AEC Chief Executive.

Compared to the version presented to the GA last year, some editorial changes have been made. The final version of the [Internal regulations](#) is shared with the GA for information.

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

Deborah Kelleher invites the Chair of the MusiQuE Board, Jacques Moreau, to present the latest developments in MusiQuE.

Besides its review activities (in Kazakhstan, Belgium, The Netherlands, Tunisia and Estonia), MusiQuE during 2023 has been engaged in a large revision process of the *Standards for Institutional review* and of the *Standards for Programme review*, including a consultation of AEC member institutions.

MusiQuE has ensured a strong visibility in 2023: it delivered a webinar in collaboration with YMTE - Young Music Talent in Europe on *Quality Enhancement at pre-college level*; its representatives delivered presentations at Pearle-Live Performance Europe conference, at the PGVIM International Symposium and at an international conference about higher music education in Bulgaria.

MusiQuE kept on advocating for international and subject-specific quality assurance at European level, and presented a poster on its Critical Friend Review scheme at the Forum of the European Association for Quality Assurance.

Results of voting from points 5 and 6

- ✓ The General Assembly endorses the PRIhME recommendations as guidelines (101 valid votes, 88 yes, 1 no, 12 abstentions)
- ✓ The General Assembly approves the proposed membership fee levels for 2024 (101 valid votes, 92 yes, 0 no, 9 abstentions)
- ✓ The General Assembly approves the forecast outturn 202 (102 valid votes, 97 yes, 0 no, 5 abstentions)

- ✓ The General Assembly approves the proposed budget for 2024 (102 valid votes, 95 yes, 0 no, 7 abstentions)
- ✓ The General Assembly approves the appointment of Kaarlo Hilden, Sibelius Academy, University of Arts Helsinki (since 2022) and Dimitrios Marinos, Athens Conservatoire College of Music as external auditors for the 2023 accounts (102 valid votes, 97 yes, 1 no, 4 abstentions)

10. Membership matters

The following institutions have been accepted as Active Members during 2023:

- Conservatorio Statale di Musica P.I. Tchaikovsky di Nocera Terinese (Italy)
- Conservatorio Statale di Musica di Reggio Emilia e Castelnovo ne' Monti (Italy)
- Conservatorio Statale di Musica Luigi Canepa di Sassari (Italy)
- Conservatorio Statale di Musica Giulio Briccialdi di Terni (Italy)
- Conservatorio Statale di Musica Claudio Monteverdi di Bolzano (Italy)
- Conservatorio Statale di Musica Vincenzo Bellini di Caltanissetta (Italy)
- Istituto Superiore di Studi Musicali della Valle d'Aosta (Italy)
- University of Aveiro, Department of Communication and Art (Portugal)
- Academy of Music, Theater and Fine Arts AMTAP (Chisinau, Moldova)
- István Széchenyi University in Győr, Department of Arts (Hungary)
- NLA University College in Oslo (Norway)

The following institutions have been accepted as Associate Members:

- Conservatoire de Musique du Nord in Ettelbruck (Luxembourg)

The following institutions have been re-admitted as Active Members:

- Conservatorio Superior de Música de Aragón (Zaragoza, Spain)
- Conservatorio di Musica Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa di Potenza (Italy)
- Conservatoire de musique et d'art dramatique du Québec (Canada)

The following institutions have withdrawn their membership:

- Institut supérieur des arts de Toulouse - isdaT (Toulouse, France)
- Conservatoire de Nantes (Nantes, France)
- UNIC - University of Nicosia, Music and Dance Department (Nicosia, Cyprus)

Memberships with 2 years of non-payment of the membership fee are expired. The following memberships have been expired in 2023:

- Conservatoire de Rennes (Rennes, France)
- Conservatorio di Musica V. Bellini di Catania (Italy)
- Hacettepe University, Ankara State Conservatory (Ankara, Turkey)
- University of Texas at Austin, School of Music (Austin, USA)
- Shanghai Conservatory of Music (Shanghai, China)

AEC ends 2023 with 304 members (265 Active members and 39 Associate members), marking the record within the AEC community to date.

11. Announcement of the Council election

The returning officer Bernd Redmann comes to stage. AEC President Deborah Kelleher asks Ashkhen Fixova to share the screen with the results and announces the candidates who reached the absolute majority of the votes cast and were elected as Council members:

- ✓ Members present elect Małgorzata Sternal and Barbara Maria Willi new AEC Council members

The returning officer Bernd Redmann confirms the information provided by the voting software and announced by the Chair of the General Assembly.

12. Future congresses

- 2024: Milan