

REPORT

AEC ANNUAL MEETING

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COORDINATORS 2024

The Space Between

Educating Citizen Artists Through Global Cooperation

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Theme and teaser

Under the thought-provoking theme of “**The Space Between: Educating Citizen Artists Through Global Cooperation**,” the Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators 2024 was a transformative experience for all attendees.

The **Royal Irish Academy of Music** in Dublin (Ireland) hosted this year’s event. Together we explored the role of the IRC as “the space between” many factors and actors, the oil between the inner mechanisms of HMEIs, the mediator between students and institutions, the facilitator between papers, IT systems and humans, the bridge between education and society, forging pathways to empower artist citizens on a global scale.

The event kicked off with three insightful **pre-conference workshops** focused on essential topics. Participants had the opportunity to dig into the intricacies of the EASY system, explore the innovative approaches of the Erasmus Blended Intensive Programme, and engage in a reflection on Power Relations affecting international offices.

Throughout the meeting, three **keynote sessions** illuminated key aspects of the conference theme. From the exploration of the citizen artist to understanding the international student experience and delving into audience development strategies by John Sloboda, these addresses were set to inspire and inform.

Parallel sessions have been the heartbeat of the conference, covering vital areas such as global collaboration, sustainability, power relations, and inclusion. Attendees attended in-depth discussions, shared best practices, and had networking opportunities that transcend borders.

Moreover, participants had the chance to join **discussion groups** focusing on addressing the practical challenges encountered by international offices, such as finding partners, implementing the ESCI, applying to KA171, filling the Erasmus+ participants report, and dealing with psychological challenges of international students. Their input and perspectives contributed to fostering greater efficiency and effectiveness in our offices.

Invaluable moments of the meeting included the networking activity **The Viking Splash** and the final **Food Sharing** between participants.

Teaser



IRCs Meeting and the IRCs Working Group

The AEC Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators is meant for administrative or teaching staff members in Conservatoires who deal with international relations and European programmes (such as ERASMUS), as well as for institutions not familiar with these programmes, but with an interest in becoming involved. The meeting is important for networking, exchanging useful information and for developing partnerships.

With this annual meeting, the AEC is bringing together a growing community of International Relations Coordinators. The programme of the meeting, as well as other important documents and policies on the field of international relations of conservatoires, are the result of the collaboration between the AEC office and the IRCs Working Group.

The International Relations Coordinators (IRC) Working Group:

- Jan-Gerd Krüger, Prince Claus Conservatoire, Groningen, The Netherlands (WG Chair)
- Frauke Velghe, KASK & Koninklijk Conservatorium, Ghent, Belgium
- Dimitrios Marinos, Athens Conservatoire, College of Music, Athens, Greece
- Oana Balan-Budoiu, The National Academy of Music Gheorghe Dima, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- Melissa Mercadal, Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya (ESMUC), Barcelona, Spain
- Iveri Kekenadze, Malmö Academy of Music, Malmö, Sweden
- Wei Boon Tan, Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, Singapore, Singapore
- Sara Primiterra, AEC Office Team (WG Coordinator). Contact [here](#).

The AEC working groups members work on the preparation of AEC events on voluntary basis. The AEC Preparatory Working Groups are all formed by coopting active individuals in the relevant field of specialization within AEC member institutions. Proactivity, as well as geographical and gender balances are the applied criteria to guarantee the diverse and dynamic character of the groups, who should ideally recreate the diversity of AEC members institutions.

More information about the role of the IRCs WG on the [ARTEMIS project](#) can be found on the dedicated [webpage of the ARTEMIS Work Package 2 – Networking of organisations and individuals \(artists and culture professionals\) throughout Europe and beyond](#).

4 September

Workshop on the new EASY Mobility Online System

This year's meeting started off with a Pre-Conference Workshop on the **EASY Mobility Online System**. Over 100 IRCs had the opportunity to dive into this essential tool and tips needed for the daily management of student mobility

The workshop addressed the new improved process within the system, basic concepts settings, tips and tricks, logic, process, common mistakes and changes for next year. Sara's presentation on the process also featured a Quiz on EASY MO with a final prize for the winner. The representative of SoP Mobility Online showed the new system layout, settings and simulated an application process until the Learning Agreement

- **Sara Primiterra**, AEC Manager of the EASY MO Project
- **Laura Diethart**, SoP Mobility Online
- **Ivan Calfa**, SoP Mobility Online



[Watch the session](#)



[View the presentation](#)



5 September

Pre-conference Workshop - Oana Balan-Budoiu

Crafting guidelines for a better implementation of BIPs in Higher Music Education Institution

The 2024 survey on BIPs launched by the IRC working group showed how IRCs of higher music education institutions share common challenges when it comes to the implementation of such programmes. In fact, many of the issues listed by AEC members are not mentioned in the official EU documentation: the need to come up with sectorial guidelines – defined by those who already experienced challenges and opportunities as leaders or partners – has become evident. By sharing insights and working together, we, as a community, can overcome common obstacles and create a successful model for implementation.

During this 3-hours workshop, experienced and less experienced IRCs explored together key topics such as funding strategies, selecting relevant BIP subjects, organizing networking activities, utilizing effective tech tools, creating a comprehensive event calendar, and finding partners.

- **Oana Balan-Budoiu**, National Academy of Music in Cluj Napoca
- **Carla Conti**, [Conservatorio Santa Cecilia di Roma](#)
- **Cecilia Franchini**, [Conservatorio B. Marcello Venezia](#)
- **Frauke Velghe**, [KASK & Conservatorium Ghent](#)
- **Elsa Ferreira**, [Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag](#)
- **Leena Veijonsuo**, [Sibelius Academy Helsinki](#)



[View the presentation](#)



[View the BIPs Guidelines produced](#)

NOTES

S1

- 2. identifying relevant virtual components!
- 4. finding time to do evaluation
- 1. accommodation too expensive!
- 2. issues of BIP ECTS recognition
- 1. looking for strategic cooperations!
- 2. digital abilities of staff
- 3. technical equipment issues
- 5. administrative vs. artistic management (data protection issues) no formal / common tools
- 3. not too many problems: efficiency and contextualisation
- 7. MULTIPLE AGREEMENT RESPONSIBILITY SHARED
- 4. finding funding from the institution (accommodation)
- 6. DISSEMINATION (ARTISTIC → CONCERT) GUIDANCE → MARKING

TABLE 1 - Additional enriching activities

3

FOR ENRICHING

- JAZZ: JAM SESSIONS
- TRAD. MUSIC: FIELD TRIPS TO ENCOUNTER LOCAL PEOPLE, FOOD, DRINKS ETC WHERE THE MUSIC WAS CREATED
- WIND BAND: VISIT CITIES WITH WIND BANDS
- ORGAN BIP: VISIT PLACES WITH SPECIAL ORGANS, ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES
- OFFERING FOOD FOR PARTICIPATING STUDENTS (PICNIC)
- GUIDED CITY TOURS
- WELCOME MEETING WITH FOOD & DRINKS
- FEEDBACK AFTER CONCERT - DINNER
- SOCIAL MEETINGS:
- RECORDING OF THE CLOSING CONCERT → DISSEMINATION PROMOTION
- LANGUAGE LESSONS (ITALIAN!)
- COMBINING LESSONS / FIELD TRIPS (GROUPS DIVIDED TO SMALLER UNITS)
- TO INVOLVE CITIES ADMINISTRATION
- INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS
- INTERCULTURAL TRAINING (FOR EXAMPLE WITHIN THE VIRTUAL COMPONENT)
- TO INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT: MAKE A VIDEO RECORDING

7

S2

- CLEAR IN COMMUNICATION WORKPLAN → INCLUDE THE BIP ACTIVITY IN TEACHER'S SCHEDULED (OSLO (37.5)) → THEY GET PAID FROM THE SALARY
- PAY THE TEACHERS FROM THE D.S. (VENICE)
- GETTING AWAY FROM THE HOSTING INSTITUTION (INSIDE BUDGET)
- TAKE BIP (GENERAL DECISION) EMBEDDED IN THE CURRICULUM
- TAKE A CALL FOR BIP
- SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN PARTNERS
- GETTING A CERTIFICATE OF CO-ORGANISING A BIP → PERSON (TO BUILD COMPETENCE AMONGST INSTITUTIONS) INSTITUTION (NATIONAL AGENCY) COMMITMENT OF THE INVOLVED PERSONS EUROPEAN COMMISSION
- POSITION ASKS PROJECT MANAGER (BIP + OTHER PROJECTS)
- CREATE SYNERGIES BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS (SENDING TO BIP) HOSTING
- TASKS LIST BETWEEN PARTNERS
- NEED OF TRUST IN THE PARTNERS
- OVERBOOKING BIP → INCLUDE MORE STUDENTS (18-20 FOR BIP) (WAITING LIST)
- RESPONSIBLE TEACHERS AWARE OF ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS
- INVOLVE STUDENTS IN LOGISTIC ORGANIZATION (FROM THE HOST INSTITUTION) → HOSTING INCOMING STUDENTS → COULD GIVE TRAVEL FROM THE OS?
- INCREASE THE OS

S1

RECOGNITION OF CREDITS

MOTIVATED TEACHERS

LOGISTIC - ADMINISTRATIVE MESS!

NO ACCOMMODATION!

LITTLE FUNDINGS

UNCERTAINTY! LIABILITY!

INVITATION VS. TIMETABLE

2

S2

CONSEQUENCES:

- STARTING FROM BEGINNING EACH TIME
- STUDENT GRANTS NOT SUFFICIENT (TRAVEL AND MEALS)
- DIGITAL COMPONENT
- SHOULD BE COIL
- GUIDELINES NEEDED!
- TIMELY BUDGETING / PREPARATION (MOBILITY GRANTS FOR PARTICIPATING STUDENTS)
- EARLY PLANNING NEEDED ALSO FOR VENUE RESERVATIONS IN THE ORGANIZING SCHOOL
- BM TECHNICAL PROBLEMS AT THE END
- WORKLOAD OF ORGANIZERS
- CHALLENGE ONLINE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES

① The additional ECTS could be included into the main curriculum of the school / university

② ECTS is the equivalent of 1 year of study

③ open to requests of teachers / students / parents

④ organization includes program in school

⑤ school gives money from international program

Pre-conference Workshop - PRIhME Project

Understanding and Coping with Power Dynamics in the International Context - a workshop for IRCs on power relations and hierarchies of power

- Gretchen Amussen, PRIhME Project

What impact do power relations and hierarchies of power have on IRCs, on international students or students and/or teachers participating in exchanges? How might understanding power relations and hierarchies of power empower us to be better supported and to better support the international student experience? What tools might we use to address the challenges we face in this regard?

We all have examples of international students receiving less attention or opportunities, or of others suffering from a lack of language skills... and in our own professional hierarchies, we may feel our voices are not valued as they should be.



This highly interactive session, focused on the specific nature of international relations and inspired by the recently completed PRIhME (Power Relations in Higher Music Education) Project, helped participants recognize and understand different types of power to better cope with challenges as they arise.

Participants explored the specific power-related challenges and imbalances faced within international relations offices. To wrap up the session participants had to define several concrete actions to improve power relations in his/her international relations environment.



[View the presentation](#)

Power OVER
 - Allocate the money directly.
 - No support - or TO be postponed (waiting list)
 - Power to say NO or YES...

Power TO
 Delegate decision (further allocated decision (co-financing))
 - Level of respect.

Power WITH
 Discuss & explore all the options
 Shape new procedures.
 - Commitment to be shared

Power WITHIN
 - Resilience.

17 Establish a clear decision-making chain (power)
 27 Establish transparent procedures → communicate them
 37 Promote a mindset/culture of shared commitment & ownership
 ↳ mostly for that we need to be supported by Top management.
 47 P.D.S.A. process.

→ come down from time to time
 same workshop w/ for managers → student + teachers → All.

POWER OVER (She/he has)
 - Recognises Information Competence??

TO (She/he should have the power to)
 - Communication
 - Delegate (to the right people)
 - Organise
 - See the need of the students...

WITH (She/he should acknowledge):
 - Inclusion
 - Ownership

WITHIN (She/he should see):
 - Roles

Misuse of power?

NOTES

OVER
 Visa authorities have power over Situation/ Student/ institution - resolve through in-house knowledge + expertise

WITH
 Welcome Week - buddy support from current student
 Provide contacts to other international students for support - especially finding accommodation
 Emotional/pastoral/wellbeing support
 - Student is very upset, needs support right now + to build resilience for future

TO
 Provide necessary tools + information to student right now - how to solve Situation in short term (different from standard info previously given - change in context)
 Alert other key colleagues/stakeholders - IRC cannot solve everything!

WITHIN
 Empower student to feel they can take action - provide information + support
 Reflection/analysis of problem and how it came about - takes confidence to do reflective work + design or change processes/procedures

Establish an organizational-policy and stick to it.
 #1. Chain of command: + structure
 - roles in the organization.
 - areas of responsibility.

#2. ~~Identify~~ Target group/audience:
 - Students.

#3. Include teachers in promoting MC to students

Training!
 Educating teachers and staff
 Frequent meetings with stakeholders + int. partners
 Have difficult discussions with anyone...
 (Re-organization??)

Session for first time delegates

The Introductory Session for First-Time Delegates served as an essential orientation for new participants. This session focused on the general structure of the AEC as a network representing Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs) in Europe and beyond.

AEC's mission and vision was shared, along with its organisational structure, upcoming events, and major projects. The session underscored the importance of networking, exchanging information, and developing partnerships among member institutions, facilitating effective communication and sharing of best practices within the community.

In this workshop participants had the opportunity to engage and share in a very interactive setting, starting with an ice-breaker exercise.



- **Frauke Velghe**, KASK & Conservatorium Ghent
- **Dimitrios Marinos**, Athens Conservatoire



[View the presentation](#)



Opening Session

Welcome words by:

- **Deborah Kelleher**, Director of RIAM and AEC President
- **Aoileann Ní Bhroin**, Irish Erasmus National Agency
- **Jan-Gerd Krüger**, IRC Working Group Chair
- **Finn Schumacker**, AEC Chief Executive



Music performance

- **Brian Dietlmeier and Sulamita Pyvovar** - 'Scherzo for Piano 4 Hands' - Brian Dietlmeier



[Watch the session](#)

AEC Talk 1

What is the role of higher music education in developing citizen artists?

- **Lynsey Callaghan**, [Royal Irish Academy of Music](#)
- Moderated by **Deborah Kelleher**, Director of the RIAM and AEC President

How can internationalisation in higher music education contribute to developing citizen artists? Among many reasons, studying abroad stands out for its potential to cultivate the competencies of global citizenship. For students in higher music education, these international experiences can profoundly shape their global consciousness.

By immersing themselves in new cultures and realities, students are afforded an opportunity to inhabit a liminal space where new possibilities for their artistic practice can emerge. Living on the precipice of something new, they are poised to discover innovative ways to express their creativity, connect with diverse audiences, and enrich their communities.

This talk explored how international experiences can deepen artists' understanding of their societal contributions. Reflecting on her own international education opportunities, Lynsey discussed how these formative experiences have shaped both her vision for social change through youth choral music education and her role as Head of Programmes, Research and Academics at the Royal Irish Academy of Music.



[Watch the session](#)

Parallel Sessions

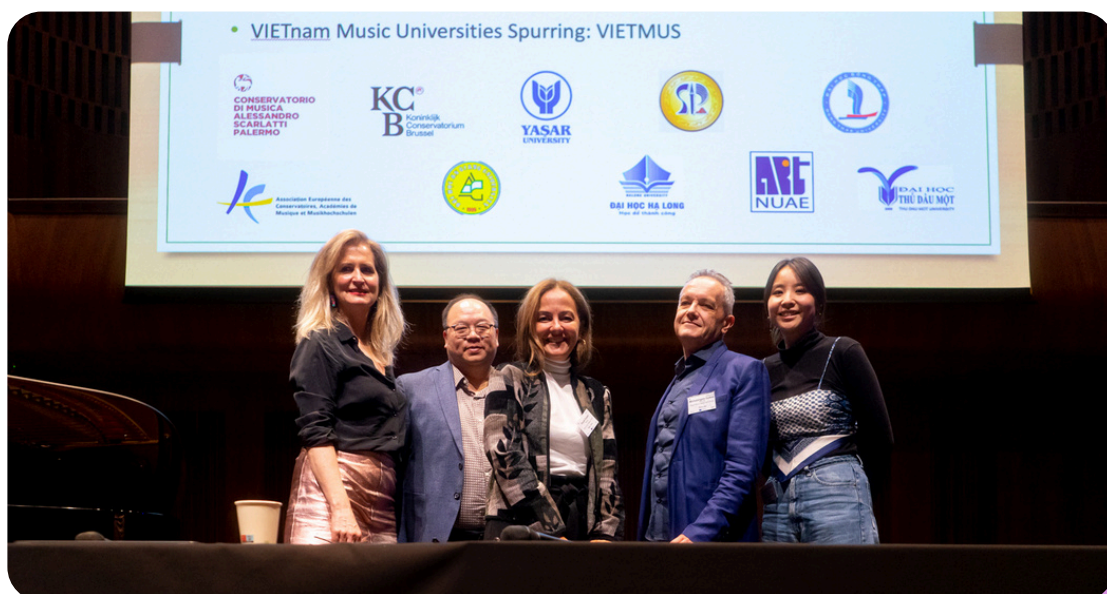
1. Navigating Challenges of Distance Mobility in Educating Citizen Artists through Global Cooperation

- **Payam Gul Susanni**, Turkey, [Vietmus Project](#)
- **Kirsty McCahon**, [Sydney Conservatorium of Music](#)
- **Stephanie Tan**, (former) student in Singapore/Australia/Groningen
- Moderated by **Wei Boon Tan** (IRC WG)

Music students as developing citizen artists are encouraged to engage with the world through their art and service by fostering exchange, bridging cultural gaps and enriching communities through diverse artistic experiences.

In this session, we discussed the importance for students to have an experience of living in a foreign country and shared ways we can seek support to facilitate global exchanges.

The session also shared an update of “Vietmus”, a two-year project funded by the European Union involving 10 universities in Europe and Vietnam which aims to promote digital transformation and to create a new digital capacity in teaching and performing in the Vietnamese Higher Music Education landscape.



[View the presentation](#)



[Watch the session](#)

2. Enhancing Accessibility for Students with Special Education Needs (SEN)

In the pursuit of educational equity and cultural exchange, the Erasmus+ programme strives to offer transformative experiences to all students. However, students with Special Education Needs (SEN) often encounter unique challenges that can hinder their participation in these opportunities. In this session we identified these challenges and facilitated discussion to explore strategies for a more inclusive Erasmus+ experience for all students.



- **Kim Fallen Bailey**, RIAM [IncluMusic Project](#)
- **Jessica Harris**, RIAM and IncluMusic
- **Maria Prodromou**, IncluMusic
- **Aine O'Sullivan**, Student at RIAM
- **Margit Dirnberger**, Erasmus+ Higher Education Agency Austria

Participants first explored the specific barriers faced by students with SEN in the context of Erasmus+ mobility (such as wheelchair access, visual and hearing impairments, and neurodivergent needs). They also shared their experiences and insights about the common obstacles at their institutions, both for outgoing and incoming students.

In this collaborative workshop participants also learnt about existing resources and best practices, including mindfulness techniques, one of the modules included in the training course developed within the scope of the IncluMusic project (2022-2025), which is gathering a full range of materials and considerations that can enhance the support provided to students with SEN.



Table discussions were held where participants explored how to implement inclusive strategies. By the end of the session, participants had a deeper understanding of the inclusion challenges, and gained insights into the specific needs and barriers faced by these students which could apply to their own institutions.



[View the presentation](#)

3. Green Citizen Artists: integrating sustainability into music performance and education

- [Anna Lardi, Cellissimo Festival](#)
- [Maria Kalleitner-Huber](#), AEC Goes Green WG member and Mozarteum University
- [Dušanka Jelenković Vidović](#), WG Chair AEC Goes Green
- moderated by [Dimitrios Marinos](#), IRC WG

The session explored sustainable music practices and how environmental responsibility can be integrated into both performance and education. It emphasizes the importance of aligning higher music education institutions with the EU Green Deal's broader objectives and its guidelines for a green transition.

Building on prior work mapping environmentally friendly practices, the **AEC Goes Green Working Group** of the **ARTEMIS** project has developed specific "green" recommendations for the music education sector. The presentation showcased these recommendations, offering practical steps for reducing institutions' carbon footprints, promoting sustainable travel, and organizing eco-friendly events. Lastly, the presentation addressed the challenges faced in implementing sustainable practices.

Anna Lardi, CEO of Music for Galway and creator of the Songs of Travel concept, provided an inspirational contribution by sharing her experiences in spotlighting environmental sustainability in music events.



[View the presentation](#)

4. Understanding and Coping with Power Dynamics in the International Context

- [Gretchen Amussen, PRIhME Project](#)

This session introduced the concepts of power relations and hierarchies of power as defined in the recently completed PRIhME Project, focusing on their impact on IRCs, international students and/or teachers participating in exchanges. Participants explored specific power related challenges and imbalances faced in international offices and suggested how understanding these dynamics can in turn empower IRCs and better support the international student/teacher experience.



[View the presentation](#)

Welcome Reception



6 September

AEC Talk 2

Understanding Student Perspective: stories from international students at European HMEIs

International students encounter numerous challenges throughout their academic journey. From navigating a complex array of bureaucratic processes, including obtaining essential documents at both the beginning and end of their studies, to adapting to a new cultural and social context, these hurdles can create significant stress and negatively impact their overall experience.

This session delved into the unique experiences of international students at European Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs). By sharing their personal stories and insights, we uncovered the specific challenges they face and identify strategies to enhance their overall experience.

Together we focused on the possibilities for change and how we can help international students feel more welcomed and valued, ultimately enriching the diverse tapestry of our academic communities.



[Check the panellists](#)



[View the presentation](#)



[Watch the session](#)



EASY presentation and Information Forum

The EASY Project Manager Sara Primiterra gave the main updates on the **New EASY Mobility Online System** and introduced the following presentation of the Information Forum:

- **Erasmus Orchestra** - Sara Pagliai
- **EPASA - Empowering European Performing Arts Students** - Monica Vejgaard and Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson, EPASA
- **HarMA HUB** - Salvatore Gioveni
- **What's cooking at Royal Conservatoire Antwerp?** - Charlotte Saelemakers
- **BIP "Intercultural relations and creative communication"** - Audrius Dabrovolksas
- **IMPACT Project** - international master in performance and creative technologies in dance - Roser Graell and Isabelle Replumaz, Charlotte Saelemakers
- **Guitar Maestro T.E.A.R.S. (Teaching Excellence And Revolutionary Synergy)** - a Nordic guitar-project taking place in Aalborg 14-16/1 2025 - Martin Granum
- **IN.TUNE Alliance - Innovative Universities in Music & Arts in Europe** - Angela Sindeli
- **Working With Music 2.0** - Damiano Lazzaron and Lucia Di Cecca, WWM 2.0 Coordinator
- **Study in Venice Summer School "The shape of Water" experience** - past editions and upcoming events - Cecilia Franchini
- **Cooperation for the implementation of the BIP in Avellino - Italian Opera "il matrimonio segreto"** - Francesca Manganiello
- **Shores: A Creative Europe cooperation project on music and sustainability** - Helena Marinho
- **MUSENSE project** - Payam Gul Susanni
- **Opera Out of Opera 2** - Michelangelo Galeati
- **YMTE survey** - Finn Schumacker

The speakers who presented their projects and initiatives at the information forum were also given a space at the **Information Market**. This provided participants with the opportunity to connect with them directly and gather more information about their projects and initiatives. It was a valuable platform for networking and engaging in meaningful conversations about the showcased endeavors.



[Watch the session](#)



[View the presentation](#)



Discussion groups

On practical issues - questions and solutions on mobility

After the Information Forum and Market, the participants had the opportunity to immerse themselves in engaging discussions on the following topics related with mobility, they were divided in 6 breakout groups

1. First Steps for finding a project partner: opportunities and matchmaking

IRCs were empowered with the skills and confidence to create meaningful and sustainable project partnerships.

- **Frauke Velghe**, KASK & Conservatorium Ghent
- **Dimitrios Marinos**, Athens Conservatoire



[View the presentation](#)



[View the presentation](#)

2. International students: supporting their psychological well-being

Participants exchanged ideas on how higher educational institutions can better support their international students.

- **Elke de Roos**, Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag
- **Virginia Kerr**, RIAM

3. The implementation of the European Student Card Initiative in HMEIs

This discussion group explored the multifaceted process of implementing the ESCI in HMEIs, addressing technical, administrative, and financial challenges.

- **Sara Belfiore**, CNSMD Paris
- **Oana Balan-Budoiu**, National Academy of Music in Cluj Napoca
- **Melissa Mercadal**, ESMUC



[View the presentation](#)



4. International Credit Mobility – connecting with third countries through Erasmus+ KA171

We discussed challenges and opportunities of Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility (ICM) KA7171 with third countries.

- **Iveri Kekenadze Gustaffson**, Malmö Academy of Music, Lund University



[View the presentation](#)

5. Erasmus evaluation as a tool for quality enhancement

The discussion kicked off by a presentation by the Italian Erasmus+ National Agency INDIRE.

- **Maria Salzano**, Italian Erasmus+ National Agency INDIRE
- **Jan-Gerd Krüger**, Prince Claus Conservatoire



[View the presentation](#)



6. EASY for external institutions and Multi-signature tool

Participants were taught about the workflow and the improvements and changes for externals for the new academic year.

- **Jose Luis Fernandez**, Conservatorio Superior de Música de Vigo
- **Sara Primiterra**, AEC



[View the presentation](#)

Networking activity and concert of the Erasmus Orchestra

After a day full of inspiring sessions, participants had the opportunity to engage in two different networking activities: the Viking Splash Tour and the visit to the National Gallery. The Viking Splash offered a unique sightseeing adventure that combined both land and water travel and the walk through the National Gallery helped participants immerse in the works of great masters like Monet, Picasso, Caravaggio and many more.



The day ended with the Erasmus Orchestra concert. The orchestra featuring over 50 students from the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) in Dublin and other Erasmus+ conservatories, included classical pieces by Beethoven, Donizetti, Puccini, Fauré, and Verdi

7 September

AEC Talk 3

How Classical Musicians Can Engage Their Live Audiences: Learning From Others Who Do It Better!

- **John Sloboda**, Emeritus Professor at the Guildhall School
- Moderated by **Deborah Kelleher**, director of RIAM, AEC President

In this presentation, John Sloboda explored the findings of a 10-year research project, Understanding Audiences, which investigated the decline in attendance at live classical concerts, especially among younger audiences. Drawing on insights from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Sloboda examined the factors that influence audience engagement with classical music and how these differ from other art forms such as popular music, jazz, theatre, and galleries.

The presentation emphasized the importance of innovative strategies for improving audience connection, including introducing improvisatory elements into concert formats and involving audiences more directly in the creative process.

Sloboda highlighted the potential benefits for classical musicians in collaborating with students and staff from other disciplines, suggesting that this cross-disciplinary approach could lead to more flexible and effective audience engagement strategies.



[Watch the session](#)



[View the presentation](#)

Discussion groups

Reflection on the conference and future topics

On Saturday, before the closing session, participants were allocated to seven discussion groups to facilitate reflections on the event moderated by IRC WG members. This interactive session provided an opportunity for attendees to share their thoughts and insights about the IRC meeting.

During these discussions, participants expressed their satisfaction with various aspects of the event. Some highlighted engaging keynote presentations, interesting panel discussions, and the overall positive atmosphere. The diverse perspectives and expertise brought by the speakers and attendees contributed to the richness of the discussions throughout the conference.

Furthermore, participants took the opportunity to convey their expectations and suggestions for future IRC meetings. Additionally, attendees expressed interest in more interactive workshops and hands-on activities, providing practical insights and skills applicable to their day to day work.



Closing Session



The closing session of the AEC Annual Meeting for IRCs began with a key update from Finn Schumacker, who provided the latest news at AEC.

Following this, the host institution of the next IRC Meeting 2025 was announced, participants discovered that Liszt Academy Budapest will host the meeting from 17 - 20 September 2025.

The session concluded with closing remarks by Riccardo Ceni, member of the AEC Council, who will reflected on the Congress's achievements, thank the participants, and outline the path forward for the AEC and its members.

This session offered a final opportunity to celebrate the progress made and look ahead to the future of Higher Music Education.



[Watch the session](#)



[View the presentation](#)

Share your food and drinks

In conclusion to the IRC meeting, participants shared the cultural richness of their countries through a communal sharing of food and drinks which has become a tradition at the end of the IRC meeting.



Thank you!

The AEC would like to thank everyone who has been part of this year's event, from our host institution **Royal Irish Academy of Music** to the speakers and to all participating HME leaders, teachers, administrators and students. **THANK YOU ALL!**

We can't wait to welcome you next year in Budapest!

Photo Gallery















THANK YOU!

WHO

The Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC) is a European cultural and educational network with around 309 member institutions for professional music training in 64 countries. The network is co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme.

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Co-funded by
the European Union

Wednesday 4 September

Educating Citizen Artists
Through Global Cooperation
AEC Annual Meeting for International
Relations Coordinators (IRCs) 2024

13:30 Registration open (with welcome coffee) - **Registration desk**
14:00 - 18:00 Workshop on the new **EASY Mobility Online System** - **Whyte Hall**

Thursday 5 September

09:00 Registration for pre-conference workshop participants (with welcome coffee) - **Registration desk**
09:30 - 12:30 **Pre-conference Workshops (only for registered participants)**

- 1 - Crafting guidelines for a better implementation of **BIPs in Higher Music Education Institution** – a collaborative workshop - **Vernon Studio**
- 2 - Understanding and Coping with **Power Dynamics in the International Context** - a workshop for IRCs on power relations and hierarchies of power - **Organ Room**

12:45 Registration opens (with welcome coffee) - **Registration desk**

13:15 - 14:15 Session for **first time delegates** - **Vernon Studio**

14:30 - 15:00 **Opening Session** - **Whyte Hall**

15:00 - 15:30 **AEC Talk 1** - What is the role of higher music education in developing citizen artists? - Lynsey Callaghan (RIAM) - **Whyte Hall**

15:30 - 16:00 Networking with refreshments - **Foyer**

16:00 - 17:30 **Parallel Sessions I**

- 1 - Navigating Challenges of **Distance Mobility** in Educating Citizen Artists through **Global Cooperation** - **Whyte Hall**
- 2 - Enhancing **Accessibility for Students with Special Education Needs (SEN)**. The example of the Erasmus+ programme and IncluMusic - **Vernon Studio**
- 3 - Green Citizen Artists: integrating **sustainability into music performance and education** - **Lecture Theatre**
- 4 - Understanding and Coping with **Power Dynamics in the International Context** - **Organ Room**

17:45 - 19:15 **Parallel Sessions II - REPEATED**

- 1 - Navigating Challenges of **Distance Mobility** in Educating Citizen Artists through **Global Cooperation** - **Lecture Theatre**
- 2 - Enhancing **Accessibility for Students with Special Education Needs (SEN)**. The example of the Erasmus+ programme and IncluMusic - **Vernon Studio**
- 3 - Green Citizen Artists: integrating **sustainability into music performance and education** - **Whyte Hall**
- 4 - Understanding and Coping with **Power Dynamics in the International Context** - **Organ Room**

19:15 Welcome reception - **Foyer**

Friday 6 September

- 9:30 Welcome coffee and registration continues - **Foyer**
- 10:00 - 11:00 **AEC Talk 2** - Understanding **Student Perspective**: stories from international students at European HMEIs - by **Jing Yi Yang**, **Casey Trowel**, **Olesia Borsuk** and **Andrés Vaccaro (RIAM)**, **Stephanie Tan** – (**Prince Claus Conservatoire**) and **Monica Vejgaard** and **Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson (EPASA)** - **Whyte Hall**
- 11:00 - 11:30 Presentation on the **New EASY Mobility Online System** - **Whyte Hall**
- 11:30 - 12:00 **Information Forum** - **Whyte Hall**
- 12:00 **Group picture** - **Whyte Hall**
- 12:00 - 12:30 **Information Market** - **Vernon Studio**
- 12:30 - 14:00 Lunch - **Foyer**
- 14:00 - 15:30 **Discussion groups on practical issues - questions and solutions on mobility**
- 1** - First Steps for finding a project partner: opportunities and matchmaking - **Early Music Room**
 - 2** - International students: supporting their psychological well-being - **Organ Room**
 - 3** - The implementation of the European Student Card Initiative in HMEIs - **Irené Sandford**
 - 4** - International Credit Mobility – connecting with third countries through Erasmus+ KA171 - **Vernon Studio**
 - 5** - Erasmus evaluation as a tool for quality enhancement - **Veronica Dunne**
 - 6** - EASY for external institutions and Multi-signature tool - **Lecture Theatre**
- 15:30 - 19:00 **Networking Activity** - **Check Swapcard for detailed information**
- 19:30 - 20:15 **Concert by the Erasmus Orchestra** - **Whyte Hall**

Saturday 7 September

- 9:45 - 11:00 **AEC Talk 3** - How Classical Musicians Can Engage Their Live Audiences: Learning From Others Who Do It Better! - **John Sloboda (UK)** - **Whyte Hall**
- 11:00 - 11:30 **Networking with refreshments** - **Foyer**
- 11:30 - 12:30 **Discussion groups - reflection on the conference and future topics** - **Check the letter on your badge**
- Group A** - **Whyte Hall**
 - Group B** - **Organ Room**
 - Group C** - **Lecture Theatre**
 - Group D** - **Early Music Room**
 - Group E** - **Irené Sandford**
 - Group F** - **Veronica Dunne**
 - Group G** - **Board Room**
- 11:30 - 12:30 **Safe Space** - **Vernon Studio**
- 12:30 - 13:00 **Closing Session** - **Whyte Hall**
- 13:00 **Share your food and drinks** - **Entrance Hall**

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