

Best Sustainable Practices at the AEC events

AEC events have become **increasingly sustainable**, as we consistently **incorporate environmentally friendly practices** throughout all our activities. Some of these practices are shared below to **raise awareness of our sustainability journey** and to keep you informed about our progress, challenges, and achievements. They are also aimed to **inspire** Higher Music Education Institutions **when planning their own events** or to serve as a reference for institutions considering or planning to host future AEC events.

Bonding over Sustainability

Since 2024, the AEC has introduced a **sustainability clause as part of the event hosting agreement**. In addition to the regular contract, this new clause reflects a shared commitment between AEC and the host institution to **implement environmentally responsible practices** and support the transition towards greener events.



Less plastic is fantastic

We strive to keep our events **free of plastic bottles** to reduce plastic waste and pollution. Instead, many hosting institutions **provide water fountains** and serve water or juice from glass bottles and jars during lunches and dinners.

Reusing pre-loved badges

We encourage event participants to **return their name badges** so they can be reused at our future events. For example, all name badges used during the AEC Congress 2024 in Milan were recycled from previous AEC events. In line with our broader commitment to sustainability, we also ask host institutions to ensure that **clearly marked recycling stations** are available and accessible throughout the event.

Calculate, reflect, improve.. repeat!

We acknowledge the **environmental impact caused by our travel** to events and actively **calculate the resulting CO₂ emissions with the goal of reducing** them each year. Also, in collaboration with event hosts, and whenever possible, we also assess electricity usage, water consumption, and general waste to help us reflect and improve in the future.

Informing & being informed

The AEC events provide a valuable opportunity to **raise awareness about the climate crisis** and promote more sustainable behaviour. We encourage participants to **choose greener modes of transport** when travelling to the city of the event venue and we collect related statistics. Additionally, we recommend staying in **eco-labelled hotels** whenever possible.



One of the recent AEC events that stood out for its high standards and particularly innovative approaches to sustainability and green practices was AEC European Platform for Artistic Research in Music (EPARM), hosted by the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (EAMT).

Public transport on the house

The EPARM 2025 encouraged **using public transport** during the event. Thanks to the EAMT, all the participants received QR codes allowing them **to take the** local public transport free of charge. Moreover, the QR codes also contributed to reducing the need for printed paper tickets.

Turning tables

Moreover, the EPARM 2025 **prioritised vegan and vegetarian options** for all lunches and dinners. The usual approach — offering a single vegetarian option among several non-vegetarian dishes — was reversed: a **non-vegetarian dish was included among predominantly vegetarian and vegan choices**.

I like my coffee cup recycled

EAMT provided **reusable cups** to all EPARM participants who wished to take coffee outside the designated coffee-breaks, in order to reduce reliance on single-use cups while still offering refreshing coffee and tea throughout the event. Each participant received one cup per day, which was then disposed of in the **designated waste containers**, mirroring a common practice of cup deposits at festivals. Following the event, the used cups were sent back to the provider for reuse at a future event.

Limiting the printing but not our efforts

EPARM 2025 continued the already established sustainable practices, that AEC has implemented in recent years. To **minimise printing** for the EPARM conference, AEC used the Swapcard application. **The official event app provided attendees with a platform to access all essential information**, offering the full program with detailed speaker bios and abstracts, practical information about the venue and schedule, tips for enjoying Tallinn, a list of registered participants, and tools for interaction and networking. **This ensured to significantly reduce the printed material**, limiting it to only a few printed copies of the programme outside conference rooms as well as at the reception desk. Moreover, the posters showing directions for participants remained and **will be reused at the next conference/event** at EAMT. This particular action was also implemented during the IRC Meeting 2024 in Dublin.