

REPORT

AEC ANNUAL MEETING

FOR INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS COORDINATORS
2025

The Great Mobility Compass

Exploration, Navigation, and
Direction in the Future of
Internationalisation



THE SOURCE OF MUSIC FOR 150 YEARS
LISZT ACADEMY
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Theme and teaser

In September 2025, the AEC celebrated a major milestone: **the 25th edition of its Annual International Relations Coordinators (IRC) Meeting**. This special edition took place at the iconic **Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest** from 17 to 20 September, set to be an inspiring and forward-looking gathering under the theme **“The Great Mobility Compass: Exploration, Navigation, and Direction in the Future of Internationalisation.”**

As the landscape of higher music education and mobility continues to evolve, this year’s meeting invited participants to pause, reflect, and recalibrate their direction. Designed by a renewed IRC working group, the programme offered an engaging blend of technical insight, strategic dialogue, and community exchange.

A key focus was the **digitisation of Erasmus+**, with dedicated technical sessions on the EASY MO system and open discussions on the future of digital tools in mobility and Erasmus Without Paper. A special session spotlighted Erasmus+ KA171 collaborations with Africa, featuring guest speaker Stella Mendonça, founder of Fundação MUSIARTE – Conservatório de Música e Arte Dramática in Maputo, Mozambique. Strategic trajectories identified by the IN.TUNE University Alliance were also presented.

Participants had the opportunity to discuss **mobility trends** in our sector based on a recent survey within the AEC community, offering valuable insights into emerging patterns and students’ needs. The integration of artificial intelligence in international offices was explored, alongside practical sessions on writing and managing projects, followed by tips and tricks from experienced project evaluators.

Important human aspects of internationalisation were addressed as well, with sessions on **student wellbeing and power relations in mobility**. The programme also featured sessions on BIP toolkits, discussions on grade conversions, Ukrainian students, work placements and Erasmus+ mobility procedures, letting participants debate on controversial topics while dealing with international partners.

Of course, no IRC meeting would be complete without its cultural and social highlights. This year, participants enjoyed a concert by the Erasmus Orchestra, enriched by stories told directly by the students, and a scenic networking boat trip on the Danube. Networking during the conference also benefited from a new established buddy system (with old timers helping newcomers) and an ad-hoc speed dating session to meet as many comrades as possible! The conference concluded with the much-loved tradition of sharing food and drinks from our home countries, a celebration of the diversity and solidarity that define our community.

Whether you are navigating the ever-changing currents of internationalisation or setting out on your first mobility journey, we are sure that The Great Mobility Compass helped you chart your course with confidence. We were thrilled to welcome you to Budapest for this special anniversary edition.

IRC Meeting 2025 Highlights



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 getting 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 2025:

- Jan-Gerd Krüger – Chair, Prins Claus Conservatorium Groningen
- Sara Primiterra – Coordinator, AEC Office. Contact [here](#)
- Iveri Kekenadze Gustaffson – Student representative, Lund University, Malmö
- Riccardo Mascia – Conservatorio Arrigo Boito Parma
- Anika Stiawa – Kunstuniversität Graz
- Veronika Kuželová – HAMU Prague
- Linn Eriksen – UiA – Universitetet i Agder
- Sarah Low – Royal Academy of Music London
- Ivana Mijanović – Faculty of Music, University of Belgrade
- Junta Arakawa – College of Music, Mahidol University, Thailand
- Orsolya Freitag – Hosting Institution 2025 – Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest

The AEC Working Group members work on the preparation of AEC events on a voluntary basis. The AEC Preparatory Working Groups are all formed by co-opting 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, which should ideally recreate the diversity of AEC members' institutions.

Workshop on Navigating the Digitisation of Erasmus+ Procedures

This workshop provided a comprehensive update on the current state and future directions of digitisation in higher music education, with a focus on **Erasmus Without Paper** (EWP) and on the **AEC EASY MO System**. The opening plenary set the scene with an overview of the present situation of the sector: progress in building the EWP infrastructure, insights from the recent AEC Digitisation Survey, and an outline of financial and organisational developments of EASY MO. Participants also heard about the technical challenges encountered in 2025 and the lessons learned through extensive testing and implementation.

Looking ahead, the benefits of moving forward collectively as a consortium, the importance of AEC's advocacy role, and concrete next steps, including the rollout of the AEC Mobility Information Portal by December 2025, and the commitment process for institutions joining the consortium in 2026 under the new conditions announced in the session were highlighted.

In parallel sessions, participants engaged in tailored discussions: newcomers and beginners were introduced to the AEC EASY MO system, advanced users explored the DLA Pipeline, new functions and addressed technical issues, and a dedicated group focused on the EWP Dashboard and related issues.

The closing plenary opened the floor to reflections from the AEC EASY MO Task Force and participants, inviting a collective conversation on the future of digitisation for higher music education institutions.



- **Sara Primiterra**, AEC EASY MO Project Manager
- **Ly Tran**, Consultant for internationalisation Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt, Weimar
- **Ruth Graf-Fleet**, IRC Conservatorium van Amsterdam
- **Noemi Parraghy**, IRC Anton Bruckner Private University Linz
- **Lucia di Cecca**, Conservatorio di Musica A. Steffani, Castelfranco
- **Jose Luis Fernandez**, IRC Conservatorio Superior de Vigo



[Watch the session](#)



View the presentations:

- [Digitisation Workshop Plenary PPT](#)
- Group 1: PPT [EASY MO General Logic and Process for beginners and future users](#)
- Group 2: [REPORT EASY MO, Advanced Users session](#)
- Group 3: PPT [EWP and Dashboard Issues Discussion](#)



Pre-conference Workshop 1 – Anika Stiawa

Exploring Erasmus+ Mobility

This pre-conference workshop was delivered in two parts.

The first one consisted of getting an overview of the guidelines, which apply to all institutions funding student mobilities (short-term and long-term) and staff mobilities with Erasmus+ KA131:

- Irrevocable Guidelines vs. Freedom in Implementation
- Terminology and Glossary
- Deadlines and Documents
- (Online)-Tools used



The second part consisted of the identification of intersections in cooperation and challenges in the different implementations of Erasmus+ requirements. The workshop aimed at optimizing joint processes and saving time in day-to-day work as an IRC with colleagues of partner institutions.



- [View the presentation with group discussion and mentimeter REPORT](#)
- [Group Questions - Mobility Workshop](#)
- [Erasmus Glossary](#)

IIA

- TIA is an open document
there is no obligation to receive the
agreed number of students/teachers/tr.
- Put your additional and requirements
in the box "additional information" and
read this information in your partners' TIA.
- To spend time creating a partnership:
Verification of compatibilities of courses,
assessment system ~~so that~~ students to get
troubles with recognition.
- If you think that your ~~ex~~ institution
is open to cooperate, do not wait that
a mobility ^{is confirmed} happen and sign an TIA.
It has become so easy!

OUT

- OUT**
- SELECTION OR TRACKING?
 - SUGGEST THE MINIMUM
 - DEFINE A ~~COURSE~~ COURSE CATALOGUE
 - CONTENT?
 - SUGGESTIONS FOR INCOMING STUDENTS
 - PASSPORT → IN
 - PERIOD
- RECORDING** ♥
- CV**
- BASIC DATA** ♥ ♥ →
- MOTIVATION LETTER** → IN? → A1
- (RECC. LETTER)** → FUNDS/SELECTION
- LANGUAGE (CERTIFICATE)** → **OUT IS RESPONSIBLE** ♥
- PERMISSION BY TEACHERS** → **NOMINATION PROCESS**
- 3/4 DESTINATIONS** ♥
- DEADLINE** → EARLY → MID JANUARY
- TOP** - PHOTO → IN
- NO DLA** IN INCOMING
- STUDY PLAN** IN

Read the notes!

Staff mobility

- STA & STT deadlines
 - enforced by umbrella Uni
 - set by coordinator / locally
- STT - can be used for language or skill improvement (courses)
- Erasmus staff weeks websites (IMOTION)
- feedback and data from previous mobilities used as guiding lights for future mobility
- "buddy" system for STA & STT
- IIA suggestions or direct questions
- national agencies enforcing rules on signature policies
- invitation letter - anchor for mobility
- ongoing debate on who's responsibility the confirmation is 😊

15 IRC PARTICIPANTS
THE IRC

- 15 IRC
- 5 ADMINISTRATIVE IRC
- 8 MUSICIAN/TEACHER IRC
- 5 ADD MORE FUNDS FOR OUTGOING MOBILITY
- LONELINESS OF THE IRC IS FREQUENT
- IRC NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE INSTITUTION.
- 7 CAN SUPPORT THE STUDENT IN FINDING AN ACCOMMODATION
- WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO GIVE THE STUDENTS?
- PSYCHOLOGICAL? LOGISTIC? FINANCIAL? FOLLOW UP DURING THE MOBILITY? ✓
- FIRST POINT OF CONTACT
- General tutor // Insightful Guidance
- It's important for teachers to organize events for students
- SUPPORT WITH DOCUMENTS / give general information, help with administration
- Create a general administrative tutor
- FIND SCHOLARSHIPS TO SUPPORT OUT GOING STUD
- Administrative - Psychological support
- link between different institutions/departments/persons
- facilitating mobility
- GIVING AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE

Pre-conference Workshop 2 – Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson

Exploring Funding Opportunities

This hands-on workshop offered a practical introduction to key EU funding programmes relevant to higher music education and international collaboration. Through a mix of expert presentations and interactive group work, participants explored opportunities under Erasmus+ KA1 and KA2, Capacity Building in Higher Education, and Jean Monnet Actions, as well as discovered funding possibilities under the Creative Europe programme.



Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson guided participants through the basics of Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE), Jean Monnet Actions, and International Credit Mobility (KA171), while Michelangelo Galeati presented the potential of Creative Europe for music and cultural projects. Salvatore Gioveni shared insights from the HarmaHub project as a concrete example of how Erasmus+ KA2 can be used effectively.

Throughout the session, participants alternated between presentations and group work, identifying how these funding lines could support their institutions. The workshop was designed to understand the funding landscape and provide practical tools and inspiration for future project development.



View the presentations:

- [Funding Opportunities for Projects](#)
- [CREATIVE EU, Michelangelo Galeati](#)



[Discussion questions](#)

Session for First-Time Delegates

Sarah Low and Ivana Mijanovic

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 were 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. A buddy system was established during this session where long-standing members of the community were paired with newcomers to help them find their way in the AEC IRC community.

- **Sarah Low**, Executive Assistant and International Projects Manager Royal Academy of Music
- **Ivana Mijanovic**, International relations coordinator, Faculty of Music Belgrad (FMU)



[View the presentation](#)

Opening Session

Welcome words by:

- **Gábor Farkas**, President of the Liszt Academy of Music
- **István Verses**, Director of Erasmus Programmes, Hungarian Erasmus National Agency Tempus Public Foundation
- **Jan-Gerd Krüger**, IRC Working Group Chair
- **Finn Schumacker**, AEC Executive Director



Music performance

Upper-Hungarian folk tunes,
with Áron Rostás (violin), Csenge Ördög
(violin), Levente Dobos (Bagpipe)



[Watch the session](#)



[List of the 25 IRC meetings](#)

AEC Talk 1

Charting Currents of Change: IN.TUNE's Compass for Collaborative Innovation

As the higher music education landscape evolves, we are called to rebalance our compass for internationalisation – exploring new trajectories, navigating challenges, and setting a clear direction forward. IN.TUNE European University Alliance embodies this spirit by moving beyond a short-term project mindset and committing to deep, long-term institutional cooperation with a strong artistic focus. By uniting eight diverse music and artistic universities across Europe, IN.TUNE is transforming differences into strengths and charting a shared strategic course towards sustainable, high-quality education.

This talk spotlighted one of IN.TUNE's strategic "trajectories" – the step-by-step development of joint educational formats that enhance progressive curriculum development. Beginning with blended intensive programmes and online collaborative courses, and aiming ultimately for joint modules and full joint programmes, this journey illustrated how flexible learning pathways can empower students and modernise curricula. These innovative formats, which can be funded with available but focused and strategic Erasmus-supported collaboration, fostered a richer exchange of expertise and teaching practices across institutions. In turn, they helped ensure that our educational offerings stay in tune with the evolving demands of the music profession and society.

Tone Jordhus, Norwegian Academy of Music Oslo, IN.TUNE University Alliance
Introduction and moderation by **Jan-Gerd Krueger**, IRC chairperson





IN.TUNE's experience served as a guiding example – a “mobility compass” – for the wider conservatoire sector. It demonstrated what international partners can achieve through existing funding and collaborative will, even outside formal alliances. Importantly, it highlighted the pivotal role of International Relations Coordinators as navigators of this process, supporting international strategies and the internationalisation of curricula at their institutions. By embracing innovation and partnership, the future of higher music education can be more effectively mapped.

Bio

Tone Jordhus is Co-Secretary General of IN.TUNE and Head of Division at the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH). Jordhus is a trained saxophonist and music educator holding a master's degree in music pedagogy from the Norwegian Academy of Music. She worked as a freelance musician, teacher, conductor, and facilitator in Norway and abroad before she moved on to a position at NMH. International Relations has been a key task in all her positions at the Academy for the last decade.

Her current role at the Academy is overseeing teams working on quality assurance and curriculum development, internationalisation, lifelong learning and young talents. Research administration and project support are also a part of her portfolio. As the Co-Secretary General of the IN.TUNE Alliance, Jordhus leads the coordination and strategic management of the alliance. One of the central parts of her role is pushing forward key developments—especially in seamless mobility and innovative collaborative approaches to joint education—by fostering deep, hands-on collaboration across institutions and keeping the alliance tightly aligned with its partners' evolving needs.



[Watch the session](#)



[View the presentation](#)

Parallel Sessions

1. Project Evaluation – Do's and Don'ts Cracking the EU Code

During this session, participants stepped behind the scenes of EU funding and discovered how to decode the Erasmus+ Programme Guide and calls for proposals—what's written, what it means, and what evaluators actually look for.

Practical guidance was provided on navigating key EU websites, understanding programme logic, and avoiding the most common (and costly) mistakes. With insider insights from a seasoned evaluator and grant writer, participants learned the do's and don'ts that can make or break a proposal.

- **Siarhei Piashkun**, Western Norway University of Applied Science Stavanger
- **Siri Elisabeth Haug**, University of Stavanger, Norway



The session focused on Erasmus+ KA2 and KA3, but the principles apply across most EU funding schemes. Whether participants were new to grant writing/support or ready to sharpen their edge, this session was designed to support all levels of experience.



[Watch the session](#)



[View the presentation](#)

2. AI for international offices: from Curiosity to Everyday use

Per-Arne Andersen,
University of Adger



Artificial Intelligence is rapidly changing the nature of work—and international offices are no exception. In this session, the potential of AI to support administrative staff in their daily tasks was explored, not only by simplifying tasks like drafting communication or organising workflows, but also by enhancing their ability to read and interpret complex calls for proposals and contribute to successful application writing. Rather than focusing on specific tools, the session took a broader look at the opportunities offered by AI: how it can support smarter working, improve quality, and reduce repetitive tasks; what ethical considerations arise; and which policies are in place at institutions such as UiA.

The session was designed to be practical and accessible, and acknowledged the wide range of experience among participants—from those who have never used AI to those who have already explored its potential. Participants left with concrete examples and ideas on how AI can be responsibly integrated into their own daily routines and professional context.



[Watch the session](#)



[View the presentation](#)



3. Student Wellbeing and Health Promotion in Tertiary Music Education

This interactive session invited international relations coordinators to reflect on how global engagement strategies in higher music education can actively support student wellbeing. Grounded in the Position Paper on Health Promotion in Tertiary Music Institutions—an international, evidence-based initiative led by Dr. Raluca Matei (Johns Hopkins University)—the session highlighted seven key recommendations aimed at transforming music institutions into healthier, more inclusive, and more sustainable environments for students and staff alike.

As a contributor to the position paper, Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson presented the paper's main messages alongside Sarah Low, Executive Assistant and International Projects Manager at the Royal Academy of Music. Together, they framed student wellbeing as a structural and international priority, rather than an individual or isolated concern.

- **Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson**, Board Member, EPASA; IRC Working Group Member
- **Sarah Low**, Executive Assistant and International Projects Manager at the Royal Academy of Music



Topics included:

- Rethinking musicianship through a health-informed lens
- Embedding health and equity in institutional governance
- Empowering students as agents of change
- Training educators and redesigning curricula
- Building cross-disciplinary and international partnerships

Structured discussions allowed participants to share challenges, identify synergies, and explore actionable strategies that can enhance student wellbeing through mobility, cooperation projects, and institutional policy. The session aimed to link internationalisation efforts with a broader cultural shift in music education—one that centres on care, creativity, and collective responsibility.



[View the presentation](#)

4. BIPs Toolkits

BIPs are here to stay!

In this session, 3 fresh resources were explored:

1. BIP 2024 Dublin Report: tips from the AEC network (following last year's Dublin workshop) on how to plan a BIP and make it both enjoyable and easy to manage.
2. EU Erasmus+ Good Practices Guide: a new handbook released by the European Commission in June 2025, showcasing best practices for BIPs.
3. BIPs Basic Toolkit: step-by-step guidance from the Austrian and Dutch National Agencies, based on real-life experience, surveys, and participants' feedback.

After a quick tour of each, participants have been invited to join lively discussions. Appreciation is extended to those who contributed their insights, challenges, and curiosity, helping to shape a new vision for the future of BIPs.

Oana Balan-Budoiu,
Academy of Music George
Dima Cluj Napoca



- [View the presentation](#)
- [Read the AEC BIPs Guidelines](#)
- [BIP Toolkit by the Austrian and Dutch Erasmus+ National Agencies](#)
- [EU Report on BIP](#)

Welcome Reception



AEC Talk 2

Direction: Africa! A successful Erasmus+ KA171 journey between Mozambique and Italy *Why Africa Matters: A Case for Inclusive Internationalisation in Music Education*

The Erasmus+ KA171 collaboration between MUSIARTE (Mozambique) and the Agostino Steffani Conservatory of Music (Italy) stands as a compelling example of how partnerships with Africa are shaping the future of international higher music education. This dynamic exchange has facilitated meaningful academic and artistic mobility, joint curriculum development, and mutual capacity building, demonstrating the vital role of European institutions as co-creators of global educational excellence. Internationalisation is more than outreach; it is a powerful driver of quality, equity, and innovation. Including African talent in this process not only enriches global cultural dialogue but also fosters shared responses to contemporary challenges.

- **Stella Mendonça**,
Fundação MUSIARTE –
Conservatório de Música e
Arte dramática, Maputo,
Mozambique
- **Damiano Lazzaron**, IRC at
Conservatorio “A. Steffani”,
Castelfranco Veneto, Italy

Introduction by **Riccardo Mascia**, IRC WG

Moderator: **Keld Hosbond**, AEC
Council Member



Erasmus+ KA171 offers a framework for building long-term, reciprocal collaborations grounded in respect, creativity, and a shared vision for transformative music education.

The path toward equitably resourced, culturally relevant, and internationally connected music education institutions in Africa depends on inclusive strategies that uphold academic excellence while affirming local identities and contributing to the global artistic landscape. This also requires recognising that high-standard and globally competitive higher education in music must be supported by strong foundations in basic education.

Therefore, European internationalisation strategies have a critical role to play in supporting systemic capacity building across educational levels in African contexts. Through mutually beneficial partnerships and innovative curricula, such collaborations can co-create forward-looking models of music education that reflect shared global standards, values, and aspirations.

Bio

Stella Mendonça is a Mozambican soprano and founder of the MUSIARTE-Conservatório de Música e Arte Dramática. Trained in France, Switzerland and in the US, she has performed internationally and collaborated with icons such as Grace Bumbry, Magda Olivero and Dennis Hall among others. A leader in arts education, she promotes cross-cultural exchange and co-leads the Erasmus+ KA171 partnership with the Italian Conservatorio Agostino Steffani, Eduardo Mondlane University and Pedagogical University of Maputo. For her contributions to the arts, Mendonça was awarded the Medal of Merit by the Portuguese government in 2016.

Damiano Lazzaron is a pianist and composer. He is a teacher and coordinator of the international office of the Agostino Steffani Conservatoire of Music in Castelfranco Veneto, Italy. He has been operating for several years in Internationalization and develops Erasmus projects KA 131 and Ka 171 with Moldova, Ukraine, Argentina, Brazil, Senegal and Mozambique.



[Watch the session](#)



[View the presentation](#)

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](#)
- [IncluMusic final conference in Cluj](#)
- [PNRR Project ROLE](#)
- [AEC Green Initiatives](#)
- [BIP: CELLO SPRING 2025](#)
- [What's cooking at RCA](#)
- [The Erasmus+ KA171 Project "MMM Mediterranean Sub-Saharan Music Movement"](#)
- [Road to Conservatorio Cimarosa: 1 year of projects and dreams](#)
- [MusiQuE](#)
- [Short term projects in Bologna](#)
- [The creation of a world conference: academic exchange, internationalization and sustainable historical heritage](#)

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

Practical issues – questions and solutions on mobility

1. Welcoming Ukrainian Students in our institutions

This session provided an opportunity to learn more about the experiences of Ukrainian students on Erasmus+ mobilities. Insights were provided directly by a Ukrainian student, as well as by IRCs from institutions within Ukraine and across Europe. There were special considerations for welcoming Ukrainian students to the institutions; delegates left with a deeper awareness of these issues and engaged in discussions on how to address them.



- **Jose Luis Fernandez**, Vigo
- **Damiano Lazzaron**, Castelfranco Veneto
- **Bohdan Rumiantsev**, Kiev
- **Anna Habruk**, Ukrainian student

Moderated by **Sarah Low** and **Junta Arakawa**.



[Read the speech](#)
by Anna Habruk



2. No stupid questions about Erasmus

During this open discussion session, IRCs asked each other anything and everything about the Erasmus+ programme—from the simplest to the most complex questions.

Designed as a safe space for honest questions and shared learning and experiences, the session covered practical aspects of mobility, partnerships, digital tools, programme management, communication tips etc. Whether participants were new to Erasmus+ or simply seeking clarity or different perspectives from the IRC community, this was their chance to speak up, share experiences, and leave with greater confidence.

Moderated by **Veronika Kuzelova**, and **Ivana Mijanovic**

3. Dealing with Grade Conversion

The academic recognition of the learning outcomes of a study stay abroad is one of the fundamental principles of the Erasmus programme. In order to fully implement it, it is needed to ensure that students receive a fair and transparent conversion of grades obtained at the hosting institution. However, as stated in the ECTS User Guide, "Due to different cultural and academic traditions, European educational systems have developed not only different national grading scales but also different ways of using them within the same country, in different subject areas or institutions."

Following the exchanges and reflections during the brainstorming session at the AEC Congress in November 2024, IRCs, who are the first link in the process of grade conversion, were invited to continue and broaden the discussion focused on the principles applied by different institutions in terms of grade conversion, as well as the challenges and best practices in this area.



Moderated by **Ania Sergueeva**, Paris BB and **Domenica Giannone**, Milan



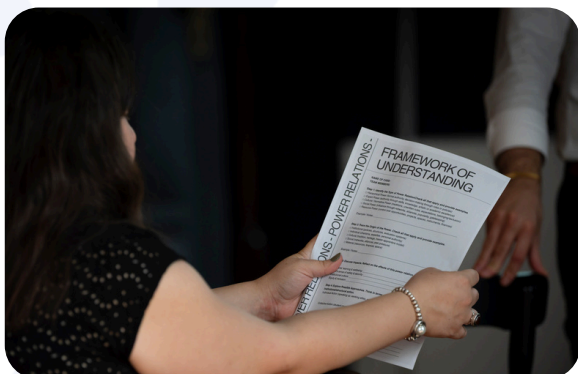
- [Read the ECTS grading scale](#)
- [Read the table of grades conversion of Sorbonne University](#)
- [Read the REPORT from the group discussion on grades conversion](#) by Ania and Domenica

4. Power Relations issues for international students

Higher music education institutions are complex learning environments where collaboration between students, staff, and management depends on navigating different levels of decision-making power. This interactive discussion session explored how power dynamics shape the experiences of international students and the professionals who support them. Participant international relations coordinators engaged in structured activities, small-group dialogues, and guided case study discussions to reflect on their own institutional contexts, identify barriers to collaboration, and share best practices for centering the student voice.

By combining icebreaker activities, spectrum mapping, and in-depth case study work, the session aimed to create a collaborative space for peer learning, mutual support, and collective problem-solving. The ultimate goal was to develop more inclusive, transparent, and student-centred practices that empower international students in decision-making processes at higher music education institutions.

Moderated by **Monica Vejgaard** (President, EPASA) and **Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson** (IRC Working Group Member, Board Member at EPASA)



[View the presentation](#)

5. What is an internship? Towards an AEC list for good practices for internships in HMEI

In recent years, many international relations offices in higher music education institutions have witnessed a notable surge in applications for traineeships abroad. Unlike study exchanges, which are governed by structured and transparent selection processes, traineeship applications often emerge informally and without clear institutional frameworks. The financial attractiveness of SMT Erasmus+ grants and their perceived simplicity make them increasingly popular among students – sometimes at the expense of more academically structured mobility options.



However, this trend raises critical questions about the fundamental nature and purpose of a traineeship in our field. What should constitute a meaningful traineeship in music? Questions were raised about how to distinguish it from a study exchange, and how to ensure that both students and institutions benefit without overburdening faculty or violating national labour laws.

This discussion group explored the diverging practices and understandings of traineeships across European higher music education institutions. Using the German and Italian contexts as case studies—including challenges related to labour laws, teacher workloads, and misaligned expectations between partner institutions—the session aimed to foster an open exchange on policy, process, and content.



Key points for discussion included:

- The need for clear institutional policies on the acceptance and structure of SMTs
- The distinction between work-oriented internships and lesson-based exchanges
- Transparency on institutional websites regarding SMT offerings and limitations
- How to advertise traineeships: how to attract students to the [AEC's Vacancy Platform](#), cross-institutional collaborations and consortia, such as Italy's "Working With Music" initiative, and the consortium of the European Opera Academy
- Common misunderstandings, mistakes, and missed opportunities
- Quality feedback

This session invited IRC colleagues to share experiences, raise concerns, and contribute to shaping a common understanding of traineeships – one that respects institutional capacity, upholds the integrity of the SMT, and enhances student mobility opportunities in a fair and sustainable manner.



[View the presentation](#)

6. How can IRCs make good use of the AI?

This session followed up on the earlier workshop and invited participants to dive deeper into practical and strategic questions.

AI offers exciting possibilities—but questions remain about where international offices should begin and how smart, ethical, and practical implementation can be ensured. In this session, participants reflected together on how international relations coordinators (IRCs) can benefit from AI in their day-to-day work.

The floor was opened for a structured discussion on key questions, such as: how can AI free up time and improve quality? What are the risks? And what role should policy, training, and leadership play in ensuring responsible use? Participants were encouraged to share ideas, challenges, and experiences—from first encounters with AI tools to ongoing experimentation and institutional strategies. The goal was to learn from one another and explore how IRCs can actively—and wisely—make use of AI going forward.

Moderated by
Per Arne Andersen,
University of Adger



[Watch the session](#)



[View the presentation](#)



[Read the report](#)



Useful links:

[@SkillLeapAI](#)

[@TheAiGrid](#)

[@TwoMinutePapers](#)

7. Discussing Do's and Don'ts of project writing

The process of applying for external funding frequently raises questions regarding where to start, how to prepare a competitive proposal, and what actions to take afterwards. This session offered a useful insight into the nature of preparing bids for EU funding. The first part of the session focused on how to design and organise the proposal writing phase, while the second part offered an open plenary discussion aimed at identifying the most appropriate ways of dealing with the proposals' evaluation results.

Moderated by **Siarhei Piashkun**
and **Siri Elisabeth Haug**



[Read this handout](#)



8. How to move students beyond Europe? The example of the PNRR Project Music4D in Palermo

MUSIC4D – *Music, entrepreneUrshlp, Creativity, For the Digital revolution* – is a large-scale international initiative funded under the Italian PNRR (NextGenerationEU). Led by Conservatorio di Musica “Alessandro Scarlatti” in Palermo, with the participation of the HME institutions from Sicily and Sardinia, together with the University of Palermo, the University of Cosenza, as well as theatres and prestigious international partners, the project aims to valorise the musical heritage of Southern Italy while promoting innovation through advanced digital tools such as AR, VR, XR, AI, and robotics.

A central pillar of MUSIC4D is the mobility dimension, promoting the creation of new networks and exchanges. The project foresees both blended and physical mobilities for students, professors, researchers, and administrative staff, with an expected impact on more than 400 direct participants.

Following the presentation of MUSIC4D, the discussion turned to the experiences of other conservatories, with particular attention to *beyond-EU mobilities*. This exchange of practices highlighted how international collaborations with non-European partners can further enrich artistic education, research, and cultural diplomacy in the performing arts.



Moderated by **Michelangelo Galeati**



[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 Budapest city tour and the Danube cruise. The city tour offered informative and exciting facts about the city of Budapest from its architecture, to the statues on the streets and a quick visit to the Budapest Opera House. The Danube cruise offered a calm late afternoon escapade on a boat with refreshing drinks and networking opportunities.

The day ended with the Erasmus Orchestra concert. More than 50 talented young musicians, selected from Conservatories across Erasmus+ countries, joined forces with students from the Liszt Academy to form this unique ensemble. The Orchestra embodied the spirit of European cooperation, demonstrating how music can transcend borders and foster meaningful connections among people from diverse backgrounds. The program included classical pieces by Bartok, Brahms, Elgar, Giordano, and Puccini.



20 September

AEC Talk 3 – Direction: Open Waters! The Currents of Mobility

The session started with a music introduction by Aleksandr Glazunov's Elegy for piano and cello, Op. 17. This was followed by a panel discussion based on the survey of the AEC's IRC Community on mobility trends by the new IRC Working Group consisting of 9 members.



[View the presentation](#)



[Watch the session](#)



[Read the IRC Manifesto](#)

Discussion Groups

Reflections on the mobility trends, on the conference and future topics for the IRC Meeting and Safe Space

On Saturday, before the closing session, participants were split into eight 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 atmosphere of the event. The diverse perspectives and expertise brought by the speakers and attendees contributed to the richness of the discussions throughout the conference.

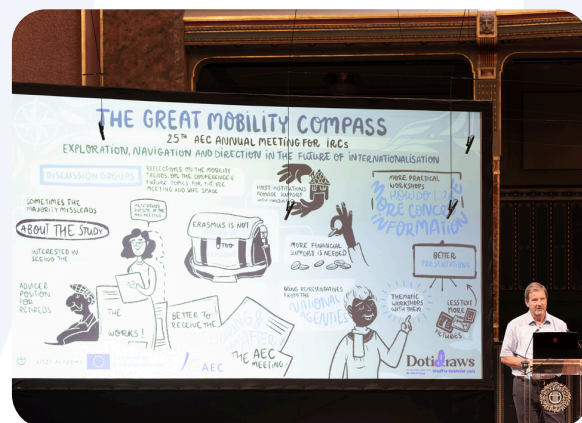
The Safe Space session took place parallel to the discussion groups, where participants discussed more discreetly about their experiences and critical remarks.



Closing Session

The closing session of the AEC Annual Meeting for IRCs began with a key update from Finn Schumacker, AEC Executive Director, who shared the latest news from AEC. Following this, the host of the next IRC Meeting in 2026 was announced: participants discovered that Conservatorio F.A. Bonporti in Trento will welcome the meeting from 2 to 5 September 2026.

The session concluded with closing remarks by Riccardo Ceni, member of the AEC Council, who reflected on the event's achievements, thanked the participants, and outlined the path forward for the AEC and its members. This session offered a final opportunity to thank the outgoing chairman of the IRC working group Jan Gerd Krueger and welcome the new chair Dimitrios Marinos.



[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 the speakers, participants, students, our host and to all participating HME leaders, teachers and administrators.

THANK YOU ALL!

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

Photo Gallery

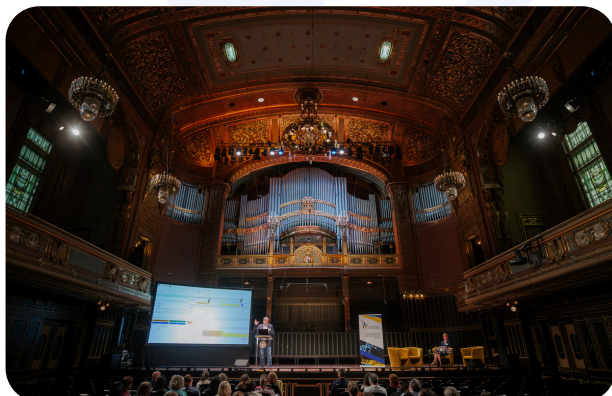
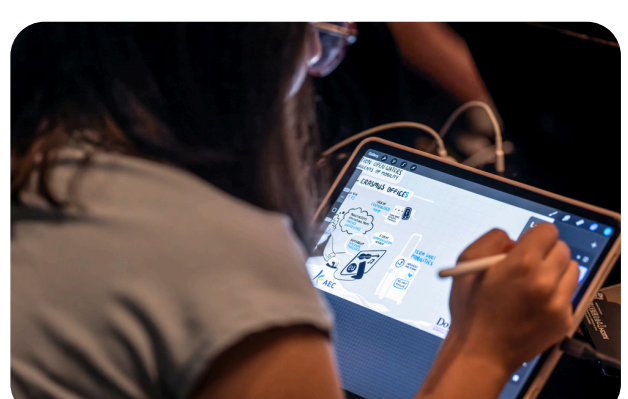


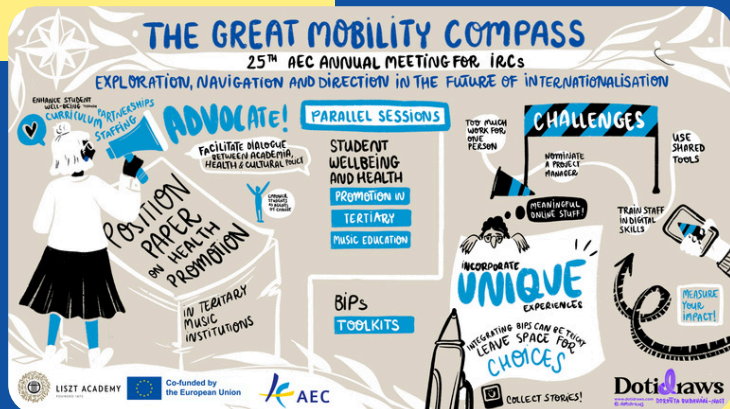
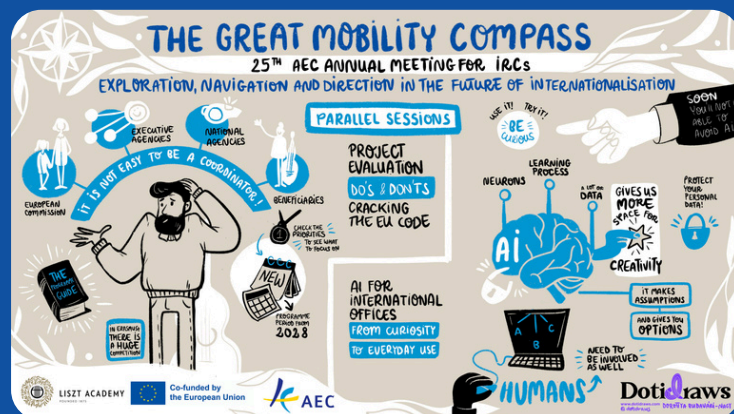
Photo Gallery

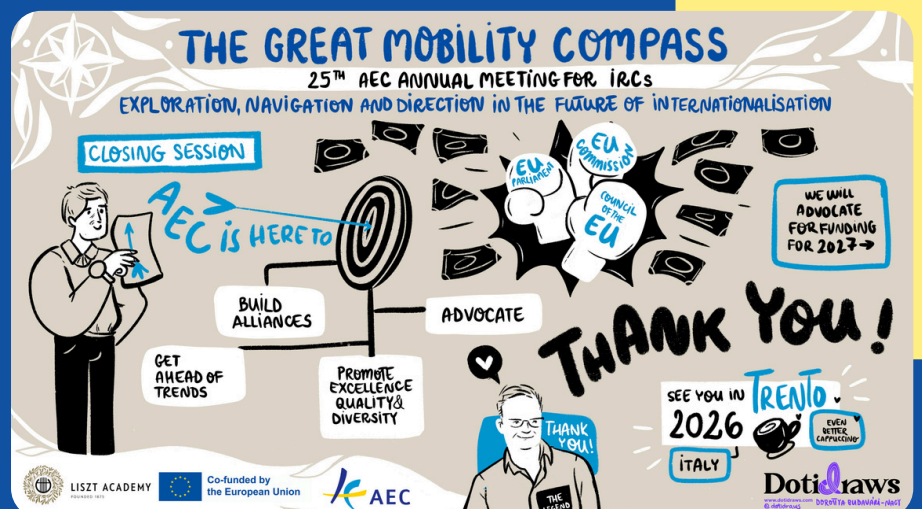
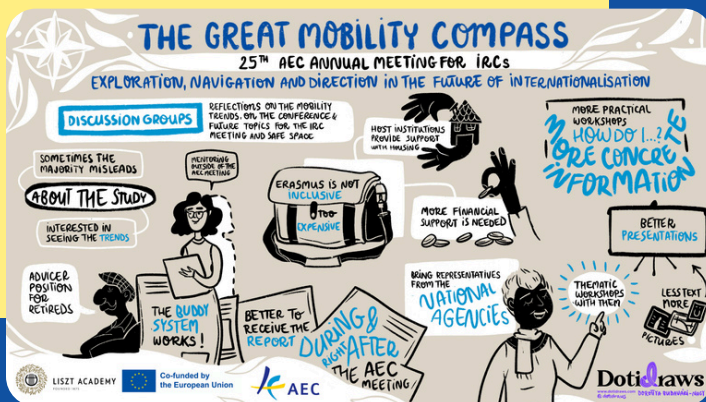


Photo Gallery



Visual notes





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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The Great Mobility Compass

Exploration, Navigation, and Direction in the
Future of Internationalisation

25th AEC Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators (IRCs) 2025

Wednesday 17 September

- 13:30 **Registration** Opens (with welcome coffee) | **Foyer (ground floor)**
14:00 - 18:00 **Workshop:** Navigating the Digitisation of Erasmus+ Procedures | **Solti Hall**

Thursday, 18 September

- 09:00 **Registration** for pre-conference workshop participants | **Foyer (ground floor)**
9:30 – 12:30 **Pre-conference Workshops**
 Workshop 1 – Exploring Erasmus+ Mobility | **Room XXIII (3rd floor)**
 Workshop 2 – Exploring Funding Opportunities | **Room I (1st floor)**
12:45 **Registration Opens:** Guided Tour of the Liszt Academy | **Foyer (ground floor)**
13:15 – 14:15 **Introductory session** for first-time explorers | **Room I (1st floor)**
14:30 – 15:30 **Opening Session** | **Grand Hall (ground floor)**
 AEC Talk 1 - Charting Currents of Change: **IN.TUNE's** Compass for **Collaborative Innovation** | **Grand Hall (ground floor)**
15:30 – 15:50 **Networking** with Refreshments | **Foyer (ground floor) & 1st floor**
15:50 – 16:10 **Speed Dating** - How many new navigators can you meet? | **Foyer (ground floor)**
16:15 – 17:30 **Parallel Sessions I**
 1. **Project Evaluation** - Do's and Don'ts – Cracking the EU Code | **Grand Hall (ground floor)**
 2. **AI for international offices:** from Curiosity to Everyday use | **Solti Hall (1st floor)**
 3. **Student Wellbeing and Health** Promotion in Tertiary Music Education | **Room X (2nd f)**
 4. **BIPs Toolkits** | **Room XXIII (3rd floor)**
17:45 – 19:00 **Parallel Sessions II REPEATED**
 1. **Project Evaluation** - Do's and Don'ts – Cracking the EU Code | **Grand Hall (ground floor)**
 2. **AI for international offices:** from Curiosity to Everyday use | **Solti Hall (1st floor)**
 3. **Student Wellbeing and Health** Promotion in Tertiary Music Education | **Room X (2nd f)**
 4. **BIPs Toolkits** | **Room XXIII (3rd floor)**
19:15 **Welcome Reception** | **Corinthia Hotel**

Friday, 19 September

- 09:20 **Welcome coffee and registration:** Guided Tour of the Liszt Academy | **Foyer**
10:00 – 11:00 **AEC Talk 2** - Direction: Africa! A successful **Erasmus+ KA171** journey between Mozambique and Italy | **Grand Hall (ground floor)**

- 11:00 – 12:00 **Information Forum** - **Grand Hall (ground floor)**
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Information Market** - **Atrium (1st floor)**
- 12:30 – 14:00 **Lunch** - **Foyer (ground floor) & 1st floor**
- 14:00 – 15:30 **Discussion Groups** - practical issues for IRCs
1. Welcoming **Ukrainian Students** in our institutions - **Room XV (2nd floor)**
 2. No stupid questions about **Erasmus** - **Opera Studio (3rd floor)**
 3. Dealing with **Grades Conversion** - **Room X (2nd floor)**
 4. **Power Relations issues** for international students - **Room I (1st floor)**
 5. What is an internship? Towards an AEC list for good practices for **internships in HMEI** - **Room XXIII (3rd floor)**
 6. How can IRCs make good use of the **AI**? - **Solti Hall**
 7. Discussing Do's and Don'ts of **project writing** - **Dome Hall (top floor)**
 8. How to **move students beyond Europe**? The example of the **PNRR Project Music4D** in Palermo - **Room XXVIII (3rd floor)**
- 15:30 – 19:00 **Networking Activity**: Guided Tour & Boat Trip on the Danube
- 19:30 – 20:15 **Concert** by the Erasmus Orchestra - **Grand Hall (ground floor)**

Saturday, 20 September

- 9:45 – 11:00 **AEC Talk 3** - Direction: Open Waters! **The Currents of Mobility** - **Grand Hall**
- 11:00 – 11:30 **Networking** with refreshments - **Foyer (ground floor) & 1st floor**
- 11:30 – 12:30 **Discussion Groups** - Reflections on the mobility trends, on the conference and future topics for the IRC Meeting
- A. Anika Stiawa - **Solti Stage (1st floor)**
 - B. Jan-Gerd Krüger - **Room I (1st floor)**
 - C. Riccardo Mascia - **Room X (2nd floor)**
 - D. Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson - **Room XV (2nd floor)**
 - E. Sarah Low - **Opera studio (3rd floor)**
 - F. Veronika Kuzelova - **Room XVII (2nd floor)**
 - G. Linn Jeanett Eriksen - **Room XXIII (3rd floor)**
 - H. Sara Primiterra - **Room XXVIII (3rd floor)**
- 12:30 – 13:00 **Closing Session** - **Grand Hall**
- 13:00 Share your food and drinks - **Entrance Hall**